

Cant. VI.

*The birth of faire Belphoebe and
Of Amoret is told.
The Gardins of Adonis fraught
With pleasures manifold.*

[1]

Well may I weene, faire Ladies, all this while
Ye wonder, how this noble Damozell
So great perfections did in her compile,
Sith that in saluage forests she did dwell,
So farre from court and royall Citadell,
The great schoolmistresse of all curtesy:
Seemeth that such wild woods should far expell
All ciuill vsage and gentility,
And gentle sprite deforme with rude rusticity.

[2]

But to this faire *Belphoebe* in her berth
The heauens so fauourable were and free,
Looking with myld aspect vpon the earth,
In th'*Horoscope* of her natiuitee,
That all the gifts of grace and chastitee
On her they poured forth of plenteous horne;
Ioue laught on *Venus* from his soueraigne see,
And *Phoebus* with faire beames did her adorne,
And all the *Graces* rockt her cradle being borne.

[3]

Her berth was of the wombe of Morning dew,
And her conception of the ioyous Prime,
And all her whole creation did her shew
Pure and vnspotted from all loathly crime,
That is ingenerate in fleshly slime.
So was this virgin borne, so was she bred,
So was she trayned vp from time to time,
In all chast vertue, and true bounti-hed
Till to her dew perfection she was ripened.

[4]

Her mother was the faire *Chrysogonee*,
The daughter of *Amphisa*, who by race

A Faerie was, yborne of high degree,
She bore *Belphoebe*, she bore in like cace
Faire *Amoretta* in the second place:
These two were twinnes, & twixt them two did share
The heritage of all celestiall grace.
That all the rest it seem'd they robbed bare
Of bountie, and of beautie, and all vertues rare.

[5]

It were a goodly storie, to declare,
By what straunge accident faire *Chrysogone*
Conceiu'd these infants, and how them she bare,
In this wild forrest wandring all alone,
After she had nine moneths fulfilled and gone:
For not as other wemens commune brood,
They were enwombed in the sacred throne
Of her chaste bodie, nor with commune food,
As other wemens babes, they sucked vitall blood.

[6]

But wondrously they were begot, and bred
Through influence of th'heauens fruitfull ray,
As it in antique bookes is mentioned.
It was vpon a Sommers shynie day,
When *Titan* faire his beames did display,
In a fresh fountaine, farre from all mens vew,
She bath'd her brest, the boyling heat t'allay;
She bath'd with roses red, and violets blew,
And all the sweetest flowres, that in the forrest grew.

[7]

Till faint through irkesome wearinesse, adowne
Vpon the grassie ground her selfe she layd
To sleepe, the whiles a gentle slombring swowne
Vpon her fell all naked bare displayd;
The sunne-beames bright vpon her body playd,
Being through former bathing mollifide,
And pierst into her wombe, where they embayd
With so sweet sence and secret power vnspide,
That in her pregnant flesh they shortly fructifide.

[8]

Miraculous may seeme to him, that reades

So straunge ensample of conception;
But reason teacheth that the fruitfull seades
Of all things liuing, through impression
Of the sunbeames in moyst complexion,
Doe life conceiue and quickned are by kynd:
So after *Nilus* inuudation,
Infinite shapes of creature men do fynd,
Informed in the mud, on which the Sunne hath shynd.

[9]

Great father he of generation
Is rightly cald, th'author of life and light;
And his faire sister for creation
Ministreth matter fit, which tempred right
With heate and humour, breedes the liuing wight.
So sprung these twinnes in wombe of *Chrysogone*,
Yet wist she nought thereof, but sore affright,
Wondred to see her belly so vpblone,
Which still increast, till she her terme had full outgone.

[10]

Whereof conceiuing shame and foule disgrace,
Albe her guiltlesse conscience her cleard,
She fled into the wildernesse a space,
Till that vnweeldy burden she had reard,
And shund dishonor, which as death she feard:
Where wearie of long trauell, downe to rest
Her selfe she set, and comfortably cheard;
There a sad cloud of sleepe her ouerkest,
And seized euery sense with sorrow sore opprest.

