

## *Cant. VIII.*

*Sir Guyon laid in swowne, is by  
Acrates sonnes despoild,  
Whom Arthur soone hath reskewed  
And Paynim brethren foild.*

[1]

**A**Nd is there care in heauen? and is there loue  
In heauenly spirits to these creatures bace,  
That may compassion of their euils moue?  
There is: else much more wretched were the cace  
Of men, then beasts. But ô th'exceeding grace  
Of highest God, that loues his creatures so,  
And all his workes with mercy doth embrace,  
That blessed Angels, he sends to and fro,  
To serue to wicked man, to serue his wicked foe.

[2]

How oft do they, their siluer bowers leaue,  
To come to succour vs, that succour want?  
How oft do they, with golden pineons, cleaue  
The flitting skyes, like flying Pursuiuant,  
Against foule feends to aide vs militant?  
They for vs fight, they watch and dewly ward,  
And their bright Squadrons round about vs plant,  
And all for loue, and nothing for reward:  
O why should heauenly God to men haue such regard?

[3]

During the while, that *Guyon* did abide  
In *Mammons* house, the Palmer, whom whyleare  
That wanton Mayd of passage had denide,  
By further search had passage found elsewhere;  
And being on his way, approched neare,  
Where *Guyon* lay in traunce, when suddenly  
He heard a voice, that called loud and cleare,  
Come hither, come hither, ô come hastily;  
That all the fields resounded with the ruefull cry.

[4]

The Palmer lent his eare vnto the noyce,  
To weet, who called so importunely:

Againe he heard a more efforced voyce,  
That bad him come in haste. He by and by  
His feeble feet directed to the cry;  
Which to that shady delue him brought at last,  
Where *Mammon* earst did sunne his threasury:  
There the good *Guyon* he found slumbring fast  
In senselesse dreame; which sight at first him sore aghast.

[5]

Beside his head there sate a faire young man,  
Of wondrous beautie, and of freshest yeares,  
Whose tender bud to blossome new began,  
And flourish faire aboue his equall peares;  
His snowy front curled with golden heares,  
Like *Phæbus* face adorn'd with sunny rayes,  
Diuinely shone, and two sharpe winged sheares,  
Decked with diuerse plumes, like painted Iayes,  
Were fixed at his backe, to cut his ayerie wayes.

[6]

Like as *Cupido* on *Idaeon* hill,  
When hauing laid his cruell bow away,  
And mortall arrowes, wherewith he doth fill  
The world with murdrous spoiles and bloudie pray,  
With his faire mother he him dights to play,  
And with his goodly sisters, *Graces* three;  
The Goddessse pleased with his wanton play,  
Suffers her selfe through sleepe beguild to bee,  
The whiles the other Ladies mind their merry glee.

[7]

Whom when the Palmer saw, abasht he was  
Through feare and wonder, that he nought could say,  
Till him the child bespoke, Long lackt, alas,  
Hath bene thy faithfull aide in hard assay,  
Whiles deadly fit thy pupill doth dismay;  
Behold this heaueie sight, thou reuerend Sire,  
But dread of death and dolour doe away;  
For life ere long shall to her home retire,  
And hee that breathlesse seemes, shall courage bold respire.

[8]

The charge which God doth vnto me arret,

Of his deare safetie, I to thee commend;  
Yet will I not forgoe, ne yet forget  
The care thereof my selfe vnto the end,  
But euermore him succour, and defend  
Against his foe and mine: watch thou I pray;  
For euill is at hand him to offend.  
So hauing said, eftsoones he gan display  
His painted nimble wings, and vanisht quite away.

[9]

The Palmer seeing his left empty place,  
And his slow eyes beguiled of their sight,  
Woxe fore affraid, and standing still a space,  
Gaz'd after him, as fowle escapt by flight;  
At last, him turning to his charge behight,  
With trembling hand his troubled pulse gan try;  
Where finding life not yet dislodged quight,  
He much reioyst, and courd it tenderly,  
As chicken newly hatcht, from dreaded destiny.

