

Cant. IX.

*Malbecco will no straunge knights host,
For peeuish gealositie:
Paridell giusts with Britomart:
Both shew their auncestrie.*

[1]

REdoubted knights, and honorable Dames,
To whom I leuell all my labours end,
Right sore I feare, least with vnworthy blames
This odious argument my rimes should shend,
Or ought your goodly patience offend,
Whiles of a wanton Lady I do write,
Which with her loose incontinence doth blend
The shyning glory of your soueraigne light,
And knighthood fowle defaced by a faithlesse knight.

[2]

But neuer let th'ensample of the bad
Offend the good: for good by paragone
Of euill, may more notably be rad,
As white seemes fairer, macht with blacke attone;
Ne all are shamed by the fault of one:
For lo in heauen, whereas all goodnesse is,
Emongst the Angels, a whole legione
Of wicked Sprights did fall from happy blis;
What wonder then, if one of women all did mis?

[3]

Then listen Lordings, if ye list to weet
The cause, why *Satyrane* and *Paridell*
Mote not be entertaynd, as seemed meet,
Into that Castle (as that Squire does tell.)
Therein a cancred crabbed Carle does dwell,
That has no skill of Court nor courtesie,
Ne cares, what men say of him ill or well;
For all his dayes he drownes in priuitie,
Yet has full large to lue, and spend at libertie.

[4]

But all his mind is set on mucky pelfe,
To hoord vp heapes of euill gotten masse,

For which he others wrongs, and wreckes himselfe;
Yet is he lincked to a louely lasse,
Whose beauty doth her bounty far surpasse,
The which to him both far vnequall yeares,
And also far vnlike conditions has;
For she does ioy to play emongst her peares,
And to be free from hard restraint and gealous feares.

[5]

But he is old, and withered like hay,
Vnfit faire Ladies seruice to supply;
The priue guilt whereof makes him alway
Suspect her truth, and keepe continuall spy
Vpon her with his other blinkted eye;
Ne suffreth he resort of liuing wight
Approch to her, ne keepe her company,
But in close bowre her mewes from all mens sight,
Depriu'd of kindly ioy and naturall delight.

[6]

Malbecco he, and *Hellenore* she hight,
Vnfitly yokt together in one teeme,
That is the cause, why neuer any knight
It suffred here to enter, but he seeme
Such, as no doubt of him he neede misdeeme.
Thereat Sir *Satyrane* gan smile, and say;
Extremely mad the man I surely deeme,
That weenes with watch and hard restraint to stay
A womans will, which is disposd to go astray.

[7]

In vaine he feares that, which he cannot shonne:
For who wotes not, that womans subtiltyes
Can guilen *Argus*, when she list misdonne?
It is not yron bandes, nor hundred eyes,
Nor brasen walls, nor many wakefull spyes,
That can withhold her wilfull wandring feet;
But fast good will with gentle curtesyes,
And timely seruice to her pleasures meet
May her perhaps containe, that else would algates fleet.

[8]

Then is he not more mad (said *Paridell*)

That hath himselfe vnto such seruice sold,
In dolefull thraldome all his dayes to dwell?
For sure a foole I do him firmly hold,
That loues his fetters, though they were of gold.
But why do we devise of others ill,
Whiles thus we suffer this same dotard old,
To keepe vs out, in scorne of his owne will,
And rather do not ransack all, and him selfe kill?

[9]

Nay let vs first (said *Satyrane*) entreat
The man by gentle meanes, to let vs in,
And afterwarde affray with cruell threat,
Ere that we to efforce it do begin:
Then if all fayle, we will by force it win,
And eke reward the wretch for his mesprise,
As may be worthy of his haynous sin.
That counsell pleasd: then *Paridell* did rise,
And to the Castle gate approcht in quiet wise.

[10]

Whereat soft knocking, entrance he desyrd.
The good man selfe, which then the Porter playd,
Him answered, that all were now retyrd
Vnto their rest, and all the keyes conuayd
Vnto their maister, who in bed was layd,
That none him durst awake out of his dreme;
And therefore them of patience gently prayd.
Then *Paridell* began to change his theme,
And threatned him with force & punishment extreme.

