

## *Cant. VIII.*

*Prince Arthure and Sir Artegall,  
Free Samient from feare:  
They slay the Soudan, driue his wife,  
Adicia to despaire.*

[1]

**N**Ought vnder heauen so strongly doth allure  
The sence of man, and all his minde possesse,  
As beauties lonely baite, that doth procure  
Great warriors oft their rigour to repressse,  
And mighty hands forget their manlinesse;  
Drawne with the powre of an heart-robbing eye,  
And wrapt in fetters of a golden tresse,  
That can with melting pleasaunce mollifye  
Their hardned hearts, enur'd to bloud and cruelty.

[2]

So whylome learnd that mighty Iewish swaine,  
Each of whose lockes did match a man in might,  
To lay his spoiles before his lemans traine:  
So also did that great Oetean Knight  
For his loues sake his Lions skin vndight:  
And so did warlike *Antony* neglect  
The worlds whole rule for *Cleopatras* sight.  
Such wondrous powre hath wemens faire aspect,  
To captiue men, and make them all the world reiect.

[3]

Yet could it not sterne *Artegall* retaine,  
Nor hold from suite of his auowed quest,  
Which he had vndertane to *Gloriane*;  
But left his loue, albe her strong request,  
Faire *Britomart* in languor and vnrest,  
And rode him selfe vpon his first intent:  
Ne day nor night did euer idly rest;  
Ne wight but onely *Talus* with him went,  
The true guide of his way and vertuous gouernment.

[4]

So traouelling, he chaunst far off to heed  
A Damzell, flying on a palfrey fast

Before two Knights, that after her did speed  
With all their powre, and her full fiercely chast  
In hope to haue her ouerhent at last:  
Yet fled she fast, and both them farre outwent,  
Carried with wings of feare, like fowle aghast,  
With locks all loose, and rayment all to rent;  
And euer as she rode, her eye was backward bent.

[5]

Soone after these he saw another Knight,  
That after those two former rode apace,  
With speare in rest, and prickt with all his might:  
So ran they all, as they had bene at bace,  
They being chased, that did others chase.  
At length he saw the hindmost ouertake  
One of those two, and force him turne his face;  
How euer loth he were his way to slake,  
Yet mote he algates now abide, and answere make.

[6]

But th'other still pursu'd the fearefull Mayd;  
Who still from him as fast away did flie,  
Ne once for ought her speedy passage stayd,  
Till that at length she did before her spie  
Sir *Artegall*, to whom she streight did hie  
With gladfull hast, in hope of him to get  
Succour against her greedy enemy:  
Who seeing her approach gan forward set,  
To saue her from her feare, and him from force to let.

[7]

But he like hound full greedy of his pray,  
Being impatient of impediment,  
Continu'd still his course, and by the way  
Thought with his speare him quight haue ouerwent.  
So both together ylike felly bent,  
Like fiercely met. But *Artegall* was stronger,  
And better skild in Tilt and Turnament,  
And bore him quite out of his saddle, longer  
Then two speares length; So mischiefe ouermatcht the wronger.

[8]

And in his fall misfortune hm mistooke;

For on his head vnhappily he pight,  
That his owne waight his necke asunder broke,  
And left there dead. Meane while the other Knight  
Defeated had the other faytour quight,  
And all his bowels in his body brast:  
Whom leauing there in that dispiteous plight,  
He ran still on, thinking to follow fast  
His other fellow Pagan, which before him past.

[9]

In stead of whom finding there ready prest  
Sir *Artegall*, without discretion  
He at him ran, with ready speare in rest:  
Who seeing him come still so fiercely on,  
Against him made againe. So both anon  
Together met, and strongly either strooke  
And broke their speares; yet neither has forgon  
His horses backe, yet to and fro long shooke,  
And tottred like two towres, which through a tempest quooke.

[10]

But when againe they had recouered sence,  
They drew their swords, in mind to make amends  
For what their speares had fayld of their pretence.  
Which when the Damzell, who those deadly ends  
Of both her foes had seene, and now her frends  
For her beginning a more fearefull fray,  
She to them runnes in hast, and her haire rends,  
Crying to them their cruell hands to stay,  
Vntill they both doe heare, what she to them will say.

