

Cant. V.

*The faithfull knight in equall field
subdewes his faithlesse foe,
Whom false Duessa saues, and for
his cure to hell does goe.*

[1]

THe noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
And is with child of glorious great intent,
Can neuer rest, vntill it forth haue brought
Th'eternall brood of glorie excellent:
Such restlesse passion did all night torment
The flaming corage of that Faery Knight,
Deuizing, how that doughtie turnament
With greatest honour he atchieuen might;
Still did wake, and still did watch for dawning light.

[2]

At last the golden Orientall gate,
Of greatest heauen gan to open faire,
And *Phoebus* fresh, as bridegrome to his mate,
Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie haire:
And hurls his glistring beames through gloomy aire.
Which when the wakefull Elfe perceiu'd, streight way
He started vp, and did himselfe prepaire,
In sun-bright armes, and battailous array:
For with that Pagan proud he combat will that day.

[3]

And forth he comes into the commune hall,
Where earely waite him many a gazing eye,
To weet what end to straunger knights may fall.
There many Minstrales maken melody,
To driue away the dull melancholy,
And many Bardes, that to the trembling chord
Can tune their timely voyces cunningly,
And many Chroniclers, that can record
Old loues, and warres for Ladies doen by many a Lord.

[4]

Soone after comes the cruell Sarazin,
In wouen maile all armed warily,

And sternly lookes at him, who not a pin
Does care for looke of liuing creatures eye.
They bring them wines of *Greece* and *Araby*,
And daintie spices fetcht from furthest *Ynd*,
To kindle heat of corage priuily:
And in the wine a solemne oth they bynd
T'obserue the sacred lawes of armes, that are assynd.

[5]

At last forth comes that farre renowned Queene,
With royall pomp and Princely maiestie;
She is ybrought vnto a paled greene,
And placed vnder stately canapee,
The warlike feates of both those knights to see.
On th'other side in all mens open vew
Duessa placed is, and on a tree
Sans-foy his shield is hangd with bloody hew:
Both those the lawrell girlonds to the victor dew.

[6]

A shrilling trompet sownded from on hye,
And vnto battaill bad themselues addresse:
Their shining shieldes about their wrestes they tye,
And burning blades about their heads doe blesse,
The instruments of wrath and heauinesse:
With greedy force each other doth assayle,
And strike so fiercely, that they do impresse
Deepe dinted furrowes in the battred mayle;
The yron walles to ward their blowes are weake & fraile.

[7]

The Sarazin was stout, and wondrous strong,
And heaped blowes like yron hammers great:
For after bloud and vengeance he did long.
The knight was fiers, and full of youthly heat:
And doubled strokes, like dreaded thunders threat:
For all for prayse and honour he did fight.
Both stricken strike, and beaten both do beat,
That from their shields forth flyeth firie light,
And helmets hewen deepe, shew marks of eithers might.

[8]

So th'one for wrong, the other striues for right:

As when a Gryfon seized of his pray,
A Dragon fiers encountreth in his flight,
Through widest ayre making his ydle way,
That would his rightfull rauine rend away:
With hideous horroure both together smight,
And souce so sore, that they the heauens affray:
The wise Southsayer seeing so sad sight,
Th'amazed vulgar tels of warres and mortall fight.

[9]

So th'one for wrong, the other striues for right,
And each to deadly shame would driue his foe:
The cruell steele so greedily doth bight
In tender flesh, that streames of bloud down flow,
With which the armes, that earst so bright did show
Into a pure vermillion now are dyde:
Great ruth in all the gazers harts did grow,
Seeing the gored woundes to gape so wyde,
That victory they dare not wish to either side.

[10]

At last the Paynim chaunst to cast his eye,
His suddeine eye, flaming with wrathfull fyre,
Vpon his brothers shield, which hong thereby:
Therewith redoubled was his raging yre,
And said, Ah wretched sonne of wofull syre,
Doest thou sit wayling by black *Stygian* lake,
Whilest here thy shield is hangd for victors hyre,
And sluggish german doest thy forces slake,
To after-send his foe, that him may ouertake?

[11]

Goe caytiue Elfe, him quickly ouertake,
And soone redeeme from his long wandring woe;
Goe guiltie ghost, to him my message make,
That I his shield haue quit from dying foe.
Therewith vpon his crest he stroke him so,
That wise he reeled, readie wise to fall;
End of the doubtfull battell deemed tho
The lookers on, and lowd to him gan call
The false *Duessa*, Thine the shield, and I, and all.