[11]

But all in vaine; for nought mote him relent,
And now so long before the wicket fast
They wayted, that the night was forward spent,
And the faire welkin fowly ouercast,
Gan blowen vp a bitter stormy blast,
With shoure and hayle so horrible and dred,
That this faire many were compeld at last,
To fly for succour to a little shed,
The which beside the gate for swine was ordered.

[12]

It fortun'd, soone after they were gone,
Another knight, whom tempest thither brought,
Came to that Castle, and with earnest mone,
Like as the rest, late entrance deare besought;
But like so as the rest he prayd for nought,
For flatly he of entrance was refusd,
Sorely thereat he was displeas'd, and thought
How to auenge himselfe so sore abusd,
And euermore the Carle of curtesie accusd.

[13]

But to auoyde th'intollerable stowre,
He was compeld to seeke some refuge neare,
And to that shed, to shrowd him from the showre,
He came, which full of guests he found why leare,
So as he was not let to enter there:
Whereat he gan to wex exceeding wroth,
And swore, that he would lodge with them yfere,
Or them dislodge, all were they liefè orloth;
And [so] defide them each, and so defide them both.

[14]

Both were full loth to leaue that needfull tent,
And both full loth in darkenesse to debate;
Yet both full liefè him lodging to haue lent,
And both full liefè his boasting to abate;
But chiefly *Paridell* his hart did grate,
To heare him threaten so despightfully,
As if he did a dogge to kenell rate,
That durst not barke; and rather had he dy,
Then when he was defide, in coward cornerly.

[15]

Tho hastily remounting to his steed,
He forth issew'd; like as a boistrous wind,
Which in th'earthes hollow caues hath long bin hid,
And shut vp fast within her prisons blind,
Makes the huge element against her kind
To moue, and tremble as it were agast,
Vntill that it an issew forth may find;
Then forth it breakes, and with his furious blast
Confounds both land & seas, and skyes doth ouercast.

[16]

Their steel-hed speares they strongly coucht, and met
Together with impetuous rage and forse,
That with the terrour of their fierce affret,
They rudely droue to ground both man and horse,
That each awhile lay like a sencelesse corse.
But *Paridell* sore brused with the blow,
Could not arise, the counterchaunge to scorse,
Till that young Squire him reared from below;
Then drew he his bright sword, & gan about him throw.

[17]

But *Satyrane* forth stepping, did them stay
And with faire treatie pacifide their ire,
Then when they were accorded from the fray,
Against that Castles Lord they gan conspire,
To heape on him dew vengeance for his hire.
They bene agreed, and to the gates they goe
To burne the same with vnquenchable fire,
And that vncurteous Carle their commune foe
To do fowle death to dye, or wrap in grieuous woe.

[18]

Malbecco seeing them resolu'd in deed
To flame the gates, and hearing them to call
For fire in earnest, ran with fearefull speed,
And to them calling from the castle wall,
Besought them humbly, him to beare with all,
As ignoraunt of seruants bad abuse,
And slacke attendaunce vnto straungers call.
The knights were willing all things to excuse,
Though nought beleu'd, & entraunce late did not refuse.

[19]

They bene ybrought into a comely bowre,
And seru'd of all things that mote needfull bee;
Yet secretly their hoste did on them lowre,
And welcomde more for feare, then charitee;
But they dissembled, what they did not see,
And welcomed themselues. Each gan vndight
Their garments wet, and weary armour free,
To dry them selues by *Vulcanes* flaming light,
And eke their lately brused parts to bring in plight.

[20]

And eke that straunger knight emongst the rest;
Was for like need enforst to disaray:
Tho whenas vailed was her loftie crest,
Her golden locks, that were in tramels gay
Vpbounden, did them selues adowne display,
And raught vnto her heeles; like sunny beames,
That in a cloud their light did long time stay,
Their vapour vaded, shew their golden gleames,
And through the persant aire shoote forth their azure streames.

[21]

She also dofte her heauy haberieon,
Which the faire feature of her limbs did hyde,
And her well plighted frock, which she did won
To tucke about her short, when she did ryde,
She low let fall, that flowd from her lanck syde
Downe to her foot, with carelesse modestee.
Then of them all she plainly was espyde,
To be a woman wight, vnwist to bee,
The fairest woman wight, that euer eye did see.