[10]

At last he spide where towards him did pace  
Two Paynim knights, all armd as bright as skie,  
And them beside an aged Sire did trace,  
And farre before a light-foot Page did flie,  
That breathed strife and troublous enmitie;  
Those were the two sonnes of *Acrates* old,  
Who meeting earst with *Archimago* slie,  
Foreby that idle strond, of him were told,  
That he, which earst them combatted, was *Guyon* bold.

[11]

Which to auenge on him they dearely vow'd,  
Where-euer that on ground they mote him fynd;  
False *Archimage* prouokt their courage prowde,  
And stryfull *Atin* in their stubborne mynd  
Coles of contention and whot vengeance tynd.  
Now bene they come, whereas the Palmer sate,  
Keeping that slombred corse to him assynd;  
Well knew they both his person, sith of late  
With him in bloudie armes they rashly did debate.

[12]

Whom when Pyrrhocles saw, inflam'd with rage,  
That sire he foule bespake, Thou dotard vile,  
That with thy brutenesse shendst thy comely age,  
Abandone soone, I read, the caitiue spoile  
Of that same outcast carkasse, that erewhile  
Made it selfe famous through false trechery,  
And crownd his coward crest with knightly stile;  
Loe where he now inglorious doth lye,  
To proue hee liued ill, that did thus foully dye.

[13]

To whom the Palmer fearelesse answered;  
Certes, Sir knight, ye bene too much to blame,  
Thus for to blot the honour of the dead,  
And with foule cowardize his carkasse shame,  
Whose liuing hands immortalizd his name.  
Vile is the vengeance on the ashes cold,  
And enuie base, to barke at sleeping fame:  
Was neuer wight, that treason of him told;  
Your selfe his prowess prou'd & found him fiers & bold.

[14]

Then said *Cymochles*; Palmer, thou doest dote,  
Ne canst of prowesse, ne of knighthood deeme,  
Saue as thou seest or hearst. But well I wote,  
That of his puissance tryall made extreeme;  
Yet gold all is not, that doth golden seeme,  
Ne all good knights, that shake well speare and shield:  
The worth of all men by their end esteeme,  
And then due praise, or due reproch them yield;  
Bad therefore I him deeme, that thus lies dead on field.

[15]

Good or bad (gan his brother fierce reply)  
What doe I recke, sith that he dyde entire?  
Or what doth his bad death now satisfy  
The greedy hunger of reuenging ire,  
Sith wrathfull hand wrought not her owne desire?  
Yet since no way is left to wreake my spight,  
I will him reauue of armes, the victors hire,  
And of that shield, more worthy of good knight;  
For why should a dead dog be deckt in armour bright?

[16]

Faire Sir, said then the Palmer suppliant,  
For knighthoods loue do not so foule a deed,  
Ne blame your honour with so shamefull vaunt  
Of vile reuenge. To spoile the dead of weed  
Is sacrilege, and doth all sinnes exceed;  
But leaue these relicks of his liuing might,  
To decke his herce, and trap his tomb-blacke steed.  
What herce or steede (said he) should he haue dight,  
But be entombed in the rauens or the kight?

[17]

With that, rude hand vpon his shield he laid,  
And th'other brother gan his helme vnlace,  
Both fiercely bent to haue him disaraid;  
Till that they spide, where towards them did pace  
An armed knight, of bold and bounteous grace,  
Whose Squire bore after him an heben launce,  
And couerd shield, Well kend him so farre space  
Th'enchauter by his armes and amenaunce,  
When vnder him he saw his Lybian steed to prauince;

[18]

And to those brethren said, Rise rise by liue,  
And vnto battell doe your selues addresse;  
For yonder comes the prowest knight alieue,  
Prince *Arthur*, flowre of grace and nobillesse,  
That hath to Paynim knights wrought great distresse,  
And thousand Sar'zins foully donne to dye.  
That word so deepe did in their harts impresse,  
That both eftsoones vpstarted furiously,  
And gan themselues prepare to battell greedily.

