

Cant. XI.

*The theeues fall out for Pastorell,
Vvhilest Melibee is slaine:
Her Calidore from them redeemes,
And bringeth backe againe.*

[1]

THE ioyes of loue, if they should euer last,
Without affliction or disquietnesse,
That worldly chaunces doe amongst them cast,
Would be on earth too great a blessednesse,
Liker to heauen, then mortall wretchednesse.
Therefore the winged God, to let men weet,
That here on earth is no sure happinesse,
A thousand sowres hath tempred with one sweet,
To make it seeme more deare and dainty, as is meet.

[2]

Like as is now befalne to this faire Mayd,
Faire *Pastorell*, of whom is now my song,
Who being now in dreadfull darknesse layd,
Amongst those theeues, which her in bondage strong
Detaynd, yet Fortune not with all this wrong
Contented, greater mischiefe on her threw,
And sorrowes heapt on her in greater throng;
That who so heares her heauinesse, would rew
And pitty her sad plight, so chang'd from pleasaunt hew.

[3]

Whylest thus she in these hellish dens remayned,
Wrapped in wretched cares and hearts vnrest,
It so befell (as Fortune had ordayned)
That he, which was their Capitaine profest,
And had the chiefe commaund of all the rest,
One day as he did all his prisoners vew,
With lustfull eyes, beheld that louely guest,
Faire *Pastorella*, whose sad mournfull hew
Like the faire Morning clad in misty fog did shew.

[4]

At sight whereof his barbarous heart was fired,
And inly burnt with flames most raging whot,

That her alone he for his part desired
Of all the other pray, which they had got,
And her in mynde did to him selfe allot.
From that day forth he kyndnesse to her showed,
And sought her loue, by all the meanes he mote;
With looks, with words, with gifts he oft her wowed;
And mixed threats among, and much vnto her vowed.

[5]

But all that euer he could doe or say,
Her constant mynd could not a whit remoue,
Nor draw vnto the lure of his lewd lay,
To graunt him fauour, or afford him loue.
Yet ceast he not to sew and all waies proue,
By which he mote accomplish his request,
Saying and doing all that mote behoue;
Ne day nor night he suffred her to rest,
But her all night did watch, and all the day molest.

[6]

At last when him she so importune saw,
Fearing least he at length the raines would lend
Vnto his lust, and make his will his law,
Sith in his powre she was to foe or frend,
She thought it best, for shadow to pretend
Some shew of fauour, by him gracing small,
That she thereby mote either freely wend,
Or at more ease continue there his thrall:
A little well is lent, that gaineth more withall.

[7]

So from thenceforth, when loue he to her made,
With better tearmes she did him entertaine,
Which gaue him hope, and did him halfe perswade,
That he in time her ioyauce should obtaine.
But when she saw, through that small fauours gaine,
That further, then she willing was, he prest,
She found no meanes to barre him, but to faine
A sodaine sicknesse, which her sore opprest,
And made vnfit to serue his lawlesse mindes behest.

[8]

By meanes whereof she would not him permit

Once to approach to her in priuity,
But onely mongst the rest by her to sit,
Mourning the rigour of her malady,
And seeking all things meete for remedy.
But she resolu'd no remedy to fynde,
Nor better cheare to shew in misery,
Till Fortune would her captiue bonds vnbynde,
Her sicknesse was not of the body but the mynde.

[9]

During which space that she thus sicke did lie,
It chaunst a sort of merchants, which were wount
To skim those coastes, for bondmen there to buy,
And by such trafficke after gaines to hunt,
Arriued in this Isle though bare and blunt,
T'inquire for slaues; where being readie met
By some of these same theeues at the instant brunt,
Were brought vnto their Captaine, who was set
By his faire patients side with sorrowfull regret.

[10]

To whom they shewed, how those marchants were
Arriu'd in place, their bondslaues for to buy,
And therefore prayd, that those same captiues there
Mote to them for their most commodity
Be sold, and mongst them shared equally.
This their request the Captaine much appalled;
Yet could he not their iust demaund deny,
And willed streight the slaues should forth be called,
And sold for most aduantage not to be forstalled.

