

[The Commendatory Verses]

¶A Vision vpon this conceipt of the  
Faery Queene.

**M**E thought I saw the graue, where *Laura* lay,  
Within that Temple, where the vestall flame  
Was wont to burne, and passing by that way,  
To see that buried dust of liuing fame,  
Whose tumbre faire loue, and fairer vertue kept,  
All suddainly I saw the Faery Queene:  
At whose approach the soule of *Petrarke* wept,  
And from thenceforth those graces were not seene.  
For they this Queene attended, in whose steed  
Obluion laid him downe on *Lauras* herse:  
Hereat the hardest stones were seene to bleed,  
And grones of buried ghostes the heuens did perse.  
Where *Homers* spright did tremble all for grieffe,  
And curst th'accesse of that celestiall theife.

Another of the same.

**T***He prayse of meaner wits this worke like profit brings,  
As doth the Cuckoes song delight when Philumena sings.  
If thou hast formed right true vertues face herein:  
Vertue her selfe can best discerne, to whom they writen bin.  
If thou hast beauty praysd, let her sole lookes diuine  
Iudge if ought therein be amis, and mend it by her eine.  
If Chastitie want ought, or Temperaunce her dew,  
Behold her Princely mind aright, and write thy Queene anew.  
Meane while she shall perceiue, how far her vertues sore  
About the reach of all that liue, or such as wrote of yore:  
And thereby will excuse and fauour thy good will:  
Whose vertue can not be exprest, but by an Angels quill.  
Of me no lines are lou'd, nor letters are of price,  
Of all which speak our English tongue, but those of thy deuice.*

W. R.

To the learned Shepeheard.

**C**ollyn I see by thy new taken taske,  
some sacred fury hath enricht thy braynes,  
That leades thy muse in haughty verse to maske,  
and loath the layes that longs to lowly swaynes.  
That lifts thy notes from Shepheardes vnto kinges,  
So like the liuely Larke that mounting singes.

Thy louely Rosolinde seemes now forlorne,  
and all thy gentle flockes forgotten quight,  
Thy chaunged hart now holdes thy pypes in scorne,  
those prety pypes that did thy mates delight.  
Those trusty mates, that loued thee so well,  
Whom thou gau'st mirth: as they gaue thee the bell.

Yet as thou earst with thy sweete roundelayes,  
didst stirre to glee our laddes in homely bowers:  
So moughtst thou now in these refyned layes,  
delight the daintie eares of higher powers.  
And so mought they in their deepe skanning skill  
Alow and grace our Collyns flowing quyll.

And fare befall that Faery Queene of thine,  
in whose faire eyes loue linckt with vertue sittes:  
Enfusing by those bewties fyers deuyne,  
such high conceites into thy humble wittes,  
As raised hath poore pastors oaten reede,  
From rustick tunes, to chaunt heroique deedes.

So mought thy Redcrosse knight with happy hand  
victorious be in that faire Ilands right:  
Which thou dost vayle in Type of Faery land  
Elyzas blessed field, that Albion hight.  
That shieldes her friendes, and warres her mightie foes,  
Yet still with people, peace, and plentie flowes.

But (iolly shepeheard) though with pleasing style,  
thou feast the humour of the Courtly trayne:  
Let not conceipt thy setled sence beguile,  
ne daunted be through enuy or disdaine.  
Subiect thy dome to her Empyring spright,  
From whence thy Muse, and all the world takes light.

Hobynoll.

Fayre *Thamis* streame, that from *Ludds* stately towne,  
Runst paying tribute to the Ocean seas,  
Let all thy Nymphes and Syrens of renowne  
Be silent, whyle this Bryttane *Orpheus* playes:  
Nere thy sweet bankes, there liues that sacred crowne,  
Whose hand strowes Palme and neuer-dying bayes,  
Let all at once, with thy soft murmuring sowne  
Present her with this worthy Poets prayes.  
For he hath taught hie drifts in shepeherdes weedes,  
And deepe conceites now singes in *Faeries* deedes.

