

## *Cant. VII.*

*The Redcrosse knight is Captiue made  
By Gyaunt proud opprest,  
Prince Arthur meets with Vna great-  
ly with those newes distrest.*

[1]

**W**Hat man so wise, what earthly wit so ware,  
As to descry the crafty cunning traine,  
By which deceit doth maske in visour faire,  
And cast her colours dyed deepe in graine,  
To seeme like Truth, whose shape she well can faine,  
And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,  
The guiltlesse man with guile to entertaine?  
Great maistresse of her art was that false Dame,  
The false *Duessa*, cloked with *Fidessaes* name.

[2]

Who when returning from the dreary *Night*,  
She fownd not in that perilous house of *Pryde*,  
Where she had left, the noble *Redcrosse* knight,  
Her hoped pray; she would no lenger bide,  
But forth she went, to seeke him far and wide.  
Ere long she fownd, whereas he wearie sate,  
To rest him selfe, foreby a fountaine side,  
Disarmed all of yron-coted Plate,  
And by his side his steed the grassy forage ate.

[3]

He feedes vpon the cooling shade, and bayes  
His sweatie forehead in the breathing wind,  
Which through the trembling leaues full gently playes  
Wherein the cherefull birds of sundry kind  
Do chaunt sweet musick, to delight his mind:  
The Witch approaching gan him fairely greet,  
And with reproch of carelesnesse vnkind  
Vpbrayd, for leauing her in place vnmeet,  
With fowle words tempring faire, soure gall with hony sweet.

[4]

Vnkindnesse past, they gan of solace treat,

And bathe in pleasaunce of the ioyous shade,  
Which shielded them against the boyling heat,  
And with greene bonghes decking a gloomy glade,  
About the fountaine like a girlond made;  
Whose bubbling waue did euer freshly well,  
Ne euer would through feruent sommer fade:  
The sacred Nymph, which therein wont to dwell,  
Was out of *Dianes* fauour, as it then befell.

[5]

The cause was this: one day when *Phoebe* fayre  
With all her band was following the chace,  
This Nymph, quite tyr'd with heat of scorching ayre,  
Sat downe to rest in midst of the race:  
The goddesse wroth gan fowly her disgrace,  
And bad the waters, which from her did flow,  
Be such as she her selfe was then in place.  
Thenceforth her waters waxed dull and slow,  
And all that drunke thereof, did faint and feeble grow.

[6]

Hereof this gentle knight vnweeting was,  
And lying downe vpon the sandie graile,  
Drunke of the streame, as cleare as cristall glas,  
Eftsoones his manly forces gan to faile,  
And mighty strong was turnd to feeble fraile.  
His chaunged powres at first them selues not felt,  
Till crudled cold his corage gan assaile,  
And chearefull bloud in faintnesse chill did melt,  
Which like a feuer fit through all his body swelt.

[7]

Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame,  
Pourd out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd,  
Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame:  
Till at the last he heard a dreadfull sownd,  
Which through the wood loud bellowing, did rebownd,  
That all the earth for terrour seemd to shake,  
And trees did tremble. Th'Elfe therewith astownd,  
Vpstarted lightly from his looser make,  
And his vnready weapons gan in hand to take.

[8]

But ere he could his armour on him dight,  
Or get his shield, his monstrous enemy  
With sturdie steps came stalking in his sight,  
An hideous Geant horrible and hye,  
That with his talnesse seemd to threat the skye,  
The ground eke groned vnder him for dread;  
His liuing like saw neuer liuing eye,  
Ne durst behold: his stature did exceed  
The hight of three the tallest somes of mortall seed.

[9]

The greatest Earth his vncouth mother was,  
And blustering *AEolus* his boasted sire,  
Who with his breath, which through the world doth pas,  
Her hollow womb did secretly inspire,  
And fild her hidden caues with stormie yre,  
That she conceiu'd; and trebling the dew time,  
In which the wombes of women do expire,  
Brought forth this monstrous masse of earthly slime,  
Puff vp with emptie wind, and fild with sinfull crime.

[10]

So growen great through arrogant delight  
Of th'high descent, whereof he was yborne,  
And through presumption of his matchlesse might,  
All other powres and knighthood he did scorne.  
Such now he marcheth to this man forlorne,  
And left to losse: his stalking steps are stayde  
Vpon a snaggy Oke, which he had torne  
Out of his mothers bowelles, and it made  
His mortall mace, where-with his foemen he dismayde.

