

Cant. IIII

*Artegall dealeth right betwixt
two brethren that doe striue,
Saues Terpine from the gallow tree,
and doth from death reprise.*

[1]

WHo so vpon him selfe will take the skill
True Iustice vnto people to diuide,
Had neede haue mightie hands, for to fulfill
That, which he doth with righteous doome decide,
And for to maister wrong and puissant pride.
For vaine it is to deeme of things aright,
And makes wrong doers iustice to deride,
Vnlesse it be perform'd with dreadlesse might.
For powre is the right hand of Iustice truely hight.

[2]

Therefore whylome to knights of great emprise
The charge of Iustice giuen was in trust,
That they might execute her iudgements wise,
And with their might beat downe licentious lust,
Which proudly did impugne her sentence iust.
Whereof no brauer president this day
Remaines on earth, preseru'd from yron rust
Of rude obliuion, and long times decay,
Then this of *Artegall*, which here we haue to say.

[3]

Who hauing lately left that louely payre,
Enlincked fast in wedlockes loyall bond,
Bold *Marinell* with *Florimell* the fayre,
With whom great feast and goodly glee he fond,
Departed from the Castle of the strand,
To follow his aduentures first intent,
Which long agoe he taken had in hond:
Ne wight with him for his assistance went,
But that great yron groome, his gard and gouernment.

[4]

With whom as he did passe by the sea shore,
He chaunst to come, whereas two comely Squires,

Both brethren, whom one wombe together bore,
But stirred vp with different desires,
Together stroue, and kindled wrathfull fires:
And them beside two seemely damzels stood,
By all meanes seeking to asswage their ires,
Now with faire words; but words did little good,
Now with sharpe threats; but threats the more increase their mood.

[5]

And there before them stood a Coffer strong,
Fast bound on euery side with iron bands,
But seeming to haue suffred mickle wrong,
Either by being wreckt vpon the sands,
Or being carried farre from forraine lands.
Seem'd that for it these Squires at ods did fall,
And bent against them selues their cruell hands.
But euermore, those Damzels did forestall
Their furious encounter, and their fierenesse pall.

[6]

But firmly fixt they were, with dint of sword,
And battailes doubtfull proofe their rights to try,
Ne other end their fury would afford,
But what to them Fortune would iustify.
So stood they both in readinesse; thereby
To ioyne the combate with cruell intent;
When *Artegall* arriuing happily,
Did stay a while their greedy bickerment,
Till he had questioned the cause of their dissent.

[7]

To whom the elder did this aunswere frame;
Then weete ye Sir, that we two brethren be,
To whom our sire, *Milesio* by name,
Did equally bequeath his lands in fee,
Two Ilands, which ye there before you see
Not farre in sea; of which the one appeares
But like a little Mount of small degree;
Yet was as great and wide ere many yeares,
As that same other Isle, that greater bredth now beares.

[8]

But tract of time, that all things doth decay,

And this deuouring Sea, that naught doth spare,
The most part of my land hath washt away,
And throwne it vp vnto my brothers share:
So his encreased, but mine did empaire.
Before which time I lou'd, as was my lot,
That further mayd, hight *Philtera* the faire,
With whom a goodly doure I should haue got,
And should haue ioyned bene to her in wedlocks knot.

[9]

Then did my younger brother *Amidas*
Loue that same other Damzell, Lucy bright,
To whom but little dowre allotted was;
Her vertue was the dowre, that did delight.
What better dowre can to a dame be hight?
But now when *Philtera* saw my lands decay,
And former liuelod fayle, she left me quight,
And to my brother did ellope streight way:
Who taking her from me, his owne loue left astray.

[10]

She seeing then her selfe forsaken so,
Through dolorous despaire, which she conceyued,
Into the Sea her selfe did headlong throw,
Thinking to haue her griefe by death bereaued.
But see how much her purpose was deceaued.
Whilst thus amidst the billowes beating of her
Twixt life and death, long to and fro she weaued,
She chaunst vnwares to light vpon this coffer,
Which to her in that daunger hope of life did offer.

