

## *Cant. XII.*

*Faire Vna to the Redcrosse knight  
betrouthed is with ioy:  
Though false Duessa it to barre  
her false sleights doe imploy.*

[1]

**B**Ehold I see the hauen nigh at hand,  
To which I meane my wearie course to bend;  
Vere the maine shete, and beare vp with the land,  
The which afore is fairely to be kend,  
And seemeth safe from stormes, that may offend;  
There this faire virgin wearie of her way  
Must landed be, now at her iourneyes end:  
There eke my feeble barke a while may stay,  
Till merry wind and weather call her thence away.

[2]

Scarsely had *Phoebus* in the glooming East  
Yet harnessed his firie-footed teeme,  
Ne reard aboute the earth his flaming creast,  
When the last deadly smoke aloft did steeme,  
That signe of last outbreathed life did seeme,  
Vnto the watchman on the castle wall;  
Who thereby dead that balefull Beast did deeme,  
And to his Lord and Ladie loud gan call,  
To tell, how he had seene the Dragons fatall fall.

[3]

Vprose with hastie ioy, and feeble speed  
That aged Sire, the Lord of all that land,  
And looked forth, to weet, if true indeede  
Those tydings were, as he did vnderstand:  
Which whenas true by tryall he out found,  
He bad to open wyde his brazen gate,  
Which long time had bene shut, and out of hond  
Proclaymed ioy and peace through all his state;  
For dead now was their foe, which them forrayed late.

[4]

Then gan triumphant Trompets sound on hie,  
That sent to heauen the ecchoed report

Of their new ioy, and happie victorie  
Gainst him, that had them long opprest with tort,  
And fast imprisoned in sieged fort.  
Then all the people, as in solemne feast,  
To him assembled with one full consort,  
Reioycing at the fall of that great beast,  
From whose eternall bondage now they were releast.

[5]

Forth came that auncient Lord and aged Queene,  
Arayd in antique robes downe to the ground,  
And sad habiliments right well beseene;  
A noble crew about them waited round  
Of sage and sober Peres, all grauely gownd;  
Whom farre before did march a goodly band  
Of tall young men, all hable armes to sownd,  
But now they laurell braunches bore in hand;  
Glad signe of victorie and peace in all their land.

[6]

Vnto that doughtie Conquerour they came,  
And him before themselues prostrating low,  
Their Lord and Patrone loud did him proclame,  
And at his feet their laurell boughes did throw.  
Soone after them all dauncing on a row  
The comely virgins came, with girlands dight,  
As fresh as flowres in medow greene do grow,  
When morning deaw vpon their leaues doth light:  
And in their hands sweet Timbrels all vpheld on hight.

[7]

And them before, the fry of children young  
Their wanton sports and childish mirth did play,  
And to the Maydens sounding tymbrels sung  
In well attuned notes, a ioyous lay,  
And made delightfull musicke all the way,  
Vntill they came, where that faire virgin stood;  
As faire *Diana* in fresh sommers day  
Beholds her Nymphes, enraung'd in shadie wood,  
Some wrestle, some doe run, some bathe in christall flood:

[8]

So she beheld those maydens meriment

With, chearefull vew; who, when to her they came,  
Themselues to ground with gracious humblesse bent,  
And her ador'd by honorable name,  
Lifting to heauen her euerlasting fame:  
Then on her head they set a girland greene,  
And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt game;  
Who in her selfe-resemblance well beseene,  
Did seeme such, as she was, a goodly maiden Queene.

[9]

And after, all the raskall many ran,  
Heaped together in rude rablement,  
To see the face of that victorious man:  
Whom all admired, as from heauen sent,  
And gazd vpon with gaping wonderment.  
But when they came, where that dead Dragon lay,  
Stretcht on the ground in monstrons large extent,  
The sight with idle feare did them dismay,  
Ne durst approach him nigh, to touch, or once assay.

[10]

Some feard, and fled; some feard and well it faind;  
One that would wiser seeme, then all the rest,  
Warnd him not touch; for yet perhaps remaynd  
Some lingring life within his hollowe brest,  
Or in his wombe might lurke some hidden nest  
Of many Dragonets, his fruitfull seed;  
Another said, that in his eyes did rest  
Yet sparckling fire, and bad thereof take heed;  
Another said, he saw him moue his eyes indeed.

