

Cant. IX.

*Arthur and Artegall catch Guyle
whom Talus doth dismay,
They to Mercillaes pallace come,
and see her rich array.*

[1]

WHat Tygre, or what other saluage wight
Is so exceeding furious and fell,
As wrong, when it hath arm'd it selfe with might?
Not fit mongst men, that doe with reason mell,
But mongst wyld beasts and saluage woods to dwell;
Where still the stronger doth the weake deuoure,
And they that most in boldnesse doe excell,
Are dreaded most, and feared for their powre:
Fit for *Adicia*, there to build her wicked bowre.

[2]

There let her wonne farre from resort of men,
Where righteous *Artegall* her late exyled;
There let her euer keepe her damned den,
Where none may be with her lewd parts defyled,
Nor none but beasts may be of her despoyled:
And turne we to the noble Prince, where late
We did him leaue, after that he had foyled
The cruell Souldan, and with dreadfull fate
Had vtterly subuerted his vnrighteous state.

[3]

Where hauing with Sir *Artegall* a space
Well solast in that Souldans late delight,
They both resolving now to leaue the place,
Both it and all the wealth therein behight
Vnto that Damzell in her Ladies right,
And so would haue departed on their way.
But she them woo'd by all the meanes she might,
And earnestly besought, to wend that day
With her, to see her Ladie thence not farre away.

[4]

By whose entreatie both they ouercommen,
Agree to goe with her, and by the way,

(As often falles) of sundry things did comen.
Mongst which that Damzell did to them bewray
A straunge aduenture, which not farre thence lay;
To weet a wicked villaine, bold and stout,
Which wonned in a rocke not farre away,
That robbed all the countrie there about,
And brought the pillage home, whence none could get it out,

[5]

Thereto both his owne wylie wit, (she sayd)
And eke the fastnesse of his dwelling place,
Both vnassaylable, gaue him great ayde:
For he so crafty was to forge and face,
So light of hand, and nymble of his pace,
So smooth of tongue, and subtile in his tale,
That could deceiue one looking in his face;
Therefore by name *Malengin* they him call,
Well knowen by his feates, and famous ouer all.

[6]

Through these his slights he many doth confound,
And eke the rocke, in which he wons to dwell,
Is wondrous strong, and hewen farre vnder ground
A dreadfull depth, how deepe no man can tell;
But some doe say, it goeth downe to hell.
And all within, it full of wyndings is,
And hidden wayes, that scarce an hound by smell
Can follow out those false footsteps of his,
Ne none can backe returne, that once are gone amis.

[7]

Which when those knights had heard, their harts gan earne,
To vnderstand that villeins dwelling place,
And greatly it desir'd of her to learne,
And by which way they towards it should trace.
Were not (sayd she) that it should let your pace
Towards my Ladies presence by you ment,
I would you guyde directly to the place.
Then let not that (said they) stay your intent;
For neither will one foot, till we that carle haue hent.

[8]

So forth they past, till they approached ny

Vnto the rocke, where was the villains won,
Which when the Damzell neare at hand did spy,
She warn'd the knights thereof: who thereupon
Gan to aduize, what best were to be done.
So both agreed, to send that mayd afore,
Where she might sit nigh to the den alone,
Wayling, and raysing pittifull vprore,
As if she did some great calamitie deplore.

[9]

With noyse whereof when as the caytiue carle
Should issue forth, in hope to find some spoyle,
They in awayt would closely him ensnarle,
Ere to his den he backward could recoyle,
And so would hope him easily to foyle.
The Damzell straight went, as she was directed,
Vnto the rocke, and there vpon the soyle
Hauing her selfe in wretched wize abiected,
Gan weepe and wayle, as if great grieffe had her affected.

[10]

The cry whereof entring the hollow caue,
Eftsoones brought forth the villaine, as they ment,
With hope of her some wishfull boot to haue.
Full dreadfull wight he was, as euer went
Vpon the earth, with hollow eyes deepe pent,
And long curld locks, that downe his shoulders shagged,
And on his backe an vncouth vestiment
Made of straunge stufte, but all to worne and ragged,
And vnderneath his breech was all to torne and iagged.

