Sonnet 70

Fresh spring the herald of loves mighty king,
In whose cote armour richly are displayd
All sorts of flowers the which on earth do spring
In goodly colours gloriously arrayd.

Goe to my love, where she is carelesse layd,
Yet in her winters bowre not well awake:
Tell her the joyous time wil not be staid
Unlesse she doe him by the forelock take.

Bid her therefore her selfe soone ready make,
To wayt on love amongst his lovely crew:
Where every one that misseth then her make,\(^\circ\)
Shall be by him amearest with penance dew.\(^4\)
Make hast therefore sweet love, whilst it is prime,\(^\circ\)
For none can call againe the passed time.

1595

THE FAERIE QUEENE

Book II

Canto VII

[THE CAVE OF MAMMON]

Guyon findes Mammon in a delve,\(^\circ\)
Sunning his threasure hore:\(^\circ\)
Is by him tempted, and led downe,
To see his secret store.

1

As Pilot well expert in perilous wave,
That to a stedfast starre his course hath bent,
When foggy mistes, or cloudy tempests have
The faithfull light of that faire lampe yblent,\(^\circ\)
And cover'd heaven with hideous dreriment,
Upon his card\(^\circ\) and compas firmes his eye,
The maisters of his long experiment,\(^\circ\)
And to them does the steddy helme apply,
Bidding his winged vessell fairely forward fly.

2

So Guyon having lost his trusty guide,\(^1\)
Late left beyond that Ydle lake, procedes
Yet on his way, of none accompanide;

3. Coat of arms.
4. I.e., have suitable penance imposed upon him.
1. Guyon’s guide, the Palmer, was left behind when Phaedria ferried Guyon over the Idle Lake in Canto vi.
And evermore himselfe with comfort feedes,
Of his owne vertues, and prayse-worthy deedes.

Long so he yode, yet no adventure found,
Which fame of her shrill trumpet worthy reedes: 
For still he travelld through wide wastfull ground,
That nought but desert wildernesse shew’d all around.

At last he came unto a gloomy glade,
Cover’d with boughes and shrubs from heavens light,
Whereas he sitting found in secret shade
An uncouth, salvage, and uncivile wight,
Of griesly hew, and fowle ill favour’d sight;
His face with smoke was tand, and eyes were bleard,
His head and beard with sout were ill bedight,
His cole-blacke hands did seeme to have been seard
In smithes fire-spitting forge, and nayles like clawes appeard.

His yron coate all overgrowne with rust,
Was underneath envelopéd with gold,
Whose glistring glosse darkned with filthy dust,
Well it appeared, to have beene of old
A worke of rich entayle, and curious mould,
Woven with antickes and wild Imagery:
And in his lap a masse of coyne he told,
And turned upsidowne, to feed his eye
And covetous desire with his huge threasury.

And round about him lay on every side
Great heapes of gold, that never could be spent:
Of which some were rude owre, not purifide
Of Mulcibers devouring element;
Some others were new driven, and distent
Into great Ingoes, and to wedges square;
Some in round plates withouten moniment;
But most were stampt, and in their metall bare
The antique shapes of kings and caesars straunge and rare.

Soone as he Guyon saw, in great affright
And hast he rose, for to remove aside
Those pretious hils from straungers envious sight,
And downe them pouréd through an hole full wide,
Into the hollow earth, them there to hide.
But Guyon lightly to him leaping, stayd
His hand, that trembled, as one terrifyde;
And though him selfe were at the sight dismayd,
Yet him perforce restrayed, and to him doubtfull sayd.

2. Intricate design.
3. Mulciber, also known as Hephaestos and Vulcan, was the classical god of fire.
What art thou man, (if man at all thou art)
That here in desert hast thin habitaunce,
And these rich heapes of wealth doest hide apart
From the worldes eye, and from her right usaunce?
Thereat with staring eyes fixed askaunce
In great disdain, he answered, “Hardy Elfe,
That darest vew my direfull countenaunce,
I read thee rash, and heedlesse of thy selfe,
To trouble my still seate, and heapes of pretious pelfe.

“God of the world and worldlings I me call,
Great Mammon, greatest god below the skye,
That of my plenty poure out unto all,
And unto none my graces do envye:
Riches, renowne, and principality,
Honour, estate, and all this worldes good,
For which men swinck and sweat incessantly,
Fro me do flow into an ample flood,
And in the hollow earth have their eternall brood.

Wherefore if me thou deigne to serve and sew,
At thy commaund lo all these mountaines bee;
Or if to thy great mind, or greedy vew
All these may not suffice, there shall to thee
Ten times so much be numbred francke and free.”

“Mammon,” said he, “thy godheades vaunt
And idle offers of thy golden fee;
To them, that covet such eye-glutting gaine,
Proffer thy giftes, and fitter servaunts entertaine.

“Me ill besits, that in der-doing armes,
And honours suit my vowed dayes do spend,
Unto thy bounteous baytes, and pleasing charmes,
With which weake men thou witchest, to attend:
Regard of worldly mucke doth fowly blend,
And low abase the high heroicke spright;
That joyes for crownes and kingdomes to contend;
Faire shields, gay steedes, bright armes be my delight:
Those be the riches fit for an adventrous knight.”

“Vaine glorious Elfe,” said he, “doest not thou weet,
That money can thy wantes at will supply?
Sheilds, steeds, and armes, and all things for thee meet
It can purvay in twinckling of an eye;
And crownes and kingdomes to thee multiply.
Do not I kings create, and throw the crowne
Sometimes to him, that low in dust doth ly?
And him that raignd, into his rowme thrust downe,
And whom I lust do heape with glory and renowne?”
12

“All otherwise,” said he, “I riches read,\(^{0}\)
And deeme them roote of all disquietnesse;
First got with guile, and then preserv’d with dread,
And after spent with pride and lavishnesse,
Leaving behind them grievfe and heavinesse.

Infinite mischiefes of them do arize,
Strife, and debate, bloudshed, and bitternesse,
Outrageous wrong, and hellish covetiz.\(^{0}\)
That noble heart as great dishonour doth despize.

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4. Stanzas 16 and 17 present a traditional picture of the Golden Age, before technology, pride, and avarice had turned man into what he now is. The next ages, Silver, Brazen, and Iron (the present) showed gradual deterioration.
But later ages pride, like corn-fed steed,
Abus'd her plenty, and fat swolne encrease
To all licentious lust, and gan exceed
The measure of her meane, and naturall first need.

17
“Then gan a cursed hand the quiet wombe
Of his great Grandmother with steele to wound,
And the hid treasures in her sacred tombe,
With Sacriledge to dig. Therein he found
Fountaines of gold and silver to abound,
Of which the matter of his huge desire
And pompous pride eftsoones he did compound;
Then avarice gan through his veins inspire
His greedy flames, and kindled life-devouring fire.”

18
“All, saith he then, “let by thy bitter scorne.”
And leave the rudenesse of that antique age
To them, that liv'd therein in state forlorne;
Thou that dost live in later times, must wage
Thy workes for wealth, and life for gold engage.
If then thee list my offred grace to use,
Take what thou please of all this surplusage;
If thee list not, leave have thou to refuse:
But thing refused, do not afterward accuse.”

19
“Me list not,” said the Elfin night, “receave
Thing offred, till I know it well be got,
Ne wote I, but thou didst these goods bereave
From rightfull owner by unrighteous lot,
Or that bloud guiltiness or guile them blot.
“Perdy,” quoth he. “yet never eye did vew,
Ne toung did tell, ne hand these handled not,
But safe I have them kept in secret mew,
From heavens sight, and powre of all which them pursue.”

20
“What secret place,” quoth he, “can safely hold
So huge a masse, and hide from heavens eye?
Or where hast thou thy wonne, that so much gold
Thou canst preserve from wrong and robbery?
“Come thou,” quoth he, “and see.” So by and by
Through that thicke covert he him led, and found
A darkesome way, which no man could descry,
That deepe descended through the hollow ground,
And was with dread and horrour compassed around.

21
At length they came into a larger space,
That stretcht it selfe into an ample plaine,
Through which a beaten broad high way did trace,
That streight did lead to Plutoes griesly raine:
By that wayes side, there sate infernall Payne,
And fast beside him sat tumultuous Strife:
The one in hand an vron whip did straine,
The other brandished a bloudy knife,
And both did gnash their teeth, and both did threaten life.

On thother side in one consort there sate,
Cruell Revenge, and rancorous Despight,
Disloyall Treason, and hart-burning Hate,
But gnawing Gealosie out of their sight
Sitting alone, his bitter lips did bight,
And trembling Feare still to and fro did fly,
And found no place, where safe he shroud him might,
Lamenting Sorrow did in darknesse lye.
And Shame his ugly face did hide from living eye.

And over them sad Horrour with grim hew,
Did alwayes sore, beating his yron wings;
And after him Owles and Night-ravens flew,
The hatefull messengers of heavy things,
Of death and dolour telling sad tidings;
Whiles sad Celeno, sitting on a clift,
A song of bale and bitter sorrow sings,
That hart of flint a sunder could have rift:
Which having ended, after him she flyeth swift.

All these before the gates of Pluto lay,
By whom the passing, spake unto them nought.
But th’ Elfin knight with wonder all the way
Did feed his eyes, and fild his inner thought.
At last him to a litle dore he brought,
That to the gate of Hell, which gaped wide,
Was next adjoyning, ne them parted ought:
Betwixt them both was but a little stride,
That did the house of Richesse from hell-mouth divide.

Before the dore sat selfe-consuming Care,
Day and night keeping wary watch and ward,
For feare least Force or Fraud should unaware
Breake in, and spoile the treasure there in gard:
Ne would he suffer Sleepe once thither-ward
Approch, albe his drowsie den were next;
For next to death is Sleepe to be compard:

7. I.e., Pluto’s horrible kingdom. Mammon was associated in Christian thought with wealth. According to the Sermon on the Mount, “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” The classical Plutus, god of wealth, and Pluto, god of the underworld, were often confused.
8. Celeno was a harpy in Virgil’s Aeneid III.245—
46. Harpies had the faces and breasts of women, but the wings and talons of birds. They were monsters of ill omen.
Therefore his house is unto his annext;
Here Sleep, there Richesse, and Hel-gate them both betwext.

So soone as Mammon there arriv’d, the dore
To him did open, and affoorded way;
Him followed eke Sir Guyon evermore,
Ne darkenesse him, ne daunger might dismay.

Soone as he entred was, the dore straignt way
Did shut, and from behind it forth there lept
An ugly feend, more fowle then dismall day,¹
The which with monstroues stalkke behind him stept,
And ever as he went, dew⁰ watch upon him kept.

due, proper

Well hopéd he, ere long that hardy guest,
If ever covetous hand, or lustfull eye,
Or lips he layd on thing, that likt⁰ him best,
Or ever sleepe his eye-strings did untie,
Should be his pray. And therefore still⁰ on hye
He over him did hold his cruell clawes,
Threatning with greedy gripe to do him dye
And rend in piecees with his ravenous pawes,
If ever he transgrest the fatall Stygian lawes.²

That houses forme within was rude and strong
Like an huge cave, hewne out of rocky clift,
From whose rough vaut the ragged breaches⁰ hong,
Embost with massy gold of glorious gift,⁰
And with rich metall loaded every rift,
That heavy ruine they did seeme to threat;
And over them Arachne³ high did lift
Her cunning web, and spred her subtile net,
Enwrappéd in fowle smoke and clouds more blacke then jet.