[22]

Like as *Minerua*, being late returnd
From slaughter of the Giaunts conquered;
Where proud *Encelade*, whose wide nosethrils burnd
With breathed flames, like to a furnace red,
Transfixed with the speare, downe tumbled ded
From top of *Hemus*, by him heaped hye;
Hath loosd her helmet from her lofty hed,
And her *Gorgonian*, shield gins to vntye
From her left arme, to rest in glorious victorye.

[23]

Which whenas they beheld, they smitten were
With great amazement of so wondrous sight,
And each on other, and they all on her
Stood gazing, as if suddein great affright
Had them surprised. At last auizing right,
Her goodly personage and glorious hew,
Which they so much mistooke, they tooke delight
In their first errour, and yet still anew
With wonder of her beauty fed their hungry vew.

[24]

Yet note their hungry view be satisfied,
But seeing still the more desired to see,
And ever firmly fixed did abide
In contemplation of divinity:
But they marvelled at her cheer,
And noble prowess, which they had approved,
That much they fayne to know, who she mote be;
Yet none of all them her thereof amoured,
Yet every one her liked, and every one her loved.

[25]

And *Paridell* though partly discontent
With his late fall, and fowle indignity,
Yet was soone wonne his malice to relent,
Through gracious regard of her faire eye,
And knightly worth, which he too late did try,
Yet tried did adore. Supper was dight;
Then they *Malbecco* prayed of curtesy,
That of his Lady they might have the sight,
And company at meat, to do them more delight.

[26]

But he to shift their curious request,
Gave cause, why she could not come in place;
Her crased health, her late recourse to rest,
And humid evening ill for sicke folkes case:
But none of those excuses could take place;
Ne would they eate, till she in presence came.
She came in presence with right comely grace,
And fairely them saluted, as became,
And shewed her selfe in all a gentle courteous Dame.

[27]

They sate to meat, and *Satyrane* his chauce
Was her before, and *Paridell* besyde;
But he him selfe sate looking still askaunce,
Gainst *Britomart*, and ever closely eyde
Sir *Satyrane*, that glaunces might not glyde:
But his blind eye, that syded *Paridell*,
All his demesure from his sight did hyde:
On her faire face so did he feede his fill,
And sent close messages of love to her at will.

[28]

And euer and anone, when none was ware,
With speaking lookes, that close embassage bore,
He rou'd at her, and told his secret care:
For all that art he learned had ofyore.
Ne was she ignoraunt of that lewd lore,
But in his eye his meaning wisely red,
And with the like him answerd euermore:
She sent at him one firie dart, whose hed
Empoisoned was with priuy lust, and gealous dred.

[29]

He from that deadly throw made no defence,
But to the wound his weake hart opened wyde;
The wicked engine through false influence,
Past through his eyes, and secretly did glyde
Into his hart, which it did sorely gryde.
But nothing new to him was that same paine,
Ne paine at all; for he so oft had tryde
The powre thereof, and lou'd so oft in vaine,
That thing of course he counted, loue to entertaine.

[30]

Thenceforth to her he sought to intimate
His inward grieffe, by meanes to him well knowne,
Now *Bacchus* fruit out of the siluer plate
He on the table dasht, as ouerthrowne,
Or of the fruitfull liquor ouerflowne,
And by the dauncing bubbles did diuine,
Or therein write to let his loue be showne;
Which well she red out of the learned line,
A sacrament prophane in mistery of wine.

[31]

And when so of his hand the pledge she raught,
The guilty cup she fained to mistake,
And in her lap did shed her idle draught,
Shewing desire her inward flame to slake:
By such close signes they secret way did make
Vnto their wils, and one eyes watch escape;
Two eyes him needeth, for to watch and wake,
Who louers will deceiue. Thus was the ape,
By their faire handling, put into *Malbecco's* cape.

[32]

Now when of meats and drinks they had their fill,
Purpose was moued by that gentle Dame,
Vnto those knights aduenturous, to tell
Of deeds of armes, which vnto them became,
And euery one his kindred, and his name.
Then *Paridell*, in whom a kindly pryde
Of gracious speach, and skill his words to frame
Abounded, being glad of so fit tyde
Him to commend to her, thus spake, of all well eyde.

