

Canto VII.

*Pealing, from Ioue, to Natur's Bar,
bold Alteration pleades
Large Evidencie: but Nature soone
her righteous Doome areads.*

I.

AH! whither doost thou now thou greater Muse
Me from these woods & pleasing forrests bring?
And my fraile spirit (that dooth oft refuse
This too high flight, vnfitt for her weake wing)
Lift vp aloft, to tell of heauens King
(Thy soueraine Sire) his fortunate successe,
And victory, in bigger notes to sing,
Which he obtain'd against that *Titanesse*,
That him of heauens Empire sought to dispossesse.

2

Yet sith I needs must follow thy behest,
Do thou my weaker wit with skill inspire,
Fit for this turne; and in my sable brest
Kindle fresh sparks of that immortall fire,
Which learned minds inflameth with desire
Of heauenly things: for, who but thou alone,
That art yborne of heauen and heauenly Sire,
Can tell things doen in heauen so long ygone;
So farre past memory of man that may be knowne.

3

Now, at the time that was before agreed,
The Gods assembled all on *Arlo* hill;
As well those that are sprung of heauenly seed,
As those that all the other world doe fill,
And rule both sea and land vnto their will:
Onely th'inferrall Powers might not appeare;
Aswell for horror of their count'naunce ill,
As for th'vnruly fiends which they did feare;
Yet *Pluto* and *Proserpina* were present there.

4

And thither also came all other creatures,

What-euer life or motion doe retaine,
According to their sundry kinds of features;
That *Arlo* scarsly could them all containe;
So full they filled euery hill and Plaine:
And had not *Natures* Sergeant (that is *Order*)
Them well disposed by his busie paine,
And raunged farre abroad in euery border,
They would haue caused much confusion and disorder.

5

Then forth issewed (great goddesse) great dame *Nature*,
With goodly port and gracious Maiesty;
Being far greater and more tall of stature
Then any of the gods or Powers on hie:
Yet certes by her face and physnomy,
Whether she man or woman inly were,
That could not any creature well descry:
For, with a veile that wimpled euery where,
Her head and face was hid, that mote to none appeare

6

That some doe say was so by skill deuized,
To hide the terror of her vncouth hew,
From mortall eyes that should be sore agrized;
For that her face did like a Lion shew,
That eye of wight could not indure to view:
But others tell that it so beautious was,
And round about such beames of splendor threw,
That it the Sunne a thousand times did pass,
Ne could be seene, but like an image in a glass.

7

That well may seemen true: for, well I weene
That this same day, when she on *Arlo* sat,
Her garment was so bright and wondrous sheene,
That my fraile wit cannot deuize to what
It to compare, nor finde like stufte to that,
As those three sacred *Saints*, though else most wise,
Yet on mount *Thabor* quite their wits forgat,
When they their glorious Lord in strange disguise
Transfigur'd sawe; his garments so did daze their eyes.

8

In a fayre Plaine vpon an equall Hill,
 She placed was in a paullion;
 Not such as Craftes-men by their idle skill
 Are wont for Princes states to fashion:
 But th'earth her self of her owne motion,
 Out of her fruitfull bosome made to growe
 Most dainty trees; that, shooting vp anon,
 Did seeme to bow their bloosming heads full lowe,
 For homage vnto her, and like a throne did shewe.

9

So hard it is for any liuing wight,
 All her array and vestiments to tell,
 That old *Dan Geffrey* (in whose gentle spright
 The pure well head of Poesie did dwell)
 In his *Foules parley* durst not with it mel,
 But it transferd to *Alane*, who he thought
 Had in his *Plaint of kindes* describ'd it well:
 Which who will read set forth so as it ought,
 Go seeke he out that *Alane* where he may be sought.

10

And all the earth far vnderneath her feete
 Was dight with flowres, that voluntary grew
 Out of the ground, and sent forth odours sweet;
 Tenne thousand mores of sundry sent and hew,
 That might delight the smell, or please the view:
 The which, the Nymphes, from all the brooks thereby
 Had gathered, which they at her foot-stoole threw;
 That richer seem'd then any tapestry,
 That Princes bowres adorne with painted imagery.

