

Cant. XII.

*Artegall doth Sir Burbon aide,
And blames for changing shield:
He with the great Grantorto fights,
And slaieth him in field.*

[1]

O Sacred hunger of ambitious mindes,
And impotent desire of men to raine,
Whom neither dread of God, that deuils bindes,
Nor lawes of men, that common weales containe,
Nor bands of nature, that wilde beastes restraine,
Can keepe from outrage, and from doing wrong,
Where they may hope a kingdome to obtaine.
No faith so firme, no trust can be so strong,
No loue so lasting then, that may endure long.

[2]

Witnesse may *Burbon* be, whom all the bands,
Which may a Knight assure, had surely bound,
Vntill the loue of Lordship and of lands
Made him become most faithlesse and vnsound:
And witnesse be *Gerioneo* found,
Who for like cause faire *Belge* did oppresse,
And right and wrong most cruelly confound:
And so be now *Grantorto*, who no lesse
Then all the rest burst out to all outragiousnesse.

[3]

Gainst whom Sir *Artegall*, long hauing since
Taken in hand th'exploit, being theretoo
Appointed by that mightie Faerie Prince,
Great *Gloriane*, that Tyrant to fordoo,
Through other great aduentures hethertoo
Had it forslackt. But now time drawing ny,
To him assynd, her high beheast to doo,
To the sea shore he gan his way apply,
To weete if shipping readie he mote there descry.

[4]

Tho when they came to the sea coast, they found
A ship all readie (as good fortune fell)

To put to sea, with whom they did compound,
To passe them ouer, where them list to tell:
The winde and weather serued them so well,
That in one day they with the coast did fall;
Whereas they readie found them to repell,
Great hostes of men in order martiall,
Which them forbad to land, and footing did forstall.

[5]

But nathemore would they from land refraine,
But when as nigh vnto the shore they drew,
That foot of man might sound the bottome plaine,
Talus into the sea did forth issew,
Though darts from shore & stones they at him threw;
And wading through the waues with stedfast sway,
Maugre the might of all those troupes in vew,
Did win the shore, whence he them chast away,
And made to fly, like doues, whom the Eagle doth affray.

[6]

The whyles Sir *Artegall*, with that old knight
Did forth descend, there being none them neare,
And forward marched to a towne in sight.
By this came tydings to the Tyrants eare,
By those, which earst did fly away for feare
Of their arriuall: wherewith troubled sore,
He all his forces streight to him did reare,
And forth issuing with his scouts afore,
Meant them to haue incountred, ere they left the shore.

[7]

But ere he marched farre, he with them met,
And fiercely charged them with all his force;
But *Talus* sternely did vpon them set,
And brusht, and battred them without remorse,
That on the ground he left full many a corse;
Ne any able was him to withstand,
But he them ouerthrew both man and horse,
That they lay scattred ouer all the land,
As thicke as doth the seede after the sowers hand.

[8]

Till *Artegall* him seeing so to rage,

Willd him to stay, and signe of truce did make:
To which all harkning, did a while asswage
Their forces furie, and their terror slake;
Till he an Herauld cald, and to him spake,
Willing him wend vnto the Tyrant streight,
And tell him that not for such slaughters sake
He thether came, but for to trie the right
Of fayre *Irenas* cause with him in single fight.

[9]

And willed him for to reclayme with speed
His scattedred people, ere they all were slaine,
And time and place conuenient to areed,
In which they two the combat might darraine.
Which message when *Grantorto* heard, full fayne
And glad he was the slaughter so to stay,
And pointed for the combat twixt them twayne
The morrow next, ne gaue him longer day.
So sounded the retraite, and drew his folke away.

[10]

That night Sir *Artegall* did cause his tent
There to be pitched on the open plaine;
For he had giuen streight commaundement,
That none should dare him once to entertaine:
Which none durst breake, though many would right faine
For fayre *Irena*, whom they loued deare.
But yet old *Sergis* did so well him paine,
That from close friends, that dar'd not to appeare,
He all things did puruay, which for them needfull weare.

[11]

The morrow next, that was the dismall day,
Appointed for *Irenas* death before,
So soone as it did to the world display
His chearefull face, and light to men restore,
The heauy Mayd, to whom none tydings bore
Of *Artegals* arryuall, her to free,
Lookt vp with eyes full sad and hart full sore;
Weening her lifes last howre then neare to bee,
Sith no redemption nigh she did nor heare nor see.