[11]

They stayd their hands, when she thus gan to speake;  
Ah gentle Knights, what meane ye thus vnwise  
Vpon your selues anothers wrong to wreake?  
I am the wrong'd, whom ye did enterprise  
Both to redresse, and both redrest likewise:  
Witnesse the Paynims both, whom ye may see  
There dead on ground. What doe ye then deuise  
Of more reuenge? if more, then I am shee,  
Which was the roote of all, end your reuenge on mee.

[12]

Whom when they heard so say, they lookt about,  
To weete if it were true, as she had told;  
Where when they saw their foes dead out of doubt,  
Eftsoones they gan their wrothfull hands to hold,  
And Ventailes reare, each other to behold.  
Tho when as *Artegall* did *Arthure* vew,  
So faire a creature, and so wondrous bold,  
He much admired both his heart and hew,  
And touched with intire affection, nigh him drew.

[13]

Saying, sir Knight, of pardon I you pray,  
That all vnweeting haue you wrong'd thus sore,  
Suffring my hand against my heart to stray:  
Which if ye please forgiue, I will therefore  
Yeeld for amends my selfe yours euermore,  
Or what so penaunce shall by you be red.  
To whom the Prince; Certes me needeth more  
To craue the same, whom errour so misled,  
As that I did mistake the liuing for the ded.

[14]

But sith ye please, that both our blames shall die,  
Amends may for the trespasse soone be made,  
Since neither is endamadg'd much thereby.  
So can they both them selues full eath perswade  
To faire accordaunce, and both faults to shade,  
Either embracing other louingly,  
And swearing faith to either on his blade,  
Neuer thenceforth to nourish enmity,  
But either others cause to maintaine mutually.

[15]

Then *Artegall* gan of the Prince enquire,  
What were those knights, which there on ground were layd,  
And had receiu'd their follies worthy hire,  
And for what cause they chased so that Mayd.  
Certes I wote not well (the Prince then sayd)  
But by aduenture found them faring so,  
As by the way vnweetingly I strayd,  
And lo the Damzell selfe, whence all did grow,  
Of whom we may at will the whole occasion know.

[16]

Then they that Damzell called to then nie,  
And asked her, what were those two her fone,  
From whom she earst so fast away did flie;  
And what was she her selfe so woe begone,  
And for what cause pursu'd of them attone.  
To whom she thus; Then wote ye well, that I  
Doe serue a Queene, that not far hence doth wone,  
A Princesse of great powre and maiestie,  
Famous through all the world, and honor'd far and nie.

[17]

Her name *Mercilla* most men vse to call;  
That is a mayden Queene of high renowne,  
For her great bounty knowen ouer all,  
And soueraine grace, with which her royall crowne  
She doth support, and strongly beateth downe  
The malice of her foes, which her enuy,  
And at her happinesse do fret and frowne:  
Yet she her selfe the more doth magnify,  
And euen to her foes her mercies multiply.

[18]

Mongst many which maligne her happy state,  
There is a mighty man, which wonnes here by  
That with most fell despight and deadly hate,  
Seekes to subuert her Crowne and dignity,  
And all his powre doth thereunto apply:  
And her good Knights, of which so braue a band  
Serues her, as any Princesse vnder sky,  
He either spoiles, if they against him stand,  
Or to his part allures, and bribeth vnder hand.

[19]

Ne him sufficeth all the wrong and ill,  
Which he vnto her people does each day,  
But that he seekes by traytrous traines to spill  
Her person, and her sacred selfe to slay:  
That ô ye heauens defend, and turne away  
From her, vnto the miscreant him selfe,  
That neither hath religion nor fay,  
But makes his God of his vngodly pelfe,  
And Idols serues; so let his Idols serue the Elfe.

[20]

To all which cruell tyranny they say,  
He is prouokt, and stird vp day and night  
By his bad wife, that hight *Adicia*,  
Who counsels him through confidence of might,  
To breake all bonds of law, and rules of right.  
For she her selfe professeth mortall foe  
To Iustice, and against her still doth fight,  
Working to all, that loue her, deadly woe,  
And making all her Knights and people to doe so.

