

Cant. III.

*Vaine Braggadocchio getting Guyons
horse is made the scorne
Of knighthood trew, and is of fayre
Belphoebe fowle forlorne.*

[1]

SOone as the morrow faire with purple beames
Disperst the shadowes of the mistie night,
And *Titan* playing on the Easterne streames,
Gan cleare the deawy ayre with springing light,
Sir *Guyon* mindfull of his vow yplight,
Vprose from drowsie couch, and him addrest
Vnto the iourney which he had behight:
His puissaunt armes about his noble brest,
And many-folded shield he bound about his wrest.

[2]

Then, taking *Congé* of that virgin pure,
The bloody-handed babe vnto her truth
Did earnestly commit, and her coniure,
In vertuous lore to traine his tender youth,
And all that gentle noriture ensu'th:
And, that so soone as ryper yeares he raught,
He might for memory of that dayes ruth,
Be called *Ruddymane*, and thereby taught,
T'auenge his Parents death on them, that had it wrought.

[3]

So forth he far'd, as now befell, on foot,
Sith his good steed is lately from him gone;
Patience perforce; helpelesse what may it boot
To fret for anger, or for grieffe to mone?
His Palmer now shall foot no more alone:
So fortune wrought, as vnder greene woods syde
He lately heard that dying Lady grone,
He left his steed without, and speare besyde,
And rushed in on foote, to ayde her, ere she dyde.

[4]

The whiles a losell wandring by the way,
One that to bountie neuer cast his mind,

Ne thought of honour euer did assay
His baser brest, but in his kestrell kind
A pleasing vaine of glory vaine did find,
To which his flowing tounge, and troublous spright
Gaued him great ayd, and made him more inclin'd:
He that braue steed there finding ready dight,
Purloynd both steed and speare, and ran away full light.

[5]

Now gan his hart all swell in iollitie,
And of him selfe great hope and helpe conceiu'd,
That puffed vp with smoke of vanitie,
And with selfe-loued personage deceiu'd,
He gan to hope, of men to be receiu'd
For such, as he him thought, or faine would bee:
But for in court gay portance he perceiu'd,
And gallant shew to be in greatest gree,
Eftsoones to court he cast t'auaunce his first degree.

[6]

And by the way he chaunced to espy
One sitting idle on a sunny bancke,
To whom auainting in great brauery,
As Peacocke, that his painted plumes doth prancke,
He smote his courser in the trembling flancke,
And to him threatned his hart thrilling speare:
The seely man, seeing him ride so rancke,
And ayme at him, fell flat to ground for feare,
And crying Mercy lowd, his pitious hands gan reare.

[7]

Thereat the Scarcrow wexed wondrous prowde,
Through fortune of his first aduenture faire,
And with big thundring voyce reuyld him lowd;
Vile Caytiue, vassall of dread and despaire,
Vnworthie of the commune breathed aire,
Why liest thou, dead dog, a lenger day,
And doest not vnto death thy selfe prepare.
Dye, or thy selfe my captiue yield for ay;
Great fauour I thee graunt, for aunswere thus to stay.

[8]

Hold, ô deare Lord, hold your dead-doing hand,

Then loud he cryde, I am your humble thrall.
Ah wretch (quoth he) thy destinies withstand
My wrathfull will, and doe for mercy call.
I giue thee life: therefore prostrated fall
And kisse my stirrup; that thy homage bee.
The Miser threw him selfe, as an Offfall,
Streight at his foot in base humilitee,
And cleeped him his liege, to hold of him in fee.

[9]

So happy peace they made and faire accord:
Eftsoones this liege-man gan to wexe more bold,
And when he felt the folly of his Lord,
In his owne kind he gan him selfe vnfold:
For he was wylie witted, and growne old
In cunning sleights and practick knauery.
From that day forth he cast for to vphold
His idle humour with fine flattery,
And blow the bellowes to his swelling vanity.

[10]

Trompart fit man for *Braggadocchio*,
To serue at court in view of vaunting eye;
Vaine-glorious man, when fluttering wind does blow
In his light wings, is lifted vp to skye
The scorne of knighthood and true cheualrye,
To thinke without desert of gentle deed,
And noble worth to be aduanced hye:
Such prayse is shame; but honour vertues meed
Doth beare the fairest flowre in honorable seed.

[11]

So forth they pas, a well consorted paire,
Till that at length with *Archimage* they meet:
Who seeing one that shone in armour faire,
On goodly courser thundring with his feet,
Eftsoones supposed him a person meet,
Of his reuenge to make the instrument:
For since the *Redcrosse* knight he earst did weet,
To been with *Guyon* knit in one consent,
The ill, which earst to him, he now to *Guyon* ment.