Both roofe, and floore, and wals were all of gold,
But overgrowne with dust and old decay,
And hid in darkenesse, that none could behold
The hew thereof: for vew of chearefull day
Did never in that house it selfe display,
But a faint shadow of uncertain light;
Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away:
Or as the Moone cloathed with clowdy night,
Does shew to him, that walkes in feare and sad affright.

In all that rowme was nothing to be seene,
But huge great vron chests and coffers strong,
All bard with double bends, that none could weene⁰

bands / think

1. Latin *dies maill, “evil days.” There were two in each month, the first and the seventh from last.
2. Laws of the underworld, so called from Styx, its boundary.
3. For her arrogance and excessive pride in her weaving, she was turned into a spider by Athena (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*).
They to enforce\(^o\) by violence or wrong;
On every side they placed were along.
But all the ground with souls was scattered,
And dead mens bones, which round about were flong,
Whose lives, it seemed, whileome\(^o\) there were shed,

And their vile carcases now left unburied.

They forward passe, ne Guyon yet spoke word,
Till that they came unto an yron dore,
Which to them opened of his owne accord,
And shewed of richesse such exceeding store,
As eye of man did never see before;
Ne ever could within one place be found,
Though all the wealth, which is, or was of yore,
Could gathered be through all the world around,
And that above were added to that under ground.

The charge thereof unto a covetous Spright
Commaunded was, who thereby did attend,
And warily awaited day and night,
From other covetous feends it to defend,
Who it to rob and ransacke did intend.

Then Mammon turning to that warriour, said;
“Looke here\(^o\) the worldes blis, loe here the end,
To which all men do ayme, rich to be made:
Such grace now to be happy, is before thee laid.”

“Certes,” said he, “I nill\(^o\) thine offred grace,
Ne to be made so\(^o\) happy do intend:
Another blis before mine eyes I place,
Another happinesse, another end.
To them, that list, these base regardes\(^o\) I lend:
But I in armes, and in atchievements brave,
Do rather choose my flitting houres to spend,
And to be Lord of those that riches have,
Then them to have my selfe, and be their servile sclave.”

Thereat the feend his gnashing teeth did grate,
And griev’d, so long to lacke his greedy pray;\(^4\)
For well he weene’d,\(^o\) that so glorious bayte
Would tempt his guest, to take thereof assay:\(^o\)
Had he so doen, he had him snatcht away,
More light then Culver\(^o\) in the Faulcons fist.
Eternall God thee save from such decay:\(^o\)
But whenas Mammon saw his purpose mist,
Him to entrap unwares another way he wist.\(^o\)

4. To be denied for so long the prey he desired.
Thence forward he him led, and shortly brought
Unto another rowme, whose dore forthright,
To him did open, as it had beeene taught:

Therein an hundred raunge were pight, placed
And hundred fornaces all burning bright;
By every fornace many feends did bide,
Deforméd creatures, horrible in sight,
And every feend his busie paines applide,
To melt the golden metall, ready to be tride. refined

One with great bellowes gathered filling aire,
And with forst wind the fewell did inflame;
Another did the dying bronds repair
With yron toungs, and sprinckled oft the same
With liquid waves, fiers Vulcans rage to tame,
Who maistring them, renewd his former heat;
Some scumd the drosse, that from the mettall came;
Some stirde the molten owre with ladles great;
And every one did swincke, and every one did sweat.

But when as earthly wight they present saw,
Glistring in armes and battailous aray, warlike
From their whot worke they did themselves withdraw
To wonder at the sight: for till that day,
They never creature saw, that came that way.

Their staring eyes sparckling with fervent fire,
And ugly shapes did nigh the man dismay,
That were it not for shame, he would retire,
Till that him thus bespake their soveraigne Lord and sire.

Behold, thou Faeries sonne, with mortall eye,
That living eye before did never see: what
The thing, that thou didst crave so earnestly,
To weet, whence all the wealth late shewd by mee,
Proceeded, lo now is reveald to thee.
Here is the fountaine of the worldes good:
Now therefore, if thou wilt enrichéd bee,
Avise thee well, and chaunge thy wilfull mood,
Least thou perhaps hereafter wish, and be withstood.”

“Suffise it then, thou Money God,” quoth hee,
“That all thine idle offers I refuse.
All that I need I have; what needeth mee
To covet more, then I have cause to use?
With such vaine shewes thy worldlings vile abuse:
But give me leave to follow mine emprise.
Mammon was much displeased, yet no’te he chuse,
But beare the rigour of his bold mesprise,
And thence him forward led, him further to entise.
He brought him through a darksome narrow strait,
To a broad gate, all built of beaten gold:
The gate was open, but therein did wait
A sturdy villein, striding stiffe and bold,
As if that highest God defie he would;
In his right hand an yron club he held,
But he himselfe was all of golden mould,
Yet had both life and sense, and well could wield
That cursed weapon, when his cruel foes he quelled.

Disdayne he called was, and did disdaine
To be so call’d, and who so did him call:
Sterne was his looke, and full of stomacke vain,
His portance terrible, and stature tall,
Far passing th’ hight of men terrestriall;
Like an huge Gant of the Titans race,
That made him scorne all creatures great and small,
And with his pride all others power deface:
More fit amongst blacke fiendes, then men to have his place.

Soone as those glitterand armes he did espie,
That with their brightnesse made that darknesse light,
His harmefull club he gan to hurtle and threaten batell to the Faery knight;
Who likewise gan himselfe to batell dight,
Till Mammon did his hasty hand withhold,
And counsel’d him abstaine from perilous fight:
For nothing might abash the villein bold,
Ne mortall steele emperce his miscreated mould.

So having him with reason pacifide,
And the fiers Carle commanding to forbear,
He brought him in. The room was large and wide,
As it some Gyled or solemne Temple weare:
Many great golden pillours did upbeare
The massy roofe, and riches huge sustayne,
And every pillour decked was full deare
With crownes and Diademus, and titles vaine,
Which mortall Princes wore, whiles they on earth did rayne.

A route of people there assembled were,
Of every sort and nation under skye,
Which with great uprore preaced to draw nere
To th’ upper part, where was advanced hye
A stately siege of soveraigne majestye;
And thereon sat a woman gorgeous gay,
And richly clad in robes of royaltye,
That never earthly Prince in such aray
His glory did enhaunce, and pompous pride display.
Her face right wondrous faire did seeme to bee,
That her broad beauties beam great brightness threw
Through the dim shade, that all men might it see:
Yet was not that same her owne native hue,
But wrought by art and counterfetted shew,
Thereby more lovers unto her to call;
Nath' lesse most heavenly faire in deed and vew
She by creation was, till she did fall;
Thenceforth she sought for helps, to cloke her crime withall.

There, as in glistring glory she did sit,
She held a great gold chaine ylincked well,
Whose upper end to highest heaven was knit,
And lower part did reach to lowest Hell;
And all that preace did round about her swell,
To catchen hold of that long chaine, thereby
To clime aloft, and others to excell:
That was Ambition, rash desire to sty,
And every lincke thereof a step of dignity.

Some thought to raise themselves to high degree,
By riches and unrighteous reward,
Some by close shouldring, some by flatteree;
Others through friends, others for base regard;
And all by wrong waves for themselves prepard.
Those that were up themselves, kept others low,
Those that were low themselves, held others hard,
Ne suffred them to rise or greater grow,
But every one did strive his fellow downe to throw.

Which whenas Guyon saw, he gan inquire,
What meant that preace about that Ladies throne,
And what she was that did so high aspire.
Him Mammon answered: “That goodly one,
Whom all that folke with such contention,
Do flocke about, my deare, my daughter is;
Honour and dignitie from her alone,
Derived are, and all this worldes blis
For which ye men do strive: few get, but many mis.

“And faire Philotime she rightly hight,
The fairest wight that wonneth under skye,
But that this darksome neather world her light
Doth dim with horrour and deformitie,
Worthy of heaven and hve felicitie,
From whence the gods have her for envy thrust:
But sith thou hast found favour in mine eye,
Thy spouse I will her make, if that thou lust,
That she may thee advance for works and merites just."

“Gramercy Mammon,” said the gentle knight,
For so great grace and offred high estate;
But I, that am fraile flesh and earthly wight,
Unworthy match for such immortall mate
My selfe well wote, and mine unequall fate;
And were I not, yet is my trouth yplight,
That to remove the same I have no might:
To change love causelesse is reproch to warlike knight.”

Mammon emmovéd was with inward wrath;
Yet forcing it to faine, him forth thence led
Through griesly shadowes by a beaten path,
Into a gardin goodly garnished
With hearbs and fruits, whose kinds mote not be red:
Not such, as earth out of her fruitfull woomb
Throwes forth to men, sweet and well savoure´d,
But direfull deadly blacke both leafe and bloom,
Fit to adorne the dead, and decke the drery toombe.

There mournful Cypresse grew in greatest store,
And trees of bitter Gall, and Heben sad,
Dead sleeping Poppy, and blacke Hellebore,
Cold Coloquintida, and Tetra mad,
Mortall Samnitis, and Cicuta bad
With which th’ unjust Atheniens made to dy
Wise Socrates, who thereof quaffing glad
Pourd out his life, and last Philosophy
To the faire Critias his dearest Belamy.

The Gardin of Proserpina this hight;
And in the midst thereof a silver seat,
With a thicke Arber goodly over dight,
In which she often vsd from open heat
Her selfe to shroud, and pleasures to entreat.
Next thereunto did grow a goodly tree,
With braunches broad dispred and body great,
Clothed with leaves, that none the wood mote see
And loaden all with fruit as thicke as it might bee.

Their fruit were golden apples glistring bright,
That goodly was their glory to behold,

8. Hiding his anger.
9. Cicuta is hemlock. The other plants mentioned are poisonous or associated with death.

1. The seat (mentioned again in Stanza 63) on which Theseus was condemned to sit in endless sloth. See Book I, Canto v, Stanza 35.
The Faerie Queene [The Cave of Mammon] / 19

On earth like never grew, ne living wight
Like ever saw, but⁰ they from hence were sold;⁰ unless / brought
For those, which Hercules with conquest bold
Got from great Atlas daughters, hence began,
And planted there, did bring forth fruit of gold:
And those with which th’ Eubean young man wan⁰ won
Swift Atalanta, when through craft he her out ran.²

Here also sprong that goodly golden fruit,
With which Acontius got his lover trew,
Whom he had long time sought with fruitlesse suit:
Here eke that famous golden Apple grew,
The which emongst the gods false Ate threw;
For which th’ Idaean Ladies disagreed,
Till partial³ Paris dempt⁴ it Venus dew,
And had of her, faire Helen for his meed,⁰ reward
That many noble Greekes and Trojans made to bleed.