[12]

Then vp she rose, and on her selfe did dight
Most squalid garments, fit for such a day,
And with dull countenance, and with doleful spright,
She forth was brought in sorrowfull dismay,
For to receiue the doome of her decay.
But comming to the place, and finding there
Sir *Artegall*, in battailous array
Wayting his foe, it did her dead hart cheare,
And new life to her lent, in midst of deadly feare.

[13]

Like as a tender Rose in open plaine,
That with vntimely drought nigh withered was,
And hung the head, soone as few drops of raine
Thereon distill, and deaw her daintie face,
Gins to looke vp, and with fresh wonted grace
Dispreeds the glorie of her leaues gay;
Such was *Irenas* countenance, such her case,
When *Artegall* she saw in that array,
There wayting for the Tyrant, till it was farre day.

[14]

Who came at length, with proud presumptuous gate,
Into the field, as if he fearelesse were,
All armed in a cote of yron plate,
Of great defence to ward the deadly feare,
And on his head a steele cap he did weare
Of colour rustie browne, but sure and strong;
And in his hand an huge Polaxe did beare,
Whose steale was yron studded, but not long,
With which he went to fight, to iustifie his wrong.

[15]

Of stature huge and hideous he was,
Like to a Giant for his monstrous hight,
And did in strength most sorts of men surpas,
Ne euer any found his match in might;
There to he had great skill in single fight:
His face was vgly, and his countenance sterne,
That could haue frayd one with the very sight,
And gaped like a gulfe, when he did gerne,
That whether man or monster one could scarce discern.

[16]

Soone as he did within the listes appeare,
With dreadfull looke he *Artegall* beheld,
As if he would haue daunted him with feare,
And grinning griesly, did against him weld
His deadly weapon, which in hand he held.
But th'Elfin swayne, that oft had seene like fight,
Was with his ghastly count'nance nothing queld,
But gan him streight to buckle to the fight,
And cast his shield about, to be in readie plight.

[17]

The trumpets sound, and they together goe,
With dreadfull terror, and with fell intent;
And their huge strokes full daungerously bestow,
To doe most dammage, where as most they ment.
But with such force and furie violent,
The tyrant thundred his thicke blowes so fast,
That through the yron walles their way they rent,
And euen to the vitall parts they past,
Ne ought could them endure, but all they cleft or brast.

[18]

Which cruell outrage when as *Artegall*
Did well auize, thenceforth with warie heed
He shund his strokes, where euer they did fall,
And way did giue vnto their gracelesse speed:
As when a skilfull Marriner doth reed
A storme approching, that doth perill threat,
He will not bide the daunger of such dread,
But strikes his sayles, and vereth his mainsheat,
And lends vnto it leaue the emptie ayre to beat.

[19]

So did the Faerie knight himselfe abeare,
And stouped oft his head from shame to shield;
No shame to stoupe, ones head more high to reare,
And much to gaine, a litle for to yield;
So stoutest knights doen oftentimes infield.
But still the tyrant sternely at him layd,
And did his yron axe so nimbly wield,
That many wounds into his flesh it made,
And with his burdenous blowes him sore did ouerlade.

[20]

Yet when as fit aduantage he did spy,
The whiles the cursed felon high did reare
His cruell hand, to smite him mortally,
Vnder his stroke he to him stepping neare,
Right in the flanke him strooke with deadly dreare,
That the gore bloud thence gushing grieuously,
Did vnderneath him like a pond appeare,
And all his armour did with purple dye;
Thereat he brayed loud, and yelled dreadfully.

[21]

Yet the huge stroke, which he before intended,
Kept on his course, as he did it direct,
And with such monstrous poise adowne descended,
That seemed nought could him from death protect:
But he it well did ward with wise respect,
And twixt him and the blow his shield did cast,
Which thereon seizing, tooke no great effect,
But byting deepe therein did sticke so fast,
That by no meanes it backe againe he forth could wrast.

