

### *Cant. III.*

*Forsaken Truth long seekes her loue,  
and makes the Lyon mylde,  
Marres blind Deuotions mart, & fals  
in hand of leachour vylde.*

[1]

**N**Ought is there vnder heau'ns wide hollownesse,  
That moues more deare compassion of mind,  
Then beautie brought t'vnworthy wretchednesse  
Through enuies snares or fortunes freaks vnkind:  
I, whether lately through her brightnesse blind,  
Or through alleageance and fast fealtie,  
Which I doe owe vnto all womankind,  
Feele my heart perst with so great agonie,  
When such I see, that all for pittie I could die.

[2]

And now it is empasioned so deepe,  
For fairest *Vnaes* sake, of whom I sing,  
That my fraile eyes these lines with teares doe steepe,  
To thinke how she through guilefull handeling,  
Though true as touch, though daughter of a King,  
Though faire as euer liuing wight was faire,  
Though nor in word nor deed ill meriting,  
Is from her knight divorced in despaire  
And her due loues deriu'd to that vile witches share.

[3]

Yet she most faithfull Ladie all this while  
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd  
Farre from all peoples prease, as in exile,  
In wilderness and wastfull deserts strayd,  
To seeke her knight; who subtilly betrayd  
Through that late vision, which th'Enchaunter wrought,  
Had her abandond. She of nought affrayd,  
Through woods and wastnesse wide him daily sought;  
Yet wished tydings none of him vnto her brought.

[4]

One day nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,  
From her vnastie beast she did alight,

And on the grasse her dainty limbes did lay  
In secret shadow, farre from all mens sight:  
From her faire head her fillet she vndight,  
And laid her stole aside. Her angels face  
As the great eye of heauen shyned bright,  
And made a sunshine in the shadie place;  
Did neuer mortall eye behold such heauenly grace.

[5]

It fortun'd out of the thickest wood  
A ramping Lyon rushed suddainly,  
Hunting full greedie after saluage blood;  
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,  
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,  
To haue attonce deuour'd her tender corse:  
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,  
His bloodie rage asswaged with remorse,  
And with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.

[6]

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,  
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,  
As he her wronged innocence did weet.  
O how can beautie maister the most strong,  
And simple truth subdue auenging wrong?  
Whose yeilded pride, and proude submission,  
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,  
Her hart gan melt in great compassion,  
And drizzling teares did shed for pure affection.

[7]

The Lyon Lord of euery beast in field,  
Quoth she, his princely puissance doth abate,  
And mightie proud to humble weake does yield,  
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late  
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:  
But he my Lyon, and my noble Lord  
How does he find in cruell hart to hate  
Her that him lou'd, and euer most adord,  
As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord?

[8]

Redounding teares did choke th'end of her plaint,

Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour wood;  
And sad to see her sorrowfull constraint  
The kingly beast vpon her gazing stood;  
With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry mood.  
At last in close hart shutting vp her paine,  
Arose the virgin borne of heauenly brood,  
And to her snowy Palfrey got againe,  
To seeke her strayed Champion, if she might attaine.

[9]

The Lyon would not leaue her desolate,  
But with her went along, as a strong gard  
Of her chast person, and a faithfull mate  
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:  
Still when she slept, he kept both watch and ward,  
And when she wak't, he waited diligent,  
With humble seruice to her will prepar'd:  
From her faire eyes he tooke commaundement,  
And euer by her lookes conceiued her intent.

[10]

Long she thus traueiled through deserts wyde,  
By which she thought her wandring knight shold pas,  
Yet neuer shew of liuing wight espyde;  
Till that at length she found the troden gras,  
In which the tract of peoples footing was,  
Vnder the steepe foot of a mountaine hore;  
The same she followes, till at last she has  
A damzell spyde slowe footing her before,  
That on her shoulders sad a pot of water bore.

[11]

To Whom approching she to her gan call,  
To weet, if dwelling place were nigh at hand;  
But the rude wench her answer'd nought at all,  
She could not heare, nor speake, nor vnderstand;  
Till seeing by her side the Lyon stand,  
With suddaine feare her pitcher downe she threw,  
And fled away: for neuer in that land  
Face of faire Ladie she before did vew,  
And that dread Lyons looke her cast in deadly hew.

[12]

Full fast she fled, ne euer lookt behynd,  
As if her life vpon the wager lay,  
And home she came, whereas her mother blynd  
Sate in eternall night: nought could she say,  
But suddaine catching hold, did her dismay  
With quaking hands, and other signes of feare:  
Who full of ghastly fright and cold affray,  
Gan shut the dore. By this arriued there  
Dame *Vna*, wearie Dame, and entrance did requere.

