

Cant. III.

*The battell twixt three brethren with
Cambell for Canacee
Cambina with true friendships bond
doth their long strife agree.*

[1]

O Why doe wretched men so much desire,
To draw their dayes vnto the vtmost date,
And doe not rather wish them soone expire,
Knowing the miserie of their estate,
And thousand perills which them still awate,
Tossing them like a boate amid the mayne,
That euery houre they knocke at deathes gate?
And he that happie seemes and least in payne,
Yet is as nigh his end, as he that most doth playne.

[2]

Therefore this Fay I hold but fond and vaine,
The which in seeking for her children three
Long life, thereby did more prolong their paine.
Yet whilest they liued none did euersee
More happie creatures, then they seem'd to bee,
Nor more ennobled for their courtesie,
That made them dearely lou'd of each degree;
Ne more renoumed for their cheualrie,
That made them dreaded much of all men farre and nie.

[3]

These three that hardie challenge tooke in hand,
For *Canacee* with *Cambell* for to fight:
The day was set, that all might vnderstand,
And pledges pawnd the same to keepe a right,
That day, the dreddest day that liuing wight
Did euer see vpon this world to shine,
So soone as heauens window shewed light,
These warlike Champions all in armour shine,
Assembled were in field, the challenge to define.

[4]

The field with listes was all about enclos'd,
To barre the prease of people farre away;

And at th'one side sixe iudges were dispos'd,
To view and deeme the deedes of armes that day;
And on the other side in fresh aray,
Fayre *Canacee* vpon a stately stage
Was set, to see the fortune of that fray,
And to be seene, as his most worthie wage,
That could her purchase with his liues aduentur'd gage.

[5]

Then entred *Cambell* first into the list,
With stately steps, and fearelesse countenance,
As if the conquest his he surely wist.
Soone after did the brethren three aduance,
In braue aray and goodly amenance,
With scutchins gilt and banners broad displayd:
And marching thrise in warlike ordinance,
Thrise lowted lowly to the noble Mayd,
The whiles shril trumpets & loud clarions sweetly playd.

[6]

Which doen the doughty chalenger came forth,
All arm'd to point his chalenge to abet:
Gainst whom Sir *Priamond* with equall worth:
And equall armes himselfe did forward set.
A trompet blew; they both together met,
With dreadfull force, and furious intent,
Carelesse of perill in their fiers affret,
As if that life to losse they had forelent,
And cared not to spare, that should be shortly spent.

[7]

Right practicke was Sir *Priamond* in fight,
And throughly skild in vse of shield and speare;
Ne lesse approued was *Cambelloes* might,
Ne lesse his s[k]ill in weapons did appeare,
That hard it was to weene which harder were.
Full many mightie strokes on either side
Were sent, that seemed death in them to beare,
But they were both so watchfull and well eyde,
That they auoyded were, and vainely by did slyde.

[8]

Yet one of many was so strongly bent

By *Priamond*, that with vnluckie glaunce
Through *Cambels* shoulder it vnwarely went,
That forced him his shield to disaduance,
Much was he grieued with that gracelesse chaunce,
Yet from the wound no drop of bloud there fell,
But wondrous paine, that did the more enhaunce
His haughtie courage to aduengement fell:
Smart daunts not mighty harts, but makes them more to swell.

[9]

With that his poynant speare he fierce auentred,
With doubled force close vnderneath his shield,
That through the mayles into his thigh it entred;
And there arresting, readie way did yield,
For bloud to gush forth on the grassie field;
That he for paine himselfe not right vpreare,
But too and fro in great amazement reel'd,
Like an old Oke whose pith and sap is seare,
At puffe of euery storme doth stagger here and there.

[10]

Whom so dismayd when *Cambell* had espide,
Againe he droue at him with double might,
That nought mote stay the steele, till in his side
The mortall point most cruelly empight:
Where fast infixd, whilst he sought by slight
It forth to wrest, the staffe a sunder brake,
And left the head behind: with which despight
He all enrag'd, his shiuering speare did shake,
And charging him a fresh thus felly him bespake.