[22]

Long while he tug'd and stroue, to get it out,
And all his powre applyed thereunto,
That he therewith the knight drew all about:
Nathlesse, for all that euer he could doe,
His axe he could not from his shield vndoe.
Which *Artegall* perceiuing, strooke no more,
But loosing soone his shield, did it forgoe,
And whiles he combred was therewith so sore,
He gan at him let driue more fiercely then afore.

[23]

So well he him pursew'd, that at the last,
He stroke him with *Chrysaor* on the hed,
That with the souse thereof full sore aghast,
He staggered to and fro in doubtfull sted.
Againe whiles he him saw so ill bested,
He did him smite with all his might and maine,
That falling on his mother earth he fed:
Whom when he saw prostrated on the plaine,
He lightly reft his head, to ease him of his paine.

[24]

Which when the people round about him saw,
They shouted all for ioy of his successe,
Glad to be quit from that proud Tyrants awe,
Which with strong powre did them long time oppresse;
And running all with greedie ioyfulnesse
To faire *Irena*, at her feet did fall,
And her adored with due humblenesse,
As their true Liege and Princesse naturall;
And eke her champions glorie sounded ouer all.

[25]

Who streight her leading with meete maiestie
Vnto the pallace, where their kings did rayne,
Did her therein establish peaceable,
And to her kingdomes seat restore agayne;
And all such persons, as did late maintayne
That Tyrants part, with close or open ayde,
He sorely punished with heauie payne;
That in short space, whiles there with her he stayd,
Not one was left, that durst her once haue disobayd.

[26]

During which time, that he did there remaine,
His studie was true Iustice how to deale,
And day and night employ'd his busie paine
How to reforme that ragged common-weale:
And that same yron man which could reueale
All hidden crimes, through all that realme he sent,
To search out those, that vsd to rob and steale,
Or did rebell gainst lawfull gouernment;
On whom he did inflict most grieuous punishment.

[27]

But ere he could reforme it thoroughly,
He through occasion called was away,
To Faerie Court, that of necessity
His course of Iustice he was forst to stay,
And *Talus* to reuoke from the right way,
In which he was that Realme for to redresse.
But enuies cloud still dimmeth vertues ray.
So hauing freed *Irena* from distresse,
He tooke his leaue of her, there left in heauinesse.

[28]

Tho as he backe returned from that land,
And there arriu'd againe, whence forth he set,
He had not passed farre vpon the strand,
When as two old ill fauour'd Hags he met,
By the way side being together set,
Two griesly creatures; and, to that their faces
Most foule and filthie were, their garments yet
Being all rag'd and tatter'd, their disgraces
Did much the more augment, and made most vgly cases.

[29]

The one of them, that elder did appeare,
With her dull eyes did seeme to looke askew,
That her mis-shape much helpt; and her foule heare
Hung loose and loathsomely: Thereto her hew
Was wan and leane, that all her teeth arew,
And all her bones might through her cheekes be red;
Her lips were like raw lether, pale and blew,
And as she spake, therewith she slauered;
Yet spake she seldom, but thought more, the lesse she sed.

[30]

Her hands were foule and durtie, neuer washt
In all her life, with long nayles ouer raught,
Like puttocks clawes: with th'one of which she scracht
Her cursed head, although it itched naught;
The other held a snake with venime fraught,
On which she fed, and gnawed hungrily,
As if that long she had not eaten ought;
That round about her iawes one might descry
The bloudie gore and poyson dropping lothsomely.

[31]

Her name was *Enuie*, knowen well thereby;
Whose nature is to grieue, and grudge at all,
That euer she sees doen prays-worthily,
Whose sight to her is greatest crosse, may fall,
And vexeth so, that makes her eat her gall.
For when she wanteth other thing to eat,
She feedes on her owne maw vnnaturall,
And of her owne foule entrayles makes her meat;
Meat fit for such a monsters monstrous dyeat.

[32]

And if she hapt of any good to heare,
That had to any happily betid,
Then would she inly fret, and grieue, and teare
Her flesh for felnesse, which she inward hid:
But if she heard of ill, that any did,
Or harme, that any had, then would she make
Great cheare, like one vnto a banquet bid;
And in anothers losse great pleasure take,
As she had got thereby, and gayned a great stake.