[11]

Then forth the good old *Meliboe* was brought,
And *Coridon*, with many other moe,
Whom they before in diuerse spoyles had caught:
All which he to the marchants sale did showe.
Till some, which did the sundry prisoners knowe,
Gan to inquire for that faire shepherdesse,
Which with the rest they tooke not long agoe,
And gan her forme and feature to expresse,
The more t'augment her price, through praise of comlinesse.

[12]

To whom the Captaine in full angry wize
Made answere, that the Mayd of whom they spake,
Was his owne purchase and his onely prize,
With which none had to doe, ne ought partake,
But he himselfe, which did that conquest make;
Litle for him to haue one silly lasse:
Besides through sicknesse now so wan and weake,
That nothing meet in marchandise to passe.
So shew'd them her, to proue how pale & weake she was.

[13]

The sight of whom, though now decayd and mard,
And eke but hardly seene by candle-light,
Yet like a Diamond of rich regard,
In doubtfull shadow of the darkesome night,
With starrie beames about her shining bright,
These marchants fixed eyes did so amaze,
That what through wonder, & what through delight,
A while on her they greedily did gaze,
And did her greatly like, and did her greatly praize.

[14]

At last when all the rest them offred were,
And prises to them placed at their pleasure,
They all refused in regard of her,
Ne ought would buy, how euer prisd with measure,
Withouten her, whose worth aboue all threasure
They did esteeme, and offred store of gold.
But then the Captaine fraught with more displeasure,
Bad them be still, his loue should not be sold:
The rest take if they would, he her to him would hold.

[15]

Therewith some other of the chiefest theeues
Boldly him bad such iniurie forbear;
For that same mayd, how euer it him greues,
Should with the rest be sold before him theare,
To make the prises of the rest more deare.
That with great rage he stoutly doth deny;
And fiercely drawing forth his blade, doth sweare,
That who so hardie hand on her doth lay,
It dearely shall aby, and death for handsell pay.

[16]

Thus as they words amongst them multiply,
They fall to strokes, the frute of too much talke,
And the mad steele about doth fiercely fly,
Not sparing wight, ne leauing any balke,
But making way for death at large to walke:
Who in the horror of the griesly night,
In thousand dreadful shapes doth mongst them stalke,
And makes huge hauocke, whiles the candlelight
Out quenched, leaues no skill nor difference of wight.

[17]

Like as a sort of hungry dogs ymet
About some carcasse by the common way,
Doe fall together, stryuing each to get
The greatest portion of the greedie pray;
All on confused heapes themselues assay,
And snatch, and byte, and rend, and tug, and teare;
That who them sees, would wonder at their fray,
And who sees not, would be affrayd to heare.
Such was the conflict of those cruell *Brigants* there.

[18]

But first of all, their captiues they doe kill,
Least they should ioyne against the weaker side,
Or rise against the remnant at their will;
Old *Meliboe* is slaine, and him beside
His aged wife, with many others wide,
But *Coridon* escaping craftily,
Creepes forth of dores, whilst darknes him doth hide,
And flyes away as fast as he can hye,
Ne stayeth leaue to take, before his friends doe dye.

[19]

But *Pastorella*, wofull wretched Elfe,
Was by the Captaine all this while defended,
Who minding more her safety then himselfe,
His target alwayes ouer her pretended;
By meanes whereof, that mote not be amended,
He at the length was slaine, and layd on ground,
Yet holding fast twixt both his armes extended
Fayre *Pastorell*, who with the selfe same wound
Launcht through the arme, fell down with him in drierie swound.

[20]

There lay she couered with confused preasse
Of carcasses, which dying on her fell.
Tho when as he was dead, the fray gan cease,
And each to other calling, did compell
To stay their cruell hands from slaughter fell,
Sith they that were the cause of all, were gone.
Thereto they all attonce agreed well,
And lighting candles new, gan search anone,
How many of their friends were slaine, how many fone.