[11]

That when the knight he spide, he gan aduance  
With huge force and insupportable mayne,  
And towards him with dreadfull fury prounce;  
Who haplesse, and eke hopelesse, all in vaine  
Did to him pace, sad battaile to darrayne,  
Disarmd, disgrast, and inwardly dismayde,  
And eke so faint in euery ioynt and vaine,  
Through that fraile fountaine, which him feeble made,  
That scarcely could he weeld his bootlesse single blade.

[12]

The Geant strooke so maynly mercilesse,  
That could haue ouerthrowne a stony towre,  
And were not heauenly grace, that him did blesse,  
He had beene pouldred all, as thin as flowre:  
But he was wary of that deadly stowre,  
And lightly lept from vnderneath the blow:  
Yet so exceeding was the villeins powre,  
That with the wind it did him overthrow,  
And all his sences stound, that still he lay full low.

[13]

As when that diuelish yron Engin wrought  
In deepest Hell, and framd by *Furies* skill,  
With windy Nitre and quick Sulphur fraught,  
And ramd with bullet round, ordaind to kill,  
Conceiueth fire, the heauens it doth fill  
With thundring noyse, and all the ayre doth choke,  
That none can breath, nor see, nor heare at will,  
Through smouldry cloud of duskish stinking smoke,  
That th'onely breath him daunts, who hath escapt the stroke.

[14]

So daunted when the Geaunt saw the knight,  
His heaue hand he heaued vp on hye,  
And him to dust thought to haue battred quight,  
Vntill *Duessa* loud to him gan crye;  
O great *Orgoglio*, greatest vnder skye,  
O hold thy mortall hand for Ladies sake,  
Hold for my sake, and do him not to dye,  
But vanquisht thine eternall bondslaue make,  
And mee thy worthy meed vnto thy Leman take.

[15]

He hearkned, and did stay from further harmes,  
To gayne so goodly guerdon, as she spake:  
So willingly she came into his armes,  
Who her as willingly to grace did take,  
And was possessed of his new found make.  
Then vp he tooke the slombred sencelesse corse,  
And ere he could out of his swowne awake,  
Him to his castle brought with hastie forse,  
And in a Dongeon deepe him threw without remorse.

[16]

From that day forth *Duessa* was his deare,  
And highly honourd in his haughtie eye,  
He gaue her gold and purple pall to weare,  
And triple crowne set on her head full hye,  
And her endowd with royall maiestye:  
Then for to make her dreaded more of men,  
And peoples harts with awfull terrour tye,  
A monstrous beast ybred in filthy fen  
He chose, which he had kept long time in darksome den.

[17]

Such one it was, as that renommed Snake  
Which great Alcides in Stremona slew,  
Long fostred in the filth of Lerna lake,  
Whose many heads out budding euer new,  
Did breed him endlesse labour to subdew:  
But this same Monster much more vgly was;  
For seuen great heads out of his body grew,  
An yron brest, and backe of scaly bras,  
And all embrewd in bloud, his eyes did shine as glas.

[18]

His tayle was stretched out in wondrous length,  
That to the house of heauenly gods it raught,  
And with extorted powre, and borrow'd strength,  
The euer-burning lamps from thence it brought,  
And proudly threw to ground, as things of nought;  
And vnderneath his filthy feet did tread  
The sacred things, and holy heasts foretaught.  
Vpon this dreadfull Beast with seuenfold head  
He set the false *Duessa*, for more aw and dread.

[19]

The wofull Dwarfe, which saw his maisters fall,  
Whiles he had keeping of his grasing steed,  
And valiant knight become a caytiue thrall,  
When all was past, tooke vp his forlorne weed,  
His mightie armour, missing most at need;  
His siluer shield, now idle maisterlesse;  
His poynant speare, that many made to bleed,  
The ruefull monuments of heauinesse,  
And with them all departes, to tell his great distresse.

[20]

He had not trauald long, when on the way  
He wofull Ladie, wofull *Vna* met,  
Fast flying from the Paynims greedy pray,  
Whilest *Satyrane* him from pursuit did let:  
Who when her eyes she on the Dwarfe had set,  
And saw the signes, that deadly tydings spake,  
She fell to ground for sorrowfull regret,  
And liuely breath her sad brest did forsake,  
Yet might her pitteous hart be seene to pant and quake.

[21]

The messenger of so vnhappy newes,  
Would faine haue dyde: dead was his hart within,  
Yet outwardly some little comfort shewes:  
At last recouering hart, he does begin  
To rub her temples, and to chaufe her chin,  
And euery tender part does tosse and turne:  
So hardly he the flitted life does win,  
Vnto her natiue prison to retourne:  
Then gins her grieued ghost thus to lament and mourne.