The warlike elfe, much wondred at this tree,
So faire and great, that shadowed all the ground,
And his broad braunches, laden with rich fee,⁰ bounty
Did stretch themselves without the utmost bound
Of this great gardin, compast⁰ with a mound,
Which over-hanging, they themselves did steepe,
In a blacke flood which flow’d about it round;
That is the river of Cocytus deepe,³
In which full many soules do endlessse waile and wepe.

Which to behold, he clomb up to the banke,
And looking downe, saw many damned wights,
In those sad waves, which direfull deadly stanke,
Plongéd continually of⁰ cruell Sprights,
That with their pittance cries, and yelling shrieks,⁰ shrieks
They made the further shore resounden wide:
Emongst the rest of those same ruefull sights,
One cursed creature, he by chaunce espide,
That drenched lay full deepe, under the Garden side.

Deepe was he drenched to the upmost chin,
Yet gaped still, as coveting to drinke
Of the cold liquor, which he waded in,
And stretching forth his hand, did often thinke
To reach the fruit, which grew upon the brincke:
But both the fruit from hand, and floud from mouth

---

2. The famous golden apples from classical legend mentioned in these two stanzas are the apples of the Hesperides which Hercules had to steal as his eleventh labor; the apples tossed to the ground by Melanion of Euboea, causing the swift Atalanta to stop and pick them up, thereby losing the race to him; and finally, the apple which Ate, goddess of discord, tossed into a feast of the gods. It was marked “For the Fairest,” and a contest arose among Venus, Juno, and Minerva, here called “Idaean Ladies” because the decision in favor of Venus was made on Mt. Ida by the prejudiced (“partial”) shepherd Paris.

3. A river of hell. The name means “lamentation” in Greek.
Did flie abacke, and made him vainely swinke:  

The whiles he sterv’d with hunger and with drouth  

He daily dyde, yet never throughly dyen couth.

By whom Jove was formerly feasted. According to the Renaissance mythographer Natalis Comes, Tantalus was condemned to perpetual thirst because avaricious people can never get enough no matter how much wealth they have.

In token of purity. See Matthew xxvii.24.

Did flie abacke, and made him vainely swinke:

Thirst

The whiles he sterv’d with hunger and with drouth:

Thirst

He daily dyde, yet never throughly dyen couth.

By whom Jove was formerly feasted. According to the Renaissance mythographer Natalis Comes, Tantalus was condemned to perpetual thirst because avaricious people can never get enough no matter how much wealth they have.

In token of purity. See Matthew xxvii.24.
The Faerie Queene, Book III / 21

For terrour of the tortures manifold,
In which the damned soules he did behold,
But roughly him bespake. “Thou fearefull foole,

Why takest not of that same fruit of gold,
Ne sittest downe on that same silver stoole,
To rest thy weareie person, in the shadow coole?”

All which he did, to doe him deadly fall
In frayle intemperance through sinfull bayt;
To which if he inclined had at all,
That dreadfull feend, which did behind him wayt,
Would him have rent in thousand pieces strayt:
But he was warie wise in all his way,
And well perceivéd his deceitfull sleight,
Ne suffred lust his safetie to betray;
So goodly did beguile the Guyler of the pray.

And now he has so long remained there,
That vitall powres gan weare both weake and wan,
For want of food, and sleepe, which two upbear,
Like mightie pillours, this fraile life of man,
That none without the same enduren can.
Since he this hardie enterprize began:
For thy great Mammon fairely he besought,
Into the world to guide him backe, as he him brought.

The God, though loth, yet was constraind t' obay,
For lenger time, then that, no living wight
Below the earth, might suffred be to stay:
So backe againe, him brought to living light
But all so soone as his enfeebled spright
Gan sucke this vitall aire into his brest,
As overcome with too exceeding might,
The life did flit away out of her nest,
And all his senses were with deadly fit opprest.

Book III

Contayning
The Legend of Britomartis, or
Of Chastitie

It falles me here to write of Chastity,
That fairest vertue, farre above the rest;

1. The heroine’s name is taken from Virgil’s Britomartis (Ciris 295–305), a goddess associated with Diana, chaste goddess of the moon. Spenser intends the etymology Brito ("Britain") + Mart ("Mars," god of war).
For which what needs me fetch from Faery
Forreine ensamples, it to have exprest?
Sith\(^5\) it is shrin’d in my Soveraines\(^1\) brest,
And form’d so lively\(^9\) in each perfect part,
That to all Ladies, which have it profest,
Need but behold the pourtraict\(^6\) of her hart,
If pourrayd it might be by any living art.

\(^2\) But living art may not least part expresse,\(^9\)
Nor life-resembling pencill\(^9\) it can paint,\(^3\)
All were it Zeuxis or Praxiteles:
His daedale\(^4\) hand would faile, and greatly faint,
And her perfections with his error taint:
Ne Poets wit, that passeth Painter farre
In picturing the parts of beautie daint,\(^9\)
So hard a workmanship adventure darre,\(^5\)
For fear through want of words her excellence to marre.

\(^3\) How then shall I, Apprentice of the skill,
That whylome\(^9\) in divinest wits did raine,\(^9\)
Presume so high to stretch mine humble quill?
Yet now my lucklesse lot doth me constraine
Hereto perforce. But O dre’d\(^9\) Soveraine
Thus farre forth pardon, sith that choicest wit
Cannot your glorious pourtraict figure plaine
That I in colourd showes may shadow it,\(^6\)
And antique\(^9\) praises unto present persons fit.

\(^4\) But if in living colours, and right hew,
Your selfe you covet to see pictured,
Who can it doe more lively, or more trew,
Then\(^9\) that sweet verse, with Nectar sprinckel’d,
In which a gracious servant pictured
His Cynthia, his heavens fairest light?
That with his melting sweetnesse ravishèd,
And with the wonder of her beamès bright,
My senses lullèd are in slomber of delight.

\(^5\) But let that same delitious\(^9\) Poet lend
A little leave unto a rusticke Muse\(^8\)
To sing his mistresse praysse, and let him mend,
If ought\(^9\) amis her liking may abuse:

\(^2\) Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen.
\(^3\) I.e., nor can any artist, however lifelike the representation, paint her heart.
\(^4\) Skillful, like the hand of Daedalus, the Greek artificer who devised wings for himself and his son Icarus, to escape from a labyrinth. Zeuxis and Praxiteles were a Greek painter and sculptor, respectively, famed for lifelike representations.
\(^5\) I.e., nor can a poet’s ingenuity, which far surpasses (“passeth”) that of a painter, dare to under-
\(^6\) I.e., because none can portray you as you truly are (“plaine”), may I do so by artful but imperfect images (“colourd showes”). In Platonic terms, everything in the material world is but a shadow of the true reality in the world of ideas. Britomart foreshadows her descendant, Queen Elizabeth.
\(^7\) The reference is to Sir Walter Ralegh’s poem in praise of Elizabeth, _Cynthia_.
\(^8\) Spenser, in his shepherd persona, Colin Clout.
Ne let his fairest Cynthia refuse,
In mirrours more then one her selfe to see,
But either Gloriana let her chuse,
Or in Belphoebe fashionèd to bee:

In th’ one her rule, in th’ other her rare chastitee.\(^9\)

\section*{Canto 1}

\emph{Guyon encountreth Britomart,}
\emph{faire Florimell is chaced:}
\emph{Duessaes traines\(^o\) and Malecastaes\(^o\) champions are defaced.\(^o\)}

1. The famous Briton Prince and Faerie knight,\(^1\)
   After long wayes and perilous paines endured,
   Having their weary limbs to perfect plight\(^o\)
   Restord, and sory\(^o\) wounds right well recured,\(^o\)
   Of the faire Alma\(^2\) greatly were procured,\(^o\)
   To make there lenger sojourne and abode;
   But when thereto they might not be allured,
   They courteous conge\(^o\) tooke, and forth together yode.\(^o\)

2. But the captived Acrasia he\(^3\) sent,
   Because of travell long, a nigher\(^o\) way,
   With a strong gard, all reskew to prevent,
   And her to Faerie court safe to convoy,
   That her for witnesse of his hard assay,\(^o\)
   Unto his Faerie Queene he might present:
   But he himselfe betooke another way,
   To make more triall of his hardiment,\(^o\)
   And seeke adventures, as he with Prince Arthur went.

3. Long so they travelled through wastefull\(^o\) wayes,
   Where daungers dwelt, and perils most did wonne,\(^o\)
   To hunt for glorie and renownèd praise;
   Full many Countries they did overronne,\(^o\)
   From the uprising to the setting Sunne,
   And many hard adventures did atchieve;
   Of all the which they honour ever wonne,
   And to recover right for such, as wrong did grieve.\(^4\)

4. At last as through an open plaine they yode,\(^o\)
   They spide a knight, that towards pricked faire,\(^5\)

\footnotesize
9. Diana, Phoebe, and Cynthia are all names for the goddess of the moon and of chastity. Hence Spenser’s name, \emph{Bel} (“beautiful”) + \emph{Phoebe}.
1. Guyon, the hero of Book 2, here rides with the “Briton Prince” Arthur.
2. Alma is a character in Book 2.
3. Guyon, who took the witch Acrasia prisoner in the final canto of Book 2 (above).
4. I.e., to restore their rights to those grieved by wrongs.
5. Rode in their direction.
And him beside an ageèd Squire there rode,
That seemed to couch under his shield three-square,
As if that age bad him that burden spare,
And yield it those, that stouter could it wield:
He them espying, gan himselfe prepare,
And on his arme addresse his goodly shield
That bore a Lion passant in a golden field.

Which seeing good Sir Guyon, deare besought
The Prince of grace, to let him runne that turne.
He graunted: then the Faery quickly raught
His poinant speare, and sharpenly gan to spurne
His fomy steed, whose fierie feete did burne
The verdant grasse, as he thereon did tread;
Ne did the other backe his foot returne,
But fiercely forward came withouten dread,
And bent his dreadfull speare against the others head.

They bene ymet, and both their points arrived,
But Guyon drove so furious and fell,
That seemed both shield and plate it would have rived;
Nathelesse it bore his foe not from his sell,
But made him stagger, as he were not well:
But Guyon selfe, ere well he was aware,
Nigh a speares length behind his crouper fell,
Yet in his fall so well him selfe he bare,
That mischievous mischance his life and limbes did spare.

Great shame and sorrow of that fall he tooke;
For never yet, sith warlike armes he bore,
And shivering speare in bloudie field first shooke,
He found himselfe dishonorèd so sore.
Ah gentlest knight, that ever armour bore,
Let not thee grieve dismounted to have beene,
And brought to ground, that never wast before;
For not thy fault, but secret powre unseene,
That speare enchaunted was, which layd thee on the greene.