[11]

One mother, when as her foolehardie chyld  
Did come too neare, and with his talants play,  
Half dead through feare, her litle babe reuyld,  
And to her gossips gan in counsell say;  
How can I tell, but that his talants may  
Yet scratch my sonne, or rend his tender hand?  
So diuersly themselues in vaine they fray;  
Whiles some more bold, to measure him nigh stand,  
To proue how many acres he did spread of land.

[12]

Thus flocked all the folke him round about,  
The whiles that hoarie king, with all his traine,  
Being arriued, where that champion stout  
After his foes defeasance did remaine,  
Him goodly greetes, and faire does entertaine,  
With princely gifts of yuorie and gold,  
And thousand thanks him yeelds for all his paine.  
Then when his daughter deare he does behold,  
Her dearely doth imbrace, and kisseth manifold.

[13]

And after to his Pallace he them brings,  
With shaumes, & trompets, & with Clarions sweet;  
And all the way the ioyous people sings,  
And with their garments strowes the paued street:  
Whence mounting vp, they find purueyance meet  
Of all, that royall Princes court became,  
And all the floore was vnderneath their feet  
Bespred with costly scarlot of great name,  
On which they lowely sit, and fitting purpose frame.

[14]

What needs me tell their feast and goodly guize,  
In which was nothing riotous nor vaine?  
What needs of daintie dishes to deuize,  
Of comely seruices, or courtly trayne?  
My narrow leaues cannot in them containe  
The large discourse of royall Princes state.  
Yet was their manner then but bare and plaine:  
For, th'antique world excesse and pride did hate;  
Such proude luxurious pompe is swollen vp but late.

[15]

Then when with meates and drinks of euery kinde  
Their feruent appetites they quenched had,  
That auncient Lord gan fit occasion finde,  
Of straunge aduentures, and of perils sad,  
Which in his trauell him befallen had,  
For to demanda of his renowned guest:  
Who then with vt'rance graue, and count'nance sad,  
From point to point, as is before exprest,  
Discourst his voyage long, according his request.

[16]

Great pleasures mixt with pittifull regard,  
That godly King and Queene did passionate,  
Whiles they his pittifull aduentures heard,  
That oft they did lament his lucklesse state,  
And often blame the too importune fate,  
That heaped on him so many wrathfull wreaques:  
For neuer gentle knight, as he of late,  
So tossed was in fortunes cruell freakes;  
And all the while salt teares bedeawd the hearers cheeks.

[17]

Then said the royall Pere in sober wise;  
Deare Sonne, great beene the euils, which ye bore  
From first to last in your late enterprise,  
That I note, whether prayse, or pittie more:  
For neuer liuing man, I weene, so sore  
In sea of deadly daungers was distrest;  
But since now safe ye seised haue the shore,  
And well arriued are, (high God be blest)  
Let vs deuise of ease and euerlasting rest.

[18]

Ah dearest Lord, said then that doughty knight,  
Of ease or rest I may not yet deuize;  
For by the faith which I to armes haue plight,  
I bounden am streight after this emprize  
As that your daughter can ye well aduize  
Backe to returne to that great Faerie Queene,  
And her to serue six yeares in warlike wize,  
Gainst that proud Pynim king, that workes her teene:  
Therefore I ought craue pardon, till I there haue beene.

[19]

Vnhappie falles that hard necessitie,  
(Quoth he) the troubler of my happie peace,  
And vowed foe of my felicitie;  
Ne I against the same can iustly preace:  
But since that band ye cannot now release,  
Nor doen vndo; (for vowes may not be vaine)  
Soone as the terme of those six yeares shall cease,  
Ye then shall hither backe returne againe,  
The marriage to accomplish vovd betwixt you twaine.

[20]

Which for my part I couet to performe,  
In sort as through the world I did proclame,  
That who so kild that monster most deforme,  
And him in hardy battaile ouercame,  
Should haue mine onely daughter to his Dame,  
And of my kingdome heire apparaunt bee:  
Therefore since now to thee perteines the same,  
By dew desert of noble cheualree,  
Both daughter and eke kingdome, lo I yield to thee.

[21]

Then forth he called that his daughter faire,  
The fairest *Vn'* his onely daughter deare,  
His onely daughter, and his onely heyre;  
Who forth proceeding with sad sober cheare,  
As bright as doth the morning starre appeare  
Out of the East, with flaming lockes bedight,  
To tell the dawning day is dawning neare,  
And to the world does bring long wished light;  
So faire and fresh that Lady shewd her selfe in sight.

