

Cant. XI.

*The enimies of Temperaunce
besiege her dwelling place:
Prince Arthur them repelles, and fowle
Maleger doth deface.*

[1]

WHat warre so cruell, or what siege so sore,
As that, which strong affections do apply
Against the fort of reason euermore
To bring the soule into captiuitie:
Their force is fiercer through infirmitie
Of the fraile flesh, relenting to their rage,
And exercise most bitter tyranny
Vpon the parts, brought into their bondage:
No wretchednesse is like to sinfull vellenage.

[2]

But in a body, which doth freely yeeld
His parts to reasons rule obedient,
And letteth her that ought the scepter weeld,
All happy peace and goodly gouernment
Is settled there in sure establishment;
There *Alma* like a virgin Queene most bright,
Doth flourish in all beautie excellent:
And to her guestes doth bounteous banquet dight,
Attended goodly well for health and for delight.

[3]

Early before the Morne with cremosin ray,
The windowes of bright heauen opened had,
Through which into the world the dawning day
Might look, that maketh euery creature glad,
Vprose Sir *Guyon*, in bright armour clad,
And to his purposd iourney him prepar'd:
With him the Palmer eke in habit sad,
Him selfe address to that aduenture hard:
So to the riuers side they both together far'd.

[4]

Where them awaited ready at the ford
The *Ferriman*, as *Alma* had behight,

With his well rigged boate: They go aboard,
And eftsoones gan launch his barke forthright.
Ere long they rowed were quite out of sight,
And fast the land behind them fled away.
But let them pas, whiles wind and weather right
Do serue their turnes: here I a while must stay,
To see a cruell fight doen by the Prince this day.

[5]

For, all so soone, as *Guyon* thence was gon
Vpon his voyage with his trustie guide,
That wicked band of villeins fresh begon
That castle to assail on euery side,
And lay strong siege about it far and wide.
So huge and infinite their numbers were,
That all the land they vnder them did hide;
So fowle and vgly, that exceeding feare
Their visages imprest, when they approched neare.

[6]

Them in twelue troupes their Captain did dispart
And round about in fittest steades did place,
Where each might best offend his proper part,
And his contrary obiect most deface,
As euery one seem'd meetest in that cace.
Seuen of the same against the Castle gate,
In strong entrenchments he did closely place,
Which with incessant force and endlesse hate,
They battred day and night, and entraunce did awate.

[7]

The other fiew, fiew sundry wayes he set,
Against the fiew great Bulwarkes of that pile.
And vnto each a Bulwarke did arret,
T'assayle with open force or hidden guile,
In hope thereof to win victorious spoile.
They all that charge did feruently apply,
With greedy malice and importune toyle,
And planted there their huge artillery,
With which they dayly made most dreadfull battery.

[8]

The first troupe was a monstrous rablement

Of fowle misshapen wights, of which some were
Headed like Owles, with beκες vncomely bent,
Others like Dogs, others like Gryphons dreare,
And some had wings, and some had clawes to teare,
And euery one of them had Lynces eyes,
And euery one did bow and arrowes beare:
All those were lawlesse lustes, corrupt enuies,
And couetous aspectes, all cruell enimies.

[9]

Those same against the bulwarke of the *Sight*
Did lay strong siege, and battailous assault,
Ne once did yield it respit day nor night,
But soone as *Titan* gan his head exault.
And soone againe as he his light with hault,
Their wicked engins they against it bent:
That is each thing, by which the eyes may fault,
But two then all more huge and violent,
Beautie, and money, they that Bulwarke sorely rent.

[10]

The second Bulwarke was the *Hearing* sence,
Gainst which the second troupe dessignment makes;
Deformed creatures, in straunge difference,
Some hauing heads like Harts, some like to Snakes,
Some like wild Bores late rouzd out of the brakes;
Slaunderous reproches, and fowle infamies,
Leasings, backbytings, and vaine-glorious crakes,
Bad counsels, prayses, and false flatteries.
All those a gainst that fort did bend their batteries.