But weenedst thou what wight thee overthrew,
Much greater griefe and shamefuller regret
For thy hard fortune then thou wouldst renew,
That of a single damzell thou wert met
On equall plaine, and there so hard beset;

6. With three equal sides.
7. Began to prepare himself.
8. Heraldic description of a walking lion, against a golden background—the arms of Brute (ancestor of Britomart), who, according to legend, founded Britain.
9. Guyon, seeing this, asked Arthur as a matter of favor (perhaps with a pun on Arthur’s symbolic significance as God’s grace).
1. I.e., they came together, with each spear hitting on the other’s shield.
2. The back of the saddle; i.e., he fell behind the horse a spear’s length. “Rived” (line 48): torn.
3. Capable of splitting, or quivering at the ready.
4. I.e., if you knew what person overthrew you.
Even the famous Britomart it was,  
Whom straunge adventure\(^o\) did from Britaine fet,\(^o\) chance / fetch  
To seeke her lover (love farre sought alas)  
Whose image she had seene in Venus looking glas.

9

Full of disdainefull\(^o\) wrath, he fierce uprose,  
For to revenge that foule reprochfull shame,  
And snatching his bright sword began to close  
With her on foot, and stoutly forward came;  
Die rather would he, then endure that same.  
Which when his Palmer\(^s\) saw, he gan to feare  
His toward\(^o\) perill and untoward blame,\(^o\) approaching / injury, shame  
Which by that new encounter he should reare:\(^o\) bring about  
For death sate on the point of that enchaunted speare.

10

And hasting towards him gan faire perswade,  
Not to provoke misfortune, nor to weene\(^o\) think  
His speares default to mend with cruell blade;  
For by his mightie Science\(^o\) he had seene knowledge  
The secret vertue of that weapon keene,\(^s\)  
That mortall puissance mote\(^s\) not withstond: might  
Nothing on earth mote alwaies happie\(^o\) beene. fortunate  
Great hazard were it, and adventure fond,\(^o\) foolish  
To loose long gotten honour with one evill hond.\(^o\) action

11

By such good meanes he him discounselle\(^d\),\(^o\) dissuaded  
From prosecuting his revenging rage;  
And eke\(^o\) the Prince like treaty\(^d\) handele\(^d\),\(^o\) also / entreaty  
His wrathfull will with reason to asswage,  
And laid the blame, not to his carriage,\(^o\) conduct  
But to his starting steed, that swarved asyde,  
And to the ill purveyance\(^o\) of his page, preparation  
That had his furnitures\(^s\) not firmely tyde: harness  
So is his angry courage\(^o\) fairely\(^o\) pacifyde. spirit / entirely

12

Thus reconcilement was betweene them knit,  
Through goodly temperance, and affection chaste,\(^7\)  
And either vowd with all their power and wit,\(^o\) skill  
To let not others honour be defaste,  
Of friend or foe, who ever it embaste,\(^8\)  
Ne armes to beare against the others syde: placed  
In which accord the Prince was also plaste,\(^o\)  
And with that golden chaine of concord tyde.  
So goodly all agreed, they forth yfere\(^o\) did ryde. together

5. The Palmer (often identified as reason) was Guyon’s guide in Book 2.  
6. The Palmer has seen the secret power (“vertue”) of Britomart’s spear, which symbolizes the power of the virtue associated with her, chastity.  
7. The special moral qualities of the two knights signify the ground of their accord.  
8. I.e., neither would let the other’s honor be defaced by friend or foe who might seek to degrade it.
O goodly usage of those antique times,
In which the sword was servant unto right;
When not for malice and contentious crimes,
But all for praise, and proofe of manly might,
The martiall brood accustomèd to fight:
Then honour was the meed of victorie,
And yet the vanquishe`d had no despight:
Let later age that noble use envie, a
Vile rancour to avoid, and cruell surquedrie. b

Long they thus travellèd in friendly wise,
Through countries waste, and eke well edifyde, c
Seeking adventures hard, to exercise
Their puissance, whylome full dernely tryde: d
At length they came into a forest wyde,
Whose hideous horror and sad trembling sound
Full griesly seem’d: Therein they long did ryde,
Yet tract of living creatures none they found,
Save Beares, Lions, and Buls, which romèd them around.

All suddenly out of the thickest brush,
Upon a milk-white Palfrey all alone,
A goodly Ladie did foreby them rush,
Whose face did seeme as cleare as Christall stone,
And eke through feare as white as whales bone:
Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold,
Which fled so fast, that nothing mote him hold,
And scarse them leasure gave, her passing to behold.

So as they gazèd after her a while,
Lo where a griesly Foster forth did rush,
Breathing out beastly lust her to defile:
His tyreling jade he fiercely forth did push,
Through thicke and thin, both over banke and bush
In hope her to attaine by hooke or crooke,
That from his gorie sides the bloud did gush:
Large were his limbes, and terrible his looke,  
And in his clownish hand a sharp bore speare he shooke. \_rustic

18
Which outrage when those gentle knights did see,
Full of great envie and fell gealosy,
They styad not to avise,\_ who first should bee,  \_consider
But all spurd after fast, as they mote\_ fly,  \_might
To reskew her from shamefull villany.
The Prince and Guyon equally bylive\_ with equal speed
Her selfe pursewd, in hope to win thereby
Most goodly meede,\_ the fairest Dame alive:  \_reward
But after the foule foster Timias\_ did strive.

19
The whiles faire Britomart, whose constant mind,
Would not so lightly follow beauties chace,\_  \_intended
Ne reckt of Ladies Love, did stay behind,
And them awayted there a certayne space,
To weet if they would turne backe to that place:  \_know
But when she saw them gone, she forward went,
As lay her journey, through that perlous Pace,\_ \_perilous passage
With stedfast courage and stout hardiment;
Ne evill thing she fear’d, ne evill thing she ment.\_ 

20
At last as nigh out of the wood she came,
A stately Castle farre away she spyde,
To which her steps directly she did frame.\_ \_direct
That Castle was most goodly edifyde,\_ \_built
And plaste for pleasure nigh that forrest syde:
But faire before the gate a spatious plaine,
Mantled with greene, it selfe did spredden wyde,
On which she saw sixe knights, that did darraine\_ \_wage
Fierce battell against one, with cruell might and maine.

21
Mainly\_ they all attonce upon him laid,  \_mightily
And sore beset on every side around,
That nigh he breathlesse grew, yet nought dismaid,
Ne ever to them yielded foot of ground
All\_ had he lost much bloud through many a wound,  \_although
But stoutly dealt his blowes, and every way
To which he turnèd in his wrathfull stound,\_ \_his violent wrath
Made them recoile, and fly from dred decay,\_ \_death
That none of all the sixe before, him durst assay.\_ 

3. Arthur’s squire, who also appears in Books 1 and 2. His name means “honored.”
4. Florimell is here identified with Beauty; the pun chased/chaste is probably intended.
5. I.e., none of the six knights dared to assail him from the front.
Like dastard Curres, that having at a bay\(^6\)
The salvage beast embost\(^6\) in wearie chace,
Dare not adventure on the stubborne pray,
Ne byte before, but rome from place to place,
To get a snatch, when turnèd is his face.

In such distresse and doubtfull\(^9\) jeopardy,
When Britomart him saw, she ran a pace\(^9\)
Unto his reskew, and with earnest cry,
Bad those same sixe forbear that single enimy.

But to her cry they list not lend an eare,
Ne ought the more their mightie strokes surceasse,\(^7\)
But gathering him round about more neare,
Their direfull rancour rather did encreasse;
Till that she rushing through the thickest preasse,\(^6\)
Perforce disparted their compacted gyre,\(^8\)

And soone compeld to hearken unto peace:
Tho\(^9\) gan she myldly of them to inquyre
The cause of their dissention and outrageous yre.\(^9\)

Where to that single knight did answere frame;\(^6\)
These sixe would me enforce by oddes of might,
To chaunge my liefe,\(^9\) and love another Dame,
That death me liefer were, then\(^9\) such despight,
So unto wrong to yield my wrested right:?
For I love one, the truest one on ground,
Ne list me chaunge; she th’ Errant Damzell\(^1\) hight,\(^9\)
For whose deare sake full many a bitter stownd,\(^9\)
I have endur’d, and tasted many a bloudy wound.

“Certès,” said she, “then bene ye sixe to blame,
To weene\(^9\) your wrong by force to justifie:
For knight to leave his Ladie were great shame,
That faithfull is, and better were to die.
All losse is lesse,\(^2\) and lesse the infamie,
Then losse of love to him, that loves but one;
Ne may love be compeld by maisterie;\(^9\)
For soone as maisterie comes, sweet love anone\(^9\)
Taketh his nimble wings, and soone away is gone.”

Then spake one of those sixe, “There dwelleth here
Within this caste wall a Ladie faire,
6. At close quarters, when a hunted animal turns
to confront its pursuers.
7. They did not wish to lend an ear, nor did they
at all stop their mighty blows.
8. Forcibly broke up their circling about the
knight.
9. I.e., death is preferable to such dishonor as to
yield my own right love of my lady under duress to
(t)h(eir) wrong.
1. This epithet indicates that the lady is Una
(Truth), the heroine of Book 1: in Book 2 that epi-
thet is specifically assigned to her. By this identi-
fication we also know the knight to be Una’s
betrothed, Redcrosse, the hero of Book 1.
2. I.e., any loss (even death) is less than such a
loss of a faithful lover.
Whose soveraine beautie hath no living pere,
Thereto\(^o\) so bounteous and so debonaire,\(^o\) in addition / gracious
That never any mote\(^o\) with her compaire.
She hath ordaind this law, which we approve,\(^o\) uphold
That every knight, which doth this way repaire,\(^o\) travel
In case he have no Ladie, nor no love,
Shall doe unto her service never to remove.\(^o\) leave

“But if he have a Ladie or a Love,
Then must he her forgoe with foule defame,\(^o\) dishonor
Or else with us by ding of sword approve,\(^o\) prove
That she is fairer, then our fairest Dame,
As did this knight, before ye hither came.”

“Perdie,”\(^o\) said Britomart, “the choise is hard:
But what reward had he, that overcame?”
“He should advauncèd be to high regard,”
Said they, “and have our Ladies love for his reward.”

“Therefore aread\(^o\) Sir, if thou have a love.”
“Love have I sure,” quoth she, “but Lady none;
Yet will I not fro mine owne love remove,
Ne to your Lady will I service done,\(^o\) do
But wreake your wrongs wrought to this knight alone,\(^i\)
And prove his cause.” With that her mortall speare

She mightily aventred\(^o\) towards one,
And downe him smot, ere well aware\(^o\) he weare,
Then to the next she rode, and downe the next did beare.

Ne did she stay, till three on ground she layd,
That none of them himselfe could reare\(^o\) againe;
The fourth was by that other knight dismayd,\(^o\) defeated
All were he wearie of his former paine,
Which two did yield, before she did them smight.
“Oh,” said she then, “now may ye all see plaine,
That truth is strong, and trew love most of might,
That for his trusty servaunts doth so strongly fight.”