[19]

But fierce *Pyrrhocles*, lacking his owne sword,  
The want thereof now greatly gan to plaine,  
And *Archimage* besought, him that afford,  
Which he had brought for *Braggadocchio* vaine.  
So would I (said th'enchauter) glad and faine  
Beteeme to you this sword, you to defend,  
Or ought that else your honour might maintaine,  
But that this weapons powre I well haue kend,  
To be contrarie to the worke, which ye intend.

[20]

For that same knights owne sword this is of yore,  
Which *Merlin* made by his almightie art  
For that his nursling, when he knighthood swore,  
Therewith to doen his foes eternall smart.  
The metall first he mixt with *Medaewart*,  
That no enchauntment from his dint might saue;  
Then it in flames of *Aetna* wrought apart,  
And seuen times dipped in the bitter waue  
Of hellish *Styx*, which hidden vertue to it gaue.

[21]

The vertue is, that neither steele nor stone  
The stroake thereof from entrance may defend;  
Ne euer may be used by his fone,  
Ne forst his rightfull owner to offend,  
Ne euer will it breake, ne euer bend.  
Wherefore *Morddure* it rightfully is hight.  
In vaine therefore, *Pyrrhochles*, should I lend  
The same to thee, against his lord to fight,  
For sure it would deceiue thy labour, and thy might.

[22]

Foolish old man, said then the Pagan wroth,  
That weenest words or charmes may force withstond:  
Soone shalt thou see, and then belieue for troth,  
That I can carue with this inchaunted brond  
His Lords owne flesh. Therewith out of his hond  
That vertuous steele he rudely snatcht away,  
And *Guyons* shield about his wrest he bond;  
So readie dight, fierce battaile to assay,  
And match his brother proud in battailous array.

[23]

By this, that straunger knight in presence came,  
And goodly salued them; who nought againe  
Him answered, as courtesie became,  
But with sterne lookes, and stomachous disdain,  
Gaued signes of grudge and discontentment vaine.  
Then turning to the Palmer, he gan spy  
Where at his feete, with sorrowfull demaine  
And deadly hew, an armed corse did lye,  
In whose dead face he read great magnanimity.

[24]

Said he then to the Palmer, Reuerend syre,  
What great misfortune hath betidd this knight?  
Or did his life her fatall date expyre,  
Or did he fall by treason, or by fight?  
How euer, sure I rew his pitteous plight.  
Not one, nor other, (said the Palmer graue,)  
Hath him befalne, but cloudes of deadly night  
A while his heauie eyelids couer'd haue,  
And all his senses drowned in deepe senselesse waue.

[25]

Which, those same foes that stand hereby,  
Making aduantage, to reuenge their spight,  
Would him disarm, and treaten shamefully;  
Vnworthy vsage of redoubted knight.  
But you, faire Sir, whose honorable sight  
Doth promise hope of help, and timely grace,  
Mote I beseech to succour his sad plight,  
And by your powre protect his feeble cace.  
First praise of knighthood is, foule outrage to deface.

[26]

Palmer, (said he) no knight so rude, I weene,  
As to doen outrage to a sleeping ghost:  
Ne was there euer noble courage seene,  
That in aduantage would his puissance bost:  
Honour is least, where oddes appeareth most.  
May be, that better reason will asswage,  
The rash reuengers heat. Words well dispost  
Haue secret powre, t'appease inflamed rage:  
If not, leaue vnto me thy knights last patonage.

[27]

Tho turning to those brethren, thus bespoke;  
Ye warlike payre, whose valorous great might  
It seemes, iust wrongs to vengeance doe prouoke,  
To wreake your wrath on this dead seeming knight,  
Mote ought allay the storme of your despight,  
And settle patience in so furious heat?  
Not to debate the chalenge of your right,  
But for this carkasse pardon I entreat,  
Whom fortune hath alreadie laid in lowest seat.

[28]

To whom *Cymochles* said; For what art thou,  
That mak'st thy selfe his dayes-man, to prolong  
The vengeance prest? Or who shall let me now  
On this vile bodie from to wreake my wrong,  
And make his carkasse as the outcast dong?  
Why should not that dead carrion satisfie  
The guilt, which if he liued had thus long,  
His life for due reuenge should deare abie?  
The trespasse still doth liue, albe the person die.