[22]

So faire and fresh, as freshest flowre in May;  
For she had laid her mournefull stole aside,  
And widow-like sad wimple throwne away,  
Wherewith her heauenly beauty she did hide,  
Whiles on her wearie iourney she did ride;  
And on her now a garment she did weare,  
All lilly white, withoutten spot, or pride,  
That seemd like silke and siluer wouen neare,  
But neither silke nor siluer therein did appeare.

[23]

The blazing brightnesse of her beauties beame,  
And glorious light of her sunshyny face  
To tell, were as to striue against the streame.  
My ragged rimes are all too rude and base,  
Her heauenly lineaments for to enchace.  
Ne wonder; for her owne deare loued knight,  
All were she daily with himselfe in place,  
Did wonder much at her celestiall sight:  
Oft had he seene her faire, but neuer so faire dight.

[24]

So fairely dight, when she in presence came,  
She to her Sire made humble reuerence,  
And bowed low, that her right well became,  
And added grace vnto her excellence:  
Who with great wisdom, and graue eloquence  
Thus gan to say. But eare he thus had said,  
With flying speede, and seeming great pretence,  
Came running in, much like a man dismaid,  
A Messenger with letters, which his message said.

[25]

All in the open hall amazed stood,  
At suddeinnesse of that vnwarie sight,  
And wondred at his breathlesse hastie mood.  
But he for nought would stay his passage right,  
Till fast before the King he did alight,  
Where falling flat, great humblesse he did make,  
And kist the ground, whereon his foot was pight;  
Then to his hands that writ he did betake,  
Which he disclosing, read thus, as the paper spake.

[26]

To thee, most mighty King of *Eden* faire,  
Her greeting sends in these sad lines adrest,  
The wofull daughter, and forsaken heire  
Of that great Emperour of all the West;  
And bids thee be advized for the best,  
Ere thou thy daughter linck in holy band  
Of wedlocke to that new vnknownen guest:  
For he already plighted his right hand  
Vnto another loue, and to another land.

[27]

To me sad mayd, or rather widow sad,  
He was affiaunced long time before,  
And sacred pledges he both gaue, and had,  
False erraunt knight, infamous, and forswore:  
Witnesse the burning Altars, which he swore,  
And guiltie heauens of his bold periury,  
Which though he hath polluted oft and yore,  
Yet I to them for iudgement iust do fly,  
And them coniure t'auenge this shamefull iniury.

[28]

Therefore, since mine he is, or free or bond,  
Or false or trew, or liuing or else dead,  
Withhold, O soueraine Prince, your hasty hond  
From knitting league with him, I you aread;  
Ne weene my right with strength adowne to tread,  
Through weakenesse of my widowed, or woe:  
For truth is strong, his rightfull cause to plead,  
And shall find friends, if need requireth soe:  
So bids thee well to fare, Thy neither friend, nor foe,  
*Fidessa.*

[29]

When he these bitter byting words had red,  
The tydings straunge did him abashed make,  
That still he sate long time astonished  
As in great muse, ne word to creature spake.  
At last his solemne silence thus he brake,  
With doubtfull eyes fast fixed on his guest;  
Redoubted knight, that for mine onely sake  
Thy life and honour late aduenturest,  
Let nought be hid from me, that ought to be exprest.

[30]

What meane these bloody vowes, and idle threats,  
Throwne out from womanish impatient mind?  
What heauens? what altars? what enraged heates  
Here heaped vp with termes of loue vnkind,  
My conscience cleare with guilty bands would bind?  
High God be witnesse, that I guiltlesse am.  
But, if your selfe, Sir knight, ye faultie find,  
Or wrapped be in loues of former Dame,  
With crime do not it couer, but disclose the same.

[31]

To whom the *Redcrosse* knight this answere sent,  
My Lord, my King, be nought hereat dismayd,  
Till well ye wote by graue intendiment,  
What woman, and wherefore doth me vpbrayd  
With breach of loue, and loyalty betrayd.  
It was in my mishaps, as hitherward  
I lately traueild, that vnwares I strayd  
Out of my way, through perils straunge and hard;  
That day should faile me, ere I had them all declard.