[11]

Likewise that same third Fort, that is the *Smell*
Of that third troupe was cruelly assayd:
Whose hideous shapes were like to feends of hell,
Some like to hounds, some like to Apes, dismayd,
Some like to Puttockes, all in plumes arayd:
All shap't according their conditions,
For by those vgly formes weren pourtrayd,
Foolish delights and fond abusions,
Which do that sence besiege with light illusions.

[12]

And that fourth band, which cruell battry bent,
Against the fourth Bulwarke, that is the *Tast*,
Was as the rest, a grysie rablement,
Some mouth'd like greedy Oystriges, some fast
Like loathly Toades, some fashioned in the wast
Like swine; for so deformd is luxury,
Surfeat, misdiet, and vnthrifitie wast,
Vaine feasts, and idle superfluity:
All those this sences Fort assayle incessantly.

[13]

But the fift troupe most horrible of hew,
And fierce or force, was dreadfull to report:
For some like Snailes, some did like spyders shew,
And some like vgly Vrchins thicke and short:
Cruelly they assayled that fift Fort,
Armed with darts of sensuall delight,
With stings of carnall lust, and strong effort
Of feeling pleasures, with which day and night
Against that same fift bulwarke they continued fight.

[14]

Thus these twelue troupes with dreadfull puissance
Against that Castle restlesse siege did lay,
And euermore their hideous Ordinance
Vpon the Bulwarkes cruelly did play,
That now it gan to threaten neare decay:
And euermore their wicked Capitaine
Prouoked them the breaches to assay,
Sometimes with threats, sometimes with hope of gaine,
Which by the ransack of that peece they should attaine.

[15]

On th'other side, th'assieged Castles ward
Their stedfast stonds did mightily maintaine,
And many bold repulse, and many hard
Atchieuement wrought with perill and with paine,
That goodly frame from ruine to sustaine:
And those two brethren Giants did defend
The walles so stoutly with their sturdie maine,
That neuer entrance any durst pretend,
But they to direfull death their groning ghosts did send.

[16]

The noble virgin, Ladie of the place,
Was much dismayed with that dreadfull sight:
For neuer was she in so euill cace,
Till that the Prince seeing her wofull plight,
Gan her recomfort from so sad affright,
Offring his seruice, and his dearest life
For her defence, against that Carle to fight,
Which was their chiefe and th'author of that strife:
She him remercièd as the Patrone of her life.

[17]

Eftsoones himselfe in glitterand armes he dight,
And his well proued weapons to him hent;
So taking courteous conge he behight,
Those gates to be vnbar'd, and forth he went.
Faire mote he thee, the prowest and most gent,
That euer brandished bright steele on hye:
Whom soone as that vnruely rablement,
With his gay Squire issuing did espy,
They reard a most outrageous dreadfull yelling cry.

[18]

And therewith all attonce at him let fly
Their fluttring arrowes, thicke as flakes of snow,
And round about him flocke impetuously,
Like a great water flood, that tomling low
From the high mountaines, threats to ouerflow
With suddein fury all the fertile plaine,
And the sad husbandmans long hope doth throw
A downe the streame, and all his vowes make vaine,
Nor bounds nor banks his headlong ruine may sustaine.

[19]

Vpon his shield their heaped hayle he bore,
And with his sword disperst the raskall flockes,
Which fled a sunder, and him fell before,
As withered leaues drop from their dried stockes,
When the wroth Western wind does reauè their locks;
And vnder neath him his courageous steed,
The fierce *Spumador* trode them downe like docks,
The fierce *Spumador* borne of heauenly seed:
Such as *Laomedon* of *Phoebus* race did breed

[20]

Which suddaine horrour and confused cry,
When as their Captaine heard, in haste he yode,
The cause to weet, and fault to remedy;
Vpon a Tygre swift and fierce he rode,
That as the winde ran vnderneath his lode,
Whiles his long legs nigh raught vnto the ground;
Full large he was of limbe, and shoulders brode,
But of such subtile substance and vnsound,
That like a ghost he seem'd, whose graue-clothes were vnbound.

