

Cant. IX.

*The house of Temperance, in which
doth sober Alma dwell,
Besiegd of many foes, whom straunger
knightes to fight compell.*

[1]

OF all Gods workes, which do this world adorne,
There is no one more faire and excellent,
Then is mans body both for powre and forme,
Whiles it is kept in sober gouernment;
But none then it, more foule and indecent,
Distempred through misrule and passions bace:
It growes a Monster, and incontinent
Doth loose his dignitie and natiue grace.
Behold, who list, both one and other in this place.

[2]

After the Paynim brethren conquer'd were,
The *Briton* Prince recou'ring his stolne sword,
And *Guyon* his lost shield, they both yfere
Forth passed on their way in faire accord,
Till him the Prince with gentle court did bord;
Sir knight, mote I of you this curt'sie read,
To weet why on your shield so goodly scord
Beare ye the picture of that Ladies head?
Full liuely is the semblaunt, though the substance dead.

[3]

Faire Sir (said he) if in that picture dead
Such life ye read, and vertue in vaine shew,
What mote ye weene, if the trew liuely-head
Of that most glorious visage ye did vew?
But if the beautie of her mind ye knew,
That is her bountie, and imperiall powre,
Thousand times fairer then her mortall hew,
O how great wonder would your thoughts deuoure,
And infinite desire into your spirite poure!

[4]

She is the mighty Queene of *Faerie*,
Whose faire retrait I in my shield doe beare;

She is the flowre of grace and chastitie,
Throughout the world renowned farre and neare,
My liefe, my liege, my Soueraigne, my deare,
Whose glory shineth as the morning starre,
And with her light the earth enlumines cleare;
Far reach her mercies, and her prayses farre,
As well in state of peace, as puissaunce in warre.

[5]

Thrise happy man, (said then the *Briton* knight)
Whom gracious lot, and thy great valiaunce
Hauē made thee souldier of that Princesse bright,
Which with her bounty and glad countenance
Doth blesse her seruaunts, and them high aduaunce.
How may straunge knight hope euer to aspire,
By faithfull seruice, and meet amenance,
Vnto such blisse? sufficient were that hire
For losse of thousand liues, to dye at her desire.

[6]

Said *Guyon*, Noble Lord, what meed so great,
Or grace of earthly Prince so soueraigne,
But by your wondrous worth and warlike feat
Ye well may hope, and easily attaine?
But were your will, her sold to entertaine,
And numbred be mongst knights of *Maydenhed*,
Great guerdon (well I wote) should you remaine,
And in her fauour high be reckoned,
As *Arthegall*, and *Sophy* now beene honored.

[7]

Certes (then said the Prince) I God auow,
That since I armes and knighthood first did plight,
My whole desire hath beene, and yet is now,
To serue that Queene with all my powre and might.
Now hath the Sunne with his lamp-burning light,
Walkt round about the world, and I no lesse,
Since of that Goddess I haue sought the sight,
Yet no where can her find: such happinesse
Heauen doth to me enuy, and fortune fauourlesse.

[8]

Fortune, the foe of famous cheuisaunce,

Seldome (said *Guyon*) yields to vertue aide,
But in her way throwes mischiefe and mischaunce,
Whereby her course is stopt, and passage staid.
But you, faire Sir, be not herewith dismaid,
But constant keepe the way, in which ye stand;
Which were it not, that I am else delaid
With hard aduerture, which I haue in hand,
I labour would to guide you through all Faery land.

[9]

Gramercy Sir (said he) but mote I wote,
What strange aduerture do ye now pursew?
Perhaps my succour, or advizement meete
Mote stead you much your purpose to subdew.
Then gan Sir *Guyon* all the story shew
Of false *Acrasia*, and her wicked wiles,
Which to auenge, the Palmer him forth drew
From Faery court. So talked they, the whiles
They wasted had much way, and measurd many miles.