[11]

And in his hand an huge long staffe he held,
Whose top was arm'd with many an yron hooke,
Fit to catch hold of all that he could weld,
Or in the compasse of his clouches tooke;
And euer round about he cast his looke.
Als at his backe a great wyde net he bore,
With which he seldome fished at the brooke,
But vsd to fish for fooles on the dry shore,
Of which he in faire weather wont to take great store.

[12]

Him when the damzell saw fast by her side,
So vgly creature, she was nigh dismayd,
And now for helpe aloud in earnest cride.
But when the villaine saw her so affrayd,
He gan with guilefull words her to perswade,
To banish feare, and with *Sardonian* smyle
Laughing on her, his false intent to shade,
Gan forth to lay his bayte her to beguyle,
That from her self vnwares he might her steale the whyle.

[13]

Like as the fouler on his guilefull pype
Charmes to the birds full many a pleasant lay,
That they the whiles may take lesse heedie keepe,
How he his nets doth for their ruine lay:
So did the villaine to her prate and play,
And many pleasant trickes before her show,
To turne her eyes from his intent away:
For he in slights and iugling feates did flow,
And of legierdemayne the mysteries did know.

[14]

To which whilest she lent her intentiue mind,
He suddenly his net vpon her threw,
That ouersprad her like a puffe of wind;
And snatching her soone vp, ere well she knew,
Ran with her fast away vnto his mew,
Crying for helpe aloud. But when as ny
He came vnto his caue, and there did vew
The armed knights stopping his passage by,
He threw his burden downe, and fast away did fly.

[15]

But *Artegall* him after did pursew,
The whiles the Prince there kept the entrance still:
Vp to the rocke he ran, and thereon flew
Like a wyld Gote, leaping from hill to hill,
And dauncing on the craggy cliffes at will;
That deadly daunger seem'd in all mens sight,
To tempt such steps, where footing was so ill:
Ne ought auayled for the armed knight,
To thinke to follow him, that was so swift and light.

[16]

Which when he saw, his yron man he sent,
To follow him; for he was swift in chace.
He him pursewd, where euer that he went,
Both ouer rockes, and hilles, and euery place,
Where so he fled, he followd him apace:
So that he shortly forst him to forsake
The hight, and downe descend vnto the base.
There he him courst a fresh, and soone did make
To leaue his proper forme, and other shape to take.

[17]

Into a Foxe himselfe he first did tourne;
But he him hunted like a Foxe full fast:
Then to a bush himselfe he did transforme,
But he the bush did beat, till that at last
Into a bird it chaung'd, and from him past,
Flying from tree to tree, from wand to wand:
But he then stones at it so long did cast,
That like a stone it fell vpon the land,
But he then tooke it vp, and held fast in his hand.

[18]

So he it brought with him vnto the knights,
And to his Lord Sir *Artegall* it lent,
Warning him hold it fast, for feare of slights.
Who whilest in hand it gryping hart he hent,
Into a Hedgehogge all vnwares it went,
And prickt him so, that he away it threw.
Then gan it runne away incontinent,
Being returned to his former hew:
But Talus soone him ouertooke, and backward drew.

[19]

But when as he would to a snake againe
Haue turn'd himselfe, he with his yron flayle
Gan driue at him, with so huge might and maine,
That all his bones, as small as sandy grayle
He broke, and did his bowels disentrayle;
Crying in vaine for helpe, when helpe was past.
So did deceit the selfe deceiuer fayle,
There they him left a carrion outcast;
For beasts and foules to feede vpon for their repast.

[20]

Thence forth they passed with that gentle Mayd,
To see her Ladie, as they did agree.
To which when she approched, thus she sayd;
Loe now, right noble knights, arriu'd ye bee
Nigh to the place, which ye desir'd to see:
There shall ye see my souerayne Lady Queene
Most sacred wight, most debonayre and free,
That euer yet vpon this earth was seene,
Or that with Diademe hath euer crowned beene.