[11]

Lo faitour there thy meede vnto thee take,
The meede of thy mischallenge and abet:
Not for thine owne, but for thy sisters sake,
Haue I thus long thy life vnto thee let:
But to forbear doth not forgiue the det.
The wicked weapon heard his wrathfull vow,
And passing forth with furious affret,
Pierst through his beuer quite into his brow,
That with the force it backward forced him to bow.

[12]

Therewith a sunder in the midst it brast,
And in his hand nought but the troncheon left,
The other halfe behind yet sticking fast,
Out of his headpeece *Cambell* fiercely reft,
And with such furie backe at him it heft,
That making way vnto his dearest life,
His weasand pipe it through his gorget cleft:
Thence streames of purple bloud issuing rife,
Let forth his wearie ghost and made an end of strife.

[13]

His wearie ghost assoyld from fleshly band,
Did not as others wont, directly fly
Vnto her rest in Plutoes griesly land,
Ne into ayre did vanish presently,
Ne chaunged was into a starre in sky:
But through traduction was eftsoones deriued,
Like as his mother prayd the Destinie,
Into his other brethren, that suruiued,
In whom he liu'd a new, of former life depriued.

[14]

Whom when on ground his brother next beheld,
Though sad and sorie for so heauy sight,
Yet leaue vnto his sorrow did not yeeld,
But rather stird to vengeance and despight,
Through secret feeling of his generous spright,
Rusht fiercely forth, the battell to renew,
As in reuersion of his brothers right;
And chalenging the Virgin as his dew.
His foe was soone address: the trompets freshly blew.

[15]

With that they both together fiercely met,
As if that each ment other to deuoure;
And with their axes both so sorely bet,
That neither plate nor mayle, whereas their powre
They felt, could once sustaine the hideous stowre,
But riued were like rotten wood a sunder,
Whilest through their rifts the ruddie bloud did showre
And fire did flash, like lightning after thunder,
That fild the lookers on attonce with ruth and wonder

[16]

As when two Tygers prickt with hungers rage,
Haue by good fortune found some beasts fresh spoyle,
On which they weene their famine to asswage,
And gaine a feastfull guerdon of their toyle,
Both falling out doe stirre vp strifefull broyle,
And cruell battell twixt themselues doe make,
Whiles neither lets the other touch the soyle,
But either sdeignes with other to partake:
So cruelly these Knights stroue for that Ladies sake.

[17]

Full many strokes, that mortally were ment,
The whiles were enterchaunged twixt them two;
Yet they were all with so good wariment
Or warded, or auoyded and let goe,
That still the life stood fearelesse of her foe:
Till *Diamond* disdeigning long delay
Of doubtfull fortune wauering to and fro,
Resolu'd to end it one or other way;
And heau'd his murdrous axe at him with mighty sway.

[18]

The dreadfull stroke in case it had arriued,
Where it was ment, (so deadly it was ment)
The soule had sure out of his bodie riued,
And stinted all the strife incontinent.
But *Cambels* fate that fortune did preuent:
For seeing it at hand, he swaru'd asyde,
And so gae way vnto his fell intent:
Who missing of the marke which he had eyde,
Was with the force nigh feld whilst his right foot did slyde.

[19]

As when a Vulture greedie of his pray,
Through hunger long, that hart to him doth lend,
Strikes at an Heron with all his bodies sway,
That from his force seemes nought may it defend;
The warie fowle that spies him toward bend
His dreadfull souse, auoydes it shunning light,
And maketh him his wing in vaine to spend;
That with the weight of his owne weeldlesse might,
He falleth nigh to ground, and scarce recouereth flight.

[20]

Which faire aduventure when *Cambello* spide,
Full lightly, ere himselfe he could recower,
From daungers dread to ward his naked side,
He can let driue at him with all his power,
And with his axe him smote in euill hower,
That from his shoulders quite his head he reft:
The headlesse tronke, as heedlesse of that stower,
Stood still a while, and his fast footing kept,
Till feeling life to fayle, it fell, and deadly slept.

[21]

They which that piteous spectacle beheld,
Were much amaz'd the headlesse tronke to see
Stand vp so long, and weapon vaine to weld,
Vnweeting of the Fates diuine decree,
For lifes succession in those brethren three.
For notwithstanding that one soule was reft,
Yet, had the bodie not dismembred bee,
It would haue liued, and reuiued eft;
But finding no fit seat, the lifelesse corse it left.