[33]

The other nothing better was, then shee;
Agreeing in bad will and cancred kynd,
But in bad maner they did disagree:
For what so *Enuie* good or bad did fynd,
She did conceale, and murder her owne mynd;
But this, what euer euill she conceiued,
Did spred abroad, and throw in th'open wynd.
Yet this in all her words might be perceiued,
That all she sought, was mens good name to haue bereaued.

[34]

For whatsoever good by any sayd,
Or doen she heard, she would streightwayes inuent,
How to depraue, or slaunderously vpbraid,
Or to misconstrue of a mans intent,
And turne to ill the thing, that well was ment.
Therefore she vsed often to resort,
To common haunts, and companies frequent,
To hearke what any one did good report,
To blot the same with blame, or wrest in wicked sort.

[35]

And if that any ill she heard of any,
She would it eeke, and make much worse by telling,
And take great ioy to publish it to many,
That euery matter worse was for her melling.
Her name was hight *Detraction*, and her dwelling
Was neare to *Enuie*, euen her neighbour next;
A wicked hag, and *Enuy* selfe excelling
In mischiefe: for her selfe she onely vext;
But this same both her selfe, and others eke perplex.

[36]

Her face was vgly, and her mouth distort,
Foming with poyson round about her gils,
In which her cursed tongue full sharpe and short
Appear'd like *Aspis* sting, that closely kils,
Or cruelly does wound, whom so she wils:
A distaffe in her other hand she had,
Vpon the which she litle spinnes, but spils,
And faynes to weaue false tales and leasings bad,
To throw amongst the good, which others had disprad.

[37]

These two now had themselues combynd in one,
And linckt together gainst *Sir Artegall*,
For whom they wayted as his mortall fone,
How they might make him into mischief fall,
For freeing from their snares *Irena* thrall,
Besides vnto themselues they gotten had
A monster, which the *Blatant beast* men call,
A dreadfull feend of gods and men ydrad,
Whom they by slights allur'd, and to their purpose lad.

[38]

Such were these Hags, and so vnhandsome drest:
Who when they nigh approching, had espyde
Sir Artegall return'd from his late quest,
They both arose, and at him loudly cryde,
As it had bene two shepherds cures, had scryde
A rauenous Wolfe amongst the scattered flockes.
And *Enuie* first, as she that first him eyde,
Towardes him runs, and with rude flaring lockes
About her eares, does beat her brest, & forehead knockes.

[39]

Then from her mouth the gobbet she does take,
The which whyleare she was so greedily
Deuouring, euen that halfe-gnawen snake,
And at him throwes it most despightfully.
The cursed Serpent, though she hungrily
Earst chawd thereon, yet was not all so dead,
But that some life remayned secretly,
And as he past afore withouten dread,
Bit him behind, that long the marke was to be read.

[40]

Then th'other comming neare, gan him reuile,
And fouly rayle, with all she could inuent;
Saying, that he had with vnmanly guile,
And foule abusion both his honour blent,
And that bright sword the sword, of Iustice lent
Had stayned with reprochfull crueltie,
In guiltlesse blood of many an innocent:
As for *Grandtorto*, him with treacherie
And traynes hauing surpriz'd, he fouly did to die.

[41]

Thereto the Blatant beast by them set on
At him began aloud to barke and bay,
With bitter rage and fell contention,
That all the woods and rockes nigh to that way,
Began to quake and tremble with dismay;
And all the aire rebellowed againe.
So dreadfully his hundred tongues did bray,
And euermore those hags them selues did paine,
To sharpen him, and their owne cursed tongs did straine.

[42]

And still among most bitter wordes they spake,
Most shamefull, most vnrighteous, most vntrew,
That they the mildest man aliue would make
Forget his patience, and yeeld vengeaunce dew
To her, that so false sclaunders at him threw.
And more to make them pierce & wound more deepe,
She with the sting, which in her vile tongue grew,
Did sharpen them, and in fresh poyson steepe:
Yet he past on, and seem'd of them to take no keepe.

[43]

But *Talus* hearing her so lewdly raile,
And speake so ill of him, that well deserued,
Would her haue chastiz'd with his yron flaile,
If her Sir *Artegall* had not preserued,
And him forbidden, who his heast obserued.
So much the more at him still did she scold,
And stones did cast, yet he for nought would swerue
From his right course, but still the way did hold

To Faery Court, where what him fell shall else be told.

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