[11]

It fortun'd, faire *Venus* hauing lost
Her little sonne, the winged god of loue,
Who for some light displeasure, which him crost,
Was from her fled, as flit as ayerie Doue,
And left her blisfull bowre of ioy aboue,
(So from her often he had fled away,
When she for ought him sharpely did reprove,
And wandred in the world in strange aray,
Disguiz'd in thousand shapes, that none might him bewray.

[12]

Him for to seeke, she left her heauenly hous,
The house of goodly formes and faire aspects,
Whence all the world deriues the glorious
Features of beauties, and all shapes select,
With which high God his workmanship hath deckt;
And searched euery way, through which his wings
Had borne him, or his tract she mote detect:
She promist kisses sweet, and sweeter things
Vnto the man, that of him tydings to her brings.

[13]

First she him sought in Court, where most he vsed
Whylome to haunt, but there she found him not;
But many there she found, which sore accused
His falsehood, and with foule infamous blot
His cruell deedes and wicked wyles did spot:
Ladies and Lords she euery where mote heare
Complayning, how with his empoysned shot
Their wofull harts he wounded had whyleare,
And so had left them languishing twixt hope and feare.

[14]

She then the Citties sought from gate to gate,
And euery one did aske, did he him see;
And euery one her answerd, that too late
He had him seene, and felt the crueltie
Of his sharpe darts and whot artillerie;
And euery one threw forth reproches rife
Of his mischieuous deedes, and said, That hee
Was the disturber of all ciuill life,
The enemy of peace, and author of all strife.

[15]

Then in the countrey she abroad him sought,
And in the rurall cottages inquired,
Where also many plaints to her were brought,
How he their heedlesse harts with loue had fyred,
And his false venim through their veines inspyred;
And eke the gentle shepheard swaynes, which sat
Keeping their fleecie flockes, as they were hyred,
She sweetly heard complaine, both how and what
Her some had to them doen; yet she did smile thereat.

[16]

But when in none of all these she him got,
She gan auize, where else he mote him hyde:
At last she her bethought, that she had not
Yet sought the saluage woods and forrests wyde,
In which full many louely Nymphes abyde,
Mongst whom might be, that he did closely lye,
Or that the loue of some of them him tyde:
For thy she thither cast her course t'apply,
To search the secret haunts of *Dianes* company.

[17]

Shortly vnto the wastefull woods she came,
Whereas she found the Goddesses with her crew,
After late chace of their embrewed game,
Sitting beside a fountaine in a rew,
Some of them washing with the liquid dew
From off their dainty limbes the dustie sweat,
And soyle which did deforme their liuely hew;
Others lay shaded from the scorching heat;
The rest vpon her person gaue attendance great.

[18]

She hauing hong vpon a bough on high
Her bow and painted quiuer, had vnlaste
Her siluer buskins from her nimble thigh,
And her lancke loynes vngirt, and brests vnbraste,
After her heat the breathing cold to taste;
Her golden lockes, that late in tresses bright
Embreaded were for hindring of her haste,
Now loose about her shoulders hong vndight,
And were with sweet *Ambrosia* all besprinckled light.

[19]

Soone as she *Venus* saw behind her backe,
She was asham'd to be so loose surprized
And woxe halfe wroth against her damzels slacke,
That had nother thereof before auized,
But suffred her so carelesly disguised
Be ouertaken. Soone her garments loose
Vpgath'ring, in her bosome she comprized,
Well as she might, and to the Goddesses rose,
Whiles all her Nymphes did like a girlond her enclose.

[20]

Goodly she gan faire *Cytherea* greet,
And shortly asked her, what cause her brought
Into that wildernesse for her vnmeet,
From her sweete bowres, and beds with pleasures fraught:
That suddein change she strange aduenture thought.
To whom halfe weeping, she thus answered,
That she her dearest sonne *Cupido* sought,
Who in his frowardnesse from her was fled;
That she repented sore, to haue him angered.

[21]

Thereat *Diana* gan to smile, in scorne
Of her vaine plaint, and to her scoffing sayd;
Great pittie sure, that ye be so forlorne
Of your gay sonne, that giues ye so good ayd
To your disports: ill mote ye bene apayd.
But she was more engrieued, and replide;
Faire sister, ill beseemes it to vpbrayd
A dolefull heart with so disdainfull pride;
The like that mine, may be your paine another tide.