[33]

Troy, that art now nought, but an idle name,
And in thine ashes buried low dost lie,
Though whilome far much greater then thy fame,
Before that angry Gods, and cruell skye
Vpon thee heapt a direfull destinie,
What boots it boast thy glorious descent,
And fetch from heauen thy great Genealogie,
Sith all thy worthy prayses being blent,
Their of-spring hath embaste, and later glory shent.

[34]

Most famous Worthy of the world, by whome
That warre was kindled, which did Troy inflame,
And stately towres of *Ilion* whilome
Brought vnto balefull ruine, was by name
Sir *Paris* far renowmd through noble fame,
Who through great prowesse and bold hardinesse,
From *Lacedaemon* fetcht the fairest Dame,
That euer *Greece* did boast, or knight possesse,
Whom *Venus* to him gaue for meed of worthinesse.

[35]

Faire *Helene*, flowre of beautie excellent,
And girlond of the mighty Conquerours,
That madest many Ladies deare lament
The heauie losse of their braue Paramours,
Which they far off beheld from *Troian* toures,
And saw the fieldes of faire *Scamander* strowne
With carcasses of noble warrioures,
Whose fruitlesse liues were vnder furrow sowne,
And *Xanthus* sandy bankes with bloud all ouerflowne.

[36]

From him my linage I deriue aright,
Who long before the ten yeares siege of *Troy*,
Whiles yet on *Ida* he a shepheard hight,
On faire *Oenone* got a louely boy,
Whom for remembraunce of her passed ioy,
She of his Father *Parius* did name;
Who, after *Greekes* did *Priams* realme destroy,
Gathred the *Troian* reliques sau'd from flame,
And with them sayling thence, to th'Isle of *Paros* came.

[37]

That was by him cald *Paros*, which before
Hight *Nausa*, there he many yeares did raine,
And built *Nausicle* by the *Pontick* shore,
The which he dying left next in remaine
To *Paridas* his sonne.
From whom I *Paridell* by kin descend;
But for faire Ladies loue, and glories gaine,
My natiue soile haue left, my dayes to spend
In seewing deeds of armes, my liues and labours end.

[38]

When as the noble *Britomart* heard tell
Of *Troian* warres, and *Priams* Citie sackt,
The ruefull story of Sir *Paridell*,
She was empassiond at that piteous act,
With zelous enuy of *Greekes* cruell fact,
Against that nation, from whose race of old
She heard, that she was lineally extract:
For noble *Britons* sprong from *Troians* bold,
And *Troynouant* was built of old *Troyes* ashes cold.

[39]

Then sighing soft awhile, at last she thus:
O lamentable fall of famous towne,
Which raignd so many yeares victorious,
And of all *Asie* bore the soueraigne crowne,
In one sad night consumd, and throwen downe:
What stony hart, that heares thy haplesse fate,
Is not empierst with deepe compassiowne,
And makes ensample of mans wretched state,
That floures so fresh at morne, and fades at euening late?

[40]

Behold, Sir, how your pitifull complaint
Hath found another partner of your payne:
For nothing may impresse so deare constraint,
As countries cause, and commune foes disdayne.
But if it should not grieue you, backe agayne
To turne your course, I would to heare desyre,
What to *Aeneas* fell; sith that men sayne
He was not in the Cities wofull fyre
Consum'd, but did him selfe to safetie retyre.

[41]

Anchyses some begot of *Venus* faire,
(Said he,) out of the flames for safegard fled,
And with a remnant did to sea repaire,
Where he through fatall error long was led
Full many yeares, and weetlesse wandered
From shore to shore, emongst the Lybicke sands,
Ere rest he found. Much there he suffered,
And many perils past in forreine lands,
To saue his people sad from victours vengefull hands.

[42]

At last in *Latium* he did arriue,
Where he with cruell warre was entertaind
Of th'inland folke, which sought him backe to driue,
Till he with old *Latinus* was constraind,
To contract wedlock: (so the fates ordaind.)
Wedlock contract in bloud, and eke in blood
Accomplished, that many deare complaind:
The riual slaine, the victour through the flood
Escaped hardly, hardly praisd his wedlock good.