“Too well we see,” said they, “and prove too well
Our faulty weakesse,\(^i\) and your matchlesse might:
For thy,\(^o\) faire Sir, yours be the Damozell,
Which by her owne law to your lot doth light,
And we your liege men faith unto you plight.”

So underneathe her feet their swords they mard,\(^o\) debased
And after her besought, well as they might,
To enter in, and reape the dew reward:
She graunted, and then in they all together far’d.\(^o\) fared, went

3. I.e., visit on you the wrongs you visited on this single knight.
4. I.e., weakness because they are at fault.
31 Long were it to describe the goodly frame,\(^9\) structure
And stately port\(^9\) of Castle Joyeous, appearance
(For so that Castle hight\(^9\) by commune name) was called
Where they were entertaind with curteous entertainment
And comely glee\(^9\) of many gracious named
Faire Ladies, and of many a gentle knight, soon after
Who through a Chamber long and spacious, named
Eftsoones\(^5\) them brought unto their Ladies sight,
That of them cleepe\(^5\) was the Lady of delight.

32 But for to tell the sumptuous aray
Of that great chamber, should be labour lost: think
For living wit, I weene,\(^5\) cannot display
The royall riches and exceeding cost,
Of every pillour and of every post;
Which all of purest bullion\(^5\) framèd were, gold
And with great pearles and pretious stones embost,
That the bright glister of their beamès cleare
Did sparckle forth great light, and glorious did appeare.

33 These straunger knights through passing, forth were led
Into an inner rowme,\(^5\) whose royaltee room
And rich purveyance might uneath be red;
Mote Princes place beseeme so deckt to bee.\(^5\)
Which stately manner when as they did see,
The image of superfluous riotize,\(^5\) immoderate extravagance
Exceeding much the state of meane\(^5\) degree,
They greatly wondred, whence so sumptuous guize\(^5\) fashion
Might be maintaynd, and each gan\(^5\) diversely devize.\(^5\) began / guess

34 The wals were round about apparellèd
With costly clothes of Arras and of Toure,\(^6\)
In which with cunning hand was pourtrahe\(^9\) portrayed
The love of Venus and her Paramoure design / skill
The faire Adonis, turnèd to a flowre,\(^7\)
A worke of rare device,\(^5\) and wondrous wit.\(^5\)
First did it shew the bitter balefull stowre,\(^9\)
Which her assayd with many a fervent fit,
When first her tender hart was with his beautie smit.

35 Then with what sleights and sweet allurements she
Entyst the Boy, as well that art she knew,
And wooèd him her Paramoure to be;

5. I.e., whose rich furnishings can hardly be told; it would become a prince’s palace to be so ornamented.
6. Arras and Tours (France) were famous for their tapestries.
7. The tapestries depict the myth of Venus and Adonis—Venus’s first love passion, her wooing of Adonis, their lovemaking, his wounding and death from the boar (signifying lust), and his metamorphosis to a flower (the anemone). The myth provides a reference point for the love stories that follow in Book 3.
Now making girledoms of each flower that grew,  
To crowne his golden lockes with honour dew;  
Now leading him into a secret shade  
From his Beauperes, and from bright heavens view,  
Where him to sleepe she gently would perswade,  
Or bathe him in a fountaine by some covert glade.

And whilst he slept, she over him would sprede  
Her mantle, coloured like the starry skyes,  
And her soft arme lay underneath his hed,  
And with ambrosiall kisses bathe his eyes;  
And whilst he bathed, with her two crafty spyes,  
She secretly would search each daintie lim,  
And throw into the well sweet Rosemaryes,  
And fragrant violets, and Pances trim,  
And ever with sweet Nectar she did sprinkle him.

So did she steale his heedelesse hart away,  
And joyed his love in secret unespyde.  
But for she saw him bent to cruell play,  
To hunt the salvage beast in forest wyde,  
Dreadfull of daunger, that mote him betyde,  
She oft and oft advis’d him to refraine  
From chase of greater beasts, whose brutish pryde  
Mote breede him scath unwares: but all in vaine;  
For who can shun the chaunce, that dest’ny doth ordaine?

Lo, where beyond he lyeth languishing,  
Deadly engorèd of a great wild Bore,  
And by his side the Goddess groveling  
Makes for him endlesse mone, and evermore  
With her soft garment wipes away the gore,  
Which staines his snowy skin with hatefull hew:  
But when she saw no helpe might him restore,  
Him to a daintie flowre she did transmew;  
Which in that cloth was wrought, as if it lively grew.

So was that chamber clad in goodly wise,  
And round about it many beds were dight,  
As whilome was the antique worldes guize,  
Some for untimely ease, some for delight,  
As pleased them to use, that use it might:  
And all was full of Damzels, and of Squires,  
Dauncing and reveling both day and night,  
And swimming deepe in sensuall desires,  
And Cupid still emongst them kindled lustfull fires.

8. Violets and pansies (“pances”) have erotic associations. Rosemary (“rosemaries”) is associated with remembrance.  
9. I.e., might cause him harm when he was unwary.
And all the while sweet Musicke did divide
Her looser notes with Lydian\(^1\) harmony;
And all the while sweet birds thereto applide
Their daintie layes and dulcet melody,
Ay\(^0\) caroling of love and jollity,
That wonder was to heare their trim consort.\(^2\)
Which when those knights beheld, with scornefull eye,
They sdeigned\(^3\) such lascivious disport,
And loathed the loose demeanare of that wanton sort.\(^5\)

Thence they were brought to that great Ladies vew,
Whom they found sitting on a sumptuous bed,
That glistred all with gold and glorious shew,\(^6\)
As the proud Persian Queenses accustomed:

She seemd a woman of great bountihed,\(^6\)
And of rare beautie, saving that askaunce\(^7\) sidelong
Her wanton eyes, ill signes of womanhed,
Did roll too lightly, and too often glaunce,
Without regard of grace,\(^8\) or comely amenaunce.\(^\circ\)

Long worke it were, and needlesse to devize\(^\circ\)
Their goodly entertainement and great glee:
She causèd them be led in curteous wize
Into a bowre, disarme`d for to bee,
And cheerèd well with wine and spicereee:\(^8\)

The Redcrosse Knight was soone disarme`d there,
But the brave Mayd would not disarme`d bee,
But onely vented up her umbriere,\(^4\)
And so did let her goodly visage to appere.

As when faire Cynthia, in darkesome night,
Is in a noyous\(^5\) cloud envelopèd,
Where she may find the substaunce thin and light,
Breakes forth her silver beames, and her bright hed
Discoveres to the world discomfited;\(^5\)
Of the poore traveller, that went astray,
With thousand blessings she is herièd;\(^5\)
Such was the beautie and the shining ray,
With which faire Britomart gave light unto the day.

And eke\(^6\) those six, which lately with her fought,
Now were disarmd, and did them selves present
Unto her vew, and company unsoght;
For they all seemed curteous and gent,\(^6\)

1. The mode of Greek music associated with soft, sensuous qualities and emotions.
2. Well-balanced ensemble, pleasing harmony.
3. Echoing 2 Peter 2.14: “Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls.”
4. Raised the face guard of her helmet.
5. I.e., as when the moon, after being hidden by a cloud, breaks forth in splendor on a world troubled by the loss of her light.
And all sixe brethren, borne of one parent,
Which had them traynd in all civilitee, they were feudal vassals ("liegemen") of the lady, holding all their goods and privileges from her grant and owing all knightly service to her.

Now were they liegemen to this Lady free,
And her knights service ought, to hold of her in fee.

The first of them by name Gardante hight,
A jolly person, and of comely vew;
The second was Parlante, a bold knight,
And next to him Jocante did ensew;
Basciante did him selfe most curteous shew;
But fierce Bacchante seemd too fell and keene;
And yet in armes Noctante greater grew:
All were faire knights, and goodly well beseene, But to faire Britomart they all but shadowes beene.

For she was full of amiable grace,
And manly terrour mixèd therewithall,
That as the one stird up affections bace,
So th’ other did mens rash desires apall,
And hold them backe, that would in error fall;
As he, that hath espide a vermeill Rose,
To which sharpe thornes and breres the way forstall,
Dare not for dread his hardy hand expose,
But wishing it far off, his idle wish doth lose.

Whom when the Lady saw so faire a wight,
All ignoraunt of her contrary sex,
(For she her weend a fresh and lusty knight)
She greatly gan enamourèd to wex,
And with vaine thoughts her falsèd fancy vex:
Her fickle hart conceivèd hasty fire,
Like sparkes of fire, which fall in sclender flex,
That shortly brent into extreme desire,
And ransackt all her veines with passion entire.

Eftsoones she grew to great impatience
And into terms of open outrage brust,
That plaine discovered her incontinence,
Ne reckt she, who her meaning did mistrust;
For she was given all to fleshly lust,
And pourèd forth in sensuall delights,
That all regard of shame she had discust,

6. A tilt is an encounter between two mounted knights armed with spears; a tournament involves many knights armed with spears and swords.
7. They were feudal vassals ("liegemen") of the lady, holding all their goods and privileges from her grant and owing all knightly service to her.
8. The names of these knights denote the rungs of the ladder of lechery: gazing ("Gardante"), conversing ("Parlante"), joking ("Jocante"), kissing ("Basciante"), drunken reveling ("Bacchante", from Bacchus, god of wine), and consummation of love at night ("Noctante.
9. I.e., she soon burst forth in language so sexually explicit as to make very clear her intemperance.
And meet respect of honour put to flight:
So shamelesse beauty soone becomes a loathly° sight.  

49
Faire Ladies, that to love captivèd arre,
And chaste desires to nourish in your mind,
Let not her fault your sweet affection marre,
Ne° blot the bounty° of all womankind;
‵Mongst thousands good one wanton Dame to find:
Emongst the Roses grow some wicked weeds;
For this was not to love, but lust inclind;
For love does alwayes bring forth bounteous deeds,
And in each gentle hart desire of honour breeds.

50
Nought so of love this looser Dame did skill,²
But as a coale to kindle fleshly flame,
Giving the bridle to her wanton will,
And treading under foote her honest name:
Such love is hate, and such desire is shame.
Still did she rove³ at her with crafty glaunce
Of her false eyes, that at her hart did ayme,
And told her meaning in her countenaunce;
But Britomart dissembled it with ignoraunce.⁴

51
Supper was shortly dight⁵ and downe they sat,
Where they were served with all sumptuous fare,
Whiles fruitfull Ceres, and Lyaeus fat⁶
Pourd out their plenty, without spight⁷ or spare:
Nought wanted there, that dainty⁸ was and rare;
And aye° the cups their bancks did overflow,
And aye betweene the cups, she did prepare
Way to her love, and secret darts did throw;
But Britomart would not such guilfull message know.