[21]

And in his hand a bended bow was seene,
And many arrowes vnder his right side,
All deadly daungerous, all cruell keene,
Headed with flint, and feathers bloudie dide,
Such as the *Indians* in their quiuers hide;
Those could he well direct and streight as line,
And bid them strike the marke, which he had eyde,
Ne was their salue, ne was their medicine,
That mote recure their wounds: so inly they did tine.

[22]

As pale and wan as ashes was his looke,
His bodie leane and meagre as a rake,
And skin all withered like a dryed rooke,
Thereto as cold and drery as a Snake,
That seem'd to tremble euermore, and quake:
All in a canuas thin he was bedight,
And girded with a belt of twisted brake,
Vpon his head he wore an Helmet light,
Made of a dead mans skull, that seem'd a ghastly sight.

[23]

Maleger was his name, and after him
There follow'd fast at hand two wicked Hags,
With hoarie lockes all loose, and visage grim;
Their feet vnshod, their bodies wrapt in rags,
And both as swift on foot, as chased Stags;
And yet the one her other legge had lame,
Which with a staffe, all full of litle snags
She did disport, and *Impotence* her name:
But th'other was *Impatience*, arm'd with raging flame.

[24]

Soone as the Carle from farre the Prince espyde,
Glistring in armes and warlike ornament,
His Beast he felly prickt on either syde,
And his mischieuous bow full readie bent,
With which at him a cruell shaft he sent:
But he was warie, and it warded well
Vpon his shield, that it no further went,
But to the ground the idle quarrell fell:
Then he another and another did expell.

[25]

Which to preuent, the Prince his mortall speare
Soone to him raught, and fierce at him did ride,
To be auenged of that shot whyleare:
But he was not so hardie to abide
That bitter stownd, but turning quicke aside
His light-foot beast, fled fast away for feare:
Whom to pursue, the Infant after hide,
So fast as his good Courser could him beare,
But labour lost it was, to weene approach him neare.

[26]

For as the winged wind his Tigre fled,
That view of eye could scarce him ouertake,
Ne scarce his feet on ground were seene to tread;
Through hils and dales he speedie way did make,
Ne hedge ne ditch his readie passage brake,
And in his flight the villein turn'd his face,
(As wons the *Tartar* by the *Caspian* lake,
When as the *Russian* him in fight does chace)
Vnto his Tygres taile, and shot at him apace.

[27]

Apace he shot, and yet he fled apace,
Still as the greedy knight nigh to him drew,
And oftentimes he would relent his pace,
That him his foe more fiercely should pursew:
Who when his vncouth manner he did vew,
He gan auize to follow him no more,
But keepe his standing, and his shaftes eschew,
Vntill he quite had spent his perlous store,
And then assayle him fresh, ere he could shift for more.

[28]

But that lame Hag, still as abroad he strew
His wicked arrowes, gathered them againe,
And to him brought, fresh battell to renew:
Which he espying, cast her to restraine
From yielding succour to that cursed Swaine,
And her attaching, thought her hands to tie;
But soone as him dismounted on the plaine,
That other Hag did farre away espy
Binding her sister, she to him ran hastily.

[29]

And catching hold of him, as downe he lent,
Him backward ouerthrew, and downe him stayd
With their rude hands and grievly graplement,
Till that the villein comming to their ayd,
Vpon him fell, and lode vpon him layd;
Full litle wanted, but he had him slaine,
And of the battell balefull end had made,
Had not his gentle Squire beheld his paine,
And commen to his reskew, ere his bitter bane.