[21]

Their Captaine there they cruelly found kild,
And in his armes the dreary dying mayd,
Like a sweet Angell twixt two clouds vphild:
Her louely light was dimmed and decayd,
With cloud of death vpon her eyes displayd;
Yet did the cloud make euen that dimmed light
Seeme much more louely in that darknesse layd,
And twixt the twinckling of her eye-lids bright,
To sparke out litle beames, like starres in foggie night.

[22]

But when they mou'd the carcasses aside,
They found that life did yet in her remaine:
Then all their helps they busily applyde,
To call the soule backe to her home againe;
And wrought so well with labour and long paine,
That they to life recouered her at last.
Who sighing sore, as if her hart in twaine
Had riuen bene, and all her hart strings brast,
With drearie drouping eyne lookt vp like one aghast.

[23]

There she beheld, that sore her grieu'd to see,
Her father and her friends about her lying,
Her selfe sole left, a second spoyle to bee
Of those, that hauing saued her from dying,
Renew'd her death by timely death denying:
What now is left her, but to wayle and weepe,
Wringing her hands, and ruefully loud crying?
Ne cared she her wound in teares to steepe,
Albe with all their might those *Brigants* her did keepe.

[24]

But when they saw her now reliu'd againe,
They left her so, in charge of one the best
Of many worst, who with vnkind disdain
And cruell rigour her did much molest;
Scarse yeelding her due food, or timely rest,
And scarsely suffering her infestred wound,
That sore her payn'd, by any to be drest.
So leaue we her in wretched thraldome bound,
And turne we backe to *Calidore*, where we him found.

[25]

Who when he backe returned from the wood,
And saw his shepherds cottage spoyled quight,
And his loue reft away, he wexed wood,
And halfe enraged at that ruefull sight,
That euen his hart for very fell despight,
And his owne flesh he readie was to teare,
He chaufft, he grieu'd, he fretted, and he sight,
And fared like a furious wyld Beare,
Whose whelpes are stolne away, she being otherwhere.

[26]

Ne wight he found, to whom he might complaine,
Ne wight he found, of whom he might inquire;
That more increast the anguish of his paine.
He sought the woods; but no man could see there,
He sought the plaines; but could no tydings heare.
The woods did nought but ecchoes vaine rebound;
The playnes all waste and emptie did appeare:
Where wont the shepherds oft their pypes resound,
And feed an hundred flocks, there now not one he found.

[27]

At last as there he romed vp and downe,
He chaunst one comming towards him to spy,
That seem'd to be some sorie simple clowne,
With ragged weedes, and lockes vpstaring hye,
As if he did from some late daunger fly,
And yet his feare did follow him behynd:
Who as he vnto him approched nye,
He mote perceiue by signes, which he did fynd,
That *Coridon* it was, the silly shepherds hynd.

[28]

Tho to him running fast, he did not stay
To greet him first, but askt where were the rest;
Where *Pastorell*? who full of fresh dismay,
And gushing forth in teares, was so opprest,
That he no word could speake, but smit his brest,
And vp to heauen his eyes fast streeming threw.
Whereat the knight amaz'd, yet did not rest,
But askt againe, what ment that ruffull hew:
Where was his *Pastorell*? where all the other crew?

[29]

Ah well away (sayd he then sighing sore)
That euer I did liue, this day to see,
This dismall day, and was not dead before,
Before I saw faire *Pastorella* dye.
Die? out alas then *Calidore* did cry:
How could the death dare euer her to quell?
But read thou shepheard, read what destiny,
Or other dyrefull hap from heauen or hell
Hath wrought this wicked deed, doe feare away, and tell.

[30]

Tho when the shepheard breathed had a whyle,
He thus began: where shall I then commence
This wofull tale? or how those *Brigants* vyle,
With cruell rage and dreadfull violence
Spoyle all our cots, and caried vs from hence?
Or how faire *Pastorell* should haue bene sold
To marchants, but was sau'd with strong defence?
Or how those theeues, whilst one sought her to hold,
Fell all at ods, and fought through fury fierce and bold.