[22]

Ye dreary instruments of dolefull sight,  
That doe this deadly spectacle behold,  
Why do ye lenger feed on loathed light,  
Or liking find to gaze on earthly mould,  
Sith cruell fates the carefull threds vnfold,  
The which my life and loue together tyde?  
Now let the stony dart of senselesse cold  
Pearce to my hart, and pas through euery side,  
And let eternall night so sad sight fro me hide.

[23]

O lightsome day, the lampe of highest *Ioue*,  
First made by him, mens wandring waies to guyde,  
When darkenesse he in deepest dongeon droue,  
Henceforth thy hated face for euer hyde,  
And shut vp heauens windowes shyning wyde:  
For earthly sight can nought but sorrow breed,  
And late repentance, which shall long abide.  
Mine eyes no more on vanitie shall feede,  
But seeled vp with death, shall haue their deadly meed.

[24]

Then downe againe she fell vnto the ground;  
But hee her quickly reared vp againe:  
Thrice did she sinke adowne in deadly swownd,  
And thrise hee her reuiu'd with busie paine:  
At last, when life recouer'd had the raine,  
And ouer-wrestled his strongemie,  
With foltring tong, and trembling euery vaine,  
Tell on (quoth she) the wofull Tragedie,  
The which these reliques sad present vnto mine eie.

[25]

Tempestuous fortune hath spent all her spight,  
And thrilling sorrow throwne his vtmost dart;  
Thy sad tongue cannot tell more heauy plight,  
Then that I feele, and harbour in mine hart:  
Who hath endur'd the whole, can beare each part.  
If death it be, it is not the first wound,  
That launched hath my brest with bleeding smart.  
Begin, and end the bitter balefull stound;  
If lesse, then that I feare, more fauour I haue found.

[26]

Then gan the Dwarfè the whole discourse declare,  
The subtill traines of *Archimago* old;  
The wanton loues of false *Fidessa* faire,  
Bought with the bloud of vanquisht *Paynim* bold:  
The wretched payre transform'd to treen mould;  
The house of Pride, and perils round about;  
The combat, which he with *Sansioy* did hold;  
The lucklesse conflict with the Gyant stout,  
Wherein captiu'd, of life or death he stood in doubt.

[27]

She heard with patience all vnto the end,  
And stroue to maister sorrowfull assay,  
Which greater grew, the more she did contend,  
And almost rent her tender hart in tway;  
And loue fresh coales vnto her fire did lay:  
For greater loue, the greater is the losse.  
Was neuer Ladie loued dearer day,  
Then she did loue the Knight of the *Redcrosse*;  
For whose deare sake so many troubles her did tosse.

[28]

At last, when feruent sorrow slaked was,  
She vp arose, resolving him to find  
A liue or dead: and forward forth doth pas,  
All as the Dwarfe the way to her assynd:  
And euermore in constant carefull mind  
She fed her wound with fresh renewed bale;  
Long tost with stormes, and bet with bitter wind,  
High ouer hils, and low adowne the dale,  
She wandred many a wood, and measurd many a vale.

[29]

At last she chaunced by good hap to meet  
A goodly knight, faire marching by the way  
Together with his Squire, arayed meet:  
His glitterand armour shined farre away,  
Like glauncing light of *Phoebus* brightest ray;  
From top to toe no place appeared bare,  
That deadly dint of steele endanger may:  
Athwart his brest a bauldrick braue he ware,  
That shynd, like twinkling stars, with stons most pretious rare.

[30]

And in the midst thereof one pretious stone  
Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous might,  
Shapt like a Ladies head, exceeding shone,  
Like *Hesperus* emongst the lesser lights,  
And stroue for to amaze the weaker sights;  
Thereby his mortall blade full comely hong  
In yuory sheath, yearu'd with curious slights;  
Whose hilts were burnisht gold, and handle strong  
Of mother pearle, and buckled with a golden tong.

[31]

His haughtie helmet, horrid all with gold,  
Both glorious brightnesse, and great terrour bred;  
For all the crest a Dragon did enfold  
With greedie pawes, and ouer all did spred  
His golden wings: his dreadful hideous hed  
Close couched on the beuer, seem'd to throw  
From flaming mouth bright sparkles fierie red,  
That suddeine horror to faint harts did show;  
And scaly taylor was stretcht adowne his backe full low.



