

Cant. III.

*Calepine by a saluage man
from Turpine reskewed is,
And whylest an Infant from a Beare
he saues, his loue doth misse.*

[1]

Like as a ship with dreadfull storme long tost,
Hauing spent all her mastes and her ground-hold,
Now farre from harbour likely to be lost,
At last some fisher barke doth neare behold,
That giueth comfort to her courage cold.
Such was the state of this most courteous knight
Being oppressed by that faytour bold,
That he remayned in most perilous plight,
And his sad Ladie left in pitifull affright.

[2]

Till that by fortune, passing all foresight,
A saluage man, which in those woods did wonne,
Drawne with that Ladies loud and piteous shrigh,
Toward the same incessantly did ronne,
To vnderstand what there was to be donne.
There he this most discourteous crauen found,
As fiercely yet, as when he first begonne,
Chasing the gentle *Calepine* around,
Ne sparing him the more for all his grieuous wound.

[3]

The saluage man, that neuer till this houre
Did taste of pittie, neither gentlesse knew,
Seeing his sharpe assault and cruell stoure
Was much emmoued at his perils vew,
That euen his ruder hart began to rew,
And feele compassion of his euill plight,
Against his foe that did him so pursew:
From whom he meant to free him, if he might,
And him auenge of that so villenous despight.

[4]

Yet armes or weapon had he none to fight,
Ne knew the vse of warlike instruments,

Saue such as sudden rage him lent to smite,
But naked without needfull vestiments,
To clad his corpse with meete habiliments,
He cared not for dint of sword nor speere,
No more then for the stroke of strawes or bents:
For from his mothers wombe, which him did beare
He was invulnerable made by Magicke leare.

[5]

He stayed not t'aduize, which way were best
His foe t'assayle, or how himselfe to gard,
But with fierce fury and with force infest
Vpon him ran; who being well prepard,
His first assault full warily did ward,
And with the push of his sharp-pointed speare
Full on the breast him strooke, so strong and hard,
That forst him backe recoyle, and reele areare;
Yet in his bodie made no wound nor bloud appeare.

[6]

With that the wyld man more enraged grew,
Like to a Tygre that hath mist his pray,
And with mad mood againe vpon him flew,
Regarding neither speare, that mote him slay,
Nor his fierce steed, that mote him much dismay.
The saluage nation doth all dread despize:
Tho on his shield he griple hold did lay,
And held the same so hard, that by no wize
He could him force to loose, or leaue his enterprize.

[7]

Long did he wrest and wring it to and fro,
And euery way did try, but all in vaine:
For he would not his greedie grype forgoe,
But hayld and puld with all his might and maine,
That from his steed him nigh he drew againe.
Who hauing now no vse of his long speare,
So nigh at hand, nor force his shield to straine,
Both speare and shield, as things that needlesse were.
He quite forsooke, and fled himselfe away for feare.

[8]

But after him the wyld man ran apace,

And him pursued with importune speed,
(For he was swift as any Bucke in chace)
And had he not in his extreamest need,
Bene helped through the swiftnesse of his steed,
He had him ouertaken in his flight.
Who euer, as he saw him nigh succeed,
Gan cry aloud with horrible affright,
And shrieked out, a thing vncomely for a knight.

[9]

But when the Saluage saw his labour vaine,
In following of him, that fled so fast,
He wearie woxe, and backe return'd againe
With speede vnto the place, whereas he last
Had left that couple, nere their vtmost cast.
There he that knight full sorely bleeding found,
And eke the Ladie fearefully aghast,
Both for the perill of the present stound,
And also for the sharpnesse of her rankling wound.

[10]

For though she were right glad, so rid to bee
From that vile lozell, which her late offended,
Yet now no lesse encombrance she did see,
And perill by this saluage man pretended;
Gainst whom she saw no meanes to be defended,
By reason that her knight was wounded sore.
Therefore her selfe she wholly recommended
To Gods sole grace, whom she did oft implore,
To send her succour, being of all hope forlore.