11

And *Mole* himselfe, to honour her the more,
 Did deck himself in freshest faire attire,
 And his high head, that seemeth alwaies hore
 With hardned frosts of former winters ire,
 He with an Oaken girlond now did tire,
 As if the loue of some new Nymph late seene,
 Had in him kindled youthfull fresh desire,
 And made him change his gray attire to greene;
 Ah gentle *Mole*! such ioyance hath thee well beseene.

12

Was neuer so great ioyance since the day,
 That all the gods whylome assembled were,
 On *Haemus* hill in their diuine array,
 To celebrate the solemne bridall cheare,
 Twixt *Peleus*, and dame *Thetis* pointed there;
 Where *Phoebus* self, that god of Poets hight,
 They say did sing the spousall hymne full cleere,
 That all the gods were rauisht with delight
 Of his celestiall song, and Musicks wondrous might.

13

This great Grandmother of all creatures bred
 Great *Nature*, euer young yet full of eld,
 Still mouing, yet vnmoued from her sted;
 Vnseene of any, yet of all beheld;
 Thus sitting in her throne as I haue told,
 Before her came dame *Mutabilitie*;
 And being lowe before her presence feld,
 With meek obaysance and humilitie,
 Thus gan her plaintif Plea, with words to amplifie;

14

To thee ô greatest goddesse, onely great,
 An humble suppliant loe, I lowly fly
 Seeking for Right, which I of thee entreat;
 Who Right to all dost deale indifferently,
 Damning all Wrong and tortious Iniurie,
 Which any of thy creatures do to other
 (Oppressing them with power, vnequally)
 Sith of them all thou art the equall mother,
 And knittest each to'each, as brother vnto brother.

15

To thee therefore of this same *Ioue* I plaine,
 And of his fellow gods that faine to be,
 That challenge to themselues the whole worlds raign;
 Of which, the greatest part is due to me,
 And heauen it selfe by heritage in Fee:
 For, heauen and earth I both alike do deeme,
 Sith heauen and earth are both alike to thee;
 And, gods no more then men thou doest esteeme:
 For, euen the gods to thee, as men to gods do seeme.

16

Then weigh, ô soueraigne goddesse, by what right
 These gods do claime the worlds whole souerainty;
 And that is onely dew vnto my might
 Arrogate to themselues ambitiously:
 As for the gods owne principality,
 Which *Ioue* vsurpes vniustly; that to be
 My heritage, *Ioue*'s selfe cannot deny,
 From my great Grandsire *Titan*, vnto mee,
 Deriu'd by dew descent; as is well knownen to thee.

17

Yet maugre *Ioue*, and all his gods beside,
 I doe possesse the worlds most regiment;
 As, if ye please it into parts diuide,
 And euery parts inholders to conuent,
 Shall to your eyes appeare incontinent.
 And first, the Earth (great mother of vs all)
 That only seems vnmov'd and permanent,
 And vnto *Mutability* not thrall;
 Yet is she chang'd in part, and eke in generall.

18

For, all that from her springs, and is ybredde,
 How-euer fayre it flourish for a time,
 Yet see we soone decay; and, being dead,
 To turne again vnto their earthly slime:
 Yet, out of their decay and mortall crime,
 We daily see new creatures to arize;
 And of their Winter spring another Prime,
 Vnlike in forme, and chang'd by strange disguise:
 So turne they still about, and change in restlesse wise.

19

As for her tenants; that is, man and beasts,
 The beasts we daily see massacred dy,
 As thralls and vassalls vnto mens beheasts:
 And men themselves doe change continually,
 From youth to eld, from wealth to pouerty,
 From good to bad, from bad to worst of all.
 Ne doe their bodies onely flit and fly:
 But eke their minds (which they immortall call)
 Still change and vary thoughts, as new occasions fall.

20

Ne is the water in more constant case;
 Whether those same on high, or these belowe.
 For, th'Ocean moueth still, from place to place;
 And euery Riuer still doth ebbe and flowe:
 Ne any Lake, that seems most still and slowe,
 Ne Poole so small, that can his smoothnesse holde,
 When any winde doth vnder heauen blowe;
 With which, the clouds are also tost and roll'd;
 Now like great Hills; &, streight, like sluices, them vnfold.