[11]

The wretched mayd that earst desir'd to die,
When as the paine of death she tasted had,
And but halfe seene his vgly visnomie,
Gan to repent, that she had beene so mad,
For any death to chaunge life though most bad:
And catching hold of this Sea-beaten chest,
The lucky Pylot of her passage sad,
After long tossing in the seas distrest,
Her weary barke at last vpon mine Isle did rest.

[12]

Where I by chaunce then wandring on the shore,
Did her espy, and through my good endeour
From dreadfull mouth of death, which threatned sore
Her to haue swallow'd vp, did helpe to sauе her.
She then in recompence of that great fauour,
Which I on her bestowed, bestowed on me
The portion of that good, which Fortune gaue her,
Together with her selfe in dowry free;
Both goodly portions, but of both the better she.

[13]

Yet in this coffer, which she with her brought,
Great threasure sithence we did finde contained;
Which as our owne we tooke, and so it thought.
But this same other Damzell since hath fained,
That to her selfe that threasure appertained;
And that she did transport the same by sea,
To bring it to her husband new ordained,
But suffred cruell shipwracke by the way.
But whether it be so or no, I can not say.

[14]

But whether it indeede be so or no,
This doe I say, that what so good or ill
Or God or Fortune vnto me did throw,
Not wronging any other by my will,
I hold mine owne, and so will hold it still.
And though my land he first did winne away,
And then my loue (though now it little skill,)
Yet my good lucke he shall not likewise pray;
But I will it defend, whilst euer that I may.

[15]

So hauing sayd, the younger did ensew;
Full true it is, what so about our land
My brother here declared hath to you:
But not for it this ods twixt vs doth stand,
But for this threasure throwne vpon his strand;
Which well I proue, as shall appeare by triall,
To be this maides, with whom I fastned hand,
Known by good markes, and perfect good espiall,
Therefore it ought be rendred her without deniall.

[16]

When they thus ended had, the Knight began;
Certes your strife were easie to accord,
Would ye remit it to some righteous man.
Vnto your selfe, said they, we giue our word,
To bide what iudgement ye shall vs afford.
Then for assuraunce to my doome to stand,
Vnder my foote let each lay downe his sword,
And then you shall my sentence vnderstand.
So each of them layd downe his sword out of his hand.

[17]

Then *Artegall* thus to the younger sayd;
Now tell me *Amidas*, if that ye may,
Your brothers land the which the sea hath layd
Vnto your part, and pluckt from his away,
By what good right doe you withhold this day?
What other right (quoth he) should you esteeme,
But that the sea it to my share did lay?
Your right is good (sayd he) and so I deeme,
That what the sea vnto you sent, your own should seeme.

[18]

Then turning to the elder thus he sayd;
Now *Bracidas* let this likewise be shounne.
Your brothers threasure, which from him is strayd,
Being the dowry of his wife well knowne,
By what right doe you claime to be your owne?
What other right (quoth he) should you esteeme,
But that the sea hath it vnto me throwne?
Your right is good (sayd he) and so I deeme,
That what the sea vnto you sent, your own should seeme.

[19]

For equall right in equall things doth stand,
For what the mighty Sea hath once possest,
And plucked quite from all possessors hand,
Whether by rage of waues, that neuer rest,
Or else by wracke, that wretches hath distrest,
He may dispose by his imperiall might,
As thing at randon left, to whom he list.
So *Amidas*, the land was yours first hight,
And so the threasure yours is *Bracidas* by right.

[20]

When he his sentence thus pronounced had,
Both *Amidas* and *Philtra* were displeased:
But *Bracidas* and *Lucy* were right glad,
And on the threasure by that iudgement seased.
So was their discord by this doome appeased,
And each one had his right. Then *Artegall*
When as their sharpe contention he had ceased,
Departed on his way, as did befall,
To follow his old quest, the which him forth did call.