[22]

As you in woods and wanton wildernesse
Your glory set, to chace the saluage beasts,
So my delight is all in ioyfulnesse,
In beds, in bowres, in banckets, and in feasts:
And ill becomes you with your loftie creasts,
To scorne the ioy, that *Ioue* is glad to seeke;
We both are bound to follow heauens beheasts,
And tend our charges with obeisance meeke:
Spare, gentle sister, with reproch my paine to eeke.

[23]

And tell me, if that ye my sonne haue heard,
To lurke emongst your Nymphes in secret wize;
Or keepe their cabins: much I am affeard,
Least he like one of them him selfe disguise,
And turne his arrowes to their exercize:
So may he long himselfe full easie hide:
For he is faire and fresh in face and guize,
As any Nymph (let not it be enuyde.)
So saying euey Nymph full narrowly she eyde.

[24]

But *Phoebe* therewith sore was angered,
And sharply said; Goe Dame, goe seeke your boy,
Where you him lately left, in *Mars* his bed;
He comes not here, we scorne his foolish ioy,
Ne lend we leisure to his idle toy:
But if I catch him in this company,
By *Stygian* lake I vow, whose sad annoy
The Gods doe dread, he dearely shall aby:
Ile clip his wanton wings, that he no more shall fly.

[25]

Whom when as *Venus* saw so sore displeas'd,
She inly sory was, and gan relent,
What she had said: so her she soone appeas'd,
With sugred words and gentle blandishment,
From which a fountaine from her sweet lips went,
And welled goodly forth, that in short space
She was well pleas'd, and forth her damzels sent,
Through all the woods, to search from place to place,
If any tract of him or tydings they mote trace.

[26]

To search the God of loue, her Nymphes she sent
Throughout the wandring forrest euery where:
And after them her selfe eke with her went
To seeke the fugitiue, both farre and nere,
So long they sought, till they arriued were
In that same shadie couert, whereas lay
Faire *Crysogone* in slombry traunce whilere:
Who in her sleepe (a wondrous thing to say)
Vnwares had borne two babes, as faire as springing day.

[27]

Vnwares she them conceiu'd, vnwares she bore:
She bore withouten paine, that she conceiu'd
Withouten pleasure: ne her need implore
Lucinaes aide: which when they both perceiued,
They were through wonder nigh of sense bereau'd,
And gazing each on other, nought bespake:
At last they both agreed, her seeming griued
Out of her heauy swowne not to awake,
But from her louing side the tender babes to take.

[28]

Vp they them tooke, each one a babe vptooke,
And with them carried, to be fostered;
Dame *Phoebe* to a Nymph her babe betooke,
To be vpbrought in perfect Maydenhed,
And of her selfe her name *Belphoebe* red:
But *Venus* hers hence farre away conuayd,
To be vpbrought in goodly womanhed,
And in her litle loues stead, which was strayd,
Her *Amoretta* cald, to comfort her dismayd.

[29]

She brought her to her ioyous Paradize,
Where most she wones, when she on earth does dwel.
So faire a place, as Nature can deuize:
Whether in *Paphos*, or *Cytheron* hill,
Or it in *Gnidus* be, I wote not well;
But well I wote by tryall, that this same
All other pleasant places doth excell,
And called is by her lost louers name,
The *Gardin* of *Adonis*, farre renowmd by fame.

[30]

In that same Gardin all the goodly flowres,
Wherewith dame Nature doth her beautifie,
And decks the girlonds of her paramoures,
Are fetcht: there is the first seminarie
Of all things, that are borne to liue and die,
According to their kindes. Long worke it were,
Here to account the endlesse pregenie
Of all the weedes, that bud and blossome there;
But so much as doth need, must needs be counted here.

[31]

It sited was in fruitfull soyle of old,
And girt in with two walles on either side;
The one of yron, the other of bright gold,
That none might thorough breake, nor ouer-stride:
And double gates it had, which opened wide,
By which both in and out men moten pas;
Th'one faire and fresh, the other old and dride:
Old *Genius* the porter of them was,
Old *Genius*, the which a double nature has.

[32]

He letteth in, he letteth out to wend,
All that to come into the world desire;
A thousand thousand naked babes attend
About him day and night, which doe require,
That he with fleshly weedes would them attire:
Such as him list, such as eternall fate
Ordained hath, he clothes with sinfull mire,
And sendeth forth to liue in mortall state,
Till they againe returne backe by the hinder gate.