[12]

And comming close to *Trompart* gan inquire
Of him, what mighty warrior that mote bee,
That rode in golden sell with single spere,
But wanted sword to wreake his enmittee.
He is a great adventurer, (said he)
That hath his sword through hard assay forgone,
And now hath vowd, till he auenged bee,
Of that despight, neuer to wearen none;
That speare is him enough to doen a thousand grone.

[13]

Th'enchauter greatly ioyed in the vaunt,
And weened well ere long his will to win,
And both his foen with equall foyle to daunt.
Tho to him louting lowly, did begin
To plaine of wrongs, which had committed bin
By *Guyon*, and by that false *Redcrosse* knight,
Which two, through treason and deceitfull gin,
Had slaine Sir *Mordant*, and his Lady bright:
That mote him honour win, to wreake so foule despight.

[14]

Therewith all suddainly he seemd enraged,
And threatned death with dreadfull countenance,
As if their liues had in his hand beene gaged;
And with stiffe force shaking his mortall launce,
To let him weet his doughtie valiaunce,
Thus said; Old man, great sure shalbe thy meed,
If where those knights for feare of dew vengeance
Do lurke, thou certainly to me areed,
That I may wreake on them their hainous hatefull deed.

[15]

Certes, my Lord, (said he) that shall I soone,
And giue you eke good help to their decay,
But mote I wisely you aduise to doon;
Giue no ods to your foes, but do puruay
Your selfe of sword before that bloody day:
For they be two the prowest knights on ground,
And oft approu'd in many hard assay;
And eke of surest steele, that may be found,
Do arme your selfe against that day, them to confound.

[16]

Dotard (said he) let be thy deepe aduise;
Seemes that through many yeares thy wits thee faile,
And that weake eld hath left thee nothing wise;
Else neuer should thy iudgement be so fraile,
To measure manhood by the sword or maile.
Is not enough foure quarters of a man,
Withouten sword or shield, an host to quaile?
Thou little wotest, what this right hand can:
Speake they, which haue beheld the battailes, which it wan.

[17]

The man was much abashed at his boast;
Yet well he wist, that who so would contend
With either of those knights on euen coast,
Should need of all his armes, him to defend;
Yet feared least his boldnesse should offend,
When *Braggadocchio* said, Once I did sweare,
When with one sword seuen knights I brought to end,
Thence forth in battell neuer sword to beare,
But it were that, which noblest knight on earth doth weare.

[18]

Perdie, Sir knight, said then th'enchauter bliue,
That shall I shortly purchase to your hond:
For now the best and noblest knight aliue
Prince *Arthur* is, that wonnes in Faerie lond;
He hath a sword, that flames like burning brond.
The same by my advise I vndertake
Shall by to morrow by thy side be fond.
At which bold word that boaster gan to quake,
And wondred in his mind, what mote that monster make.

[19]

He stayd not for more bidding, but away
Was suddein vanished out of his sight:
The Northerne wind his wings did broad display
At his commaund, and reared him vp light
From off the earth to take his aerie flight.
They lookt about, but no where could espie
Tract of his foote: then dead through great affright
They both nigh were, and each bad other flie:
Both fled attonce, ne euer backe returned eie.

[20]

Till that they come vnto a forrest greene,
In which they shrowd themselues from causelesse feare;
Yet feare them followes still, where so they beene,
Each trembling leafe, and whistling wind they heare,
As ghastly bug their haire on end does reare:
Yet both doe striue their fearfulnessse to faine.
At last, they heard a horne, that shrilled cleare
Throughout the wood, that ecchoed againe,
And made the forrest ring, as it would riue in twaine.

[21]

Eft through the thicke they heard one rudely rush;
With noyse whereof he from his loftie steed
Downe fell to ground, and crept into a bush,
To hide his coward head from dying dread.
But *Trompart* stoutly stayd to taken heed,
Of what might hap. Eftsoone there stepped forth
A goodly Ladie, clad in hunters weed,
That seem'd to be a woman of great worth,
And by her stately portance, borne of heauenly birth.

[22]

Her face so faire as flesh it seemed not,
But heauenly pourtraict of bright Angels hew,
Cleare as the skie, withouten blame or blot,
Through goodly mixture of complexions dew;
And in her cheeks the vermeill red did shew
Like roses in a bed of lillies shed,
The which ambrosiall odours from them threw,
And gazers sense with double pleasure fed,
Able to heale the sicke, and to reuiue the ded.

[23]

In her faire eyes two liuing lamps did flame,
Kindled aboue at th'heauenly makers light,
And darted fyrie beames out of the same,
So passing persant, and so wondrous bright,
That quite bereau'd the rash beholders sight:
In them the blinded god his lustfull fire
To kindle oft assayd, but had no might;
For with drad Maiestie, and awfull ire,
She broke his wanton darts, and quenched base desire.