[13]

Which when none yeilded, her vnruely Page  
With his rude clawes the wicket open rent,  
And let her in; where of his cruell rage  
Nigh dead with feare, and faint astonishment,  
She found them both in darkesome corner pent;  
Where that old woman day and night did pray  
Vpon her beades deuoutly penitent;  
Nine hundred *Pater nosters* euery day,  
And thrice nine hundred *Aues* she was wont to say.

[14]

And to augment her painefull pennance more,  
Thrice euery weeke in ashes she did sit,  
And next her wrinkled skin rough sackcloth wore,  
And thrice three times did fast from any bit:  
But now for feare her beads she did forget.  
Whose needlesse dread for to remoue away,  
Faire *Vna* framed words and count'nance fit:  
Which hardly doen, at length she gan them pray,  
That in their cotage small, that night she rest her may.

[15]

The day is spent, and commeth drowsie night,  
When euery creature shrowded is in sleepe;  
Sad *Vna* downe her laies in wearie plight,  
And at her feet the Lyon watch doth keepe:  
In stead of rest, she does lament, and weepe  
For the late losse of her deare loued knight,  
And sighes, and grones, and euermore does steepe  
Her tender brest in bitter teares all night,  
All night she thinks too long, and often lookes for light.

[16]

Now when *Aldeboran* was mounted hie  
About the shynie *Cassiopeias* chaire,  
And all in deadly sleep did drowned lie,  
One knocked at the dore, and in would fare;  
He knocked fast, and often curst, and sware,  
That readie entrance was not at his call:  
For on his backe a heauie load he bare  
Of nightly stelths and pillage seuerall,  
Which he had got abroad by purchase criminall.

[17]

He was to weete a stout and sturdie thiefe,  
Wont to robbe Churches of their ornaments,  
And poore mens boxes of their due reliefe,  
Which giuen was to them for good intents;  
The holy Saints of their rich vestiments  
He did disrobe, when all men carelesse slept,  
And spoild the Priests of their habiliments,  
Whiles none the holy things in safety kept;  
Then he by cunning sleights in at the window crept.

[18]

And all that he by right or wrong could find,  
Vnto this house he brought, and did bestowe  
Vpon the daughter of this woman blind,  
*Abessa* daughter of *Corceca* slow,  
With whom he whoredome vsd, that few did know,  
And fed her fat with feast of offerings,  
And plentie, which in all the land did grow;  
Ne spared he to giue her gold and rings:  
And now he to her brought part of his stolen things.

[19]

Thus long the dore with rage and threats he bet,  
Yet of those fearefull women none durst rize,  
The Lyon frayed them, him in to let:  
He would no longer stay him to advize,  
But open breakes the dore in furious wize,  
And entring is; when that disdainfull beast  
Encountring fierce, him suddaine doth surprize,  
And seizing cruell clawes on trembling brest,  
Vnder his Lordly foot him proudly hath suppress.

[20]

Him booteth not resist, nor succour call,  
His bleeding hart is in the vengers hand,  
Who straight him rent in thousand peeces small,  
And quite dismembred hath: the thirstie land  
Drunke vp his life; his corse left on the strand.  
His fearefull friends weare out the wofull night,  
Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to vnderstand  
The heaue hap, which on them is alight,  
Affraid, least to themselues the like mishappen might.

[21]

Now when broad day the world discouered has,  
Vp *Vna* rose, vp rose the Lyon eke,  
And on their former iourney forward pas,  
In wayes vnknowne, her wandring knight to seeke,  
With paines farre passing that long wandring *Greeke*,  
That for his loue refused deitie;  
Such were the labours of this Lady meeke,  
Still seeking him, that from her still did flie,  
Then furthest from her hope, when most shee weened nie.

[22]

Soone as she parted thence, the fearefull twaine,  
That blind old woman and her daughter deare  
Came forth, and finding *Kirkrapine* there slaine,  
For anguish great they gan to rend their heare,  
And beat their brests, and naked flesh to teare.  
And when they both had wept and wayld their fill,  
Then forth they ranne like two amazed deare,  
Halfe mad through malice, and reuenging will,  
To follow her, that was the causer of their ill.