21

So likewise are all watry liuing wights
 Still tost, and turned, with continuall change
 Neuer abyding in their stedfast plights.
 The fish, still floting, doe at randon range,
 And neuer rest; but euermore exchange
 Their dwelling places, as the streames them carrie:
 Ne haue the watry foules a certaine grange,
 Wherein to rest, ne in one stead do tarry;
 But flitting still doe fly, and still their places vary.

22

Next is the Ayre: which who feeles not by sense
 (For, of all sense it is the middle meane)
 To flit still? and, with subtil influence
 Of his thin spirit, all creatures to maintaine,
 In state of life? O weake life! that does leane
 On thing so tickle as th'vnsteady ayre;
 Which euery howre is chang'd, and altred cleane
 With euery blast that bloweth fowle or faire:
 The faire doth it prolong; the fowle doth it impaire.

23

Therein the changes infinite beholde,
 Which to her creatures euery minute chaunce;
 Now, boyling hot: streight, friezing deadly cold:
 Now, faire sun-shine, that makes all skip and daunce:
 Streight, bitter storms and balefull countenance,
 That makes them all to shiuier and to shake:
 Rayne, hayle, and snowe do pay them sad penance,
 And dreadfull thunder-claps (that make them quake)
 With flames & flashing lights that thousand changes make.

24

Last is the fire: which, though it liue for euer,
 Ne can be quenched quite; yet, euery day,
 Wee see his parts, so soone as they do seuer,
 To lose their heat, and shortly to decay;
 So, makes himself his owne consuming pray.
 Ne any liuing creatures doth he breed:
 But all, that are of others bredd, doth slay;
 And, with their death, his cruell life dooth feed;
 Nought leauing, but their barren ashes, without seede.

25

Thus, all these fower (the which the ground-work bee
 Of all the world, and of all liuing wights)
 To thousand sorts of *Change* we subiect see:
 Yet are they chang'd (by other wondrous slightes)
 Into themselues, and lose their native mights;
 The Fire to Aire, and th'Ayre to Water sheere,
 And Water into Earth : yet Water fights
 With Fire, and Aire with Earth approaching neere:
 Yet all are in one body, and as one appeare.

26

So, in them all raignes *Mutabilitie*;
 How-euer these, that Gods themselues do call,
 Of them doe claime the rule and souerainty:
 As, *Vesta*, of the fire aethereall;
Vulcan, of this, with vs so vsuall;
Ops, of the earth; and *Iuno* of the Ayre;
Neptune, of Seas; and Nymphes, of Riuers all.
 For, all those Riuers to me subiect are:
 And all the rest, which they vsurp, be all my share.

27

Which to approuen true, as I haue told,
 Vouchsafe, ô goddesse, to thy presence call
 The rest which doe the world in being hold:
 As, times and seasons of the yeare that fall:
 Of all the which, demand in generall,
 Or iudge thy selfe, by verdit of thine eye,
 Whether to me they are not subiect all.
Nature did yeeld thereto; and by-and-by,
 Bade *Order* call them all, before her Maiesty.

28

So, forth issew'd the Seasons of the yeare;
 First, lusty *Spring*, all dight in leaues of flowres
 That freshly budded and new bloosmes did bear
 (In which a thousand birds had built their bowres
 That sweetly sung, to call forth Paramours):
 And in his hand a iuelin he did bear,
 And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures)
 A guilt engrauen morion he did weare;
 That as some did him loue, so others did him feare.

29

Then came the iolly *Sommer*, being dight
 In a thin silken cassock coloured greene,
 That was vnlyned all, to be more light:
 And on his head a girlond well beseene
 He wore, from which as he had chauffed been
 The sweat did drop; and in his hand he bore
 A boawe and shaftes, as he in forrest greene
 Had hunted late the Libbard or the Bore,
 And now would bathe his limbes, with labor heated sore.