[11]

But the wyld man, contrarie to her feare,
Came to her creeping like a fawning hound,
And by rude tokens made to her appeare
His deepe compassion of her dolefull stound,
Kissing his hands, and crouching to the ground;
For other language had he none nor speach,
But a soft murmure, and confused sound
Of senselesse words, which nature did him teach,
T'expresse his passions, which his reason did empeach.

[12]

And comming likewise to the wounded knight,
When he beheld the streames of purple blood
Yet flowing fresh, as moued with the sight,
He made great mone after his saluage mood,
And running streight into the thickest wood,
A certaine herbe from thence vnto him brought,
Whose vertue he by vse well vnderstood:
The iuyce whereof into his wound he wrought,
And stopt the bleeding straight, ere he it staunched thought.

[13]

Then taking vp that Recreants shield and speare,
Which earst he left, he signes vnto them made,
With him to wend vnto his wonning neare:
To which he easily did them perswade
Farre in the forrest by a hollow glade,
Couered with mossie shrubs, which spredding brode
Did vnderneath them make a gloomy shade;
There foot of liuing creature neuer trode,
Ne scarce wyld beasts durst come, there was this wights abode.

[14]

Thether he brought these vnacquainted guests;
To whom faire semblance, as he could, he shewed
By signes, by lookes, and all his other gests.
But the bare ground, with hoarie mosse bestrowed,
Must be their bed, their pillow was vnsowed,
And the frutes of the forrest was their feast:
For their bad Stuard neither plough'd nor sowed,
Ne fed on flesh, ne euer of wyld beast
Did taste the bloud, obeying natures first beheast.

[15]

Yet howsoeuer base and meane it were,
They tooke it well, and thanked God for all,
Which had them freed from that deadly feare,
And sau'd from being to that caytiue thrall.
Here they of force (as fortune now did fall)
Compelled were themselues a while to rest,
Glad of that easement, though it were but small;
That hauing there their wounds awhile redrest,
They mote the abler be to passe vnto the rest.

[16]

During which time, that wyld man did apply
His best endeouour, and his daily paine,
In seeking all the woods both farre and nye
For herbes to dresse their wounds; still seeming faine,
When ought he did, that did their lyking gaine.
So as ere long he had that knightes wound
Recured well, and made him whole againe:
But that same Ladies hurts no herbe he found,
Which could redresse, for it was inwardly vnsound.

[17]

Now when as *Calepine* was woxen strong,
Vpon a day he cast abroad to wend,
To take the ayre, and heare the thrushes song,
Vnarm'd, as fearing neither foe nor frend,
And without sword his person to defend.
There him befell, vnlooked for before,
An hard aduerture with unhappie end,
A cruell Beare, the which an infant bore
Betwixt his bloodie iawes, besprinckled all with gore.

[18]

The litle babe did loudly srike and squall,
And all the woods with piteous plaints did fill,
As if his cry did meane for helpe to call
To *Calepine*, whose eares those shrieches shrill
Percing his hart with pitie point did thrill;
That after him, he ran with zealous haste,
To rescue th'infant, ere he did him kill:
Whom though he saw now somewhat ouerpast,
Yet by the cry he follow'd, and pursewed fast.

[19]

Well then him chaunst his heauy armes to want,
Whose burden mote impeach his needfull speed,
And hinder him from libertie to pant:
For hauing long time, as his daily weed,
Them wont to weare, and wend on foot for need,
Now wanting them he felt himselfe so light,
That like an Hauke, which feeling her selfe freed
From bels and iesses, which did let her flight,
Him seem'd his feet did fly, and in their speed delight.

[20]

So well he sped him, that the wearie Beare
Ere long he ouertooke, and forst to stay,
And without weapon him assaying neare,
Compeld him soone the spoyle adowne to lay.
Wherewith the beast enrag'd to loose his pray,
Vpon him turned, and with greedie force
And furie, to be crossed in his way,
Gaping full wyde, did thinke without remorse
To be aueng'd on him, and to deuoure his corse.