[12]

Soone as the Faerie heard his Ladie speake,
Out of his swowning dreame he gan awake,
And quickning faith, that earst was woxen weake,
The creeping deadly cold away did shake:
Tho mou'd with wrath, and shame, and Ladies sake,
Of all attonce he cast avengd to bee,
And with so'exceeding furie at him strake,
That forced him to stoupe vpon his knee;
Had he not stouped so, he should haue clouen bee.

[13]

And to him said, Goe now proud Miscreant,
Thy selfe thy message doe to german deare,
Alone he wandring thee too long doth want:
Goe say, his foe thy shield with his doth beare.
Therewith his heauie hand he high gan reare,
Him to haue slaine; when loe a darksome clowd
Vpon him fell: he no where doth appeare,
But vanisht is. The Elfe him cals alowd,
But answer none receiues: the darknes him does shrowd.

[14]

In haste *Duessa* from her place arose,
And to him running said, O prowest knight,
That euer Ladie to her loue did chose,
Let now abate the terror of your might,
And quench the flame of furious despight,
And bloody vengeance; lo th'infernall powres
Couering your foe with cloud of deadly night,
Haue borne him hence to *Plutoes* balefull bowres.
The conquest yours, I yours, the shield, and glory yours.

[15]

Not all so satisfide, with greedie eye
He sought all round about, his thirstie blade
To bath in bloud of faithlesse enemy;
Who all that while lay hid in secret shade:
He standes amazed, how he thence should fade.
At last the trumpets, Triumph sound on hie,
And running Heralds humble homage made,
Greeting him goodly with new victorie,
And to him brought the shield, the cause of enmitie.

[16]

Wherewith he goeth to that soueraigne Queene;
And falling her before on lowly knee,
To her makes present of his seruice seene:
Which she accepts, with thankes, and goodly gree,
Greatly aduauncing his gay cheualree.
So marcheth home, and by her takes the knight,
Whom all the people follow with great glee,
Shouting, and clapping all their hands on hight,
That all the aire it fils, and flyes to heauen bright.

[17]

Home is he brought, and laid in sumptuous bed:
Where many skilfull leaches him abide,
To salue his hurts, that yet still freshly bled.
In wine and oyle they wash his woundes wide,
And softly can embalme on euery side.
And all the while, most heauenly melody
About the bed sweet musicke did diuide,
Him to beguile of grieffe and agony:
And all the while *Duessa* wept full bitterly.

[18]

As when a wearie traeller that straias
By muddy shore of broad seuen-mouthed *Nile*,
Vnweeting of the perillous wandring wayes,
Doth meet a cruell craftie Crocodile,
Which in false grieffe hiding his harmefull guile,
Doth weepe full sore, and sheddeth tender teares:
The foolish man, that pitties all this while
His mournefull plight, is swallowd vp vnwares,
Forgetfull of his owne, that mindes anothers cares.

[19]

So wept *Duessa* vntill euentide,
That shyning lampes in *Ioues* high house were light:
Then forth she rose, ne lenger would abide,
But comes vnto the place, where th'Hethen knight
In slombring swownd nigh voyd of vitall spright,
Lay couer'd with inchaunted cloud all day:
Whom when she found, as she him left in plight,
To wayle his woefull case she would not stay,
But to the easterne coast of heauen makes speedy way.

[20]

Where griesly *Night*, with visage deadly sad,
That *Phoebus* chearefull face durst neuer vew,
And in a foule blacke pitchie mantle clad,
She findes forth comming from her darkesome mew,
Where she all day did hide her hated hew.
Before the dore her yron charet stood,
Alreadie harnessed for iourney new;
And coleblacke steedes yborne of hellish brood,
That on their rustie bits did champ, as they were wood.

[21]

Who when she saw *Duessa* sunny bright,
Adorn'd with gold and iewels shining cleare,
She greatly grew amazed at the sight,
And th'vnacquainted light began to feare:
For neuer did such brightnesse there appeare,
And would haue backe retyred to her caue,
Vntill the witches speech she gan to heare,
Saying, yet ô thou dreaded Dame, I craue
Abide, till I haue told the message, which I haue.