[21]

The gentle knights reioyced much to heare
The prayses of that Prince so manifold,
And passing litle further, commen were,
Where they a stately pallace did behold,
Of pompous show, much more then she had told;
With many towres, and tarras mounted hye,
And all their tops bright glittering with gold,
That seemed to out shine the dimmed skye,
And with their brightnesse daz'd the straunge beholders eye.

[22]

There they alighting, by that Damzell were
Directed in, and shewed all the sight:
Whose porch, that most magnificke did appeare,
Stood open wyde to all men day and night;
Yet warded well by one of mickle might,
That sate thereby, with gyantlike resemblance,
To keepe out guyle, and malice, and despight,
That vnder shew oftymes of fayned semblance,
Are wont in Princes courts to worke great scath and hindrance.

[23]

His name was *Awe*; by whom they passing in
Went vp the hall, that was a large wyde roome,
All full of people making troublous din,
And wondrous noyse, as if that there were some,
Which vnto them was dealing righteous doome.
By whom they passing, through the thickest preasse,
The marshall of the hall to them did come;
His name hight *Order*, who commaunding peace,
Them guyded through the throng, that did their clamors cease.

[24]

They ceast their clamors vpon them to gaze;
Whom seeing all in armour bright as day,
Straunge there to see, it did them much amaze,
And with vnwonted terror halfe affray.
For neuer saw they there the like array.
Ne euer was the name of warre there spoken,
But ioyous peace and quietnesse alway,
Dealing iust iudgements, that mote not be broken
For any brybes, or threates of any to be wroken.

[25]

There as they entred at the Scriene, they saw
Some one, whose tongue was for his trespasse vyle
Nayld to a post, adiudged so by law:
For that therewith he falsely did reuyle,
And foule blaspheme that Queene for forged guyle,
Both with bold speaches, which he blazed had,
And with lewd poems, which he did compyle;
For the bold title of a Poet bad
He on himselfe had ta'en, and rayling rymes had sprad.

[26]

Thus there he stood, whylest high ouer his head,
There written was the purport of his sin,
In cyphers strange, that few could rightly read,
BON FONNS: but *bon* that once had written bin,
Was raced out, and *Mal* was now put in.
So now *Malfont* was plainely to be red;
Eyther for th'euill, which he did therein,
Or that he likened was to a welhed
Of euill words, and wicked sclaunders by him shed.

[27]

They passing by, were guyded by degree
Vnto the presence of that gracious Queene:
Who sate on high, that she might all men see,
And might of all men royally be seene,
Vpon a throne of gold full bright and sheene,
Adorned all with gemmes of endlesse price,
As either might for wealth haue gotten bene,
Or could be fram'd by workmans rare deuce;
And all embost with Lyons and with Flourdelice.

[28]

All ouer her a cloth of state was spred,
Not of rich tissew, nor of cloth of gold,
Nor of ought else, that may be richest red,
But like a cloud, as likest may be told,
That her brode spreading wings did wyde vnfold;
Whose skirts were bordred with bright sunny beams,
Glistring like gold, amongst the plights enrold,
And here and there shooting forth siluer streames,
Mongst which crept litle Angels through the glittering gleames.

[29]

Seemed those litle Angels did vphold
The cloth of state, and on their purpled wings
Did beare the pendants, through their nimblesse bold:
Besides a thousand more of such, as sings
Hymnes to high God, and carols heauenly things,
Encompassed the throne, on which she sate:
She Angel-like, the heyre of ancient kings
And mightie Conquerors, in royall state,
Whylest kings and kesars at her feet did them prostrate.

[30]

Thus she did sit in souerayne Maiestie,
Holding a Scepter in her royall hand,
The sacred pledge of peace and clemencie,
With which high God had blest her happie land,
Maugre so many foes, which did withstand.
But at her feet her sword was likewise layde,
Whose long rest rusted the bright steely brand;
Yet when as foes enforst, or friends sought ayde,
She could it sternely draw, that all the world dismayde.