30

Then came the *Autumne* all in yellow clad,
 As though he ioyed in his plentious store,
 Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad
 That he had banisht hunger, which to-fore
 Had by the belly oft him pinched sore.
 Vpon his head a wreath that was enrold
 With eares of corne, of euery sort he bore:
 And in his hand a sickle he did holde,
 To reap the ripened fruits the which the earth had yold.

31

Lastly, came *Winter* cloathed all in frize,
 Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill,
 Whil'st on his hoary beard his breath did freese;
 And the dull drops that from his purpled bill
 As from a limbeck did adown distill.
 In his right hand a tipped staffe he held,
 With which his feeble steps he stayed still:
 For, he was faint with cold, and weak with eld;
 That scarce his loosed limbes he hable was to weld.

32

These, marching softly, thus in order went,
 And after them, the Monthes all riding came;
 First, sturdy *March* with brows full sternly bent,
 And armed strongly, rode vpon a Ram,
 The same which ouer *Hellespontus* swam:
 Yet in his hand a spade he also hent,
 And in a bag all sorts of seeds ysame,
 Which on the earth he strowed as he went,
 And fild her womb with fruitfull hope of nourishment.

33

Next came fresh *Aprill* full of lustyhed,
 And wanton as a Kid whose horne new buds:
 Vpon a Bull he rode, the same which led
Europa floting through th'Argolick fluds:
 His hornes were gilden all with golden studs
 And garnished with garlonds goodly dight
 Of all the fairest flowres and freshest buds
 Which th'earth brings forth, & wet he seem'd in sight
 With waues, through which he waded for his loues delight.

34

Then came faire *May*, the fayrest mayd on ground,
 Deckt all with dainties of her seasons pridy,
 And throwing flowres out of her lap around:
 Vpon two brethrens shoulders she did ride,
 The twinnes of *Leda*; which on eyther side
 Supported her like to their soueraine Queene.
 Lord! how all creatures laught when her they spide,
 And leapt and daunc't as they had rauisht beene!
 And *Cupid* selfe about her fluttred all in greene.

35

And after her, came iolly *June*, arrayd
 All in greene leaues, as he a Player were;
 Yet in his time, he wrought as well as playd,
 That by his plough-yrons mote right well appeare:
 Vpon a Crab he rode, that him did beare
 With crooked crawling steps an vncouth pase,
 And backward yode, as Bargemen wont to fare
 Bending their force contrary to their face,
 Like that vngracious crew which faines demurest grace.

36

Then came hot *July* boyling like to fire,
 That all his garments he had cast away:
 Vpon a Lyon raging yet with ire
 He boldly rode and made him to obay:
 It was the beast that whylome did forray
 The Nemeanean forrest, till th'*Amphytrionide*
 Him slew, and with his hide did him array;
 Behinde his back a sithe, and by his side
 Vnder his belt he bore a sickle circling wide.

37

The sixt was *August*, being rich arrayd
 In garment all of gold downe to the ground:
 Yet rode he not, but led a louely Mayd
 Forth by the lilly hand, the which was cround
 With eares of corne, and full her hand was found;
 That was the righteous Virgin, which of old
 Liv'd here on earth, and plenty made abound;
 But, after Wrong was lov'd and Iustice solde,
 She left th'vnrighteous world and was to heauen extold.

38

Next him, *September* marched eeke on foot;
 Yet was he heauy laden with the spoyle
 Of haruests riches, which he made his boot,
 And him enricht with bounte of the soyle:
 In his one hand, as fit for haruests toyle,
 He held a knife-hook; and in th'other hand
 A paire of waights, with which he did assoyle
 Both more and lesse, where it in doubt did stand,
 And equall gauе to each as Iustice duly scann'd.

39

Then came *October* full of merry glee:
 For, yet his noule was totty of the must,
 Which he was treading in the wine-fats see,
 And of the ioyous oyle, whose gentle gust
 Made him so frolick and so full of lust:
 Vpon a dreadfull Scorpion he did ride,
 The same which by *Dianaes* doom vniust
 Slew great *Orion*: and eeke by his side
 He had his ploughing share, and coulter ready tyde.