[30]

So greatest and most glorious thing on ground
May often need the helpe of weaker hand;
So feeble is mans state, and life vnsound,
That in assurance it may neuer stand,
Till it dissolued be from earthly band.
Prooffe be thou Prince, the prowest man alieue,
And noblest borne of all in *Briton* land;
Yet thee fierce Fortune did so nearely driue,
That had not grace thee blest, thou shouldest not reuiue.

[31]

The Squire arriuing, fiercely in his armes
Snatcht first the one, and then the other Iade,
His chiefest lets and authors of his harmes,
And them perforce withheld with threatned blade,
Least that his Lord they should behind inuade;
The whiles the Prince prickt with reprochefull shame,
As one awakt out of long slombring shade,
Reuiuing thought of glorie and of fame,
Vnited all his powres to purge himselfe from blame.

[32]

Like as a fire, the which in hollow caue
Hath long bene vnderkept, and downe suppress,
With murmurous disdain doth inly raue,
And grudge, in so streight prison to be prest,
At last breakes forth with furious vnrest,
And striues to mount vnto his natiue seat;
All that did earst it hinder and molest,
It now deuoures with flames and scorching heat,
And carries into smoake with rage and horror great.

[33]

So mightily the *Briton* Prince him rouzd
Out of his hold, and broke his caitiue bands,
And as a Beare whom angry cures haue touzd,
Hauing off-shakt them, and escapt their hands,
Becomes more fell, and all that him withstands
Treads downe and ouerthrowes. Now had the Carle
Alighted from his Tigre, and his hands
Discharged of his bow and deadly quar'le,
To seize vpon his foe flat lying on the marle.

[34]

Which now him turnd to disauantage deare;
For neither can he fly, nor other harme,
But trust vnto his strength and manhood meare,
Sith now he is farre from his monstrous swarme,
And of his weapons did himselfe disarme.
The knight yet wrothfull for his late disgrace,
Fiercely aduaunst his valorous right arme,
And him so sore smote with his yron mace,
That groueling to the ground he fell, and fild his place.

[35]

Well weened he, that field was then his owne,
And all his labour brought to happie end,
When sudden vp the villein ouerthrowne,
Out of his swowne arose, fresh to contend,
And gan himselfe to second battell bend,
As hurt he had not bene. Thereby there lay
An huge great stone, which stood vpon one end,
And had not bene remoued many a day;
Some land-marke seem'd to be, or signe of sundry way.

[36]

The same he snatcht, and with exceeding sway
Threw at his foe, who was right well aware
To shunne the engin of his meant decay;
It booted not to thinke that throw to beare,
But ground he gaue, and lightly leapt areare:
Eft fierce returning, as a Faulcon faire
That once hath failed of her souse full neare,
Remounts againe into the open aire,
And vnto better fortune doth her selfe prepaire.

[37]

So braue returning, with his brandisht blade,
He to the Carle himselfe againe addrest,
And strooke at him so sternely, that he made
An open passage through his riuen brest,
That halfe the steele behind his backe did rest;
Which drawing backe, he looked euermore
When the heart bloud should gush out of his chest,
Or his dead corse should fall vpon the flore;
But his dead corse vpon the flore fell nathemore:

[38]

Ne drop of bloud appeared shed to bee,
All were the wounde so wide and wonderous,
That through his carcasse one might plainly see:
Halfe in a maze with horror hideous,
And halfe in rage to be deluded thus,
Againe through both the sides he strooke him quight,
That made his spright to grone full piteous:
Yet nathemore forth fled his groning spright,
But freshly, as at first, prepar'd himselfe to fight.

[39]

Thereat he smitten was with great affright,
And trembling terror did his heart appall;
Ne wist he, what to thinke of that same sight,
Ne what to say, ne what to doe at all;
He doubted, least it were some magicall
Illusion, that did beguile his sense,
Or wandring ghost, that wanted funerall,
Or aerie spirit vnder false pretence,
Or hellish feend raysd vp through diuelish science.