[21]

So as he trauelled vpon the way,
He chaunst to come, where happily he spide
A rout of many people farre away;
To whom his course he hastily applide,
To weete the cause of their assemblaunce wide.
To whom when he approched neare in sight,
(An vncouth sight) he plainly then descrive
To be a troupe of women warlike dight,
With weapons in their hands, as ready for to fight.

[22]

And in the midst of them he saw a Knight,
With both his hands behinde him pinnoed hard,
And round about his necke an halter tight,
As ready for the gallow tree prepard:
His face was couered, and his head was bar'd,
That who he was, vneath was to descry;
And with full heauy heart with them he far'd,
Grieu'd to the soule, and groning inwardly,
That he of womens hands so base a death should dy.

[23]

But they like tyrants, merclesse the more,
Reioyced at his miserable case,
And him reuiled, and reproched sore
With bitter taunts, and termes of vile disgrace.
Now when as *Artegall* arriu'd in place,
Did aske, what cause brought that man to decay,
They round about him gan to swarne apace,
Meaning on him their cruell hands to lay,
And to haue wrought vnwares some villanous assay.

[24]

But he was soone aware of their ill minde,
And drawing backe deceiued their intent;
Yet though him selfe did shame on womankinde
His mighty hand to shend, he *Talus* sent
To wrecke on them their follies hardymynt:
Who with few sowces of his yron flake,
Dispersed all their troupe incontinent,
And sent them home to tell a piteous tale,
Of their vaine prowesse, turned to their proper bale.

[25]

But that same wretched man, ordaynd to die,
They left behind them, glad to be so quit:
Him *Talus* tooke out of perplexitie,
And horrour of fowle death for Knight vnfyt,
Who more then losse of life ydreaded it;
And him restoring vnto liuing light,
So brought vnto his Lord, where he did sit,
Beholding all that womanish weake fight;
Whom soone as he beheld, he knew, and thus behight.

[26]

Sir *Turpine*, haplesse man, what make you here?
Or haue you lost your selfe, and your discretion,
That euer in this wretched case ye were?
Or haue ye yeelded you to proude oppression
Of womens powre, that boast of mens subiection?
Or else what other deadly dismal day
Is falne on you, by heauens hard direction,
That ye were runne so fondly far astray,
As for to lead your selfe vnto your owne decay?

[27]

Much was the man confounded in his mind,
Partly with shame, and partly with dismay,
That all astonisht he him selfe did find,
And little had for his excuse to say,
But onely thus; Most haplesse well ye may
Me iustly terme, that to this shame am brought,
And made the scorne of Kighthod this same day.
But who can scape, what his owne fate hath wrought?
The worke of heauens will surpasseth humaine thought.

[28]

Right true: but faulty men vse oftentimes
To attribute their folly vnto fate,
And lay on heauen the guilt of their owne crimes.
But tell, Sir *Terpin*, ne let you amate
Your misery, how fell ye in this state.
Then sith ye needs (quoth he) will know my shame,
And all the ill, which chaunst to me of late,
I shortly will to you rehearse the same,
In hope ye will not turne misfortune to my blame.

[29]

Being desirous (as all Knights are woont)
Through hard aduentures deedes of armes to try,
And after fame and honour for to hunt,
I heard report that farre abrode did fly,
That a proud Amazon did late defy
All the braue Knights, that hold of Maidenhead,
And vnto them wrought all the villany,
That she could forge in her malicious head,
Which some hath put to shame, and many done be dead.

[30]

The cause, they say, of this her cruell hate,
Is for the sake of *Bellodant* the bold,
To whom she bore most feruent loue of late,
And wooed him by all the waies she could:
But when she saw at last, that he ne would
For ought or nought be wonne vnto her will,
She turn'd her loue to hatred manifold,
And for his sake vow'd to doe all the ill
Which she could doe to Knights, which now she doth fulfill.

[31]

For all those Knights, the which by force or guile
She doth subdue, she fowly doth entreat.
First she doth them of warlike armes despoile,
And cloth in womens weedes: And then with threat
Doth them compell to worke, to earne their meat,
To spin, to card, to sew, to wash, to wring;
Ne doth she giue them other thing to eat,
But bread and water, or like feeble thing,
Them to disable from reuenge aduenturing.