[10]

And now faire *Phoebus* gan decline in hast
His wearie wagon to the Westerne vale,
When-as they spide a goodly castle, plast
Foreby a riuier in a pleasant dale,
Which choosing for that euenings hospitale,
They thither marcht: but when they came in sight,
And from their sweaty Coursers did auale,
They found the gates fast barred long ere night,
And euery loup fast lockt, as fearing foes despight.

[11]

Which when they saw, they weened fowle reproch
Was to them doen, their entrance to forstall,
Till that the Squire gan nigher to approch;
And wind his horne vnder the castle wall,
That with the noise it shooke, as it would fall:
Eftsoones forth looked from the highest spire
The watch, and lowd vnto the knights did call,
To weet, what they so rudely did require.
Who gently answered, They entraunce did desire.

[12]

Fly fly, good knights, (said he) fly fast away
If that your liues ye loue, as meete ye should;
Fly fast, and saue your selues from neare decay,
Here may ye not haue entraunce, though we would:
We would and would againe, if that we could;
But thousand enemies about vs raue,
And with long siege vs in this castle hould:
Seuen yeares this wize they vs besieged haue,
And many good knights slaine, that haue vs sought to saue.

[13]

Thus as he spoke, loe with outragious cry
A thousand villeins round about them swarmd
Out of the rockes and caues adioyning nye,
Vile caytiue wretches, ragged, rude, deformd,
All threatning death, all in straunge manner armd,
Some with vnweldy clubs, some with long speares,
Some rusty kniues, some staues in fire warmd.
Sterne was their looke, like wild amazed steares,
Staring with hollow eyes, and stiffe vpstanding heares.

[14]

Fiersly at first those knights they did assaile,
And droue them to recoile: but when againe
They gaue fresh charge, their forces gan to faile,
Vnhable their encounter to sustaine;
For with such puissaunce and impetuous maine
Those Champions broke on them, that forst them fly,
Like scattered S[h]eepe, when as the Shepherds swaine
A Lyon and a Tigre doth espye,
With greedy pace forth rushing from the forest nie.

[15]

Awhile they fled, but soone returnd againe
With greater fury, then before was found;
And euermore their cruell Capitaine
Sought with his raskall routs t'enclose them round,
And ouerrun to tread them to the ground.
But soone the knights with their bright-burning blades
Broke their rude troupes, and orders did confound,
Hewing and slashing at their idle shades;
For, though they bodies seeme, yet substance from them fades.

[16]

As when a swarme of Gnats at euentide
Out of the fennes of Allan do arise,
Their murmuring small trompets sounden wide,
Whiles in the aire their clustring army flies,
That as a cloud doth seeme to dim the skies;
Ne man nor beast may rest, or take repast,
For their sharpe wounds, and noyous iniuries,
Till the fierce Northerne wind with blustring blast
Doth blowe them quite away, and in the *Ocean* cast.

[17]

Thus when they had that troublous rout disperst,
Vnto the castle gate they come againe,
And entraunce crau'd, which was denied erst.
Now when report of that their perilous paine,
And combrous conflict which they did sustaine,
Came to the Ladies eare, which there did dwell,
She forth issewed with a goodly traine
Of Squires and Ladies equipaged well,
And entertained them right fairely, as befell.

[18]

Alma she called was, a virgin bright;
That had not yet felt *Cupid*'s wanton rage,
Yet was she woo'd of many a gentle knight,
And many a Lord of noble parentage,
That sought with her to lincke in marriage:
For she was faire, as faire mote euer bee,
And in the flowre now of her freshest age;
Yet full of grace and goodly modestee,
That euen heauen reioyced her sweet face to see.

[19]

In robe of lilly white she was arayd,
That from her shoulder to her heele downe raught,
The traine whereof loose far behind her strayd,
Braunched with gold & pearle, most richly wrought,
And borne of two faire Damsels, which were taught
That seruice well. Her yellow golden heare
Was trimly wouen, and in tresses wrought,
Ne other tyre she on her head did weare,
But crowned with a garland of sweete Rosiere.