R. S.

*Graue Muses march in triumph and with prayses,  
Our Goddess here hath giuen you leaue to land:  
And biddes this rare dispensor of your graces  
Bow downe his brow vnto her sacred hand.  
Desertes findes dew in that most princely doome,  
In whose sweete brest are all the Muses bredde:  
So did that great Augustus erst in Roome  
With leaues of fame adorne his Poets hedde.  
Faire be the guerdon of your Faery Queene,  
Euen of the fairest that the world hath seene.*

H. B.

When stout *Achilles* heard of *Helens* rape  
And what reuenge the States of Greece deuise:  
Thinking by sleight the fatall warres to scape,  
In womans weedes him selfe he then disguise:  
But this deuise *Vlysses* soone did spy,  
And brought him forth, the chaunce of warre to try.

When *Spencer* saw the fame was spredd so large,  
Through Faery land of their renowned Queene:  
Loth that his Muse should take so great a charge,  
As in such haughty matter to be seene,  
To seeme a shepeheard then he made his choice,  
But *Sydney* heard him sing, and knew his voice.

And as *Vlysses* brought faire *Thetis* some  
From his retyred life to menage armes:  
So *Spencer* was by *Sidneys* speaches wonne,  
To blaze her fame not fearing future harmes:  
For well he knew, his Muse would soone be tyred  
In her high praise, that all the world admired.

Yet as *Achilles* in those warlike frayes,  
Did win the palme from all the *Grecian* Peeres:  
So *Spencer* now to his immortall prayse,  
Hath wonne the Laurell quite from all his feres.  
What though his taske exceed a humaine witt,  
He is excus'd, sith *Sidney* thought it fitt.

W. L.

**T**O looke vpon a worke of rare deuise  
The which a workman setteth out to view,  
And not to yield it the deserued prise,  
That vnto such a workmanship is dew.  
Doth either proue the iudgement to be naught  
Or els doth shew amind with enuy fraught.

To labour to commend a peece of worke,  
Which no man goes about to discommend,  
Would raise a iealous doubt that there did lurke,  
Some secret doubt, whereto the prayse did tend.  
For when men know the goodnes of the wyne,  
T'is needlesse for the hoast to haue a sygne.

Thus then to shew my iudgement to be such  
As can discern of colours blacke, and white,  
As alls to free my minde from enuies tuch,  
That neuer giues to any man his right,  
I here pronounce this workmanship is such,  
As that no pen can set it forth too much.

And thus I hang a garland at the dore,  
Not for to shew the goodnes of the ware:  
But such hath beene the custome heretofore,  
And customes very hardly broken are.  
And when your tast shall tell you this is trew,  
Then looke you giue your hoast his vtmost dew.

Ignoto.

[The Dedicatory Sonnets]

[1]

*To the right honourable Sir. Christopher Hatton,  
Lord high Chauncelor of England &c.*

**T**Hose prudent heads, that with their counsels wise  
Whylom the Pillours of th'earth did sustaine,  
And taught ambitious *Rome* to tyrannise,  
And in the neck of all the world to rayne,  
Of from those graue affaires were wont abstaine,  
With the sweet Lady Muses for to play:  
So *Ennius* the elder Africane,  
So *Maro* oft did *Caesars* cares allay.  
So you great Lord, that with your counsell sway  
The burdeine of this kingdom mightily,  
With like delightes sometimes may eke delay,  
The rugged brow of carefull Policy:  
And to these ydle rymes lend litle space,  
Which for their titles sake may find more grace.