[32]

But if through stout disdaine of manly mind,
Any her proud obseruaunce will withstand,
Vppon that gibbet, which is there behind,
She causeth them be hang'd vp out of hand;
In which condition I right now did stand.
For being ouercome by her in fight,
And put to that base seruice of her band,
I rather chose to die in liues despight,
Then lead that shamefull life, vnworthy of a Knight.

[33]

How hight that Amazon (sayd *Artegall*?)
And where, and how far hence does she abide?
Her name (quoth he) they *Radigund* doe call,
A Princesse of great powre, and greater pride,
And Queene of Amazons, in armes well tride,
And sundry battels, which she hath atchieued
With great successe, that her hath glorifie,
And made her famous, more then is believed;
Ne would I it haue ween'd, had I not late it prieued.

[34]

Now sure (said he) and by the faith that I
To Maydenhead and noble knighthood owe,
I will not rest, till I her might doe trie,
And venge the shame, that she to Knights doth show.
Therefore Sir *Terpin* from you lightly throw
This squalid weede, the patterne of dispaire;
And wend with me, that ye may see and know,
How Fortune will your ruin'd name repaire,
And knights of Maidenhead, whose praise she would empaire.

[35]

With that, like one that hopelesse was repty'd
From deathes dore, at which he lately lay,
Those yron fetters, wherewith he was gyu'd,
The badges of reproch, he threw away,
And nimblly did him dight to guide the way
Vnto the dwelling of that Amazone.
Which was from thence not past a mile or tway:
A goodly city and a mighty one,
The which of her owne name she called *Radegone*.

[36]

Where they arriuing, by the watchmen were
Descried streight, who all the city warned,
How that three warlike persons did appeare,
Of which the one him seem'd a Knight all armed,
And th'other two well likely to haue harmed.
Estsoones the people all to harnesse ran,
And like a sort of Bees in clusters swarmed:
Ere long their Queene her selfe halfe, like a man
Came forth into the rout, and them t'array began.

[37]

And now the Knights being arriued neare,
Did beat vpon the gates to enter in,
And at the Porter, skorning them so few,
Threw many threats, if they the towne did win,
To teare his flesh in peeces for his sin.
Which when as *Radigund* there comming heard,
Her heart for rage did grate, and teeth did grin:
She bad that streight the gates should be vnbard,
And to them way to make, with weapons well prepard.

[38]

Soone as the gates were open to them set,
They pressed forward, entraunce to haue made.
But in the middle way they were ymet
With a sharpe showre of arrowes, which them staid,
And better bad aduise, ere they assaid
Vnknowen perill of bold womens pride.
Then all that rout vpon them rudely laid,
And heaped strokes so fast on euery side,
And arrowes haled so thicke, that they could not abide.

[39]

But *Radigund* her selfe, when she espide
Sir Terpin, from her direfull doome acquit,
So cruell doile amongst her maides dauide,
T'auenge that shame, they did on him commit,
All sodainely enflam'd with furious fit,
Like a fell Lionesse at him she flew,
And on his head-peece him so fiercely smit,
That to the ground him quite she ouerthrew,
Dismayd so with the stroke, that he no colours knew.

[40]

Soone as she saw him on the ground to grouell,
She lightly to him leapt, and in his necke
Her proud foote setting, at his head did leuell,
Weening at once her wrath on him to wreake,
And his contempt, that did her iudg'ment breake.
As when a Beare hath seiz'd her cruell clawes
Vpon the carkasse of some beast too weake,
Proudly stands ouer, and a while doth pause,
To heare the piteous beast pleading her plaintiffe cause.

[41]

Whom when as *Artegall* in that distresse
By chaunce beheld, he left the bloody slaughter,
In which he swam, and ranne to his redresse.
There her assayling fiercely fresh, he raught her
Such an huge stroke, that it of sence distraught her:
And had she not it warded warily,
It had depriu'd her mother of a daughter.
Nathlesse for all the powre she did apply,
It made her stagger oft, and stare with ghastly eye.