[20]

Goodly she entertaind those noble knights,
And brought them vp into her castle hall;
Where gentle court and gracious delight
She to them made, with mildnesse virginall,
Shewing her selfe both wise and liberall:
There when they rested had a season dew,
They her besought of fauour speciall,
Of that faire Castle to affoord them vew;
She graunted, & them leading forth, the same did shew.

[21]

First, she them led vp to the Castle wall,
That was so high, as foe might not it clime,
And all so faire, and sensible withall,
Not built of bricke, ne yet of stone and lime,
But of thing like to that *AEgyptian* slime,
Whereof king *Nine* whilome built *Babell* towre;
But ô great pitty, that no lenger time
So goodly workemanship should not endure:
Soone it must turne to earth; no earthly thing is sure.

[22]

The frame thereof seemd partly circulare,
And part triangulare: ô worke diuine;
Those two the first and last proportions are,
The one imperfect, mortall, fœminine;
Th'other immortall, perfect, masculine,
And twixt them both a quadrate was the base,
Proportioned equally by seuen and nine;
Nine was the circle set in heauens place,
All which compacted, made a goodly *Dyapase*.

[23]

Therein two gates were placed seemly well:
The one before, by which all in did pas,
Did th'other far in workmanship excell;
For not of wood, nor of enduring bras,
But of more worthy substance fram'd it was;
Doubly disparted, it did locke and close,
That when it locked, none might thorough pas,
And when it opened, no man might it close,
Still open to their friends, and closed to their foes.

[24]

Of hewen stone the porch was fairely wrought,
Stone more of valew, and more smooth and fine,
Then Iet or Marble far from Ireland brought;
Ouer the which was cast a wandring vine,
Enchaced with a wanton yuie twine.
And ouer it a faire Portcullis hong,
Which to the gate directly did incline,
With comely compasse, and compacture strong,
Neither vnseemely short, nor yet exceeding long.

[25]

Within the Barbican a Porter sate,
Day and night duely keeping watch and ward,
Nor wight, nor word mote passe out of the gate,
But in good order, and with dew regard;
Vtters of secrets he from thence debard,
Bablers of folly, and blazers of crime.
His larumbell might lowd and wide be hard,
When cause requird, but neuer out of time;
Early and late it rong, at euening and at prime.

[26]

And round about the porch on euery side
Twise sixteen warders sat, all armed bright
In glistring steele, and strongly fortifide:
Tall yeomen seemed they, and of great might,
And were enraunged ready, still for fight.
By them as *Alma* passed with her gwestes,
They did obeysaunce, as beseemed right,
And then againe returned to their restes:
The Porter eke to her did lout with humble gstes.

[27]

Thence she them brought into a stately Hall,
Wherein were many tables faire dispred,
And ready dight with drapets festiuall,
Against the viaundes should be ministred.
At th'vpper end there sate, yclad in red
Downe to the ground, a comely personage,
That in his hand a white rod menaged,
He Steward was, hight *Diet*; rype of age,
And in demeanure sober, and in counsell sage.

[28]

And through the Hall there walked to and fro
A iolly yeoman, Marshall of the same,
Whose name was *Appetite*; he did bestow
Both guestes and meate, when euer in they came,
And knew them how to order without blame,
As him the Steward bad. They both attone
Did dewty to their Lady, as became;
Who passing by, forth led her guestes anone
Into the kitchin rowme, ne spard for nicenesse none.

[29]

It was a vault built for great dispenche,
With many raunges reard along the wall;
And one great chimney, whose long tonnell thence,
The smoke forth threw. And in the midst of all
There placed was a caudron wide and tall,
Vpon a mighty furnace, burning whot,
More whot, then *Aetn'*, or flaming *Mongiball*:
For day and night it brent, ne ceased not,
So long as any thing it in the caudron got.

[30]

But to delay the heat, least by mischaunce
It might breake out, and set the whole on fire,
There added was by goodly ordinaunce,
An huge great paire of bellowes, which did styre
Continually, and cooling breath inspyre.
About the Caudron many Cookes accoyld,
With hookes and ladles, as need did require;
The whiles the viandes in the vessell boyl'd
They did about their businesse sweat, and sorely toyld.