[22]

She stayd, and fourth *Duessa* gan proceede,
O thou most auncient Grandmother of all,
More old then *Ioue*, whom thou at first didst breede,
Or that great house of Gods cælestiall,
Which wast begot in *Daemogorgons* hall,
And sawst the secrets of the world vnmade,
Why suffredst thou thy Nephewes deare to fall
With Elfin sword, most shamefully betrade?
Lo where the stout *Sansioy* doth sleepe in deadly shade.

[23]

And, him before, I saw with bitter eyes
The bold *Sansfoy* shrinke vnderneath his speare;
And now the pray of fowles in field he lyes,
Nor wayld of friends, nor laid on groning beare,
That whylome was to me too dearely deare.
O what of Gods then boots it to be borne,
If old *Aveugles* sonnes so euill heare?
Or who shall not great *Nightes* children scorne,
When two of three her Nephews are so fowle forlorne?

[24]

Vp then, vp dreary Dame, of darknesse Queene,
Go gather vp the reliques of thy race,
Or else goe them auenge, and let be seene,
That dreaded *Night* in brightest day hath place,
And can the children of faire light deface.
Her feeling speeches some compassion moued
In hart, and chaunge in that great mothers face:
Yet pittie in her hart was neuer proued
Till then: and euermore she hated, neuer loued.

[25]

And said, Deare daughter rightly may I rew
The fall of famous children borne of mee,
And good successes, which their foes enrew:
But who can turne the streame of destinee,
Or breake the chayne of strong necessitee,
Which fast is tyde to *Ioues* eternall seat?
The sonnes of *Day* he fauoureth, I see,
And by my ruines thinks to make them great:
To make one great by others losse, is bad excheat.

[26]

Yet shall they not escape so freely all;
For some shall pay the price of others guilt:
And he the man that made *Sansfoy* to fall,
Shall with his owne bloud price that he hath spilt.
But what art thou, that telst of Nephews kilt?
I that doe seeme not I, *Duessa* am,
(Quoth she) how euer now in garments gilt,
And gorgeous gold arayd I to thee came;
Duessa I, the daughter of Deceipt and Shame.

[27]

Then bowing downe her aged backe, she kist
The wicked witch, saying; In that faire face
The false resemblance of Deceipt, I wist
Did closely lurke; yet so true-seeming grace
It carried, that I scarce in darkesome place
Could it discern, though I the mother bee
Of falshood, and root of *Duessaes* race.
O welcome child, whom I haue longd to see,
And now haue seene vnwares. Lo, now I go with thee.

[28]

Then to her yron wagon she betakes,
And with her beares the fowle welfauourd witch:
Through mirkesome aire her readie way she makes.
Her twyfold Teme, of which two blacke as pitch,
And two were browne, yet each to each vnlich,
Did softly swim away, ne euer stampe,
Vnlesse she chaunst their stubborne mouths to twitch;
Then foming tarre, their bridles they would champe,
And trampling the fine element, would fiercely rampe.

[29]

So well they sped, that they be come at length
Vnto the place, whereas the Paynim lay,
Deuoid of outward sense, and natiue strength,
Couerd with charmed cloude from vew of day,
And sight of men, since his late lucklesse fray.
His cruell wounds with cruddy bloud congealed,
They binden vp so wisely, as they may,
And handle softly, till they can be healed:
So lay him in her charet, close in night concealed.

[30]

And all the while shee stood vpon the ground,
The wakefull dogs did neuer cease to bay,
As giuing warning of th'vnwonted sound,
With which her yron wheelles did them affray,
And her darke griesly looke them much dismay;
The messenger of death, the ghastly Owle,
With drearie shriekes did also her bewray;
And hungry Wolues continually did howle,
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so fowle.

[31]

Thence turning backe in silence soft they stole,
And brought the heaueie corse with easie pace
To yawning gulfe of deepe *Auernus* hole.
By that same hole, an entrance, darke and bace
With smoake and sulphure hiding all the place,
Descends to hell: there creature neuer past,
That backe returned without heauenly grace;
But dreadfull *Furies*, which their chaines haue brast,
And damned sprights sent forth to make ill men aghast.

[32]

By that same way the direfull dames doe driue
Their mournfull charet, fild with rusty blood,
And downe to *Plutoes* house are come biliue:
Which passing through, on euery side them stood
The trembling ghosts with sad amazed mood,
Chattring their yron teeth, and staring wide
With stonie eyes; and all the hellish brood
Of feends infernall flockt on euery side,
To gaze on earthly wight, that with the Night durst ride.