[22]

It left; but that same soule, which therein dwelt,
Streight entring into *Triamond*, him fild
With double life, and grieffe, which when he felt,
As one whose inner parts had bene ythrild
With point of steele, that close his hartbloud spild,
He lightly left out of his place of rest,
And rushing forth into the emptie field,
Against *Cambello* fiercely him address;
Who him affronting soone to fight was readie prest.

[23]

Well mote ye wonder how that noble Knight,
After he had so often wounded beene,
Could stand on foot, now to renew the fight.
But had ye then him forth aduauncing seene,
Some newborne wight ye would him surely weene:
So fresh he seemed and so fierce in sight;
Like as a Snake, whom wearie winters teene,
Hath worne to nought, now feeling sommers might,
Casts off his ragged skin and freshly doth him dight.

[24]

All was through vertue of the ring he wore,
The which not onely did not from him let
One drop of bloud to fall, but did restore
His weakned powers, and dulled spirits whet,
Through working of the stone therein yset.
Else how could one of equall might with most,
Against so many no lesse mightie met,
Once thinke to match three such on equall cost,
Three such as able were to match a puissant host.

[25]

Yet nought thereof was *Triamond* adredde,
Ne desperate of glorious victorie,
But sharply him assayld, and sore bestedde,
With heapes of strokes, which he at him let flie,
As thicke as hayle forth poured from the skie:
He stroke, he soust, he foynd, he hewd, he lasht,
And did his yron brond so fast applie,
That from the same the fierie sparkles flasht,
As fast as water-sprinkles gainst a rocke are dasht.

[26]

Much was *Cambello* daunted with his blowes,
So thicke they fell, and forcibly were sent,
That he was forst from daunger of the throwes
Backe to retire, and somewhat to relent,
Till th'heat of his fierce furie he had spent:
Which when for want of breath gan to abate,
He then afresh with new encouragement
Did him assayle, and mightily amate,
As fast as forward erst, now backward to retrate.

[27]

Like as the tide that comes fro th'Ocean mayne,
Flowes vp the Shenan with contrarie forse,
And ouerruling him in his owne rayne,
Driues backe the current of his kindly course,
And makes it seeme to haue some other source:
But when the floud is spent, then backe againe
His borrowed waters forst to redisbourse,
He sends the sea his owne with double gaine,
And tribute eke withall, as to his Soueraine.

[28]

Thus did the battell varie to and fro,
With diuerse fortune doubtfull to be deemed:
Now this the better had, now had his fo;
Then he halfe vanquisht, then the other seemed,
Yet victors both them selues alwayes esteemed.
And all the while the disentrayled blood
Adowne their sides like litle riuers stremed,
That with the wasting of his vitall flood,
Sir *Triamond* at last full faint and feeble stood.

[29]

But *Cambell* still more strong and greater grew,
Ne felt his blood to wast, ne powres emperisht,
Through that rings vertue, that with vigour new,
Still when as he enfeebled was, him cherisht,
And all his wounds, and all his bruses guarisht,
Like as a withered tree through husbands toyle
Is often seene full freshly to haue florisht,
And fruitfull apples to haue borne awhile,
As fresh as when it first was planted in the soyle.

[30]

Through which aduantage, in his strength he rose,
And smote the other with so wondrous might,
That through the seame, which did his hauberk close,
Into his throate and life it pierced quight,
That downe he fell as dead in all mens sight:
Yet dead he was not, yet he sure did die,
As all men do, that lose the liuing spright:
So did one soule out of his bodie flie
Vnto her natieue home from mortall miserie.

[31]

But nathelesse whilst all the lookers on
Him dead behight, as he to all appeard,
All vnawares he started vp anon,
As one that had out of a dreame bene reard,
And fresh assayld his foe, who halfe affeard
Of th'vncouth sight, as he some ghost had seene,
Stood still amaz'd, holding his idle sward;
Till hauing often by him stricken beene,
He forced was to strike, and saue him selfe from teene.