[31]

And round about, before her feet there sate
A beuie of faire Virgins clad in white,
That goodly seem'd t'adorne her royall state,
All louely daughters of high *Ioue*, that hight,
Litae by him begot in lous delight,
Vpon the righteous *Themis*: those they say
Vpon *Ioues* iudgement seat wayt day and night,
And when in wrath he threats the worlds decay,
They doe his anger calme, and cruell vengeance stay.

[32]

They also doe by his diuine permission
Vpon the thrones of mortall Princes tend,
And often treat for pardon and remission
To suppliants, through frayltie which offend.
Those did vpon *Mercillaes* throne attend:
Iust *Dice*, wise *Eunomie*, myld *Eirene*,
And them amongst, her glorie to commend,
Sate goodly *Temperance* in garments clene,
And sacred *Reuerence*, yborne of heauenly strene.

[33]

Thus did she sit in royall rich estate,
Admyr'd of many, honoured of all,
Whylest vnderneath her feete, there as she sate,
An huge great Lyon lay, that mote appall
An hardie courage, like captiued thrall,
With a strong yron chaine and coller bound,
That once he could not moue, nor quich at all;
Yet did he murmure with rebellions sound,
And softly royne, when saluage choler gan redound.

[34]

So sitting high in dreaded souerayntie,
Those two strange knights were to her presence brought;
Who bowing low before her Maiestie,
Did to her myld obeysance, as they ought,
And meekest boone, that they imagine mought.
To whom she eke inclyning her withall,
As a faire stoupe of her high soaring thought,
A chearefull countenance on them let fall,
Yet tempred with some maiestie imperiall.

[35]

As the bright sunne, what time his fierie teme
Towards the westerne brim begins to draw,
Gins to abate the brightnesse of his beme,
And feruour of his flames somewhat adaw:
So did this mightie Ladie, when she saw
Those two strange knights such homage to her make,
Bate somewhat of that Maiestie and awe,
That whylome wont to doe so many quake,
And with more myld aspect those two to entertake.

[36]

Now at that instant, as occasion fell,
When these two stranger knights arriu'd in place,
She was about affaires of common wele,
Dealing of Iustice with indifferent grace,
And hearing pleas of people meane and base.
Mongst which as then, there was for to be heard
The tryall of a great and weightie case,
Which on both sides was then debating hard:
But at the sight of these, those were a while debard.

[37]

But after all her princely entertayne,
To th'hearing of that former cause in hand,
Her selfe eftsoones she gan conuert againe;
Which that those knights likewise mote vnderstand,
And wisse forth aright in forrain land,
Taking them vp vnto her stately throne,
Where they mote heare the matter throughly scand
On either part, she placed th'one on th'one,
The other on the other side, and neare them none.

[38]

Then was there brought, as prisoner to the barre,
A Ladie of great countenance and place,
But that she it with foule abuse did marre;
Yet did appeare rare beautie in her face,
But blotted with condition vile and base,
That all her other honour did obscure,
And titles of nobilitie deface:
Yet in that wretched semblant, she did sure
The peoples great compassion vnto her allure.

[39]

Then vp arose a person of deepe reach,
And rare in-sight, hard matters to reuele;
That well could charme his tongue, & time his speach
To all assayes; his name was called *Zelee*:
He gan that Ladie strongly to appele
Of many haynous crymes, by her enured,
And with sharpe reasons rang her such a pele,
That those, whom she to pitie had allured,
He now t'abhorre and loath her person had procured.

[40]

First gan he tell, how this that seem'd so faire
And royally arayd, *Duessa* hight
That false *Duessa*, which had wrought great care,
And mickle mischief vnto many a knight,
By her beguyled, and confounded quight:
But not for those she now in question came,
Though also those mote question'd be aright,
But for vyld treasons, and outrageous shame,
Which she against the dred *Mercilla* oft did frame.