[31]

The maister Cooke was cald *Concoction*,
A carefull man, and full of comely guise:
The kitchin Clerke, that hight *Digestion*,
Did order all the *Achates* in seemely wise,
And set them forth, as well he could devise.
The rest had seuerall offices assind,
Some to remoue the scum as it did rise;
Others to beare the same away did mind;
And others it to vse according to his kind.

[32]

But all the liquour, which was fowle and wast,
Not good nor seruiceable else for ought,
They in another great round vessell plast,
Till by a conduit pipe it thence were brought.
And all the rest, that noyous was, and nought,
By secret wayes, that none might it espy,
Was close conuaid, and to the back-gate brought,
That cleped was *Port Esquiline*, whereby
It was auoided quite, and throwne out priuily.

[33]

Which goodly order, and great workmans skill
When as those knights beheld, with rare delight,
And gazing wonder they their minds did fill;
For, neuer had they seene so straunge a sight.
Thence backe againe faire *Alma* led them right,
And soone into a goodly Parlour brought,
That was with royall arras richly dight,
In which was nothing pourtrahed, nor wrought,
Not wrought, nor pourtrahed, but easie to be thought.

[34]

And in the midst thereof vpon the floure,
A louely beuy of faire Ladies sate,
Courtred of many a iolly Paramoure,
The which them did in modest wise amate,
And each one sought his Lady to aggrate;
And eke emongst them litle *Cupid* playd
His wanton sports, being returned late
From his fierce warres, and hauing from him layd
His cruell bowe, where-with he thousands hath dismayd.

[35]

Diuerse delights they found themselues to please;
Some song in sweet consort, some laught for ioy,
Some plaid with strawes, some idly sat at ease,
But other some could not abide to toy,
All pleasaunce was to them grieffe and annoy:
This fround, that faund, the third for shame did blush,
Another seemed enuious, or coy,
Another in her teeth did gnaw a rush:
But at these straungers presence euery one did hush.

[36]

Soone as the gracious *Alma* came in place,
They all attonce out of their seates arose,
And to her homage made, with humble grace:
Whom when the knights beheld, they gan dispose
Themselues to court, and each a Damsell chose:
The Prince by chaunce did on a Lady light,
That was right faire and fresh as morning rose,
But somewhat sad, and solemne eke in sight,
As if some pensieue thought constrained her gentle spright.

[37]

In a long purple pall, whose skirt with gold
Was fretted all about, she was arayd;
And in her hand a Poplar braunch did hold:
To whom the Prince in curteous manner said;
Gentle Madame, why beene ye thus dismaid,
And your faire beautie do with sadnesse spill?
Liues any, that you hath thus ill apaid?
Or doen your loue, or doen you lacke your will?
What euer be the cause, it sure beseemes you ill.

[38]

Faire Sir, (said she halfe in disdainefull wise,)
How is it, that this word in me ye blame,
And in your selfe do not the same aduise?
Him ill beseemes, anothers fault to name,
That may vnwares be blotted with the same:
Pensieue I yeeld I am, and sad in mind,
Through great desire of glory and of fame;
Ne ought I weene are ye therein behind,
That haue twelue moneths sought one, yet no where can her find.

[39]

The Prince was inly moued at her speach,
Well weeting trew, what she had rashly told;
Yet with faire samblaunt sought to hide the breach,
Which change of colour did perforce vnfold,
Now seeming flaming whot, now stony cold.
Tho turning soft aside, he did inquire,
What wight she was, that Poplar braunch did hold:
It answered was, her name was *Prays-desire*,
That by well doing sought to honour to aspire.

[40]

The whiles, the *Faerie* knight did entertaine
Another Damsell of that gentle crew,
That was right faire, and modest of demaine,
But that too oft she chaung'd her natiue hew:
Straunge was her tyre, and all her garment blew,
Close round about her tuckt with many a plight:
Vpon her fist the bird, which shonmeth vew,
And keepes in couerts close from liuing wight,
Did sit, as yet ashamed, how rude *Pan* did her dight.