[31]

In that same conflict (woe is me) befell
This fatall chaunce, this dolefull accident,
Whose heauy tydings now I haue to tell.
First all the captiues, which they here had hent,
Were by them slaine by generall consent;
Old *Meliboe* and his good wife withall
These eyes saw die, and dearely did lament:
But when the lot to *Pastorell* did fall,
Their Captaine long withstood, & did her death forstall,

[32]

But what could he gainst all them doe alone:
It could not boot; needs mote she die at last:
I onely scapt through great confusione
Of cryes and clamors, which amongst them past,
In dreadfull darknesse dreadfully aghast;
That better were with them to haue bene dead,
Then here to see all desolate and wast,
Despoyled of those ioyes and iolly head,
Which with those gentle shepherds here I wont to lead.

[33]

When *Calidore* these ruefull newes had raught,
His hart quite deaded was with anguish great,
And all his wits with doole were nigh distraught,
That he his face, his head, his brest did beat,
And death it selfe vnto himselfe did threat;
Oft cursing th'heauens, that so cruell were
To her, whose name he often did repeat;
And wishing oft, that he were present there,
When she was slaine, or had bene to her succour nere.

[34]

But after griefe awhile had had his course,
And spent it selfe in mourning, he at last
Began to mitigate his swelling sourse,
And in his mind with better reason cast,
How he might saue her life, if life did last;
Or if that dead, how he her death might wreake,
Sith otherwise he could not mend thing past;
Or if it to reuenge he were too weake,
Then for to die with her, and his liues threed to breake.

[35]

Tho *Coridon* he prayd, sith he well knew
The readie way vnto that theeuish womne,
To wend with him, and be his conduct trew
Vnto the place, to see what should be donne.
But he, whose hart through feare was late fordonne,
Would not for ought be drawne to former drede,
But by all meanes the daunger knowne did shonne:
Yet *Calidore* so well him wrought with meed,
And faire bespoke with words, that he at last agreed.

[36]

So forth they goe together (God before)
Both clad in shepherds weeds agreeably,
And both with shepherds hookes: But *Calidore*
Had vnderneath, him armed priuily.
Tho to the place when they approched nye,
They chaunst, vpon an hill not farre away,
Some flockes of sheepe and shepherds to espy;
To whom they both agreed to take their way,
In hope there newes to learne, how they mote best assay.

[37]

There did they find, that which they did not feare,
The selfe same flockes, the which those theeues had reft
From *Meliboe* and from themseles whyleare,
And certaine of the theeues there by them left,
The which for want of heards themselues then kept.
Right well knew *Coridon* his owne late sheepe,
And seeing them, for tender pittie wept:
But when he saw the theeues, which did them keepe
His hart gan fayle, albe he saw them all asleepe.

[38]

But *Calidore* recomforting his grieffe,
Though not his feare: for nought may feare disswade;
Him hardly forward drew, whereas the thiefe
Lay sleeping soundly in the bushes shade,
Whom *Coridon* him counseld to inuade
Now all vnwares, and take the spoyle away;
But he, that in his mind had closely made
A further purpose, would not so them slay,
But gently waking them, gaue them the time of day.

[39]

Tho sitting downe by them vpon the greene,
Of sundrie things he purpose gan to faine;
That he by them might certaine tydings weene
Of *Pastorell*, were she aliue or slaine.
Mongst which the theeues them questioned againe,
What mister men, and eke from whence they were.
To whom they answer'd, as did appertaine,
That they were poore heardgroomes, the which whylere
Had from their maisters fled, & now sought hyre elsewhere.

[40]

Whereof right glad they seem'd, and offer made
To hyre them well, if they their flockes would keepe:
For they themselues were euill groomes, they sayd,
Vnwont with heards to watch, or pasture sheepe,
But to forray the land, or scoure the deepe.
Thereto they soone agreed, and earnest tooke,
To keepe their flockes for litle hyre and chepe:
For they for better hyre did shortly looke,
So there all day they bode, till light the sky forsooke.