52
So when they slakèd had the fervent heat
Of appetite with meates⁹ of every sort,
The Lady did faire Britomart entreat,
Her to disarme, and with delightfull sport
To loose her warlike limbs and strong effort,⁶
But when she mote not thereunto be wonne,
(For she her sexe under that straunge purport
Did use to hide, and plaine apparaunce shonne;)⁷
In plainer wise to tell her grievaunce she begonne.

2. I.e., this too-loose lady did not understand love in that way.
3. Shoot an arrow at a mark chosen at will.
4. I.e., pretended not to know her meaning.
5. Ceres is goddess of crops, Lyaeus (Bacchus) god of wine.
6. I.e., the lady entreated Britomart to unloose her “warlike limbs” from their armor and relax her martial force in delightful sport.
7. I.e., Britomart refused to disarm because she used that disguise (“strange purport”) to hide her female sex.
53

And all atonce discovered° her desire

With sighes, and sobs, and plaints, and piteous griefe,
The outward sparkes of her in° burning fire;
Which spent in vaine, at last she told her briefe,
That but if° she did lend her short° reliefe,
And do her comfort, she mote algates° dye.

But the chaste damzell, that had never priefe°
Of such malengine° and fine forgerie,
Did easily beleeve her strong extremitie.

54

Full easie was for her to have beliefe,
Who by self-feeling of her feeble sexe,
And by long triall of the inward griefe,
Wherewith imperious love her hart did vexe,
Could judge what paines do loving harts perplexe.°
Who meanes no guile, beguilèd soonest shall,
And to faire semblaunce doth light faith annexe;°

The bird, that knowes not the false fowlers call,
Into his hidden net full easily doth fall.

55

For thy° she would not in discourteise wise,°
Scorne the faire offer of good will profest;
For great rebuke° it is, love to despise,
Or rudely sdeigne° a gentle harts request;

But with faire countenaunce, as beseemed best,
Her entertaynd; nath'lesse she inly deemd
Her love too light, to wooe a wandring guest:
Which she° misconstruing, thereby esteemd
That from like inward fire that outward smoke had steemd.

56

Therewith a while she her flit° fancy fed,
Till she mote winne fit time for her desire,
But yet her wound still inward freshly bled,
And through her bones the false instilled fire

Did spred it selfe, and venime close° inspire.

Tho° were the tables taken all away,
And every knight, and every gentle Squire
Gan choose his dame with Basciomani° gay,
With whom he meant to make his sport and courtly play.

57

Some fell to daunce, some fell to hazardry,°

Some to make love,° some to make meriment,
As diverse wits to divers things apply;
And all the while faire Malecasta° bent

8. I.e., one who means no guile is easily beguiled, and gives ready (“light”) faith to false appearances.
9. Italian, “I kiss your hand.”
1. Now that her nature has been fully revealed by her actions, she is named: Malecasta, unchaste (malus, “bad” + castus, “chaste”).
Her crafty engins\(^\circ\) to her close intent.

By this th’ eternall lampes, wherewith high Jove
Doth light the lower world, were halfe yspent,
And the moist daughters of huge Atlas\(^2\) strove
Into the Ocean deepe to drive their weary drove.\(^\circ\)

High time it seemed then for every wight

Them to betake unto their kindly\(^\circ\) rest;
Eftsoones long waxen torches weren light,
Unto their bowres to guiden every guest:
Tho when the Britonesse saw all the rest
Avoided\(^\circ\) quite, she gan her selfe despoile,\(^\circ\)
And safe commit to her soft fethered nest,
Where through long watch, and late dayes weary toile,
She soundly slept, and carefull thoughts did quite assoile.\(^\circ\)

Now whenas all the world in silence deepe
Yshrowded was, and every mortall wight
Was drownèd in the depth of deadly\(^\circ\) sleepe,
Faire Malecasta, whose engrieve`d spriët
Could find no rest in such perplexed plight,
Lightly arose out of her wearie bed,
And under the blacke vele of guilty Night,
Her with a scarlot mantle coverèd,
That was with gold and Ermines faire envelopèd.

Then panting soft, and trembling everie joynt,
Her fearfull feete towards the bowre she moved;
Where she for secret purpose did appoynt
To lodge the warlike mayd unwisely loved,
And to her bed approching, first she prooved,\(^\circ\)
Whether she slept or wakt, with her soft hand
She softly felt, if any member mooved,
And lent her wary eare to understand,
If any puffe of breath, or signe of sence she fond.

Which whenas none she fond, with easie shift,\(^\circ\)
For feare least her unwares she should abrayd,\(^\circ\)
Th’ embroderd quilt she lightly up did lift,
And by her side her selfe she softly layd,
Of every finest fingers touch affrayd;
Ne any noise she made, ne word she spake,
But inly sigh’d. At last the royall Mayd
Out of her quiet slomber did awake,
And chaungd her weary side, the better ease to take.

2. The seven stars in the constellation Taurus, called the daughters of Atlas. Their setting locates this episode at midnight.
62
550 Where feeling one close couchèd by her side,
  She lightly⁰ left out of her filèd⁰ bed,  quickly / defiled
  And to her weapon ran, in minde to gride⁰  pierce
  The loathèd leachour. But the Dame halfe ded
  Through suddein feare and ghastly drerihed,⁰  terror
555 Did shrieke alowd, that through the house it rong,
  And the whole family therewith adred,
  Rashly⁰ out of their rouzèd couches sprong,  hastily
  And to the troubled chamber all in armes did throng.

63
560 And those six Knights that Ladies Champions,
  Halfe armd and halfe unarmd, with them attons:⁰  uproar
  Where when confusedly they came, they found
  Their Lady lying on the sencelesse grownd;
  On th’ other side, they saw the warlike Mayd
565 All in her snow-white smocke, with locks unbownnd,
  Threatning the point of her avenging blade,
  That with so troublous terour they were all dismayde.

64
570 About their Lady first they flockt arownd,
  Whom having laid in comfortable couch,
  Shortly they reard out of her froznd swownd;⁰  cold faint, swoon
  And afterwards they gan with fowle reproch
  To stirre up strife, and troublous contecke⁰ broch:
575 Ne in so glorious spoile themselves embosse;³
  Her succourd eke the Champion of the bloudy Crosse.

65
580 But one of those sixe knights, Gardante hight,⁰  named
  Drew out a deadly bow and arrow keene,
  Which forth he sent with felonous despight,⁰  fierce spite
  And fell intent against the virgin sheene:⁰  shining
  The mortall steele stayd not, till it was seene
  To gore her side, yet was the wound not deepe,
585 Which did her lilly smock with staines of vermeil⁰ steepe.

66
590 Wherewith enrag’d she fiercely at them flew,
  And with her flaming sword about her layd,
  That none of them foule mischiefe⁰ could eschew,⁰  harm / escape
  But with her dreadfull strokes were all dismayd:  spell
  Here, there, and every where about her swayd
  Her wrathfull steele, that none mote it abide;
595 And eke the Redcrosse knight gave her good aid,

3. I.e., none tries to cover himself with glory by taking her as his spoil or booty.
Ay joyning foot to foot, and side to side,
That in short space their foes they have quite terrifide.

Tho whenas all were put to shamefull flight,
The noble Britomartis her arayd,
And her bright armes about her body dight;\textsuperscript{6} drew
For nothing would she lenger\textsuperscript{5} there be stayd,
Where so loose life, and so ungentle trade
Was usd of Knights and Ladies seeming gent:\textsuperscript{4}
So early ere the grosse Earthes gryesy\textsuperscript{7} shade
Was all dispersd out of the firmament,
They tooke their steeds, and forth upon their journey went.

\begin{flushleft}
\textit{Canto 2}
\end{flushleft}

\textit{The Redcrosse knight to Britomart}\textit{ describeth Artegall:}
\textit{The wondrous myrrhour, by which she in love with him did fall.}

Here have I cause, in men just blame to find,
That in their proper\textsuperscript{5} prayse too partiall bee,
And not indifferent\textsuperscript{5} to woman kind,
To whom no share in armes and chevalrie
They do impart, ne maken memorie
Of their brave gestes\textsuperscript{5} and prowesse martiall;
Scarse do they spare to one or two or three,
Rowme in their writs; yet the same writing small
Does all their deeds deface, and dims their glories all.\textsuperscript{5}

But by record of antique\textsuperscript{6} times I find,
That women wont\textsuperscript{6} in warres to beare most sway,
And to all great exploits them selves inclind:
Of which they still the girland bore away,\textsuperscript{6}
Till envious Men fearing their rules decay,
Gan coyne streight\textsuperscript{5} lawes to curb their liberty;
Yet sith they warlike armes have layd away,
That now we foolish men that prayse gin eke\textsuperscript{5} enuy.\textsuperscript{7}

Of warlike puissaunce in ages spent,
Be thou faire Britomart, whose prayse I write,
But of all wisedome be thou precedent,\textsuperscript{6}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{4} I.e., she would not stay where such discourteous and ignoble conduct ("ungentle trade") was used by knights and ladies seemingly of gentle birth.
\textsuperscript{5} I.e., men scarcely spare room in their writings to one or two or three women, yet those brief accounts outshine all the men's deeds and glory.
\textsuperscript{6} I.e., they always won the greatest praise ("bore the garland away") in these exploits.
\textsuperscript{7} I.e., now we foolish men begin also to envy women that praise (of excelling in arts and statesmanship).
\end{flushright}
O soveraigne Queene, whose prayse I would endite,\(^\circ\) write

Endite I would as dewtie doth excite;
But ah my rimes too rude and rugged arre,
When in so high an object they do lite,
And striving, fit to make,\(^8\) I feare do marre:
Thy selfe thy prayses tell, and make them knowne farre.

She travelling with Guyon\(^9\) by the way,
Of sundry things faire purpose\(^6\) gan to find,
T\(^4\) abridg their journey long, and lingring day;
Mongst which it fell into that Faeries mind,
To aske this Briton Mayd, what uncouth\(^9\) wind,
Brought her into those parts, and what inquest\(^9\)
Made her dissemble her disguisèd kind:\(^9\)
Faire Lady she him seemd, like Lady drest,
But fairest knight alive, when armèd was her brest.

Thereat she sighing softly, had no powre
To speake a while, ne ready answere make,
But with hart-thrilling throbs and bitter stowre,\(^5\) turmoil
As if she had a fever fit, did quake,
And every daintie limbe with horrour shake;
And ever and anone the rosy red,
Flasht through her face, as it had been a flake\(^6\)
Of lightning, through bright heaven fulminèd;
At last the passion past she thus him answerèd.

“Faire Sir, I let you weete,\(^6\) that from the howre
I taken was from nourses tender pap,\(^6\)
I have beene traine`d up in warlike stowre,
To tossen speare and shield, and to affrap\(^6\) hit
The warlike ryder to his most mishap;
Sithence\(^1\) I loathèd have my life to lead,
As Ladies wont, in pleasures wanton lap,
To finger the fine needle and nyce\(^6\) thread;
Me lever were\(^6\) with point of foemans speare be dead.