[32]

Vpon the top of all his loftie crest,  
A bunch of haire discolour'd diuersly,  
With sprinckled pearle, and gold full richly drest,  
Did shake, and seem'd to daunce for iollity,  
Like to an Almond tree ymounted hye  
On top of greene *Selinis* all alone,  
With blossomes braue bedecked daintily;  
Whose tender locks do tremble euery one  
At euery little breath, that vnder heauen is blowne.

[33]

His warlike shield all closely couer'd was,  
Ne might of mortall eye be euer seene;  
Not made of steele, nor of enduring bras,  
Such earthly mettals soone consumed bene:  
But all of Diamond perfect pure and cleene  
It framed was, one massie entire mould,  
Hewen out of Adamant rocke with engines keene,  
That point of speare it neuer percer could,  
Ne dint of direfull sword diuide the substance would.

[34]

The same to wight he neuer wont disclose,  
But when as monsters huge he would dismay,  
Or daunt vnequall armies of his foes,  
Or when the flying heauens he would affray;  
For so exceeding shone his glistring ray,  
That *Phoebus* golden face it did attaint,  
As when a cloud his beames doth ouer-lay;  
And siluer *Cynthia* waxed pale and faint,  
As when her face is staynd with magick arts constraint.

[35]

No magick arts hereof had any might,  
Nor bloudie wordes of bold Enchaunters call,  
But all that was not such, as seemd in sight,  
Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall:  
And when him list the raskall routes appall,  
Men into stones therewith he could transmew,  
And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all;  
And when him list the prouder lookes subdew,  
He would them gazing blind, or turne to other hew.

[36]

Ne let it seeme, that credence this exceeds,  
For, he that made the same, was knowne right well  
To haue done much more admirable deedes.  
It *Merlin* was, which whilome did excell  
All liuing wightes in might of magicke spell:  
Both shield, and sword, and armour all he wrought  
For this young Prince, when first to armes he fell;  
But when he dyde, the Faerie Queene it brought  
To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought.

[37]

A gentle youth, his dearely loued Squire,  
His speare of heben wood behind him bare,  
Whose harmefull head, thrice heated in the fire,  
Had riuen many a brest with pikehead square;  
A goodly person, and could menage faire,  
His stubborne steed with curbed canon bit,  
Who vnder him did trample as the aire,  
And chauff, that any on his backe should sit;  
The yron rowels into frothy fume he bit.

[38]

When as this knight nigh to the Lady drew,  
With louely court he gan her entertaïne;  
But when he heard her answeres loth, he knew  
Some secret sorrow did her heart distraïne:  
Which to allay, and calme her storming paine,  
Faïre feeling words he wisely gan display,  
And for her humour fitting purpose faïne,  
To tempt the cause it selfe for to bewray,  
Wherewith emmou'd, these bleeding words she gan to say.

[39]

What worlds delight, or ioy of liuing speach  
Can heart, so plung'd in sea of sorrowes deep,  
And heaped with so huge misfortunes, reach?  
The carefull cold beginneth for to creepe,  
And in my heart his yron arrow steepe,  
Soone as I thinke vpon my bitter bale:  
Such helplesse harmes yts better hidden keepe,  
Then rip vp grieffe, where it may not auaille,  
My last left comfort is, my woes to weepe and waile.

[40]

Ah Ladie deare, quoth then the gentle knight,  
Well may I weene, your grieffe is wondrous great;  
For wondrous great grieffe groneth in my spright,  
Whiles thus I heare you of your sorrowes treat.  
But wofull Ladie let me you intrete,  
For to vnfold the anguish of your hart:  
Mishaps are maistred by advice discrete,  
And counsell mitigates the greatest smart;  
Found neuer helpe, who neuer would his hurts impart.

[41]

O but (quoth she) great grieffe will not be tould,  
And can more easily be thought, then said.  
Right so; (quoth he) but he, that neuer would,  
Could neuer: will to might giues greatest aid.  
But grieffe (quoth she) does greater grow displaid,  
If then it find not helpe, and breedes despaire.  
Despaire breedes not (quoth he) where faith is staid.  
No faith so fast (quoth she) but flesh does paire.  
Flesh may empaire (quoth he) but reason can repaire.

[42]

His goodly reason, and well guided speach,  
So deep did settle in her gracious thought,  
That her perswaded to disclose the breach,  
Which loue and fortune in her heart had wrought,  
And said; faire Sir, I hope good hap hath brought  
You to inquire the secrets of my grieffe,  
Or that your wisdom will direct my thought,  
Or that your prowesse can me yield reliefe:  
Then heare the storie sad, which I shall tell you briefe.