[32]

Yet from thenceforth more warily he fought,
As one in feare the Stygian gods t'offend,
Ne followd on so fast, but rather sought
Him selfe to saue, and daunger to defend,
Then life and labour both in vaine to spend.
Which *Triamond* perceiuing, weened sure
He gan to faint, toward the battels end,
And that he should not long on foote endure,
A signe which did to him the victorie assure.

[33]

Whereof full blith, eftsoones his mightie hand
He heav'd on high, in mind with that same blow
To make an end of all that did withstand:
Which *Cambell* seeing come, was nothing slow
Him selfe to saue from that so deadly throw;
And at that instant reaching forth his sward
Close vnderneath his shield, that scarce did show,
Stroke him, as he his hand to strike vpreard,
In th'arm-pit full, that through both sides the wound appeard.

[34]

Yet still that direfull stroke kept on his way,
And falling heaueie on *Cambelloes* crest,
Strooke him so hugely, that in swowne he lay,
And in his head an hideous wound imprest:
And sure had it not happily found rest
Vpon the brim of his brode plated shield,
It would haue cleft his braine downe to his brest.
So both at once fell dead vpon the field,
And each to other seemd the victorie to yield.

[35]

Which when as all the lookers on beheld,
They weened sure the warre was at an end,
And Iudges rose, and Marshals of the field
Broke vp the listes, their armes away to rend;
And *Canacee* gan wayle her dearest frend.
All suddenly they both vpstarted light,
The one out of the swownd, which him did blend,
The other breathing now another spright,
And fiercely each assayling, gan afresh to fight.

[36]

Long while they then continued in that wize,
As if but then the battell had begonne:
Strokes, wounds, wards, weapons, all they did despise,
Ne either car'd to ward, or perill shonne,
Desirous both to haue the battell donne;
Ne either cared life to saue or spill,
Ne which of them did winne, ne which were wonne.
So wearie both of fighting had their fill,
That life it selfe seemd loathsome, and long safetie ill.

[37]

Whilst thus the case in doubtfull ballance hong,
Vnsure to whether side it would incline,
And all mens eyes and hearts, which there among
Stood gazing, filled were with ruffull tine,
And secret feare, to see their fatall fine,
All suddenly they heard a troublous noyes,
That seemd some perilous tumult to desine,
Confusd with womens cries, and shouts of boyes,
Such as the troubled Theaters offimes annoyes.

[38]

Thereat the Champions both stood still a space,
To weeten what that sudden clamour ment;
Lo where they spyde with speedie whirling pace,
One in a charet of straunge furniment,
Towards them driuing like a storme out sent.
The charet decked was in wondrous wize,
With gold and many a gorgeous ornament,
After the Persian Monarks antique guise,
Such as the maker selfe could best by art deuize.

[39]

And drawne it was (that wonder is to tell)
Of two grim lyons, taken from the wood,
In which their powre all others did excell;
Now made forget their former cruell mood,
T'obey their riders hest, as seemed good.
And therein sate a Ladie passing faire
And bright, that seemed borne of Angels brood,
And with her beautie bountie did compare,
Whether of them in her should haue the greater share.

[40]

Thereto she learned was in Magicke leare,
And all the artes, that subtill wits discover,
Hauing therein bene trained many a yeare,
And well instructed by the Fay her mother,
That in the same she farre exceld all other.
Who vnderstanding by her mightie art,
Of th'euill plight, in which her dearest brother
Now stood, came forth in hast to take his part,
And pacifie the strife, which causd so deadly smart.

[41]

And as she passed through th'vnruly preace
Of people, thronging thicke her to behold,
Her angrie teame breaking their bonds of peace,
Great heapes of them, like sheepe in narrow fold,
For hast did ouer-runne, in dust enrould,
That thorough rude confusion of the rout,
Some fearing shriekt, some being harmed hould,
Some laught for sport, some did for wonder shout,
And some that would seeme wise, their wonder turnd to dout.