“All my delight on deedes of armes is set,
To hunt out perils and adventures hard,
By sea, by land, where so they may be met,
Onely for honour and for high regard,
Without respect of richesse or reward.
For such intent into these parts I came,
Withouten compasse, or withouten card,\(^6\)
Far fro my native soyle, that is by name
The greater Britaine,\(^1\) here to seeke for prayse and fame.

\(^8\) I.e., to compose fitting verse.
\(^9\) A mistake for Redcrosse; see introductory lines to this canto and below, stanza 16.
\(^1\) Great Britain, not Brittany in France.
The name suggests "equal to Arthur" (Arthegall).

I.e., before she finished speaking.

I.e., it would be a great wonder if he would think or do anything shameful or blameworthy.

It pleased her ("her list") to oppose him with hostile words.

I.e., speak falsely in praise of his virtues.
It ill beseemes a knight of gentle sort,
Such as ye have him boasted, to beguile
A simple mayd, and worke so haynous tort,\(^1\) wrong
In shame of knighthood, as I largely\(^2\) can report.

“Let be” therefore my vengeaunce to disswade,
And read,\(^3\) where I that faytour\(^4\) false may find.”
“Ah, but if reason faire might you perswade,
To slake your wrath, and mollifie your mind,”
Said he, “perhaps ye should it better find:
For hardy\(^5\) thing it is, to weene\(^6\) by might, bold / think
That man to hard conditions to bind,
Or ever hope to match in equall fight,
Whose prowesse paragon saw never living wight.\(^7\)

“Ne soothlich\(^8\) is it easie for to read,
Where now on earth, or how he may be found;
For he ne wonneth\(^9\) in one certaine stead,\(^10\) dwells / place
But restlesse walketh all the world around,
Ay doing things, that to his fame redound,
Defending Ladies cause, and Orphans right,
Where so he heares, that any doth confound\(^11\) overthow
Them comfortlesse, through tyranny or might;
So is his soveraine honour raisde to heavens hight.”

His feeling words her feeble sence much pleased,
And softly sunck into her molten hart;
Hart that is inly hurt, is greatly eased allay
With hope of thing, that may allege\(^12\) his smart;
For pleasing words are like to Magick art,
That doth the charmed Snake in slomber lay:
Such secret ease felt gentle Britomart,
Yet list the same efforce with faind gainesay;
So dischord oft in Musick makes the sweeter lay.\(^13\) song

And said, “Sir knight, these idle termes forbeare,
And sith it is uneath\(^14\) to find his haunt,\(^15\) difficult / abode
Tell me some markes, by which he may appeare,
If chaunce I him encounter paravaunt;\(^16\) by chance
For perdie\(^17\) one shall other slay, or daunt:\(^18\) surely / subdue
What shape, what shield, what armes, what steed, what sted,\(^19\) mark
And what so else his person most may vaunt?\(^20\) display
All which the Redcrosse knight to point ared,\(^21\) exactly declared
And him in every part before her fashioned.

Yet him in every part before she knew,
How ever list her now her knowledge faine,\(^22\) disguise

---

7. I.e., no living person ever saw the equal of his prowess.
8. I.e., she chose to reinforce the pleasure by pretending to disagree with him.
Sith him whilome\textsuperscript{5} in Britaine she did vew,
To her revelèd in a mirrhour plaine,
Whereof did grow her first engrafted\textsuperscript{1} paine;
Whose root and stalke so bitter yet did tast,
That but the fruit more sweetnesse did containe,
Her wretched dayes in dolour she mote\textsuperscript{1} wast,
And yield the pray of love\textsuperscript{9} to lothsome death at last.

18

By strange occasion she did him behold,
And much more strangely gan to love his sight,
As it in bookes hath written bene of old.
In Deheubarth that now South-wales is hight,
What time king Ryence\textsuperscript{1} raigned, and deale\textsuperscript{d} right,
The great Magitian Merlin had deviz\textsuperscript{d},
By his deepe science,\textsuperscript{0} and hell-dreade\textsuperscript{d} might,
A looking glasse,\textsuperscript{2} right wondrously aguiz\textsuperscript{d},\textsuperscript{0}
Whose vertues through the wyde world soone were solemniz\textsuperscript{d}.\textsuperscript{0}

19

It vertue\textsuperscript{0} had, to shew in perfect sight,
What ever thing was in the world contaynd,
Betwixt the lowest earth and heavens hight,
So that it to the looker appertaynd;\textsuperscript{1}
What ever foe had wrought,\textsuperscript{0} or frend had faynd,\textsuperscript{0}
Therein discovered was, ne ought\textsuperscript{e} mote pas,
For thy\textsuperscript{1} it round and hollow shaped was,
Like to the world it selfe, and seem\textsuperscript{d} a world of glas.

20

Who wonders not, that reades\textsuperscript{0} so wonderous worke?
But who does wonder, that has red the Towre,
Wherein th’ Aegyptian Phao\textsuperscript{4} long did lurke
From all mens vew, that none might her discoure,\textsuperscript{0}
Yet she might all men vew out of her bowre?
Great Ptolomae\textsuperscript{3} it for his lemans\textsuperscript{o} sake
Ybuilded all of glasse, by Magicke powre,
And also it impregnable did make;
Yet when his love was false, he with a peaze\textsuperscript{o} it brake.

21

Such was the glassie globe that Merlin made,
And gave unto king Ryence for his gard,\textsuperscript{0}
That never foes his kingdom might invade,
But he it knew at home before he hard\textsuperscript{0}
Tydings thereof, and so them still debar\textsuperscript{d}.
It was a famous Present for a Prince,

9. I.e., yield (herself) the prey of love.
1. In Sir Thomas Malory’s medieval romance, \textit{Morte Darthur}, Reyence is a king of North Wales and enemy of Arthur.
2. A glass globe (like that of a fortune-teller).
3. I.e., provided that it pertained to the viewer.
4. Spenser’s source for this myth has not been found.
5. Ptolemy II, confused with the astronomer Ptolemy who built the lighthouse and library at Alexandria and who was considered in the Renaissance to be a magician and esoteric philosopher.
And worthy worke of infinite reward,
That treasons could bewray, and foes convince; reveal / vanquish
Happie this Realme, had it remainèd ever since.

22

One day it fortune’d, faire Britomart
Into her fathers closet to repayre; chamber / go
For nothing he from her reserv’d apart,
Being his onely daughter and his hayre; heir
Where when she had espyle that mirrhour fayre,
Her selfe a while therein she vewd in vaine; to no purpose
Tho’ her avizing of the vertues rare,
Which thereof spoken were, she gan againe
Her to bethinke of, that mote to her selfe pertaine.6

23

But as it falleth, in the gentlest harts
Imperious Love hath highest set his throne,
And tyrannizeth in the bitter smarts
Of them, that to him buxome are and prone. yielding / submissive
So thought this Mayd (as maydens use are accustomed
Whom fortune for her husband would allot,
Not that she lusted after any one;
For she was pure from blame of sinfull blot,
Yet wist her life at last must lincke in that same knot. knew

24

Eftsoones there was presented to her eye soon after
A comely knight, all arm’d in complete wize,
Through whose bright ventayle lifted up on hye terrify
His manly face, that did his foes agrize,9
And friends to termes of gentle truce entize,
Lookt foorth, as Phoebus face out of the east, the sun
Betwixt two shadie mountaines doth arize;
Portly his person was, and much increast dignified
Through his Heroicke grace, and honorable gest. bearing

25

His crest was covrerd with a couchant Hound,8
And all his armour seem’d of antique mould, heavy
But wondrous massie and assurèd sound, decorated
And round about yfretted all with gold, letters
In which there written was with cyphers old, Achilles armes, which Arthegall did win.9
And on his shield enveloped sevenfold
He bore a crownèd litle Ermilin,1
That deckt the azure field with her faire pouldred skin. spotted

6. I.e., she began to think of those things that might pertain to herself.
7. Lower moveable part of a helmet.
8. The emblem of a hound lying in crouched position, ready to spring.
9. It is traditional for heroes of romance to inherit the arms (and thereby the qualities) of Homeric and Virgilian heroes. Achilles was the greatest of the Greeks in martial prowess.
1. Achilles’ shield was made of seven layers of skins. Arthegall’s heraldic arms are a crowned ermine (associated with Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen) on a blue field.
The Damzell well did vew his personage,  
And likéd well, ne further fastned not,  
But went her way; ne her unguilty age  
Did weene, unwares, that her unlucky lot  
Lay hidden in the bottome of the pot;  
Of hurt unwist most daunger doth reound:  
But the false Archer, which that arrow shot  
So slyly, that she did not feele the wound,  
Did smyle full smoothely at her weetlesse wofull stound.

Thenceforth the feather in her loftie crest,  
Ruffèd of love, gan lowly to availe;  
And her proud portance, and her princely gest,  
With which she earst tryumphe’d, now did quaille;  
Sad, solemne, sowre, and full of fancies fraile  
She woxe, yet wist she neither how, nor why,  
Yet wist, she was not well at ease perdy,  
Yet thought it was not love, but some melancholy.

So soone as Night had with her pallid hew  
Defast the beautie of the shining sky,  
And reft from men the worlds desire’d vew,  
She with her Nourse adowne to sleepe did lye;  
Kept watch and ward about her warily,  
That nought she did but wayle, and often steepe  
Her daintie couch with teares, which closely she did weepe.

And if that any drop of slombring rest  
Did chaunce to still into her wearie spright,  
When feeble nature felt her selfe opprest,  
Of dreadfull things the same was put to flight,  
That oft out of her bed she did astart,  
As one with vew of ghastly feends affright:  
Tho gan she to renew her former smart,  
And thinke of that faire visage, written in her hart.

One night, when she was tost with such unrest,  
Her agèd Nurse, whose name was Glauce hight,  
Feeling her leape out of her loathèd nest,  
Betwixt her feeble armes her quickly keight.

2. I.e., gave no further thought to him.  
3. I.e., she did not suppose that her lot would remain hidden (until revealed by Merlin).  
4. I.e., Cupid wounded her (all unawares) with his arrow of love and smiled at what was to her inexplicable pain.  
5. I.e., the feather in her helmet’s crest, ruffled by love, began to droop.  
6. Her name associates her with the mother of the goddess Diana and, in its Greek etymology, with the owl, companion of Minerva.
And downe againe in her warme bed her dight;¹
"Ah my deare daughter, ah my dearest dread,"²
What uncouth³ fit," said she, "what evill plight
Hath thee opprest, and with sad drearyhead⁴
Chaungèd thy lively cheare,⁵ and living made thee dead?⁶

³¹ "For not of nought these suddeine ghastly feares
All night afflict thy naturall repose,
And all the day, when as thine equall peares⁷
Their fit⁸ disports with faire delight doe chose,
Thou in dull corners doest thy selfe inclose,
Ne tastest Princes pleasures, ne doest spred
Abroad thy fresh youthes fairest flowre, but lose
Both leafe and fruit, both too untimely shed,
As one in wilfull bale⁹ for ever burièd.