[33]

After that they againe returned beene,
They in that Gardin planted be againe;
And grow a fresh, as they had neuer seene
Fleshly corruption, nor mortall paine.
Some thousand yeares so doen they there remaine;
And then of him are clad with other hew,
Or sent into the changefull world againe,
Till thither they returne, where first they grew:
So like a wheele around they runne from old to new.

[34]

Ne needs there Gardiner to set, or sow,
To plant of prune: for of their owne accord
All things, as they created were, doe grow,
And yet remember well the mightie word,
Which first was spoken by th'Almightie lord,
That bad them to increase and multiply:
Ne doe they need with water of the ford,
Or of the clouds to moysten their roots dry;
For in themselues eternall moisture they imply.

[35]

Infinite shapes of creatures there are bred,
And vncouth formes, which none yet euer knew,
And euery sort is in a sundry bed
Set by itselfe, and ranckt in comely rew:
Some fit for reasonable soules t'indew,
Some made for beasts, some made for birds to weare,
And all the fruitfull spawne of fishes hew
In endlesse rancks along enraunged were,
That seem'd the *Ocean* could not containe them there.

[36]

Daily they grow, and daily forth are sent
Into the world, it to replenish more;
Yet is the stocke not lessened, nor spent,
But still remains in euerlasting store,
As it at first created was of yore.
For in the wide wombe of the world there lyes,
In hatefull darkenesse and in deepe horrore,
An huge eternall *Chaos*, which supplyes
The substances of natures fruitfull progenyes.

[37]

All things from thence doe their first being fetch,
And borrow matter, whereof they are made,
Which when as forme and feature it does ketch,
Becomes a bodie, and doth then inuade
The state of life, out of the griefly shade.
That substance is eterne, and bideth so,
Ne when the life decayes, and forme does fade,
Doth it consume, and into nothing go,
But changed is, and often altred to and fro.

[38]

The substance is not changed, nor altered,
But th'only forme and outward fashion;
For euery substance is conditioned
To change her hew, and sundry formes to don,
Meet for her temper and complexion:
For formes are variable and decay,
By course of kind, and by occasion;
And that faire flowre of beautie fades away,
As doth the lilly fresh before the sunny ray.

[39]

Great enemy to it, and to all the rest,
That in the *Gardin of Adonis* springs,
Is wicked *Time*, who with his scyth adrest,
Does mow the flowring herbes and goodly things,
And all their glory to the ground downe flings,
Where they doe wither, and are fowly mard:
He flies about, and with his flaggy wings
Beates downe both leaues and buds without regard,
Ne euer pittie may relent his malice hard.

[40]

Yet pittie often did the gods relent,
To see so faire things mard, and spoyled quight:
And their great mother *Venus* did lament
The losse of her deare brood, her deare delight;
Her hart was pierst with pittie at the sight,
When walking through the Gardin, them she spyde,
Yet no'te she find redresse for such despight.
For all that liues, is subiect to that law:
All things decay in time, and to their end do draw.

[41]

But were it not, that *Time* their troubler is,
All that in this delightfull Gardin growes,
Should happie be, and haue immortall blis:
For here all plentie, and all pleasure flowes,
And sweet loue gentle fits emongst them throwes,
Without fell rancor, or fond gealosie;
Franckly each paramour his leman knowes,
Each bird his mate, ne any does enuie
Their goodly meriment, and gay felicitie.

[42]

There is continuall spring, and haruest there
Continuall, both meeting at one time:
For both the boughes doe laughing blossomes beare,
And with fresh colours decke the wanton Prime,
And eke attonce the heauy trees they clime,
Which seeme to labour vnder their fruits lode:
The whiles the ioyous birdes make their pastime
Emongst the shadie leaues, their sweet abode,
And their true loues without suspition tell abode.

[43]

Right in the midst of that Paradise,
There stood a stately Mount, on whose round top
A gloomy groue of mirtle trees did rise,
Whose shadie boughes sharpe steele did neuer lop,
Nor wicked beasts their tender buds did crop,
But like a girlond compassed the hight,
And from their fruitfull sides sweet gum did drop,
That all the ground with precious deaw bedight,
Threw forth most dainty odours, & most sweet delight.