[42]

In her right hand a rod of peace shee bore,
About the which two Serpents weren wound,
Entrayled mutually in louely lore,
And by the tailes together firmly bound,
And both were with one oliue garland crownd,
Like to the rod which *Maias* sonne doth wield,
Wherewith the hellish fiends he doth confound.
And in her other hand a cup she hild,
The which was with *Nepenthe* to the brim vpfilld.

[43]

Nepenthe is a drinck of souerayne grace,
Deuized by the Gods, for to asswage
Harts grief, and bitter gall away to chace,
Which stirs vp anguish and contentious rage:
In stead thereof sweet peace and quiet age
It doth establish in the troubled mynd.
Few men, but such as sober are and sage,
Are by the Gods to drinck thereof assynd;
But such as drinck, eternall happinesse do fynd.

[44]

Such famous men, such worthies of the earth,
As *Ioue* will haue aduanced to the skie,
And there made gods, though borne of mortall berth,
For their high merits and great dignitie,
Are wont, before they may to heauen flie,
To drinke hereof, whereby all cares forepast
Are washt away quite from their memorie.
So did those olde Heroes hereof taste,
Before that they in blisse amongst the Gods were plaste.

[45]

Much more of price and of more gracious powre
Is this, then that same water of Ardenne,
The which *Rinaldo* drunck in happie howre,
Described by that famous Tuscanne penne:
For that had might to change the hearts of men
Fro loue to hate, a change of euill choise:
But this doth hatred make in loue to brenne,
And heauy heart with comfort doth reioyce.
Who would not to this vertue rather yeeld his voice?

[46]

At last arriuing by the listes side,
Shee with her rod did softly smite the raile,
Which straight flew ope, and gaue her way to ride.
Eftsoones out of her Coch she gan auaile,
And pacing fairely forth, did bid all haile,
First to her brother, whom she loued deare,
That so to see him made her heart to quaile:
And next to *Cambell*, whose sad ruefull cheare
Made her to change her hew, and hidden loue t'appeare.

[47]

They lightly her requit (for small delight
They had as then her long to entertaine,)
And eft them turned both againe to fight,
Which when she saw, down on the bloody plaine
Her selfe she threw, and teares gan shed amaine;
Amongst her teares immixing prayers meeke,
And with her prayers reasons to refraine,
From bloudy strife, and blessed peace to seeke,
By all that vnto them was deare, did them beseeke.

[48]

But when as all might nought with them preuaile,
Shee smote them lightly with her powerfull wand.
Then suddenly as if their hearts did faile,
Their wrathfull blades downe fell out of their hand,
And they like men astonisht still did stand.
Thus whilst their minds were doubtfully distraught,
And mighty spirites bound with mightier band,
Her golden cup to them for drinke she raught,
Whereof full glad for thirst, ech drunk an harty draught.

[49]

Of which so soone as they once tasted had,
Wonder it is that sudden change to see:
Instead of strokes, each other kissed glad,
And louely haulst from feare of treason free,
And plighted hands for euer friends to be.
When all men saw this sudden change of things,
So mortall foes so friendly to agree,
For passing ioy, which so great maruaile brings,
They all gan shout aloud, that all the heauen rings.

[50]

All which, when gentle *Canacee* beheld,
In hast she from her lofty chaire descended,
Too weet what sudden tidings was befel:
Where when she saw that cruell war so ended,
And deadly foes so faithfully affrended,
In louely wise she gan that Lady greet,
Which had so great dismay so well amended,
And entertaining her with curt'sies meet,
Protest to her true friendship and affection sweet.

[51]

Thus when they all accorded goodly were,
The trumpets sounded, and they all arose,
Thence to depart with glee and gladsome chere.
Those warlike champions both together chose,
Homeward to march, themselues there to repose,
And wise *Cambina* taking by her side
Faire *Canacee*, as fresh as morning rose,
Vnto her Coch remounting, home did ride,
Admir'd of all the people, and much glorifide.

[52]

Where making ioyous feast their daies they spent
In perfect loue, deuoid of hatefull strife,
Allide with bands of mutuall couplement;
For *Triamond* had *Canacee* to wife,
With whom he ledd a long and happie life;
And *Cambel* tooke *Cambina* to his fere,
The which as life were each to other lief.
So all alike did loue, and loued were,
That since their days such louers were not found elswere.

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