[2]

*To the most honourable and excellent Lo. the Earle  
of Essex. Great Maister of the Horse to her Highnesse,  
and knight of the Noble order of the Garter. &c.*

**M***agnificke Lord, whose vertues excellent  
Doe merit a most famous Poets witt,  
To be thy liuing praises instrument,  
Yet doe not sdeigne, to let thy name be writt  
In this base Poeme, for thee far vnfit.  
Nought is thy worth disparaged thereby,  
But when my Muse, whose fethers nothing flitt  
Doe yet but flagg, and lowly learne to fly  
With bolder wing shall dare alofte to sty  
To the last praises of this Faery Queene,  
Then shall it make more famous memory  
Of thine Heroicke parts, such as they beene:  
Till then vouchsafe thy noble countenaunce,  
To these first labours needed furtheraunce,*

[3]

*To the right Honourable the Earle of Oxenford,  
Lord high Chamberlayne of England. &c.*

**R**eceiue most Noble Lord in gentle gree,  
The vnripe fruit of an vnready wit:  
Which by thy countenance doth craue to bee  
Defended from foule Enuies poisonous bit.  
Which so to doe may thee right well besit,  
Sith th'antique glory of thine auncestry  
Vnder a shady vele is therein writ,  
And eke thine owne long liuing memory,  
Succeeding them in true nobility:  
And also for the loue, which thou doest beare  
To th'*Heliconian* ymps, and they to thee,  
They vnto thee, and thou to them most deare:  
Deare as thou art vnto thy selfe, so loue  
That loues & honours thee, as doth behoue.

[4]

*To the right honourable the Earle of  
Northumberland.*

**T***He sacred Muses haue made alwaies clame  
To be the Nourses of nobility,  
And Registres of euerlasting fame,  
To all that armes professe and cheualry.  
Then by like right the noble Progeny,  
Which them succeed in fame and worth, are tyde  
T'embrace the seruice of sweete Poetry,  
By whose endeouours they are glorifide,  
And eke from all, of whom it is enuide,  
To patronize the authour of their praise,  
Which giues them life, that els would soone haue dide,  
And crownes their ashes with immortall baies.  
To thee therefore right noble Lord I send  
This present of my paines, it to defend.*

[5]

To the right Honourable the Earle of  
*Ormond and Ossory.*

**R**Eceiue most noble Lord a simple taste  
Of the wilde fruit, which saluage soyl hath bred,  
Which being through long wars left almost waste,  
With brutish barbarisme is ouerspredd:  
And in so faire a land, as may be redd,  
Not one *Parnassus*, nor one *Helicone*  
Left for sweete Muses to be harboured,  
But where thy selfe hast thy braue mansione;  
There in deede dwel faire Graces many one.  
And gentle Nymphes, delights of learned wits,  
And in thy person without Paragone  
All goodly bountie and true honour sits,  
Such therefore, as that wasted soyl doth yield,  
Receiue dear Lord in worth, the fruit of barren field.

[6]

*To the right honourable the Lo. Ch. Howard, Lo. high Admi-  
ral of England, knight of the noble order of the Garter,  
and one of her Maiesties priuie Counsel. &c.*

**A***Nd ye, braue Lord, whose goodly personage,  
And noble deeds each other garnishing,  
Make you ensample to the present age,  
Of th'old Heroes, whose famous ofspring  
The antique Poets wont so much to sing,  
In this same Pageaunt haue a worthy place,  
Sith those huge castles of Castilian king,  
That vainly threatned kingdomes to displace,  
Like flying doues ye did before you chace;  
And that proud people woxen insolent  
Through many victories, didst first deface:  
Thy praises euer lasting monument  
Is in this verse engrauen semblably,  
That it may liue to all posterity.*



[7]

To the most renowned and valiant Lord, the  
Lord Grey of Wilton, knight of the Noble order  
of the Garter, &c.