[23]

Whom ouertaking, they gan loudly bray,  
With hollow howling, and lamenting cry,  
Shamefully at her rayling all the way,  
And her accusing of dishonesty,  
That was the flowre of faith and chastity;  
And still amidst her rayling, she did pray,  
That plagues, and mischiefs, and long misery  
Might fall on her, and follow all the way,  
And that in endlesse error she might euer stray.

[24]

But when she saw her prayers nought preuaile,  
She backe returned with some labour lost;  
And in the way as she did weepe and waile,  
A knight her met in mighty armes embost,  
Yet knight was not for all his bragging bost,  
But subtill *Archimag*, that *Vna* sought  
By traynes into new troubles to haue tost:  
Of that old woman tydings he besought,  
If that of such a Ladie she could tellen ought.

[25]

Therewith she gan her passion to renew,  
And cry, and curse, and raile, and rend her heare,  
Saying, that harlot she too lately knew,  
That causd her shed so many a bitter teare,  
And so forth told the story of her feare:  
Much seemed he to mone her haplesse chaunce,  
And after for that Ladie did inquire;  
Which being taught, he forward gan aduaunce  
His faire enchanted steed, and eke his charmed launce.

[26]

Ere long he came, where *Vna* traueild slow,  
And that wilde Champion wayting her besyde:  
Whom seeing such, for dread he durst not show  
Himselfe too nigh at hand, but turned wyde  
Vnto an hill; from whence when she him spyde,  
By his like seeming shield, her knight by name  
She weend it was, and towards him gan ryde:  
Approching nigh, she wist it was the same,  
And with faire fearefull humblesse towards him shee came.

[27]

And weeping said, Ah my long lacked Lord,  
Where haue ye been thus long out of my sight?  
Much feared I to haue bene quite abhord,  
Or ought haue done, that ye displeasen might,  
That should as death vnto my deare heart light:  
For since mine eye your ioyous sight did mis,  
My chearefull day is turnd to chearelesse night,  
And eke my night of death the shadow is;  
But welcome now my light, and shining lampe of blis.

[28]

He thereto meeting said, My dearest Dame,  
Farre be it from your thought, and fro my will,  
To thinke that knighthood I so much should shame,  
As you to leaue, that haue me loued still,  
And chose in Faery court of meere goodwill,  
Where noblest knights were to be found on earth:  
The earth shall sooner leaue her kindly skill  
To bring forth fruit, and make eternall derth,  
Then I leaue you, my liefé, yborne of heauenly berth.

[29]

And sooth to say, why I left you so long,  
Was for to seeke aduerture in strange place,  
Where *Archimago* said a felon strong  
To many knights did daily worke disgrace;  
But knight he now shall neuer more deface:  
Good cause of mine excuse; that mote ye please  
Well to accept, and euermore embrace  
My faithfull seruice, that by land and seas  
Haue vowd you to defend, now then your plaint appease.

[30]

His louely words her seemd due recompence  
Of all her passed paines: one louing howre  
For many yeares of sorrow can dispence:  
A dram of sweet is worth a pound of sowre:  
She has forgot, how many a wofull stowre  
For him she late endur'd; she speakes no more  
Of past: true is, that true loue hath no powre  
To looken back; his eyes be fixt before.  
Before her stands her knight, for whom she toyld so sore.

[31]

Much like, as when the beaten marinere,  
That long hath wandred in the *Ocean* wide,  
Oft soust in swelling *Tethys* saltish teare,  
And long time hauing tand his tawney hide  
With blustering breath of heauen, that none can bide,  
And scorching flames of fierce *Orions* hound,  
Soone as the port from farre he has espide,  
His chearefull whistle merrily doth sound,  
And *Nereus* crownes with cups; his mates him pledg around.

[32]

Such ioy made *Vna*, when her knight she found;  
And eke th'enchauter ioyous seemd no lesse,  
Then the glad marchant, that does vew from ground  
His ship farre come from watrie wilderness,  
He hurles out vowes, and *Neptune* oft doth blesse:  
So forth they past, and all the way they spent  
Discoursing of her dreadfull late distresse,  
In which he askt her, what the Lyon ment:  
Who told her all that fell in iourney as she went.

[33]

They had not ridden farre, when they might see  
One pricking towards them with hastie heat,  
Full strongly armd, and on a courser free,  
That through his fiercenesse fomed all with sweat,  
And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,  
When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side;  
His looke was sterne, and seemed still to threat  
Cruell reunge, which he in hart did hyde,  
And on his shield *Sans loy* in bloudie lines was dyde.