[24]

Her iuorie forehead, full of bountie braue,
Like a broad table did it selfe dispred,
For Loue his loftie triumphes to engraue,
And write the battels of his great godhed:
All good and honour might therein be red:
For there their dwelling was. And when she spake,
Sweet words, like dropping honny she did shed,
And twixt the pearles and rubins softly brake
A silver sound, that heauenly musicke seemd to make.

[25]

Vpon her eye-lids many Graces sate,
Vnder the shadow of her euen browes,
Working belgards, and amorous retrate,
And euery one her with a grace endowes:
And euery one with meekenesse to her bowes.
So glorious mirrhour of celestiall grace,
And soueraine monument of mortall vowes,
How shall fraile pen descriue her heauenly face,
For feare through want of skill her beautie to disgrace?

[26]

So faire, and thousand thousand times more faire
She seemd, when she presented was to sight,
And was yclad, for heat of scorching aire,
All in a silken Camus, lyly whight,
Purfled vpon with many a folded plight,
Which all about besprinckled was throughout,
With golden aygulets, that glistred bright,
Like twinkling starres, and all the skirt about
Was hemd with golden fringe

[27]

Below her ham her weede did somewhat traine,
And her streight legs most brauely were embayld
In gilden buskins of costly Cordwaine,
All bard with golden bendes, which were entayld
With curious antickes, and full faire aumayld:
Before they fastned were vnder her knee
In a rich Iewell, and therein entrayld
The end of all their knots, that none might see,
How they within their fouldings close enwrapped bee.

[28]

Like two faire marble pillours they were seene,
Which doe the temple of the Gods support,
Whom all the people decke with girlands greene,
And honour in their festiuall resort;
Those same with stately grace, and princely port
She taught to tread, when she her selfe would grace:
But with the wooddie Nymphes when she did play,
Or when the flying Libbard she did chace,
She could them nimble moue, and after fly apace.

[29]

And in her hand a sharpe bore-speare she held,
And at her backe a bow and quiuer gay,
Stuft with steele-headed darts, wherewith she queld
The saluage beastes in her victorious play,
Knit with a golden bauldricke, which forelay
Athwart her snowy breast, and did diuide
Her daintie paps; which like young fruit in May
Now little gan to swell, and being tide,
Through her thin weed their places only signifide.

[30]

Her yellow lockes crisped, like golden wyre,
About her shoulders weren loosely shed,
And when the winde emongst them did inspyre,
They waued like a penon wide dispred,
And low behinde her backe were scattered:
And whether art it were, or heedlesse hap,
As through the flowring forrest rash she fled,
In her rude haire sweet flowres themselues did lap,
And flourishing fresh leaues and blossomes did enwrap.

[31]

Such as *Diana* by the sandie shore
Of swift *Eurotas*, or on *Cynthus* greene,
Where all the Nymphes haue her vnwares forlore,
Wandreth alone with bowe and arrowes keene,
To seeke her game: Or as that famous Queene
Of *Amazons*, whom *Pyrrhus* did destroy,
The day that first of *Priame* she was seene,
Did shew her selfe in great triumphant ioy,
To succour the weake state of sad afflicted *Troy*.

[32]

Such when as hartlesse *Trompart* her did vew,
He was dismayed in his coward mind,
And doubted, whether he himselfe should shew,
Or fly away, or bide alone behind:
Both feare and hope he in her face did find,
When she at last him spying, thus bespake;
Hayle Groome; didst not thou see a bleeding Hind,
Whose right haunch earst my stedfast arrow strake?
If thou didst, tell me, that I may her ouertake.

[33]

Wherewith reviu'd, this answere forth he threw;
O Goddesse, (for such I thee take to bee)
For neither doth thy face terrestriall shew,
Nor voyce sound mortall; I auow to thee,
Such wounded beast, as that, I did not see,
Sith earst into this forrest wild I came.
But mote thy goodlyhed forgiue it mee,
To weet, which of the Gods I shall thee name,
That vnto thee due worship I may rightly frame.

[34]

To whom she thus; but ere her words ensewed,
Vnto the bush her eye did suddein glaunce,
In which vaine *Braggadocchio* was mewed,
And saw it stirre: she left her percing launce,
And towards gan a deadly shaft aduaunce,
In mind to marke the beast. At which sad stowre,
Trompart forth stept, to stay the mortall chaunce,
Out-crying, ô what euer heauenly powre,
Or earthly wight thou be, withhold this deadly howre.