[21]

But the bold knight no whit thereat dismayd,
But catching vp in hand a ragged stone,
Which lay thereby (so fortune him did ayde)
Vpon him ran, and thrust it all attone
Into his gaping throte, that made him grone
And gaspe for breath, that he nigh choked was,
Being vnable to digest that bone;
Ne could it vpward come, nor downward passe,
Ne could he brooke the coldnesse of the stony masse.

[22]

Whom when as he thus combred did behold,
Stryuing in vaine that nigh his bowels brast,
He with him closd, and laying mightie hold
Vpon his throte, did gripe his gorge so fast,
That wanting breath, him downe to ground he cast;
And then oppressing him with vrgent paine,
Ere long enforst to breath his vtmost blast,
Gnashing his cruell teeth at him in vaine,
And threatning his sharpe clawes, now wanting powre to straine.

[23]

Then tooke he vp betwixt his armes twaine
The litle babe, sweet relickes of his pray;
Whom pitying to heare so sore complaine,
From his soft eyes the teares he wypt away,
And from his face the filth that did it ray,
And euery litle limbe he searcht around,
And euery part, that vnder sweathbands lay,
Least that the beasts sharpe teeth had any wound
Made in his tender flesh, but whole them all he found.

[24]

So hauing all his bands againe vptyde,
He with him thought backe to returne againe:
But when he lookt about on euery syde,
To weet which way were best to entertaine,
To bring him to the place, where he would faine,
He could no path nor tract of foot descry,
Ne by inquirie learne, nor ghesse by ayme.
For nought but woods and forrests farre and nye,
That all about did close the compasse of his eye.

[25]

Much was he then encombred, ne could tell
Which way to take: now West he went a while,
Then North; then neither, but as fortune fell.
So vp and downe he wandred many a mile,
With wearie trauell and vncertaine toile,
Yet nought the nearer to his iourneys end;
And euermore his louely litle spoile
Crying for food, did greatly him offend.
So all that day in wandring vainely he did spend.

[26]

At last about the setting of the Sunne,
Him selfe out of the forest he did wynd,
And by good fortune the plaine champion wonne:
Where looking all about, where he mote fynd
Some place of succour to content his mynd,
At length he heard vnder the forrests syde
A voice, that seemed of some woman kynd,
Which to her selfe lamenting loudly cryde,
And oft complayn'd of fate, and fortune oft defyde.

[27]

To whom approaching, when as she perceiued
A stranger wight in place, her plaint she stayd,
As if she doubted to haue bene deceiued,
Or loth to let her sorrowes be bewrayd.
Whom when as *Calepine* saw so dismayd,
He to her drew, and with faire blandishment
Her chearing vp, thus gently to her sayd;
What be you wofull Dame, which thus lament,
And for what cause declare, so mote ye not repent.

[28]

To whom she thus, what need me Sir to tell,
That which your selfe haue earst ared so right?
A wofull dame ye haue me termed well;
So much more wofull, as my wofull plight
Cannot redressed be by liuing wight.
Nathlesse (quoth he) if need doe not you bynd,
Doe it disclose, to ease your grieued spright:
Oftimes it haps, that sorrowes of the mynd
Find remedie vnsought, which seeking cannot fynd.

[29]

Then thus began the lamentable Dame;
Sith then ye needs will know the grieffe I hoord,
I am th'vnfortunate *Matilde* by name,
The wife of bold Sir *Bruin*, who is Lord
Of all this land, late conquer'd by his sword
From a great Gyant, called *Cormoraunt*;
Whom he did ouerthrow by yonder foord,
And in three battailes did so deadly daunt,
That he dare not returne for all his daily vaunt.

[30]

So is my Lord now seiz'd of all the land,
As in his fee, with peaceable estate,
And quietly doth hold it in his hand,
Ne any dares with him for it debate.
But to these happie fortunes, cruell fate
Hath ioyn'd one euill, which doth ouerthrow
All these our ioyes, and all our blisse abate;
And like in time to further ill to grow,
And all this land with endlesse losse to ouerflow.