40

Next was *Nouember*, he full grosse and fat,
 As fed with lard, and that right well might seeme;
 For, he had been a fatting hogs of late,
 That yet his browes with sweat, did reek and steem,
 And yet the season was full sharp and breem;
 In planting eeke he took no small delight:
 Whereon he rode, not easie was to deeme;
 For it a dreadfull *Centaure* was in sight,
 The seed of *Saturne*, and faire *Nais*, *Chiron* hight,

41

And after him, came next the chill *December*:
 Yet he through merry feasting which he made,
 And great bonfires, did not the cold remember;
 His Sauiours birth his mind so much did glad:
 Vpon a shaggy-bearded Goat he rode,
 The same wherewith *Dan Ioue* in tender yeares,
 They say, was nourisht by th'*Iaean* mayd;
 And in his hand a broad deepe boawle he beares;
 Of which, he freely drinks an health to all his peeres.

42

Then came old *Januairy*, wrapped well
 In many weeds to keep the cold away;
 Yet did he quake and quiuer like to quell,
 And blowe his nayles to warme them if he may:
 For, they were numbd with holding all the day
 An hatchet keene, with which he felled wood,
 And from the trees did lop the needlessse spray:
 Vpon an huge great Earth-pot steane he stood;
 From whose wide mouth, there flowed forth the Romane floud.

43

And lastly, came cold *February*, sitting
 In an old wagon, for he could not ride;
 Drawne of two fishes for the season fitting,
 Which through the flood before did softly slyde
 And swim away: yet had he by his side
 His plough and harnesse fit to till the ground,
 And tooles to prune the trees, before the pride
 Of hasting Prime did make them burgein round:
 So past the twelue months forth, & their dew places found

44

And after these, there came the *Day*, and *Night*,
 Riding together both with equall pase,
 Th'one on a Palfrey blacke, the other white;
 But *Night* had couered her vncomely face
 With a blacke veile, and held in hand a mace,
 On top whereof the moon and stars were pight,
 And sleep and darknesse round about did trace:
 But *Day* did beare, vpon his scepters hight,
 The goodly Sun, encompast all with beames bright.

45

Then came the *Howres*, faire daughters of high *Ioue*,
 And timely *Night*, the which were all endewed
 With wondrous beauty fit to kindle loue;
 But they were Virgins all, and loue eschewed,
 That might forslack the charge to them fore-shewed
 By mighty *Ioue*; who did them Porters make
 Of heauens gate (whence all the gods issued)
 Which they did dayly watch, and nightly wake
 By euen turnes, ne euer did their charge forsake.

46

And after all came *Life*, and lastly *Death*;
Death with most grim and griesly visage seene,
 Yet is he nought but parting of the breath;
 Ne ought to see, but like a shade to weene,
 Vnbodied, vnsoul'd, vnheard, vnseene.
 But *Life* was like a faire young lusty boy,
 Such as they faine *Dan Cupid* to haue beene,
 Full of delightfull health and liuely ioy.
 Deckt all with flowres, and wings of gold fit to employ.

47

When these were past, thus gan the *Titanesse*;
 Lo, mighty mother, now be iudge and say,
 Whether in all thy creatures more or lesse
C H A N G E doth not raign & beare the greatest sway:
 For, who sees not, that *Time* on all doth pray?
 But *Times* do change and moue continually.
 So nothing here long standeth in one stay:
 Wherefore, this lower world who can deny
 But to be subiect still to *Mutabilitie*?

48

Then thus gan *Ioue*; Right true it is, that these
 And all things else that vnder heauen dwell
 Are chaung'd of *Time*, who doth them all disseise
 Of being : But, who is it (to me tell)
 That *Time* himselfe doth moue and still compell
 To keepe his course? Is not that namely wee
 Which poure that vertue from our heauenly cell,
 That moues them all, and makes them changed be?
 So them we gods doe rule, and in them also thee.

49

To whom, thus *Mutability*: The things
 Which we see not how they are mov'd and swayd,
 Ye may attribute to your selues as Kings,
 And say they by your secret powre are made:
 But what we see not, who shall vs perswade?
 But were they so, as ye them faine to be,
 Mov'd by your might, and ordred by your ayde;
 Yet what if I can proue, that euen yee
 Your selues are likewise chang'd, and subiect vnto mee?