[32]

There did I find, or rather I was found  
Of this false woman, that *Fidessa* hight,  
*Fidessa* hight the falsest Dame on ground,  
Most false *Duessa*, royall richly dight,  
That easie was to inuegle weaker sight:  
Who by her wicked arts, and wylie skill,  
Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,  
Vnwares me wrought vnto her wicked will,  
And to my foe betrayd, when least I feared ill.

[33]

Then stepped forth the goodly royall Mayd,  
And on the ground her selfe prostrating low,  
With sober countenance thus to him sayd;  
O pardon me, my soueraigne Lord, to show  
The secret treasons, which of late I know  
To haue been wrought by that false sorceresse.  
She onely she it is, that earst did throw  
This gentle knight into so great distresse,  
That death him did awaite in dayly wretchednesse.

[34]

And now it seemes, that she suborned hath  
This craftie messenger with letters vaine,  
To worke new woe and improuided scath,  
By breaking of the band betwixt vs twaine;  
Wherein she vsed hath the practicke paine  
Of this false footman, clokt with simplenesse:  
Whom if ye please for to discouer plaine,  
Ye shall him *Archimago* find, I ghesse,  
The falsest man aliue; wo tries shall find no lesse.

[35]

The King was greatly moued at her speach,  
And all with suddein indignation freight,  
Bad on that Messenger rude hands to reach.  
Eftsoones the Gard, which on his state did wait,  
Attacht that faitor false, and bound him strait:  
Who seeming sorely chauffed at his band,  
As chained Beare, whom cruell dogs do bait,  
With idle force did faine them to withstand,  
And often semblaunce made to scape out of their hand.

[36]

But they him layd full low in dungeon deepe,  
And bound him hand and foote with yron chains,  
And with continuall watch did warely keepe;  
Who then would thinke, that by his subtile trains  
He could escape fowle death or deadly paines?  
Thus when that Princes wrath was pacifide,  
He gan renew the late forbidden banes,  
And to the knight his daughter deare he tyde,  
With sacred rites and vowes for euer to abide.

[37]

His owne two hands the holy knots did knit,  
That none but death for euer can deuide;  
His owne two hands, for such a turne most fit,  
The housling fire did kindle and prouide,  
And holy water thereon sprinckled wide;  
At which, the bushy Teade a groome did light,  
And sacred lampe in secret chamber hide,  
Where it should not be quenched day nor night,  
For feare of euill fates, but burnen euer bright.

[38]

Then gan they sprinckle all the posts with wine,  
And made great feast to solemnize that day;  
They all perfumde with frankencense diuine,  
And precious odours fetcht from far away,  
That all the house did sweat with great array:  
And all the while sweete Musick did apply  
Her curious skill, the warbling notes to play,  
To driue away the dull Melancholy;  
The whiles one sung a song of loue and iollity.

[39]

During the which there was an heauenly noise  
Heard sound through all the Pallace pleasantly,  
Like as it had bene many an Angels voice,  
Singing before th'eternall maiesty,  
In their trinall triplicities on hie;  
Yet wist no creature, whence that heauenly sweet  
Proceeded: yet each one felt secretly  
Himselpe thereby reft of his sences meet,  
And rauished with rare impression in his sprite.

[40]

Great ioy was made that day of young and old,  
And solemne feast proclaimd throughout the land,  
That their exceeding merth may not be told:  
Suffice it heare by signes to vnderstand  
The vsuall ioyes at knitting of loues band.  
Thrise happy man the knight himselfe did hold,  
Possessed of his Ladies hart and hand,  
And euer, when his eye did her behold,  
Her heart did seeme to melt in pleasures manifold.

[41]

Her ioyous presence and sweet company  
In full content he there did long enioy,  
Ne wicked enuie, ne vile gealosity  
His deare delights were able to annoy:  
Yet swimming in that sea of blisfull ioy,  
He nought forgot, how he whilome had sworne,  
In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,  
Vnto his Faerie Queene backe to returne:  
The which he shortly did, and *Vna* left to mourne.

[42]

Now strike your sailes ye iolly Mariners,  
For we be come vnto a quiet rode,  
Where we must land some of our passengers,  
And light this wearie vessell of her lode.  
Heere she awhile may make her safe abode,  
Till she repaired haue her tackles spent,  
And wants supplide. And then againe abroad  
On the long voyage whereto she is bent:  
Well may she speede and fairely finish her intent.

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