[29]

Indeed (then said the Prince) the euill donne  
Dyes not, when breath the bodie first doth leaue;  
But from the grandsyre to the Nephewes sonne,  
And all his seed the curse doth often cleaue,  
Till vengeance vtterly the guilt bereaue:  
So streightly God doth iudge. But gentle knight,  
That doth against the dead his hand vpreare,  
His honour staines with rancour and despight,  
And great disparagment makes to his former might.

[30]

*Pyrrhochles* gan reply the second time,  
And to him said, Now felon sure I read,  
How that thou art partaker of his crime:  
Therefore by *Termagaunt* thou shalt be dead.  
With that his hand, more sad then lomp of lead,  
Vplifting high, he weened with *Morddure*,  
His owne good sword *Morddure*, to cleaue his head.  
The faithfull steele such treason no'uld endure,  
But swaruing from the marke, his Lords life did assure.

[31]

Yet was the force so furious and so fell,  
That horse and man it made to reele aside:  
Nath'lesse the Prince would not forsake his sell  
For well of yore he learned had to ride,  
But full of anger fiercely to him cride;  
False traytour miscreant, thou broken hast  
The law of armes, to strike foe vndefide.  
But thou thy treasons fruit, I hope, shalt taste  
Right sowre, & feele the law, the which thou hast defast.



[32]

With that his balefull speare, he fiercely bent  
Against the Pagans breast, and therewith thought  
His cursed life out of her lodge haue rent:  
But ere the point arriued, where it ought,  
That seuen-fold shield, which he from *Guyon* brought  
He cast betwene to ward the bitter stound:  
Through all those foldes the steelhead passage wrought,  
And through his shoulder pearst; wherwith to ground  
He groueling fell, all gored in his gushing wound.

[33]

Which when his brother saw, fraught with great griefe  
And wrath, he to him leaped furiously,  
And fowly said, By *Mahoune*, cursed thiefe,  
That direfull stroake thou dearely shalt aby.  
Then hurling vp his harmefull blade on hye,  
Smote him so hugely on his haughtie crest,  
That from his saddle forced him to fly:  
Else mote it needes downe to his manly brest  
Haue cleft his head in twaine, and life thence dispossesst.

[34]

Now was the Prince in dangerous distresse,  
Wanting his sword, when he on foot should fight:  
His single speare could doe him small redresse,  
Against two foes of so exceeding might,  
The least of which was match for any knight.  
And now the other, whom he earst did daunt,  
Had reard himselfe againe to cruell fight,  
Three times more furious, and more puissaunt,  
Vnmindfull of his wound, of his fate ignoraunt.

[35]

So both attonce him charge on either side,  
With hideous strokes, and importable powre,  
That forced him his ground to trauerse wide,  
And wisely watch to ward that deadly stowre:  
For in his shield, as thicke as stormie showre,  
Their strokes did raine, yet did he neuer quaile,  
Ne backward shrinke, but as a stedfast towre,  
Whom foe with double battry doth assaile,  
Them on her bulwarke beares, and bids them nought auaille.

[36]

So stoutly he withstood their strong assay,  
Till that at last, when he aduantage spyde,  
His poinant speare he thrust with puissant sway  
At proud *Cymochles*, whiles his shield was wyde,  
That through his thigh the mortall steele did gryde:  
He swaruing with the force, within his flesh  
Did breake the launce, and let the head abyde:  
Out of the wound the red bloud flowed fresh,  
That vnderneath his feet soone made a purple plesh.

[37]

Horribly then he gan to rage, and rayle,  
Cursing his Gods, and himselfe damning deepe:  
Als when his brother saw the red bloud [t]rayle  
Adowne so fast, and all his armour steepe,  
For very felnesse lowd he gan to weepe,  
And said, Caytiue, cursse on thy cruell hond,  
That twise hath sped; yet shall it not thee keepe  
From the third brunt of this my fatall brond:  
Loe where the dreadfull Death behind thy backe doth stond.