[40]

His wonder farre exceeded reasons reach,
That he began to doubt his dazeled sight,
And oft of error did himselfe appeach:
Flesh without bloud, a person without spright,
Wounds without hurt, a bodie without might,
That could doe harme, yet could not harmed bee,
That could not die, yet seem'd a mortall wight,
That was most strong in most infirmittee;
Like did he neuer heare, like did he neuer see.

[41]

A while he stood in this astonishment,
Yet would he not for all his great dismay
Giue ouer to effect his first intent,
And th'vtmost meanes of victorie assay,
Or th'vtmost issew of his owne decay.
His owne good sword *Morddure*, that neuer fayld
At need, till now, he lightly threw away,
And his bright shield, that nought him now auayld,
And with his naked hands him forcibly assayld.

[42]

Twixt his two mightie armes him vp he snatcht,
And crusht his carkasse so against his brest,
That the disdainfull soule he thence dispatcht,
And th'idle breath all vtterly exprest:
Tho when he felt him dead, adowne he kest
The lumpish corse vnto the senselesse grownd;
Adowne he kest it with so puissant wrest,
That backe againe it did aloft rebownd,
And gaue against his mother earth a gronefull sownd.

[43]

As when *Ioues* harnesse-bearing Bird from hie
Stoupes at a flying heron with proud disdaine,
The stone-dead quarrey fals so forcible,
That it rebounds against the lowly plaine,
A second fall redoubling backe againe.
Then thought the Prince all perill sure was past,
And that he victor onely did remaine;
No sooner thought, then that the Carle as fast
Gan heape huge strokes on him, as ere he downe was cast.

[44]

Nigh his wits end then woxe th'amazed knight,
And thought his labour lost and trauell vaine,
Against this lifelesse shadow so to fight:
Yet life he saw, and felt his mightie maine,
That whiles he marueild still, did still him paine:
For thy he gan some other wayes aduize,
How to take life from that dead-liuing swaine,
Whom still he marked freshly to arize
From th'earth, & from her wombe new spirits to reprize.

[45]

He then remembred well, that had bene sayd,
How th'Earth his mother was, and first him bore;
She eke so often, as his life decayd,
Did life with vsury to him restore,
And raysd him vp much stronger then before,
So soone as he vnto her wombe did fall;
Therefore to ground he would him cast no more,
Ne him commit to graue terrestriall,
But beare him farre from hope of succour vsuall.

[46]

Tho vp he caught him twixt his puissant hands,
And hauing scruz'd out of his carrion corse
The lothfull life, now loosd from sinfull bands,
Vpon his shoulders carried him perforce
About three furlongs, taking his full course,
Vntill he came vnto a standing lake;
Him thereinto he threw without remorse,
Ne stird, till hope of life did him forsake;
So end of that Carles dayes, and his owne paines did make.

[47]

Which when those wicked Hags from farre did spy,
Like two mad dogs they ran about the lands,
And th'one of them with dreadfull yelling cry,
Throwing away her broken chaines and bands,
And hauing quencht her burning fier brands,
Hedlong her selfe did cast into that lake;
But *Impotence* with her owne wilfull hands,
One of *Malegers* cursed darts did take,
So riu'd her trembling heart, and wicked end did make.

[48]

Thus now alone he conquerour remains;
Tho coming to his Squire, that kept his steed,
Thought to haue mounted: but his feeble vaines
Him faild thereto, and serued not his need,
Through loss of bloud, which from his wounds did bleed,
That he began to faint, and life decay:
But his good Squire him helping vp with speed,
With stedfast hand vpon his horse did stay,
And led him to the Castle by the beaten way.

[49]

Where many Groomes and Squiers readie were,
To take him from his steed full tenderly,
And eke the fairest *Alma* met him there
With balme and wine and costly spicery,
To comfort him in his infirmity;
Eftsoones she causd him vp to be conuayd,
And of his armes despoyled easily,
In sumptuous bed she made him to be layd,
And all the while his wounds were dressing, by him stayd.

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