[41]

Tho when as towards darksome night it drew,
Vnto their hellish dens those theeues them brought,
Where shortly they in great acquaintance grew,
And all the secrets of their entrayles sought.
There did they find, contrarie to their thought,
That *Pastorell* yet liu'd, but all the rest
Were dead, right so as *Coridon* had taught:
Whereof they both full glad and blyth did rest,
But chiefly *Calidore*, whom griefe had most possest.

[42]

At length when they occasion fittest found,
In dead of night, when all the theeues did rest
After a late forray, and slept full sound,
Sir *Calidore* him arm'd, as he thought best,
Hauing of late by diligent inquest,
Prouided him a sword of meanest sort:
With which he streight went to the Captaines nest.
But *Coridon* durst not with him consort,
Ne durst abide behind, for dread of worse effort.

[43]

When to the Caue they came, they found it fast:
But *Calidore* with huge resistlesse might,
The dores assayled, and the locks vprast.
With noyse whereof the theefe awaking light,
Vnto the entrance ran: where the bold knight
Encountring him with small resistance slew;
The whiles faire *Pastorell* through great affright
Was almost dead, misdoubting least of new
Some vprore were like that, which lately she did vew.

[44]

But when as *Calidore* was comen in,
And gan aloud for *Pastorell* to call,
Knowing his voice although not heard long sin,
She sudden was reuiued therewithall,
And wondrous ioy felt in her spirits thrall:
Like him that being long in tempest tost,
Looking each houre into deathes mouth to fall,
At length espyes at hand the happie cost,
On which he safety hopes, that earst feard to be lost.

[45]

Her gentle hart, that now long season past
Had neuer ioyance felt, nor chearefull thought,
Began some smacke of comfort new to tast,
Like lyfull heat to nummed senses brought,
And life to feele, that long for death had sought;
Ne lesse in hart reioyced *Calidore*,
When he her found, but like to one distraught
And robd of reason, towards her him bore,
A thousand times embrast, and kist a thousand more.

[46]

But now by this, with noyse of late vprore,
The hue and cry was raysed all about;
And all the *Brigants* flocking in great store,
Vnto the caue gan preasse, nought hauing dout
Of that was doen, and entred in a rout.
But *Calidore* in th'entry close did stand,
And entertayning them with courage stout,
Still slew the formost, that came first to hand,
So long till all the entry was with bodies mand.

[47]

Tho when no more could nigh to him approch,
He breath'd his sword, and rested him till day:
Which when he spyde vpon the earth t'encroch,
Through the dead carcasses he made his way,
Mongst which he found a sword of better say,
With which he forth went into th'open light:
Where all the rest for him did readie stay,
And fierce assayling him, with all their might
Gan all vpon him lay: there gan a dreadfull fight.

[48]

How many flyes in whottest sommers day
Do seize vpon some beast, whose flesh is bare,
That all the place with swarmes do ouerlay,
And with their litle stings right felly fare;
So many theeues about him swarming are,
All which do him assayle on euery side,
And sore oppresse, ne any him doth spare:
But he doth with his raging brond diuide
Their thickest troups, & round about him scattreth wide.

[49]

Like as a Lion mongst an heard of dere,
Disperseth them to catch his choyssest pray;
So did he fly amongst them here and there,
And all that nere him came, did hew and slay,
Till he had strowd with bodies all the way;
That none his daunger daring to abide,
Fled from his wrath, and did themselues conuay
Into their caues, their heads from death to hide,
Ne any left, that victorie to him enuide.

[50]

Then backe returning to his dearest deare,
He her gan to recomfort, all he might,
With gladfull speaches, and with louely cheare,
And forth her bringing to the ioyous light,
Whereof she long had lackt the wishfull sight,
Deuiz'd all goodly meanes, from her to driue
The sad remembrance of her wretched plight.
So her vneath at last he did reuiue,
That long had lyen dead, and made againe aliue.

[51]

This doen, into those theeuish dens he went,
And thence did all the spoyles and threasures take,
Which they from many long had robd and rent,
But fortune now the victors meed did make;
Of which the best he did his loue betake;
And also all those flockes, which they before
Had reft from *Meliboe* and from his make,
He did them all to *Coridon* restore.

So droue them all away, and his loue with him bore.

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