[34]

When nigh he drew vnto this gentle payre,  
And saw the Red-crosse, which the knight did beare,  
He burnt in fire, and gan eftsoones prepare  
Himselfe to battell with his couched speare.  
Loth was that other, and did faint through fea,  
To taste th'vntryed dint of deadly steele;  
But yet his Lady did so well him cheare,  
That hope of new goodhap he gan to feele;  
So bent his speare, and spurnd his horse with yron heele.

[35]

But that proud Paynim forward came so fierce,  
And full of wrath, that with his sharp-head speare  
Through vainely crossed shield he quite did pierce;  
And had his staggering steed not shrunke for feare,  
Through shield and bodie eke he should him beare:  
Yet so great was the puissance of his push,  
That from his saddle quite he did him beare:  
He tombling rudely downe to ground did rush,  
And from his gored wound a well of bloud did gush.

[36]

Dismounting lightly from his loftie steed,  
He to him lept, in mind to reauue his life,  
And proudly said, Lo there the worthy meed  
Of him, that slew *Sansfoy* with bloudie knife;  
Henceforth his ghost freed from repining strife,  
In peace may passen ouer *Lethe* lake,  
When morning altars purgd with enemies life,  
The blacke infernall *Furies* doen aslake:  
Life from *Sansfoy* thou tookst, *Sansloy* shall from thee take.

[37]

Therewith in haste his helmet gan vnlace,  
Till *Vna* cride, O hold that heauie hand,  
Deare Sir, what euer that thou be in place:  
Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquisht stand  
Now at thy mercy: Mercy not withstand:  
For he is one the truest knight alieue,  
Though conquered now he lie on lowly land,  
And whilst him fortune fauourd, faire did thriue  
In bloudie field: therefore of life him not depriue.

[38]

Her piteous words might not abate his rage,  
But rudely rending vp his helmet, would  
Haue slaine him straight: but when he sees his age,  
And hoarie head of *Archimago* old,  
His hastie hand he doth amazed hold,  
And halfe ashamed, wondred at the sight:  
For the old man well knew he, though vntold,  
In charmes and magicke to haue wondrous might,  
Ne euer wont in field, ne in round lists to fight.

[39]

And said, Why *Archimago*, lucklesse syre,  
What doe I see? what hard mishap is this,  
That hath thee hither brought to taste mine yre?  
Or thine the fault, or mine the error is,  
In stead of foe, to wound my friend amis?  
He answered nought, but in a traunce still lay,  
And on those guilefull dazed eyes of his  
The cloud of death did sit. Which doen away,  
He left him lying so, ne would no lenger stay.

[40]

But to the yirgin comes, who all this while  
Amased stands, her selfe so mockt to see  
By him, who has the guerdon of his guile,  
For so misfeigning her true Knight to bee:  
Yet is she now in more perplexitie,  
Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold,  
From whom her booteth not at all to flie,  
Who by her cleanly garment catching hold,  
Her from her Palfrey pluckt, her visage to behold.

[41]

But her fierce seruant, full of kingly awe  
And high disdain, when as his soueraine Dame  
So rudely handled by her foe he sawe,  
With gaping iawes full greedy at him came,  
And ramping on his shield, did weene the same  
Haue reft away with his sharpe rending clawes:  
But he was stout, and lust did now inflame  
His corage more, that from his griping pawes  
He hath his shield redeem'd, and forth his swerd he drawes.

[42]

O then too weake and feeble was the forse  
Of saluage beast, his puissance to withstand:  
For he was strong, and of so mightie corse,  
As euer wielded speare in warlike hand,  
And feates of armes did wisely vnderstand.  
Eftsoones he perced through his chaufed chest  
With thrilling point of deadly yron brand,  
And launcht his Lordly hart: with death opprest  
He roar'd aloud, whiles life forsooke his stubborne brest.

[43]

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne maid  
From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will?  
Her faithfull gard remou'd, her hope dismaid,  
Her selfe a yeelded pray to saue or spill.  
He now Lord of the field, his pride to fill,  
With foule reproches, and disdainfull spight  
Her vildly entertaines, and will or nill,  
Beares her away vpon his courser light:  
Her prayers nought preuaile, his rage is more of might.

[44]

And all the way, with great lamenting paine,  
And piteous plaints she filleth his dull eares,  
That stony hart could riuen haue in twaine,  
And all the way she wets with flowing teares:  
But he enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares.  
Her seruile beast yet would not leaue her so,  
But followes her farre off, ne ought he feares,  
To be partaker of her wandring woe,  
More mild in beastly kind, then that her beastly foe.

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