[44]

And in the thickest couert of that shade,
There was a pleasant arbour, not by art,
But of the trees owne inclination made,
Which knitting their rancke braunches part to part,
With wanton yuie twyne entrayld athwart,
And Eglantine, and Caprifole emong,
Fashiond aboue within their inmost part,
That nether *Phoebus* beams could through them throng,
Nor *Aeolus* sharp blast could worke them any wrong.

[45]

And all about grew euery sort of flowre,
To which sad louers were transformd of yore;
Fresh *Hyacinthus*, *Phoebus* paramoure,
Foolish *Narcisse*, that likes the watry shore,
Sad *Amaranthus*, made a flowre but late,
Sad *Amaranthus*, in whose purple gore
Me seemes I see *Amintas* wretched fate,
To whom sweet Poets verse hath giuen endlesse date.

[46]

There wont faire *Venus* often to enjoy
Her deare *Adonis* ioyous company,
And reape sweet pleasure of the wanton boy;
There yet, some say, in secret he does ly,
Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery,
By her hid from the world, and from the skill
Of *Stygian* Gods, which doe her loue enuy;
But she her selfe, when euer that she will,
Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill.

[47]

And sooth it seemes they say: for he may not
For euer die, and euer buried bee
In balefull night, where all things are forgot;
All be he subiect to mortalitie,
Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,
And by succession made perpetuall,
Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie:
For him the Father of all formes they call;
Therefore needs mote he liue, that liuing giues to all.

[48]

There now he liueth in eternall blis,
Ioying his goddesse, and of her enioyd:
Ne feareth he henceforth that foe of his,
Which with his cruell tuske him deadly cloyd:
For that wilde Bore, the which him once annoyd,
She firmly hath emprisoned for ay,
That her sweet loue his malice mote auoyd,
In a strong rocky Caue, which is they say,
Hewen vnderneath that Mount, that none him losen may.

[49]

There now he liues in euerlasting ioy,
With many of the Gods in company,
Which thither haunt, and with the winged boy
Sporting himselfe in safe felicity:
Who when he hath with spoiles and cruelty
Ransackt the world, and in the wofull harts
Of many wretches set his triumphes hye,
Thither resorts, and laying his sad darts
Aside, with faire *Adonis* playes his wanton parts.

[50]

And his true loue faire *Psyche* with him playes,
Faire *Psyche* to him lately reconcyld,
After long troubles and vnmeet vpbayes,
With which his mother *Venus* her reuyld,
And eke himselfe her cruelly exyld:
But now in stedfast loue and happy state
She with him liues, and hath him borne a chyld,
Pleasure, that doth both gods and men aggrate,
Pleasure, the daughter of *Cupid* and *Psyche* late.

[51]

Hither great *Venus* brought this infant faire,
The younger daughter of *Chrysogonee*,
And vnto *Psyche* with great trust and care
Committed her, yfostered to bee,
And trained vp in true feminitee.
Who no lesse carefully her tendered,
Then her owne daughter *Pleasure*, to whom shee
Made her companion, and her lessoned
In all the lore of loue, and goodly womanhead.

[52]

In which when she to perfect ripenesse grew,
Of grace and beautie noble Paragone,
She brought her forth into the worldes vew,
To be th'ensample of true loue alone,
And Lodestarre of all chaste affectione,
To all faire Ladies, that doe liue on ground.
To Faery court she came, where many one
Admyrd her goodly haueour, and found
His feeble hart wide launched with lous cruell wound.

[53]

But she to none of them her loue did cast,
Sawe to the noble knight Sir *Scudamore*,
To whom her louing hart she linked fast
In fathfull loue, t'abide for euermore,
And for his dearest sake endured sore,
Sore trouble of an hainous enemy;
Who her would forced haue to haue forlore
Her former loue, and stedfast loialty,
As ye may elsewhere read that ruefull history.

[54]

But well I weene, ye first desire to learne,
What end vnto that fearefull Damozell,
Which fled so fast from that same foster stearne,
Whom with his brethren *Timias* slew, befell:
That was to weet, the goodly *Florimell*;
Who wandring for to seeke her louer deare,
Her louer deare, her dearest *Marinell*,
Into misfortune fell, as ye did heare,
And from Prince *Arthur* fled with wings of idle feare.

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