[21]

Which my liege Lady seeing, thought it best,  
With that his wife in friendly wise to deale,  
For stint of strife, and stablishment of rest  
Both to her selfe, and to her common weale,  
And all forepast displeasures to repeale.  
So me in message vnto her she sent,  
To treat with her by way of enterdeale,  
Of finall peace and faire attonement,  
Which might concluded be by mutuall consent.

[22]

All times haue wont safe passage to afford  
To messengers, that come for causes iust:  
But this proude Dame disdayning all accord,  
Not onely into bitter termes forth brust,  
Reuiling me, and rayling as she Iust,  
But lastly to make prooffe of vtmost shame,  
Me like a dog she out of dores did thrust,  
Miscalling me by many a bitter name,  
That neuer did her ill, ne once deserued blame.

[23]

And lastly, that no shame might wanting be,  
When I was gone, soone after me she sent  
These two false Knights, whom there ye lying see,  
To be by them dishonoured and shent:  
But thankt be God, and your good hardiment,  
They haue the price of their owne folly payd.  
So said this Damzell, that hight *Samient*,  
And to those knights, for their so noble ayd,  
Her selfe most gratefull shew'd, & heaped thanks repayd.

[24]

But they now hauing throughly heard, and seene  
Al those great wrongs, the which that mayd complained.  
To haue bene done against her Lady Queene,  
By that proud dame, which her so much disdained,  
Were moued much thereat, and twixt them fained,  
With all their force to worke auengement strong  
Vppon the Souldanselfe, which it mayntained,  
And on his Lady, th'author of that wrong,  
And vppon all those Knights, that did to her belong.

[25]

But thinking best by counterfet disguise  
To their deseigne to make the easier way,  
They did this complot twixt them selues devise,  
First that sir *Artegall* should him array,  
Like one of those two Knights, which dead there lay.  
And then that Damzell, the sad *Samient*,  
Should as his purchast prize with him conuay  
Vnto the Souldans court, her to present  
Vnto his scornefull Lady, that for her had sent.

[26]

So as they had deuiz'd, sir *Artegall*  
Him clad in th'armour of a Pagan knight,  
And taking with him, as his vanquisht thrall,  
That Damzell, led her to the Souldans right.  
Where soone as his proud wife of her had sight,  
Forth of her window as she looking lay,  
She weened streight, it was her Paynim Knight,  
Which brought that Damzell, as his purchast pray;  
And sent to him a Page, that mote direct his way.

[27]

Who bringing them to their appointed place,  
Offred his seruice to disarme the Knight;  
But he refusing him to let vnlace,  
For doubt to be discouered by his sight,  
Kept himselfe still in his straunge armour dight.  
Soone after whom the Prince arriued there,  
And sending to the Souldan in despight  
A bold defyance, did of him requere  
That Damzell, whom he held as wrongfull prisonere.

[28]

Wherewith the Souldan all with furie fraught,  
Swearing, and banning most blasphemously,  
Commaunded straight his armour to be brought,  
And mounting straight vpon a charret hye,  
With yron wheelles and hookes arm'd dreadfully,  
And drawne of cruell steedes, which he had fed  
With flesh of men, whom through fell tyranny  
He slaughtred had, and ere they were halfe ded,  
Their bodies to his beasts for prouender did spred.

[29]

So forth he came all in a cote of plate,  
Burnisht with bloudie rust, whiles on the greene  
The Briton Prince him readie did awayte,  
In glistening armes right goodly well beseene,  
That shone as bright, as doth the heauen sheene;  
And by his stirrup *Talus* did attend,  
Playing his pages part, as he had beene  
Before directed by his Lord; to th'end  
He should his flae to finall execution bend.

[30]

Thus goe they both together to their geare,  
With like fierce minds, but meanings different:  
For the proud Souldan with presumptuous cheare,  
And countenance sublime and insolent,  
Sought onely slaughter and auengement:  
But the braue Prince for honour and for right,  
Gainst tortious powre and lawlesse regiment,  
In the behalfe of wronged weake did fight:  
More in his causes truth he trusted then in might.

[31]

Like to the *Thracian* Tyrant, who they say  
Vnto his horses gaue his guests for meat,  
Till he himselfe was made their greedie pray,  
And torne in peeces by *Alcides* great.  
So thought the Souldan in his follies threat,  
Either the Prince in peeces to haue torne  
With his sharpe wheelles, in his first rages heat,  
Or vnder his fierce horses feet haue borne  
And trampled downe in dust his thoughts disdained scorne.