[33]

They pas the bitter waues of *Acheron*,
Where many soules sit wailing woefully,
And come to fiery flood of *Phlegeton*,
Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fry,
And with sharpe shrilling shriekes doe bootlesse cry,
Cursing high *Ioue*, the which them thither sent.
The house of endlesse paine is built thereby,
In which, ten thousand sorts of punishment
The cursed creatures doe eternally torment.

[34]

Before the threshold dreadfull *Cerberus*
His three deformed heads did lay along,
Curled with thousand Adders venemous,
And lilled forth his bloudie flaming tong:
At them he gan to reare his bristles strong,
And felly gnarre, vntill dayes enemy
Did him appease; then downe his taile he hong
And suffered them to passen quietly:
For she in hell and heauen had power equally.

[35]

There was *Ixion* turned on a wheele,
For daring tempt the Queene of heauen to sin;
And *Sisyphus* an huge round stone did reele
Against an hill, ne might from labour lin;
There thirstie *Tantalus* hong by the chin;
And *Tityus* fed a vulture on his maw;
Typhoeus ioynts were stretched on a gin,
Theseus condemned to endlesse slouth by law,
And fifty sisters water in leake vessels draw.

[36]

They all beholding worldly wights in place,
Leaue off their worke, vnmindfull of their smart,
To gaze on them; who forth by them doe pace,
Till they be come vnto the furthest part:
Where was a Caue ywrought by wondrous art,
Deepe, darke, vneasie, dolefull, comfortlesse,
In which sad *Æsculapius* farre a part
Emprisond was in chaines remedillesse,
For that *Hippolytus* rent corse he did redresse.

[37]

Hippolytus a iolly huntsman was,
That wont in charet chace the foming Bore;
He all his Peeres in beautie did surpas,
But Ladies loue, as losse of time forbore:
His wanton stepdame loued him the more,
But when she saw her offred sweets refused,
Her loue she turnd to hate, and him before
His father fierce, of treason false accused,
And with her gealous termes his open eares abused.

[38]

Who all in rage his Sea-god syre besought,
Some cursed vengeance on his sonne to cast:
From surging gulf two monsters straight were brought,
With dread whereof his chasing steedes aghast,
Both charet swift and huntsman ouercast.
His goodly corps on ragged cliffs yrent,
Was quite dismembred, and his members chast
Scattered on euery mountaine, as he went,
That of *Hippolytus* was left no monument.

[39]

His cruell stepdame seeing what was donne,
Her wicked dayes with wretched knife did end,
In death auowing th'innocence of her sonne.
Which hearing his rash Syre, began to rend
His haire, and hastie tongue, that did offend:
Tho gathering vp the relicks of his smart
By *Dianes* meanes, who was *Hippolyts* frend,
Them brought to *Æsculape*, that by his art
Did heale them all againe, and ioyned euery part.

[40]

Such wondrous science in mans wit to raine
When *Ioue* auizd, that could the dead reuiue,
And fates expired could renue againe,
Of endlesse life he might him not depriue,
But vnto hell did thrust him downe alieue,
With flashing thunderbolt ywounded sore:
Where long remaining, he did alwaies striue
Himselfe with salues to health for to restore,
And slake the heauenly fire, that raged euermore.

[41]

There auncient Night arriuing, did alight
From her high wearie waine, and in her armes
To *Æsculapius* brought the wounded knight:
Whom hauing softly disarayd of armes,
Tho gan to him discouer all his harmes,
Beseeching him with prayer, and with praise,
If either salues, or oyles, or herbes, or charmes
A fordonne wight from dore of death mote raise,
Hee would at her request prolong her nephews daies.

[42]

Ah Dame (quoth he) thou temptest mee in vaine,
To dare the thing, which daily yet I rew,
And the old cause of my continued paine
With like attempt to like end to renew.
Is not enough, that thrust from heauen due
Here endlesse penance for one fault I pay,
But that redoubled crime with vengeance new
Thou biddest mee to eeke? Can *Night* defray
The wrath of thundring *Ioue*, that rules both night and day?