[42]

Like to an Eagle in his kingly pride,
Soring through his wide Empire of the aire,
To weather his brode sailes, by chaunce hath spide
A Goshauke, which hath seized for her share
Vpon some fowle, that should her feast prepare;
With dreadfull force he flies at her bylue,
That with his souce, which none enduren dare,
Her from the quarrey he away doth drieue,
And from her griping pounce the greedy prey doth riuue.

[43]

But soone as she her sence recover'd had,
She fiercely towards him her selfe gan dight,
Through vengeful wrath & sdeignfull pride half mad:
For neuer had she suffred such despight.
But ere she could ioyne hand with him to fight,
Her warlike maides about her flockt so fast,
That they disparted them, maugre their might,
And with their troupes did far a sunder cast:
But mongst the rest the fight did vntill euening last.

[44]

And euery while that mighty yron man,
With his strange weapon, neuer wont in warre,
Them sorely vext, and courst, and ouerran,
And broke their bowes, and did their shooting marre,
That none of all the many once did darre
Him to assault, nor once approach him nie,
But like a sort of sheepe dispersed farre
For dread of their deuouring enemie,
Through all the fields and vallies did before him flie.

[45]

But when as daies faire shinie-beame, yclowded
With fearefull shadowes of deformed night,
Warn'd man and beast in quiet rest be shrowded,
Bold *Radigund* with sound of trumpe on hight,
Causd all her people to surcease from fight,
And gathering them vnto her citties gate,
Made them all enter in before her sight,
And all the wounded, and the weake in state,
To be conuayed in, ere she would once retrace.

[46]

When thus the field was voided all away,
And all things quieted, the Elfin Knight
Weary of toile and trauell of that day,
Causd his paullion to be richly pight
Before the city gate, in open sight;
Where he him selfe did rest in safety,
Together with sir *Terpin* all that night:
But *Talus* vsde in times of ieopardy
To keepe a nightly watch, for dread of treachery.

[47]

But *Radigund* full of heart-gnawing griefe,
For the rebuke, which she sustain'd that day,
Could take no rest, ne would receiue reliefe,
But tossed in her troublous minde, what way
She mote reuenge that blot, which on her lay.
There she resolu'd her selfe in single fight
To try her Fortune, and his force assay,
Rather then see her people spoiled quight,
As she had seene that day a disauenterous sight.

[48]

She called forth to her a trusty mayd,
Whom she thought fittest for that businesse,
Her name was *Clarin*, and thus to her sayd;
Goe damzell quickly, doe thy selfe addresse,
To doe the message, which I shall expresse.
Goe thou vnto that stranger Faery Knight,
Who yeester day droue vs to such distresse,
Tell, that to morrow I with him wil fight,
And try in equall field, whether hath greater might.

[49]

But these conditions doe to him propound,
That if I vanquishe him, he shall obey
My law, and euer to my lore be bound,
And so will I, if me he vanquish may;
What euer he shall like to doe or say.
Goe streight, and take with thee, to witnesse it,
Sixe of thy fellowes of the best array,
And beare with you both wine and iuncates fit,
And bid him eate, henceforth he oft shall hungry sit.

[50]

The Damzell streight obayd, and putting all
In readinesse, forth to the Towne-gate went,
Where sounding loud a Trumpet from the wall,
Vnto those warlike Knights she warning sent.
Then *Talus* forth issuing from the tent,
Vnto the wall his way did fearelesse take,
To weeten what that trumpets sounding ment:
Where that same Damzell lowdly him bespake,
And shew'd, that with his Lord she would emparlance make.

[51]

So he them streight conducted to his Lord,
Who, as he could, them goodly well did greete,
Till they had told their message word by word:
Which he accepting well, as he could weete,
Them fairely entaynd with curt'sies meete,
And gaue them gifts and things of deare delight.
So backe againe they homeward turnd their feete.
But *Artegall* him selfe to rest did dight,

That he mote fresher be against the next daies fight.

[Original content ©2018 by Dirk Jol.]