[32]

But the bold child that perill well espying,  
If he too rashly to his charet drew,  
Gave way vnto his horses speedie flying,  
And their resistlesse rigour did eschew.  
Yet as he passed by, the Pagan threw  
A shiuering dart with so impetuous force,  
That had he not it shun'd with heedfull vew,  
It had himselfe transfixed, or his horse,  
Or made them both one masse withouten more remorse.

[33]

Off drew the Prince vnto his charret nigh,  
In hope some stroke to fasten on him neare;  
But he was mounted in his seat so high,  
And his wingfooted coursers him did beare  
So fast away, that ere his readie speare  
He could aduance, he farre was gone and past.  
Yet still he him did follow euery where,  
And followed was of him likewise full fast;  
So long as in his steedes the flaming breath did last.

[34]

Againe the Pagan threw another dart,  
Of which he had with him abundant store,  
On euery side of his embatteld cart,  
And of all other weapons lesse or more,  
Which warlike vses had deuiz'd of yore.  
The wicked shaft guyded through th'ayrie wyde,  
By some bad spirit, that it to mischief bore,  
Stayd not, till through his curat it did glyde,  
And made a griesly wound in his enriuen side.

[35]

Much was he grieved with that haplesse throe,  
That opened had the welspring of his blood;  
But much the more that to his hatefull foe  
He mote not come, to wreake his wrathfull mood.  
That made him raue, like to a Lyon wood,  
Which being wounded of the huntsmans hand  
Can not come neare him in the couert wood,  
Where he with boughes hath built his shady stand,  
And fenst himselfe about with many a flaming brand.

[36]

Still when he sought t'approch vnto him ny,  
His charret wheelles about him whirled round,  
And made him backe againe as fast to fly;  
And eke his steedes like to an hungry hound,  
That hunting after game hath carrion found,  
So cruelly did him pursew and chace,  
That his good steed, all were he much renownd  
For noble courage, and for hardie race,  
Durst not endure their sight, but fled from place to place.

[37]

Thus long they trast, and trauerst to and fro,  
Seeking by euery way to make some breach,  
Yet could the Prince not nigh vnto him goe,  
That one sure stroke he might vnto him reach,  
Whereby his strengthes assay he might him teach.  
At last from his victorious shield he drew  
The vaile, which did his powrefull light empeach;  
And comming full before his horses vew,  
As they vpon him prest, it plaine to them did shew.

[38]

Like lightening flash, that hath the gazer burned,  
So did the sight thereof their sense dismay,  
That backe againe vpon themselues they turned,  
And with their ryder ranne perforce away:  
Ne could the Souldan them from flying stay,  
With raynes, or wonted rule, as well he knew.  
Nought feared they, what he could do, or say,  
But th'onely feare, that was before their vew;  
From which like mazed deare, dismayfully they flew.

[39]

Fast did they fly, as them their feete could beare,  
High ouer hilles, and lowly ouer dales,  
As they were follow'd of their former feare.  
In vaine the Pagan bannes, and swears, and rayles,  
And backe with both his hands vnto him hayles  
The resty raynes, regarded now no more:  
He to them calles and speakes, yet nought auayles;  
They heare him not, they haue forgot his lore,  
But go, which way they list, their guide they haue forlore.

[40]

As when the fire-mouthed steeds, which drew  
The Sunnes bright wayne to *Phaetons* decay,  
Soone as they did the monstrous Scorpion vew,  
With vgly craples crawling in their way,  
The dreadfull sight did them so sore affray,  
That their well knowne courses they forwent,  
And leading th'euer-burning lampe astray,  
This lower world nigh all to ashes brent,  
And left their scorched path yet in the firmament.

[41]

Such was the furie of these head-strong steeds,  
Soone as the infants sunlike shield they saw,  
That all obedience both to words and deeds  
They quite forgot, and scornd all former law;  
Through woods, and rocks, and mountaines they did draw  
The yron charet, and the wheeles did teare,  
And tost the Paynim, without feare or awe;  
From side to side they tost him here and there,  
Crying to them in vaine, that nould his crying heare.