50

And first, concerning her that is the first,
 Euen you faire *Cynthia*, whom so much ye make
Ioues dearest darling, she was bred and nurst
 On *Cynthus* hill, whence she her name did take:
 Then is she mortall borne, how-so ye crake;
 Besides, her face and countenance euery day
 We changed see, and sundry forms partake,
 Now hornd, now round, now bright, now brown & gray:
 So that *as changefull as the Moone* men vse to say.

51

Next, *Mercury*, who though he lesse appeare
 To change his hew, and always seeme as one;
 Yet, he his course doth altar euery yeare,
 And is of late far out of order gone:
 So *Venus* eeke, that goodly Paragone,
 Though faire all night, yet is she darke all day;
 And *Phoebus* self, who lightsome is alone,
 Yet is he oft eclipsed by the way,
 And fills the darkned world with terror and dismay.

52

Now *Mars* that valiant man is changed most:
 For, he some times so far runs out of square,
 That he his way doth seem quite to haue lost,
 And cleane without his vsuall spheere to fare;
 That euen these Star-gazers stonisht are
 At sight thereof, and damne their lying bookes:
 So likewise, grim Sir *Saturne* oft doth spare
 His sterne aspect, and calme his crabbed lookes:
 So many turning cranks these haue, so many crookes.

53

But you *Dan Ioue*, that only constant are,
 And King of all the rest, as ye doe clame,
 Are you not subiect eeke to this misfare?
 Then let me aske you this withouten blame,
 Where were ye borne? some say in *Crete* by name,
 Others in *Thebes*, and others other-where;
 But wheresoeuer they comment the same,
 They all consent that ye begotten were,
 And borne here in this world, ne other can appeare.

54

Then are ye mortall borne, and thrall to me,
 Vnlesse the kingdome of the sky yee make
 Immortall, and vnchangeable to be;
 Besides, that power and vertue which ye spake,
 That ye here worke, doth many changes take,
 And your owne natures change: for, each of you
 That vertue haue, or this, or that to make,
 Is checkt and changed from his nature trew,
 By others opposition or obliquid view.

55

Besides, the sundry motions of your Spheares,
 So sundry wayes and fashions as clerkes faine,
 Some in short space, and some in longer yeares;
 What is the same but alteration plaine?
 Onely the starry skie doth still remaine:
 Yet do the Starres and Signes therein still moue,
 And euen it self is mov'd, as wizards faine.
 But all that moueth, doth mutation loue:
 Therefore both you and them to me I subiect proue.

56

Then since within this wide great *Vniuerse*
 Nothing doth firme and permanent appeare,
 But all things lost and turned by transuerse:
 What then should let, but I aloft should reare
 My Trophee, and from all, the triumph beare?
 Now iudge then (ô thou greatest goddesse trew!)
 According as thy selfe doest see and heare,
 And vnto me addoom that is my dew;
 That is the rule of all, all being rul'd by you.

57

So hauing ended, silence long ensewed,
 Ne *Nature* to or fro spake for a space,
 But with firme eyes affixt, the ground still viewed.
 Meane while, all creatures, looking in her face,
 Expecting th'end of this so doubtfull case,
 Did hang in long suspence what would ensew,
 To whether side should fall the soueraigne place:
 At length, she looking vp with chearefull view,
 The silence brake, and gaue her doome in speeches few.

58

I well consider all that ye haue sayd,
 And find that all things stedfastnes do hate
 And changed be: yet being rightly wayd
 They are not changed from their first estate;
 But by their change their being doe dilate:
 And turning to themselues at length againe,
 Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
 Then ouer them Change doth not rule and raigne;
 But they raigne ouer change, and doe their states maintaine.

59

Cease therefore daughter further to aspire,
 And thee content thus to be rul'd by me:
 For thy decay thou seekst by thy desire;
 But time shall come that all shall changed bee,
 And from thenceforth, none no more change shal see.
 So was the *Titaness* put downe and whist,
 And *Ioue* confirm'd in his imperiall see.
 Then was that whole assembly quite dismiste,

And *Natur*'s selfe did vanish, whither no man wist.

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