**M**Ost Noble Lord the pillor of my life,  
And Patrone of my Muses pupillage,  
Through whose large bountie poured on me rife,  
In the first season of my feeble age,  
I now doe liue, bound yours by vassalage:  
Sith nothing euer may redeeme, nor reauē  
Out of your endlesse debt so sure a gage,  
Vouchsafe in worth this small guift to receauē,  
Which in your noble hands for pledge I leauē,  
Of all the rest, that I am tyde t'account:  
Rude rymes, the which a rustick Muse did weauē  
In sauadge soyle, far from Parnasso mount,  
And roughly wrought in an vnlearned Looime:  
The which vouchsafe dear Lord your fauorable doome

[8]

*To the right noble and valorous knight, Sir Walter Raleigh,  
Lo. Wardein of the Stanneryes, and lieftenaunt  
of Cornewaile.*

**T**O thee that art the sommers Nightingale,  
*Thy soueraine Goddesses most deare delight,  
Why doe I send this rusticke Madrigale,  
That may thy tunefull eare vnseason quite?  
Thou onely fit this Argument to write,  
In whose high thoughts Pleasure hath built her bowre,  
And dainty loue learned sweetly to endite.  
My rimes I know vnsauory and sowre,  
To tast the streames, that like a golden showre  
Flow from thy fruitfull head, of thy loues praise,  
Fitter perhaps to thonder Martiall stowre,  
When so thee list thy lofty Muse to raise:  
Yet till that thou thy Poeme wilt make knowne,  
Let thy faire Cinthias praises bee thus rudely showne.*

[9]

To the most vertuous, and beautifull Lady,  
*the Lady Carew.*

**N**E may I, without blot of endlesse blame,  
You fairest Lady leaue out of this place,  
But with remembraunce of your gracious name,  
Where with that courtly garlond most ye grace,  
And deck the world, adorne these verses base:  
Not that these few lines can in them comprise  
Those glorious ornaments of heuenly grace,  
Wherewith ye triumph ouer feeble eyes,  
And in subdued harts do tyranyse:  
For thereunto doth need a golden quill,  
And siluer leaues, them rightly to deuise,  
But to make humble present of good will:  
Which whenas timely meanes it purchase may,  
In ampler wise it selfe will forth display.

E. S.

[10]

To all the gracious and beautifull Ladies in the Court.

**T***He Chian Peincter, when he was requirde  
To pourtraict Venus in her perfect hew,  
To make his worke more absolute, desird  
Of all the fairest Maides to haue the vew.  
Much more me needs to draw the semblant trew,  
Of beauties Queene, the worlds sole wonderment,  
To sharpe my sence with sundry beauties vew,  
And steale from each some part of ornament.  
If all the world to seeke I ouerwent,  
A fairer crew yet no where could I see,  
Then that braue court doth to mine eie present,  
That the worlds pride seemes gathered there to bee.  
Of each a part I stole by cunning thefte:  
Forgiue it me faire Dames, sith lesse ye haue not lefte.*

E. S.

[11]

*To the right honourable the Lo. Burleigh Lo. high  
Treasurer of England.*

**T**O you right noble Lord, whose carefull brest.  
To menage of most graue affaires is bent,  
And on whose mightie shoulders most doth rest  
The burdein of this kingdomes gouvernement,  
As the wide compasse of the firmament,  
On *Atlas* mighty shoulders is vpstayed;  
Vnfitly I these ydle rimes present,  
The labor of lost time, and wit vnstayed:  
Yet if their deeper sence be inly wayd,  
And the dim vele, with which from comune vew  
Their fairer parts are hid, aside be layd.  
Perhaps not vaine they may appeare to you.  
Such as they be, vouchsafe them, to receaue,  
And wipe their faults out of your censure graue.

E. S.

[12]

*To the right honourable the Earle of Cumberland.*

**R**Edoubted Lord, in whose corageous mind  
The flowre of cheualry now bloosming faire,  
Doth promise fruite worthy the noble kind,  
Which of their praises haue left you the haire;  
To you this humble present I prepare,  
For loue of vertue and of Martiall praise,  
To which though nobly ye inclined are,  
As goodlie well ye shew'd in late assaies,  
Yet braue ensample of long passed daies,  
In which trew honor yee may fashiond see,  
To like desire of honor may ye raise,  
And fill your mind with magnanimitee.  
Receiue it Lord therefore as it was ment,  
For honor of your name and high descent.