[43]

Yet after all, he victour did suruiue,
And with *Latinus* did the kingdome part.
But after, when both nations gan to striue,
Into their names the title to conuart,
His sonne *Iulus* did from thence depart,
With all the warlike youth of *Troians* bloud,
And in long *Alba* plast his throne apart,
Where faire it florished, and long time stoud,
Till *Romulus* renewing it, to *Rome* remoud.

[44]

There there (said *Britomart*) a fresh appeared
The glory of the later world to spring,
And *Troy* againe out of her dust was reard,
To sit in second seat of soueraigne king,
Of all the world vnder her gouerning.
But a third kingdome yet is to arise,
Out of the *Troians* scattered of-spring,
That in all glory and great enterprise,
Both first and second *Troy* shall dare to equalise.

[45]

It *Troynouant* is hight, that with the waues
Of wealthy *Thamis* washed is along,
Vpon whose stubborne neck, whereat he raues
With roring rage, and sore him selfe does throng,
That all men feare to tempt his billowes strong,
She fastned hath her foot, which standes so hy,
That it a wonder of the world is song
In forreine landes, and all which passen by,
Beholding it from far, do thinke it threates the skye.

[46]

The *Troian Brute* did first that Citie found,
And Hygate gate made the meare thereof by West,
And *Ouert* gate by North: that is the bound
Toward the land; two riuers bound the rest.
So huge a scope at first him seemed best,
To be the compasse of his kingdomes seat:
So huge a mind could not in lesser rest,
Ne in small meares containe his glory great,
That *Albion* had conquered first by warlike feat.

[47]

Ah fairest Lady knight, (said *Paridell*)
Pardon I pray my heedlesse ouersight,
Who had forgot, that whilome I heard tell
From aged *Mnemon*; for my wits bene light.
Indeed he said (if I remember right,)
That of the antique *Troian* stocke, there grew
Another plant, that raught to wondrous hight,
And far abroad his mighty branches threw,
Into the vtmost Angle of the world he knew.

[48]

For that same *Brute*, whom much he did aduance
In all his speach, was *Syluius* his sonne,
Whom hauing slaine, through luckles arrowes glau~ce
He fled for feare of that he had misdonne,
Or else for shame, so fowle reproch to shonne,
And with him led to the sea an youthly trayne,
Where wearie wandring they long time did wonne,
And many fortunes prou'd in *th'Ocean* mayne,
And great aduentures found, that now were long to sayne.

[49]

At last by fatall course they driuen were
Into an Island spacious and brode,
The furthest North, that did to them appeare:
Which after rest they seeking far abode,
Found it the fittest soyle for their abode,
Fruitfull of all things fit for liuing foode,
But wholly wast, and void of peoples trode,
Sae an huge nation of the Geaunts broode,
That fed on liuing flesh, & druncke mens vitall blood.

[50]

Whom he through wearie wars and labours long,
Subdewd with losse of many *Britons* bold:
In which the great *Goemagot* of strong
Corineus, and *Coulin* of *Debon* old
Were ouerthrowne, and layd on th'earth full cold,
Which quaked vnder their so hideous masse,
A famous history to be enrold
In euerlasting monuments of brasse,
That all the antique Worthies merits far did passe.

[51]

His worke great *Troynouant*, his worke is eke
Faire *Lincolne*, both renommed far away,
That who from East to West will endlong seeke,
Cannot two fairer Cities find this day,
Except *Cleopolis*: so heard I say
Old *Mnemon*. Therefore Sir, I greet you well
Your countrey kin, and you entirely pray
Of pardon for the strife, which late befell
Betwixt vs both vnknowne. So ended *Paridell*.

[52]

But all the while, that he these speaches spent,
Vpon his lips hong faire Dame *Hellenore*,
With vigilant regard, and dew attent,
Fashioning worlds of fancies euermore
In her fraile wit, that now her quite forlore:
The whiles vnwares away her wondring eye,
And greedy eares her weake hart from her bore:
Which he perceiuing, euer priuily
In speaking, many false belgardes at her let fly.

[53]

So long these knights discoursed diuersly,
Of straunge affaires, and noble hardiment,
Which they had past with mickle ieopardy,
That now the humid night was farforth spent,
And heauenly lampes were halfendeale ybrent:
Which th'old man seeing well, who too long thought
Euery discourse and euery argument,
Which by the houres he measured, besought
Them go to rest. So all vnto their bowres were brought.

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