[41]

So long as *Guyon* with her commoned,
Vnto the ground she cast her modest eye,
And euer and anone with rosie red
The bashfull bloud her snowy cheekes did dye,
That her became, as polisht yuory,
Which cunning Craftesman hand hath ouerlayd
With faire vermilion or pure lastery.
Great wonder had the knight, to see the mayd
So strangely passioned, and to her gently sayd,

[42]

Faire Damzell, seemeth, by your troubled cheare,
That either me too bold ye weene, this wise
You to molest, or other ill to feare
That in the secret of your hart close lyes,
From whence it doth, as cloud from sea arise.
If it be I, of pardon I you pray;
But if ought else that I mote not deuise,
I will, if please you it discure, assay,
To ease you of that ill, so wisely as I may.

[43]

She answered nought, but more abasht for shame,
Held downe her head, the whiles her louely face
The flashing bloud with blushing did inflame,
And the strong passion mard her modest grace,
That *Guyon* meruayld at her vncouth cace:
Till *Alma* him bespake, Why wonder yee
Faire Sir at that, which ye so much embrace?
She is the fountaine of your modestee;
You shamefac't are, but *Shamefastnesse* itselfe is shee.

[44]

Thereat the Elfe did blush in priuitee,
And turnd his face away; but she the same
Dissembled faire, and faynd to ouersee.
Thus they awhile with court and goodly game,
Themselues did solace each one with his Dame,
Till that great Ladie thence away them sought,
To vew her castles other wondrous frame.
Vp to a stately Turret she them brought,
Ascending by ten steps of Alablaster wrought.

[45]

That Turrets frame most admirable was,
Like highest heauen compassed around,
And lifted high aboue this earthly masse,
Which it suruew'd, as hills doen lower ground;
But not on ground mote like to this be found,
Not that, which antique *Cadmus* whylome built
In *Thebes*, which *Alexander* did confound;
Nor that proud towre of *Troy*, though richly guilt,
From which young *Hectors* bloud by cruell *Greekes* was spilt.

[46]

The roofe hereof was arched ouer head,
And deckt with flowers and herbars daintily;
Two goodly Beacons, set in watches stead,
Therein gaue light, and flam'd continually:
For, they of liuing fire most subtilly
Were made, and set in siluer sockets bright,
Couer'd with lids deuiz'd of substance sly,
That readily they shut and open might.
O, who can tell the prayses of that makers might!

[47]

Ne can I tell, ne can I stay to tell
This parts great workmanship, & wondrous powre,
That all this other worlds worke doth excell,
And likest is vnto that heauenly towre,
That God hath built for his owne blessed bowre.
Therein were diuerse roomes, and diuerse stages,
But three the chiefest, and of greatest powre,
In which there dwelt three honorable sages,
The wisest men, I weene, that liued in their ages.

[48]

Not he, whom *Greece*, the Nourse of all good arts,
By *Phoebus* doome, the wisest thought aliue,
Might be compar'd to these by many parts:
Nor that sage *Pylian* syre, which did suruiue
Three ages, such as mortall men contriue,
By whose aduise old *Priams* cittie fell,
With these in praise of policies mote striue.
These three in these three roomes did sundry dwell,
And counselled faire *Alma*, how to gouerne well.

[49]

The first of them could things to come foresee:
The next could of things present best advize;
The third things past could keepe in memoree,
So that no time, nor reason could arize,
But that the same could one of these comprize.
For thy the first did in the forepart sit,
That nought mote hinder his quicke preiudize:
He had a sharpe foresight, and working wit,
That neuer idle was, ne once could rest a whit.

[50]

His chamber was disapointed all within,
With sundry colours, in the which were writ
Infinite shapes of things dispersed thin;
Some such as in the world were neuer yit,
Ne can deuized be of mortall wit;
Some daily seene, and knowen by their names,
Such as in idle fantasies doe flit:
Infernall Hags, Centaurs, feendes, Hippodames,
Apes, Lions, Aegles, Owles, fooles, louers, children, Dames.