[31]

For th'heauens enuying our prosperitie,
Haue not vouchsaft to graunt vnto vs twaine
The gladfull blessing of posteritie,
Which we might see after our selues remaine
In th'heritage of our vnhappie paine:
So that for want of heires it to defend,
All is in time like to returne againe
To that foule feend, who dayly doth attend
To leape into the same after our liues end.

[32]

But most my Lord is griued herewithall,
And makes exceeding mone, when he does thinke
That all this land vnto his foe shall fall,
For which he long in vaine did sweat and swinke,
That now the same he greatly doth forthinke.
Yet was it sayd, there should to him a sonne
Be gotten, not begotten, which should drinke
And dry vp all the water, which doth ronne
In the next brooke, by whom that feend shold be fordonne.

[33]

Well hop't he then, when this was propheside,
That from his sides some noble chyld should rize,
The which through fame should farre be magnifide,
And this proud gyant should with braue emprize
Quite ouerthrow, who now ginnes to despize
The good Sir *Bruin*, growing farre in yeares;
Who thinkes from me his sorrow all doth rize.
Lo this my cause of grieffe to you appeares;
For which I thus doe mourne, and poure forth ceaselesse teares.

[34]

Which when he heard, he inly touched was
With tender ruth for her vnworthy grieffe,
And when he had deuized of her case,
He gan in mind conceiue a fit reliefe
For all her paine, if please her make the priefe.
And hauing cheared her, thus said; faire Dame,
In euils counsell is the comfort chiefe,
Which though I be not wise enough to frame,
Yet as I well it meane, vouchsafe it without blame.

[35]

If that the cause of this your languishment
Be lacke of children, to supply your place,
Low how good fortune doth to you present
This litle babe, of sweete and louely face,
And spotlesse spirit, in which ye may enchace
What euer formes ye list thereto apply,
Being now soft and fit them to embrace;
Whether ye list him traine in cheualry,
Or noursle vp in lore of learn'd Philosophy.

[36]

And certes it hath oftentimes bene seene,
That of the like, whose linage was vnknowne,
More braue and noble knights haue raysed beene,
As their victorious deedes haue often shoven,
Being with fame through many Nations blowen,
Then those, which haue bene dandled in the lap.
Therefore some thought, that those braue imps were sowen
Here by the Gods, and fed with heauenly sap,
That made them grow so high t'all honorable hap.

[37]

The Ladie hearkning to his sensefull speach,
Found nothing that he said, vnmeet nor geason,
Hauing oft seene it tryde, as he did teach.
Therefore inclyning to his goodly reason,
Agreeing well both with the place and season,
She gladly did of that same babe accept,
As of her owne by liuerey and seisin,
And hauing ouer it a litle wept,
She bore it thence, and euer as her owne it kept.

[38]

Right glad was *Calepine* to be so rid
Of his young charge, whereof he skilled nought:
Ne she lesse glad; for she so wisely did,
And with her husband vnder hand so wrought,
That when that infant vnto him she brought,
She made him thinke it surely was his owne,
And it in goodly thewes so well vpbrought,
That it became a famous knight well knowne
And did right noble deedes, the which elsewhere are showne.

[39]

But *Calepine*, now being left alone
Vnder the greenewoods side in sorie plight,
Withouten armes or steede to ride vpon,
Or house to hide his head from heauens spight,
Albe that Dame by all the meanes she might,
Him oft desired home with her to wend,
And offred him, his courtesie to requite,
Both horse and armes, and what so else to lend,
Yet he them all refusd, though thankt her as a frend.

[40]

And for exceeding grieffe which inly grew,
That he his loue so lucklesse now had lost,
On the cold ground, maugre himselfe he threw,
For fell despight, to be so sorely crost;
And there all night himselfe in anguish tost,
Vowing, that neuer he in bed againe
His limbes would rest, ne lig in ease embost,
Till that his Ladies sight he mote attaine,
Or vnderstand, that she in safetie did remaine.

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