[38]

With that he strooke, and th'other strooke withall,  
That nothing seem'd mote beare so monstrous might:  
The one vpon his couered shield did fall,  
And glauncing downe, would not his owner byte:  
But th'other did vpon his troncheon smyte,  
Which hewing quite a sunder, further way  
It made, and on his hacqueton did lyte,  
The which diuiding with importune sway,  
It seizd in his right side, and there the dint did stay.

[39]

Wyde was the wound, and a large lukewarme flood,  
Red as the Rose, thence gushed grieuously;  
That when the Paynim spyde the streaming blood,  
Gaued him great hart, and hope of victory.  
On th'other side, in huge perplexity,  
The Prince now stood, hauing his weapon broke;  
Nought could he hurt, but still at ward did ly:  
Yet with his troncheon he so rudely stroke  
*Cymochles* twise, that twise him forst his foote reuoke.

[40]

Whom when the Palmer saw in such distresse,  
Sir *Guyons* sword he lightly to him raught,  
And said; faire Son, great God thy right hand blesse,  
To vse that sword so wisely as it ought.  
Glad was the knight, & with fresh courage fraught,  
When as againe he armed felt his hond;  
Then like a Lion, which hath long time saught  
His robbed whelpes, and at the last them fond  
Emongst the shepheard swaynes, then wexeth wood & yond.

[41]

So fierce he laid about him, and dealt blowes  
On either side, that neither mayle could hold,  
Ne shield defend the thunder of his throwes:  
Now to *Pyrrhochles* many strokes he told;  
Eft to *Cymochles* twise so many fold:  
Then backe againe turning his busie hond,  
Them both attonce compeld with courage bold,  
To yield wide way to his hart-thrilling brond;  
And though they both stood stiffè, yet could not both withstond.

[42]

As saluage Bull, whom two fierce mastiues bayt,  
When rancour doth with rage him once engore,  
Forgets with warie ward them to awayt,  
But with his dreadfull hornes them driues afore,  
Or flings aloft, or treads downe in the flore,  
Breathing out wrath, and bellowing disdaine,  
That all the forest quakes to heare him rore:  
So rag'd Prince *Arthur* twixt his foemen twaine,  
That neither could his mightie puissance sustaine.

[43]

But euer at *Pyrrhochles* when he smit,  
Who *Guyons* shield cast euer him before,  
Whereon the Faery Queenes pourtract was writ,  
His hand relented, and the stroke forbore,  
And his deare hart the picture gan adore,  
Which oft the Paynim sau'd from deadly stowre.  
But him henceforth the same can saue no more;  
For now arriued is his fatall howre,  
That no'te auoyded be by earthly skill or powre.

[44]

For when *Cymochles* saw the fowle reproch,  
Which them appeached, prickt with gulty shame,  
And inward grieffe, he fiercely gan approach,  
Resolu'd to put away that loathly blame,  
Or dye with honour and desert of fame;  
And on the hauberk stroke the Prince so sore,  
That quite disparted all the linked frame,  
And pearced to the skin, but bit no more,  
Yet made him wise to reele, that neuer moou'd afore.

[45]

Whereat renfierst with wrath and sharpe regret,  
He stroke so hugely with his borrowd blade,  
That it empierst the Pagans burganet,  
And cleauing the hard steele, did deepe inuade  
Into his head, and cruell passage made  
Quite through his braine. He tomling downe on ground,  
Breathd out his ghost; which to th'inferrall shade  
Fast flying, there eternall torment found,  
For all the sinnes, wherewith his lewd life did abound,

[46]

Which when his german saw, the stony feare,  
Ran to his hart, and all his sence dismayd,  
Ne thenceforth life ne courage did appeare;  
But as a man whom hellish feends haue frayd,  
Long trembling still he stood: at last thus sayd;  
Traytour what hast thou doen? how euer may  
Thy cursed hand so cruelly haue swayd  
Against that knight: Horrow and well away,  
After so wicked deed why liu'st thou lenger day?