[35]

O stay thy hand for yonder is no game
For thy fierce arrowes, them to exercize;
But loe my Lord, my liege, whose warlike name,
Is farre renownd through many bold emprize;
And now in shade he shrowded yonder lies.
She staid: with that, he crauld out of his nest,
Forth creeping on his caitiue hands and thies,
And standing stoutly vp, his loftie crest
Did fiercely shake, and rowze, as comming late from rest.

[36]

As fearefull fowle, that long in secret caue
For dread of soaring hauke her selfe hath hid,
Not caring how, her silly life to saue,
She her gay painted plumes disorderid,
Seeing at last her selfe from daunger rid,
Peepes foorth, and soone renewes her natiue pride;
She gins her feathers foule disfigured
Proudly to prune, and set on euery side,
So shakes off shame, ne thinks how erst she did her hide.

[37]

So when her goodly visage he beheld,
He gan himselfe to vaunt: but when he vewed
Those deadly tooles, which in her hand she held,
Soone into other fits he was transmewed,
Till she to him her gracious speach renewed;
All haile, Sir knight, and well may thee befall,
As all the like, which honour haue pursewed
Through deedes of armes and prowesse martiall;
All vertue merits praise, but such the most of all.

[38]

To whom he thus; ô fairest vnder skie,
True be thy words, and worthy of thy praise,
That warlike feats doest highest glorifie.
Therein haue I spent all my youthly daies,
And many battailes fought, and many fraies
Throughout the world, wherso they might be found,
Endeuouring my dredded name to raise
Aboue the Moone, that fame may it resound
In her eternall trompe, with laurell girland cround.

[39]

But what art thou, ô Ladie, which doest raunge
In this wilde forrest, where no pleasure is,
And doest not it for ioyous court exchange,
Emongst thine equall peres, where happie blis
And all delight does raigne, much more then this?
There thou maist loue, and dearely loued bee,
And swim in pleasure, which thou here doest mis;
There maist thou best be seene, and best maist see:
The wood is fit for beasts; the court is fit for thee.

[40]

Whoso in pompe of proud estate (quoth she)
Does swim, and bathes himselfe in courtly blis,
Does waste his daies in darke obscuritee,
And in obliuion euer buried is:
Where ease abounds, yt's eath to doe amis;
But who his limbs with labours, and his mind
Behaues with cares, cannot so easie mis.
Abroad in armes, at home in studious kind
Who seekes with painfull toile, shall honor soonest find.

[41]

In woods, in waues, in warres she wons to dwell,
And will be found with perill and with paine;
Ne can the man, that moulds in idle cell,
Vnto her happie mansion attaine:
Before her gate high God did Sweat ordaine,
And wakefull watches euer to abide:
But easie is the way, and passage plaine
To pleasures pallace; it may soone be spide,
And day and night her dores to all stand open wide.

[42]

In Princes court, The rest she would haue said,
But that the foolish man, fild with delight
Of her sweet words, that all his sence dismaid,
And with her wondrous beauty raiisht quight,
Gan burne in filthy lust, and leaping light,
Thought in his bastard armes her to embrace.
With that she swaruing backe, her Iauelin bright
Against him bent, and fiercely did menace:
So turned her about, and fled away apace.

[43]

Which when the Peasant saw, amazd he stood,
And greiued at her flight; yet durst he not
Pursew her steps, through wild vnknownen wood;
Besides he feard her wrath, and threatned shot
Whiles in the bush he lay, not yet forgot:
Ne car'd he greatly for her presence vaine,
But turning, said to *Trompart*, What foule blot
Is this to knight, that Ladie should againe
Depart to woods vntoucht, & leaue so proud disdaine?

[44]

Perdie (said *Trompart*) let her passe at will,
Least by her presence daunger mote befall.
For who can tell (and sure I feare it ill)
But that she is some powre celestiall?
For whiles she spake, her great words did apall
My feeble courage, and my hart oppresse,
That yet I quake and tremble ouer all.
And I (said *Braggadocchio*) thought no lesse,
When first I heard her horne sound with such ghastrinesse.

[45]

For, from my mothers wombe this grace I haue
Me giuen by eternall destinie,
That earthly thing may not my courage braue
Dismay with feare, or cause on foot to flie,
But either hellish feends, or powres on hie:
Which was the cause, when earst that horne I heard,
Weening it had bene thunder in the skie,
I hid my selfe from it, as one affeard;
But when I other knew, my selfe I boldly reard.

[46]

But now for feare of worse, that may betide,
Let vs soone hence depart. They soone agree;
So to his steed he got, and gan to ride,
As one vnfit therefore, that all might see
He had not trayned bene in cheualree.
Which well that valiant courser did discerne;
For he despysd to tread in dew degree,
But chaufd and fom'd, with courage fierce and sterne,
And to be easd of that base burdeu still did erne.

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