[43]

Not so (quoth she) but sith that heauens king
From hope of heauen hath thee excluded quight,
Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for thing,
And fearest not, that more thee hurten might,
Now in the powre of euerlasting Night?
Goe to then, ô thou farre renowned sonne
Of great *Apollo*, shew thy famous might
In medicine, that else hath to thee wonne
Great paines, & greater praise, both neuer to be donne.

[44]

Her words preuaild: And then the learned leach
His cunning hand gan to his wounds to lay,
And all things else, the which his art did teach:
Which hauing seene, from thence arose away
The mother of dread darknesse, and let stay
Aueugles some there in the leaches cure,
And backe returning tooke her wonted way,
To runne her timely race, whilst *Phoebus* pure
In westerne waues his wearie wagon did recure.

[45]

The false *Duessa* leauing noyous Night,
Returnd to stately pallace of dame Pride;
Where when she came, she found the Faerie knight
Departed thence, albe his woundes wide
Not throughly heald, vnreadie were to ride.
Good cause he had to hasten thence away;
For on a day his wary Dwarfe had spide,
Where in a dongeon deepe huge numbers lay
Of caytiue wretched thrals, that wayled night and day.

[46]

A ruefull sight, as could be seene with eie;
Of whom he learned had in secret wise
The hidden cause of their captiuitie,
How mortgaging their liues to *Couetise*,
Through wastfull Pride, and wanton Riotise,
They were by law of that proud Tyrannesse
Proukt with *VVrath*, and *Enuies* false surmise,
Condemned to that Dongeon mercilesse,
Where they should liue in woe, & die in wretchednesse.

[47]

There was that great proud king of *Babylon*,
That would compell all nations to adore,
And him as onely God to call vpon,
Till through celestiall doome throwne out of dore,
Into an Oxe he was transform'd of yore:
There also was king *Croesus*, that enhaunst
His heart too high through his great riches store;
And proud *Antiochus*, the which aduaunst
His cursed hand gainst God, and on his altars daunst.

[48]

And them long time before, great *Nimrod* was,
That first the world with sword and fire warrayd;
And after him, old *Ninus* farre did pas
In princely pompe, of all the world obayd;
There also was that mightie Monarch layd
Lowe vnder all, yet aboue all in pride,
That name of natiue syre did foule vpbrayd,
And would as *Ammons* sonne be magnifide,
Till scornd of God and man a shamefull death he dide.

[49]

All these together in one heape were throwne,
Like carkases of beasts in butchers stall.
And in another corner wide were strowne
The antique ruines of the *Romaines* fall:
Great *Romulus* the Grandsyre of them all,
Proud *Tarquin*, and too lordly *Lentulus*,
Stout *Scipio*, and stubborne *Hanniball*,
Ambitious *Sylla*, and sterne *Marius*,
High *Cæsar*, great *Pompey*, and fierce *Antonius*.

[50]

Amongst these mighty men were wemen mixt,
Proud wemen, vaine, forgetfull of their yoke:
The bold *Semiramis*, whose sides transfixt
With sonnes owne blade, her fowle reproches spoke;
Faire *Sthenoboea*, that her selfe did choke
With wilfull cord, for wanting of her will;
High minded *Cleopatra*, that with stroke
Of *Aspes* sting her selfe did stoutly kill:
And thousands moe the like, that did that dongeon fill.

[51]

Besides the endlesse routs of wretched thralles,
Which thither were assembled day by day,
From all the world after their wofull falles,
Through wicked pride, and wasted wealthes decay.
But most of all, which in the Dongeon lay,
Fell from high Princes courts, or Ladies bowres,
Where they in idle pomp, or wanton play,
Consumed had their goods, and thriftlesse howres,
And lastly throwne themselues into these heauy stowres.

[52]

Whose case when as the carefull Dwarfe had tould,
And made ensample of their mournefull sight
Vnto his maister, he no lenger would
There dwell in perill of like painefull plight,
But early rose, and ere that dawning light
Discouered had the world to heauen wyde,
He by a priuie Posterne tooke his flight,
That of no enuious eyes he mote be spyde:
For doubtlesse death ensewd, if any him descryde.

[53]

Scarse could he footing find in that foule way,
For many corses, like a great Lay-stall
Of murdred men which therein strowed lay,
Without remorse, or decent funerall:
Which all through that great Princesse pride did fall
And came to shamefull end. And them beside
Forth ryding vnderneath the castell wall,
A donghill of dead carkases he spide,
The dreadfull spectacle of that sad house of *Pride*.

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