[42]

Yet still the Prince pursew'd him close behind,  
Oft making offer him to smite, but found  
No easie meanes according to his mind.  
At last they haue all ouerthrowne to ground  
Quite topside turuey, and the pagan hound  
Amongst the yron hookes and graples keene,  
Torne all to rags, and rent with many a wound,  
That no whole peece of him was to be seene,  
But scattred all about, and strow'd vpon the greene.

[43]

Like as the cursed some of *Theseus*,  
That following his chace in dewy morne,  
To fly his stepdames loues outrageous,  
Of his owne steedes was all to peeces torne,  
And his faire limbs left in the woods forlorne;  
That for his sake *Diana* did lament,  
And all the wooddy Nymphes did wayle and mourne.  
So was this Souldan rapt and all to rent,  
That of his shape appear'd no litle monument.

[44]

Onely his shield and armour, which there lay,  
Though nothing whole, but all to brused and broken,  
He vp did take, and with him brought away,  
That mote remaine for an eternall token  
To all, mongst whom this storie should be spoken,  
How worthily, by heauens high decree,  
Iustice that day of wrong her selfe had wroken,  
That all men which that spectacle did see,  
By like ensample mote for euer warned bee.

[45]

So on a tree, before the Tyrants dore,  
He caused them be hung in all mens sight,  
To be a moniment for euermore.  
Which when his Ladie from the castles hight  
Beheld, it much appald her troubled spright:  
Yet not, as women wont in dolefull fit,  
She was dismayd, or faynted through affright,  
But gathered vnto her her troubled wit,  
And gan eftsoones deuize to be aueng'd for it.

[46]

Streight downe she ranne, like an enraged cow,  
That is berobbed of her youngling dere,  
With knife in hand, and fatally did vow,  
To wreake her on that mayden messengere,  
Whom she had causd be kept as prisonere,  
By *Artegall*, misween'd for her owne Knight,  
That brought her backe. And comming present there,  
She at her ran with all her force and might,  
All flaming with reuenge and furious despight.

[47]

Like raging *Ino*, when with knife in hand  
She threw her husbands mured infant out,  
Or fell *Medea*, when on *Colchicke* strand  
Her brothers bones she scattered all about;  
Or as that madding mother, mongst the rout  
Of *Bacchus* Priests her owne deare flesh did teare.  
Yet neither *Ino*, nor *Medea* stout,  
Nor all the *Moenades* so furious were,  
As this bold woman, when she saw that Damzell there.

[48]

But *Artegall* being thereof aware,  
Did stay her cruell hand, ere she her raught,  
And as she did her selfe to strike prepare,  
Out of her fist the wicked weapon caught:  
With that like one enfelon'd or distraught,  
She forth did come, whether her rage her bore,  
With franticke passion, and with furie fraught;  
And breaking forth out at a posterne dore,  
Vnto the wyld wood ranne, her dolours to deplore.

[49]

As a mad bytch, when as the franticke fit  
Her burning tongue with rage inflamed hath,  
Doth runne at randon, and with furious bit  
Snatching at euery thing, doth wreake her wrath  
On man and beast, that commeth in her path.  
There they doe say, that she transformed was  
Into a Tygre, and that Tygres scath  
In crueltie and outrage she did pas,  
To proue her surname true, that she imposed has.

[50]

Then *Artegall* himselve discovering plaine,  
Did issue forth gainst all that warlike rout  
Of knights and armed men, which did maintaine  
That Ladies part, and to the Souldan lout:  
All which he did assault with courage stout,  
All were they nigh an hundred knights of name,  
And like wyld Goates them chaced all about,  
Flying from place to place with cowheard shame,  
So that with finall force them all he ouercame.

[51]

Then caused he the gates be opened wyde,  
And there the Prince, as victour of that day,  
With tryumph entertayn'd and glorifyde,  
Presenting him with all the rich array,  
And roiall pompe, which there long hidden lay,  
Purchast through lawlesse powre and tortious wrong  
Of that proud Souldan, whom he earst did slay.  
So both for rest there hauing stayd not long,

Marcht with that mayd, fit matter for another song.

[Original content ©2018 by Dirk Jol.]