[51]

And all the chamber filled was with flyes,
Which buzzed all about, and made such sound,
That they encombred all mens eares and eyes,
Like many swarmes of Bees assembled round,
After their hiues with honny do abound:
All those were idle thoughts and fantasies,
Deuices, dreames, opinions vnsound,
Shewes, visions, sooth-sayes, and prophesies;
And all that fained is, as leasings, tales, and lies.

[52]

Emongst them all sate he, which woned there,
That hight *Phantastes* by his nature trew;
A man of yeares yet fresh, as mote appere,
Of swarth complexion, and of crabbed hew,
That him full of melancholy did shew;
Bent hollow beetle browes, sharpe staring eyes,
That mad or foolish seemd: one by his vew
More deeme him borne with ill disposed skyes,
When oblique *Saturne* sate in the house of agonyes.

[53]

Whom *Alma* hauing shewed to her gwestes,
Thence brought them to the second roome, whose wals
Were painted faire with memorable gestes,
Of famous Wisards, and with picturals
Of Magistrates, of courts, of tribunals,
Of commen wealthes, of states, of pollicy,
Of lawes, of iudgements, and of decretals;
All artes, all science, all Philosophy,
And all that in the world was aye thought wittily.

[54]

Of those that roome was full: and them among
There sate a man of ripe and perfect age,
Who did them meditate all his life long,
That through continuall practise and vsage,
He now was growne right wise, and wondrous sage.
Great pleasure had those stranger knights, to see
His goodly reason, and graue personage,
That his disciples both desir'd to bee;
But *Alma* thence them led to th'hindmost roome of three.

[55]

That chamber seemed ruinous and old,
And therefore was remoued farre behind,
Yet were the wals, that did the same vphold,
Right firme & strong, though somewhat they declind;
And therein sate an old oldman, halfe blind,
And all decrepit in his feeble corse,
Yet liuely vigour rested in his mind,
And recompenst him with a better scorse:
Weake body well is chang'd for minds redoubled forse.

[56]

This man of infinite remembrance was,
And things foregone through many ages held,
Which he recorded still, as they did pas,
Ne suffred them to perish through long eld,
As all things else, the which this world doth weld,
But laid them vp in his immortall scrine,
Where they for euer incorrupted dweld:
The warres he well remembered of king *Nine*,
Of old *Assaracus*, and *Inachus* diuine.

[57]

The yeares of *Nestor* nothing were to his,
Ne yet *Mathusalem*, though longest liu'd;
For he remembered both their infancies:
Ne wonder then, if that he were depriu'd
Of natiue strength now, that he them surviu'd.
His chamber all was hangd about with rolles,
And old records from auncient times deriu'd,
Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolles,
That were all worme-eaten, and full of canker holes.

[58]

Amidst them all he in a chaire was set,
Tossing and turning them withouten end;
But for he was vnhabable them to set,
A little boy did on him still attend,
To reach, when euer he for ought did send;
And oft when things were lost, or laid amis,
That boy them sought, and vnto him did lend.
Therefore he *Anamnestes* cleped is,
And that old man *Eumnestes*, by their propertis.

[59]

The knights, there entring, did him reuerence dew
And wondred at his endlesse exercise,
Then as they gan his Librarie to vew,
And antique Registers for to auise,
There chaunced to the Princes hand to rize,
An auncient booke, hight *Briton moniments*,
That of this lands first conquest did deuize,
And old diuision into Regiments,
Till it reduced was to one mans governments.

[60]

Sir *Guyon* chaunst eke on another booke,
That hight *Antiquitie of Faerie lond*.
In which when as he greedily did looke;
Th'off-spring of Elues and Faries there he fond,
As it deliuer'd was from hond to hond:
Whereat they burning both with feruent fire
Their countries auncestry to vnderstond,
Crau'd leaue of *Alma*, and that aged sire,
To read those bookes; who gladly graunted their desire.

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