[43]

The forlorne Maiden, whom your eyes haue seene  
The laughing stocke of fortunes mockeries,  
Am th'only daughter of a King and Queene,  
Whose parents deare, whilst equall destinies  
Did runne about, and their felicities  
The fauourable heauens did not enuy,  
Did spread their rule through all the territories,  
Which *Phison* and *Euphrates* floweth by,  
And *Gebons* golden waues doe wash continually;

[44]

Till that their cruell cursed enemy,  
An huge great Dragon horrible in sight,  
Bred in the loathly lakes of *Tartary*,  
With murdrous rauine, and deuouring might  
Their kingdome spoild, and countrey wasted quight:  
Themselues, for feare into his iawes to fall,  
He forst to castle strong to take their flight,  
Where fast embard in mightie brasen wall,  
He has them now foure yeres besiegd to make them thrall.

[45]

Full many knights aduenturous and stout,  
Haue enterprizd that Monster to subdew;  
From euery coast that heauen walks about,  
Haue thither come the noble Martiall crew,  
That famous hard atchieuements still pursew,  
Yet neuer any could that girlond win,  
But all still shronke, and still he greater grew:  
All they for want of faith, or guilt of sin,  
The pitteous pray of his fierce crueltie haue bin.

[46]

At last yledd with farre reported praise,  
Which flying fame throughout the world had spred,  
Of doughtie knights, whom Faery land did raise,  
That noble order hight of Maidenhed,  
Forthwith to court of *Gloriane* I sped,  
Of *Gloriane*, great Queene of glory bright,  
Whose kingdomes seat *Cleopolis* is red,  
There to obtaine some such redoubted knight,  
That Parents deare from Tyrants powre deliuer might.

[47]

It was my chance (my chance was faire and good)  
There for to find a fresh vnproued knight,  
Whose manly hands imbrew'd in guilty blood  
Had neuer bene, ne euer by his might  
Had throwne to ground the vnregarded right:  
Yet of his prowesse prooffe he since hath made  
(I witnesse am) in many a cruell fight;  
The groning ghosts of many one dismaide  
Haue felt the bitter dint of his auenging blade.

[48]

And yee the forlorne reliques of his powre,  
His byting sword, and his deuouring speare,  
Which haue endured many a dreadfull stowre,  
Can speake his prowesse, that did earst you beare,  
And well could rule: now he hath left you heare,  
To be the record of his ruefull losse,  
And of my dolefull disauenturous deare:  
O heauie record of the good *Redcrosse*,  
Where haue you left your Lord, that could so wel you tosse?

[49]

Well hoped I, and faire beginnings had,  
That he my captiue langour should redeeme,  
Till all vnweeting, an Enchaunter bad  
His sense abus'd, and made him to misdeeme  
My loyaltie, not such as it did seeme;  
That rather death desire, then such despight.  
Be iudge ye heauens, that all things right esteeme,  
How I him lou'd, and loue with all my might,  
So thought I eke of him, and thinke I thought aright.

[50]

Thenceforth me desolate he quite forsooke,  
To wander, where wilde fortune would me lead,  
And other bywaies he himselfe betooke,  
Where neuer foot of liuing wight did tread,  
That brought not backe the balefull body dead;  
In which him chaunced false *Duessa* meete,  
Mine onely foe, mine onely deadly dread,  
Who with her witchcraft and misseeming sweete,  
Inueigled him to follow her desires vnmeete.

[51]

At last by subtill sleights she him betraid  
Vnto his foe, a Gyant huge and tall,  
Who him disarmed, dissolute, dismaid,  
Vnwares surprised, and with mightie mall  
The monster mercilesse him made to fall,  
Whose fall did neuer foe before behold;  
And now in darksome dungeon, wretched thrall,  
Remedilesse, for aie he doth him hold;  
This is my cause of grieffe, more great, then may be told.

[52]

Ere she had ended all, she gan to faint:

But he her comforted and faire bespake,  
Certes, Madame, ye haue great cause of plaint,  
That stoutest heart, I weene, could cause to quake.

But be of cheare, and comfort to you take:

For till I haue acquit your captiue knight,

Assure your selfe, I will you not forsake.

His cheerfull words reuiu'd her cheerlesse spright:

So forth they went, the Dwarfè them guiding euer right.

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