E. S.

[13]

*To the right honourable the Lord of Hunsdon, high  
Chamberlaine to her Maiesty.*

**R**enowned Lord, that for your worthinesse  
And noble deeds haue your deserued place,  
High in the fauour of that Emperesse.  
The worlds sole glory and her sexes grace,  
Here eke of right haue you a worthie place,  
Both for your neernes to that Faerie Queene,  
And for your owne high merit in like cace,  
Of which, apparaunt proofe was to be seene,  
When that tumultuous rage and fearfull deene  
Of Northerne rebels ye did pacify,  
And their disloiall powre defaced clene,  
The record of enduring memory.  
Liue Lord for euer in this lasting verse,  
That all posteritie thy honor may reherse.

E. S.

[14]

*To the right honourable the Lord of Buckhurst, one  
of her Maiesties priuie Counsell.*

**I**N vain I thinke right honourable Lord,  
By this rude rime to memorize thy name;  
Whose learned Muse hath writ her owne record,  
In golden verse, worthy immortal fame:  
Thou much more fit (were leasure to the same)  
Thy gracious Souerain praises to compile.  
And her imperiall Maiestie to frame,  
In loftie numbers and heroicke stile.  
But sith thou maist not so, giue leaue a while  
To baser wit his power therein to spend,  
Whose grosse defaults thy daintie pen may file,  
And vnaduised ouersights amend.  
But euermore vouchsafe it to maintaine  
Against vile Zoilus backbitings vaine.

[15]

*To the right honourable Sir Fr. Walsingham knight,  
principall Secretary to her Maiesty, and of her  
honourable priuy Counsell.*

**T**Hat Mantuane Poetes incompared spirit,  
Whose girland now is set in highest place,  
Had not *Mecoenas* for his worthy merit,  
It first aduauunst to great *Augustus* grace,  
Might long perhaps haue lien in silence bace,  
Ne bene so much admir'd of later age.  
This lowly Muse, that learns like steps to trace,  
Flies for like aide vnto your Patronage;  
That are the great *Mecenas* of this age,  
As wel to al that ciuill artes professe  
As those that are inspir'd with Martial rage,  
And craues protection of her feeblenesse:  
Which if ye yield, perhaps ye may her rayse  
In bigger tunes to sound your liuing prayse.

E. S.

[16]

*To the right noble Lord and most valiaunt Captaine,  
Sir Iohn Norris knight, Lord president of Mounster.*

**V**VHo euer gaue more honourable prize  
To the sweet Muse, then did the Martiall crew;  
That their braue deeds she might immortalize  
In her shril tromp, and sound their praises dew?  
Who then ought more to fauour her, then you  
Moste noble Lord, the honor of this age,  
And Precedent of all that armes ensue?  
Whose warlike prowesse and manly courage,  
Tempred with reason and aduizement sage  
Hath fild sad Belgicke with victorious spoile,  
In *Fraunce* and *Ireland* left a famous gage,  
And lately shakt the Lusitanian soile.  
Sith then each where thou hast dispredd thy fame,  
Loue him, that hath eternized your name.

E. S.

[17]

*To the right honourable and most vertuous Lady,  
the Countesse of Penbroke. [1611]*

**R**Emembrance of that most Heroick spirit,  
The heauens pride, the glory of our daies,  
Which now triumpheth through immortall merit  
Of his braue vertues, crownd with lasting baies  
Of heauenly bliss and euerlasting praies;  
Who first my mufe did lift out of the flore,  
To sing his sweet delights in lowlie laies;  
Bids me, most noble Lady to adore  
His goodly image liuing euermore,  
In the diuine resemblance of your face;  
Which with your vertues ye embellish more,  
And natue beautie deck with heauenly grace:  
For his, and for your owne especiall sake,  
Vouchsafe from him this token in good worth to take.

*E. S.*

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