[41]

For she whylome (as ye mote yet right well
Remember) had her counsels false conspyred,
With faithlesse *Blandamour* and *Paridell*,
(Both two her paramours, both by her hyred,
And both with hope of shadowes vaine inspyred.)
And with them practiz'd, how for to depryue
Mercilla of her crowne, by her aspyred,
That she might it vnto her selfe deryue,
And triumph in their blood, whom she to death did dryue.

[42]

But through high heauens grace, which fauour not
The wicked driftes of trayterous desynes,
Gainst loiall Princes, all this cursed plot,
Ere prooffe it tooke, discouered was betymes,
And th'actours won the meede meet for their crymes.
Such be the meede of all, that by such mene
Vnto the type of kingdomes title clymes.
But false *Duessa* now vntitled Queene,
Was brought to her sad doome, as here was to be seene.

[43]

Strongly did *Zele* her haynous fact enforce,
And many other crimes of foule defame
Against her brought, to banish all remorse,
And aggrauate the horror of her blame.
And with him to make part against her, came
Many graue persons, that against her pled;
First was a sage old Syre, that had to name
The *Kingdomes care*, with a white siluer hed,
That many high regards and reasons gainst her red.

[44]

Then gan *Authority* her to appose
With peremptorie powre, that made all mute;
And then the law of *Nations* gainst her rose,
And reasons brought, that no man could refute;
Next gan *Religion* gainst her to impute
High Gods beheast, and powre of holy lawes;
Then gan the Peoples cry and Commons sute,
Importune care of their owne publicke cause;
And lastly *Iustice* charged her with breach of lawes.

[45]

But then for her, on the contrarie part,
Rose many aduocates for her to plead:
First: there came *Pittie*, with full tender hart,
And with her ioynd *Regard* of womanhead;
And then came *Daunger* threatning hidden dread,
And high alliance vnto forren powre;
Then came *Nobilitie* of birth, that bread
Great ruth through her misfortunes tragicke stowre;
And lastly *Griefe* did plead, & many teares forth powre.

[46]

With the neare touch whereof in tender hart
The Briton Prince was sore empassionate,
And woxe inclined much vnto her part,
Through the sad terror of so dreadfull fate,
And wretched ruine of so high estate,
That for great ruth his courage gan relent.
Which when as *Zeale* perceiued to abate,
He gan his earnest feruour to augment,
And many fearefull objects to them to present.

[47]

He gan t'efforce the euidence anew,
And new accusations to produce in place:
He brought forth that old hag of hellish hew,
The cursed *Ate*, brought her face to face,
Who priuie was, and partie in the case:
She, glad of spoyle and ruinous decay,
Did her appeach, and to her more disgrace,
The plot of all her practise did display,
And all her traynes, and all her treasons forth did lay.

[48]

Then brought he forth, with griesly grim aspect,
Abhorred *Murder*, who with bloudie knyfe
Yet dropping fresh in hand did her detect,
And there with guiltie bloudshed charged ryfe:
Then brought he forth *Sedition*, breeding stryfe
In troublous wits, and mutinous vprore:
Then brought he forth *Incontinence* of lyfe,
Euen foule *Adulterie* her face before,
And lewd *Impietie*, that her accused sore.

[49]

All which when as the Prince had heard and scene,
His former fancies ruth he gan repent,
And from her partie eftsoones was drawn cleene.
But *Artegall* with constant firme intent,
For zeale of Iustice was against her bent.
So was she guiltie deemed of them all.
Then *Zeale* began to vrge her punishment,
And to their Queene for iudgement loudly call,
Vnto *Mercilla* myld for Iustice gainst the thrall.

[50]

But she, whose Princely breast was touched nere
With piteous ruth of her so wretched plight,
Though plaine she saw by all, that she did heare,
That she of death was guiltie found by right,
Yet would not let iust vengeance on her light;
But rather let in stead thereof to fall
Few perling drops from her faire lampes of light;
The which she couering with her purple pall
Would haue the passion hid, and vp arose withall.

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