[47]

With that all desperate as loathing light,  
And with reuenge desiring soone to dye,  
Assembling all his force and vtmost might,  
With his owne sword he fierce at him did flye,  
And strooke, and foynd, and lasht outrageously,  
Withouten reason or regard. Well knew  
The Prince, with patience and sufferance sly  
So hasty heat soone cooled to subdew:  
Tho when this breathlesse woxe, that batteil gan renew.

[48]

As when a windy tempest bloweth hye,  
That nothing may withstand his stormy stowre,  
The cloudes, as things affrayd, before him flye;  
But all so soone as his outrageous powre  
Is layd, they fiercely then begin to shoure,  
And as in scorne of his spent stormy spight,  
Now all attonce their malice forth do poure;  
So did [Prince *Arthur*] beare himselfe in fight,  
And suffred rash *Pyrrhochles* wast his idle might.

[49]

At last when as the Sarazin perceiu'd,  
How that strange sword refusd, to serue his need,  
But when he strooke most strong, the dint deceiu'd,  
He flong it from him, and deuoyd of dread,  
Vpon him lightly leaping without heed,  
Twixt his two mighty armes engrasped fast,  
Thinking to ouerthrow and downe him tred:  
But him in strength and skill the Prince surpast,  
And through his nimble sleight did vnder him down cast.

[50]

Nought booted it the Paynim then to striue;  
For as a Bittur in the Eagles claw,  
That may not hope by flight to scape aliuie,  
Still waites for death with dread and trembling aw;  
So he now subiect to the victours law,  
Did not once moue, nor vpward cast his eye,  
For vile disdain and rancour, which did gnaw  
His hart in twaine with sad melancholy,  
As one that loathed life, and yet despisd to dye.

[51]

But full of Princely bounty and great mind,  
The Conquerour nought cared him to slay,  
But casting wrongs and all reuenge behind,  
More glory thought to giue life, then decay,  
And said, Paynim, this is thy dismall day;  
Yet if thou wilt renounce thy miscreaunce,  
And my trew liegeman yield thy selfe for ay,  
Life will I graunt thee for thy valiaunce,  
And all thy wrongs will wipe out of my souenaunce.

[52]

Foole (said the Pagan) I thy gift defye,  
But vse thy fortune, as it doth befall,  
And say, that I not ouercome do dye,  
But in despight of life, for death do call.  
Wroth was the Prince, and sory yet withall,  
That he so wilfully refused grace;  
Yet sith his fate so cruelly did fall,  
His shining Helmet he gan soone vnlace,  
And left his headlesse body bleeding all the place.

[53]

By this, Sir *Guyon* from his traunce awakt,  
Life hauing maistered her sencelesse foe;  
And looking vp, when as his shield he lakt,  
And sword saw not, he wexed wondrous woe:  
But when the Palmer, whom he long ygoe  
Hast lost, he by him spide, right glad he grew,  
And said, Deare sir, whom wandring to and fro  
I long haue lakt, I ioy thy face to vew;  
Firme is thy faith, whom daunger neuer fro me drew.

[54]

But read what wicked hand hath robbed mee  
Of my good sword and shield? The Palmer glad,  
With so fresh hew vprising him to see,  
Him answered; Faire sonne, be no whit sad  
For want of weapons, they shall soone be had.  
So gan he to discourse the whole debate,  
Which that straunge knight for him sustained had,  
And those two Sarazins confounded late,  
Whose carcasses on ground were horribly prostrate.

[55]

Which when he heard, and saw the tokens trew,  
His hart with great affection was embayd,  
And to the Prince with bowing reuerence dew,  
As to the Patrone of his life, thus sayd;  
My Lord, my liege, by whose most gracious ayd  
I liue this day, and see my foes subdewd,  
What may suffise, to be for meede repayd  
Of so great graces, as ye haue me shewd,  
But to be euer bound

[56]

To whom the Infant thus, Faire Sir, what need  
Good turnes be counted, as a seruile bond,  
To bind their doers, to receiue their meede?  
Are not all knights by oath bound, to withstond  
Oppressours powre by armes and puissant hond?  
Suffise, that I haue done my dew in place.  
So goodly purpose they together fond,  
Of kindnesse and of curteous aggrace;  
The whiles false *Archimage* and *Atin* fled apace.

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