³² "The time, that mortall men their weary cares
Do lay away, and all wilde beastes do rest,
And every river eke⁰ his course forbeares,
Then doth this wicked evill thee infect,¹¹
And rive¹² with thousand throbs thy thrille`d¹³ brest;
Like an huge Aetn’⁷ of deepe engulfe`d griefe,
Sorrow is heape`d in thy hollow chest,
Whence forth it breakes in sighes and anguish rife,
As smoke and sulphure mingled with confusion strife.

³³ "Aye me, how much I feare, least¹⁴ love it bee;
But if that love it be, as sure I read¹⁵
de known signes and passions, which I see,
Be it worthy of thy race and royall sead,
Then I avow by this most sacred head
Of my deare foster child, to ease thy griefe,
And win thy will: Therefore away doe dread;
For death nor daunger from thy dew reliefe
Shall me debarre, tell me therefore my liefest liefe.”¹⁶
dearest love

³⁴ So having said, her twixt her arme`s twaine
She straightly straynd, and collèd tenderly,⁹
And every trembling joynet, and every vaine¹⁰
She softly felt, and rubbed busily,
To doe¹¹ the frozen cold away to fly;
And her faire deawy eies with kisses deare
She oft did bath, and oft againe did dry;
And ever her importund, not to feare
To let the secret of her hart to her appeare.

³⁵ The Damzell pauzd, and then thus fearfully;
"Ah Nurse, what needeth thee to eke¹² my paine?"
Is not enough, that I alone doe dye,
But it must doubled be with death of twaine?
For nought for me but death there doth remaine."
“O daughter deare,” said she, “despaire no whit;
For never sore, but might a salve obtaine:
That blinded God, which hath ye blindly smit,
Another arrow hath your lovers hart to hit.”¹

“But mine is not,” quoth she, “like others wound;
For which¹ no reason can find remedy.” i.e., my wound
“Was never such, but mote² the like be found,” may
Said she, “and though no reason may apply
Salve to your sore, yet love can higher sty,³ fly
Then reasons reach, and oft hath wonders donne.”
“But neither God of love, nor God of sky
Can doe,” said she, “that, which cannot be donne.”
“Things oft impossible,” quoth she, “seeme, ere begonne.”

“These idle words,” said she, “doe nought asswage
My stubborne smart, but more annoyance breed,
For no no usuall fire, no usuall rage
It is, O Nurse, which on my life doth feed,
And suckes the bloud, which from my hart doth bleed.
But since thy faithfull zeale lets me not hyde
My crime, (if crime it be) I will it reed.
Nor Prince, nor pere² it is, whose love hath gryde⁰ pierced
My feeble brest of late, and launchèd⁰ this wound wyde.

“Nor man it is, nor other living wight;
For then some hope I might unto me draw,
But th’ only shade and semblant of a knight,³
Whose shape or person yet I never saw,
Hath me subjected to loves cruell law:
The same one day, as me misfortune led,
I in my fathers wondrous mirrhour saw,
And please`d with that seeming goodly-hed,⁰ goodly appearance
Unwares the hidden hooke with baite I swallowèd.

“Sithens⁰ it hath infixed faster hold
Since then
Within my bleeding bowels,⁴ and so sore
Now ranckleth in this same fraile fleshy mould,⁹ body
That all mine entrailes flow with poysnous gore,
And th’ ulcer growtheth daily more and more;
Ne can my running sore find remedie,
Other then my hard fortune to deplore,
And languish as the leafe falne from the tree,
Till death make one end of my dayes and miserie.”

1. I.e., blind Cupid, who has blindly smitten you, has another arrow to smite your beloved’s heart with love.
2. Peer, nobleman.
3. I.e., but only the illusion and image of a knight.
4. Internal organs, seat of the tender passions.
“Daughter,” said she, “what need ye be dismayd,
Of much more uncouth thing I was affrayd;
Of filthy lust, contrarie unto kind;
But this affection nothing straunge I find;
For who with reason can you aye reprove,
To love the semblant pleasing most your mind,
And yield your heart, whence ye cannot remove?
No guilt in you, but in the tyranny of love.

Not so th’ Arabian Myrrhe did set her mind;
Nor so did Biblis spend her pining hart,
But loved their native flesh against all kind,
And to their purpose usèd wicked art:
Yet playd Pasiphaë a more monstrous part,
That loved a Bull, and learnt a beast to bee;
Such shamefull lusts who loaths not, which depart
From course of nature and of modestie?
Sweet love such lewdnes bands from his faire companie.

But thine my Deare (welfare thy heart my deare)
Though strange beginning had, yet fixèd is
On one, that worthy may perhaps appeare;
And certès seemes bestowèd not amis:
Joy thereof have thou and eternall blis.”
With that upleaning on her elbow weake,
Her alablaster brest she soft did kis,
Which all that while she felt to pant and quake,
As it an Earth-quake were; at last she thus bespake.

For though my love be not so lewdly bent,
As those ye blame, yet may it nought appease
My raging smart, ne ought my flame relent,
But rather doth my helpelesse griefe augment.
For they, how ever shamefull and unkind,
Yet did possesse their horrible intent:
Short end of sorrowes they thereby did find;
So was their fortune good, though wicked were their mind.

But wicked fortune mine, though mind be good,
Can have no end, nor hope of my desire,
But feed on shadowes, whiles I die for food,
And like a shadow wexe, whiles with entire
Affection, I doe languish and expire.

5. Myrrha tricked her father into committing incest with her; Biblis lusted after her brother.
6. Pasiphaë placed herself inside the statue of a cow to enjoy the love of a bull, to whom she bore the Minotaur.
7. I.e., may thy heart fare well (in this love adventure).
I fonder, then? Cephisus foolish child, than
Who having vewèd in a fountaine shere clear
His face, was with the love thereof beguild;¹
I fonder² love a shade, the bodie farre exild."³

“Nought like,” quoth she, “for that same wretched boy
Was of himselfe the idle Paramoure;
Both love and lover, without hope of joy,
For which he faded to a wartry flowre.
But better fortune thine, and better howre,⁴
Which lov’st the shadow of a warlike knight;
No shadow, but a bodie hath in powre:⁵
That bodie, wheresoever that it light,⁶
May learnèd be by cyphers,⁷ or by Magicke might.

“But if thou may with reason yet represse
The growing evill, ere it strength have got,
And thee abandond wholly doe possesse,
Till thou in open field adowne be smot.¹
But if the passion mayster thy fraile might,
So that needs love or death must be thy lot,
Then I avow to thee, by wrong or right
To compass thy desire, and find that lovèd knight.”

Her chearefull words much cheard the feeble spright⁸
Of the sicke virgin, that her downe she layd
In her warme bed to sleepe, if that she might;
And the old-woman carefully displayd
The clothes about her round with busie ayd;
So that at last a little creeping sleepe
Surprisd her sense: She therewith well apayd,⁹
The drunken lampe downe in the oyle did steepe,²
And set her by to watch, and set her by to weepe.

Earely the morrow next, before that day
His joyous face did to the world reveale,
They both uprose and tooke their readie³ way
Unto the Church, their prayers to appeale,⁴
With great devotion, and with litle zeale:
For the faire Damzell from the holy herse⁵
Her love-sicke hart to other thoughts did steale;
And that old Dame said many an idle verse,⁶ i.e., charm, incantation
Out of her daughters hart fond fantasies to reverse.⁷

8. Narcissus, who drowned in a pool trying to kiss his own reflection; he was then transformed into the flower that bears his name.
9. I.e., this is not really a shadow, but has a body producing it.
1. I.e., till you be struck down in battle.
2. I.e., drowned the lamplight in its own oil.
49
Returnèd home, the royall Infant\(^o\) fell
Into her former fit; for why,\(^o\) no powre
Nor guidance of her selfe in her did dwell.
But th’ agèd Nurse her calling to her bowre,
Had gathered Rew, and Savine, and the flowre
Of Camphora, and Calamint, and Dill,\(^3\)
All which she in a earthen Pot did poure,
And to the brim with Colt wood\(^o\) did it fill,
And many drops of milke and bloud through it did spill.

50
Then taking thrise three haires from off her head,
Them trebly breaded\(^o\) in a threefold lace,
And round about the pots mouth, bound the thread,
And after having whisperèd a space
Certaine sad\(^o\) words, with hollow voice and bace,\(^o\)
She to the virgin said, thrise said she it;
“Come daughter come, come; spit upon my face,
Spit thrise upon me, thrise upon me spit;
Th’ uneven number for this businesse is most fit.”

51
That sayd, her round about she from her turnd,
She turnèd her contrarie to the Sunne,
Thrise she her turnd contrary, and returnd,
All contrary, for she the right did shunne,
And ever what she did, was streight undone.
So thought she to undoe her daughters love:
But love, that is in gentle brest begonne,
That well can witnesse, who by triall\(^o\) it does prove.

52
Ne ought it mote the noble Mayd avayle,\(^4\)
Ne slake the furie of her cruell flame,
But that she still did waste, and still did wayle,
That through long languour,\(^o\) and hart-burning brame\(^o\)
She shortly like a pynèd ghost became,
Which long hath waited by the Stygian strond.\(^5\)
That when old Glauce saw, for feare least blame
Of her miscarriage\(^o\) should in her be fond,
She wist not how t’ amend, nor how it to withstand.
From Canto 3

[THE VISIT TO MERLIN]

Merlin bewrayes* to Britomart,
the state of Artegall.
And shewes the famous* Progeny
which from them springen shall.

1
Most sacred fire, that burnest mightily
In living brests, ykindled first above,
Emongst th’ eternall spheres and lamping* sky,
And thence pourd into men, which men call Love;

5
Not that same, which doth base affections* move
In brutish minds, and filthy lust inflame,
But that sweet fit, that doth true beautie love,
And choseth vertue for his dearest Dame,*

Whence spring all noble deeds and never dying fame:

2
Well did Antiquitie a God thee deeme,
That over mortall minds hast so great might,
To order them, as best to thee doth seeme,
And all their actions to direct aright;
The fatall* purpose of divine foresight,

15
Thou doest effect in destinèd descents,*
Through deepe impression of thy secret might,
And stirrèdst up th’ Heroes high intents,
Which the late world admyres for wondrous moniments.*

3
But thy dread darts in none doe triumph more,
Ne braver proofe in any, of thy powre
Shewedst thou, then in this royall Maid of yore,
Making her seeke an unknowne Paramoure,*

20
From the worlds end, through many a bitter stowre:*
From whose two loynes thou afterwards did rayse
Most famous fruits of matrimoniall bowre,
Which through the earth have spred their living prayse,
That fame in trompe of gold* eternally displayes.

4
Begin then, O my dearest sacred Dame,
Daughter of Phoebus and of Memorie,
That doest ennoble with immortall name
The warlike Worthies, from antiquitie,

25
In thy great volume of Eternitie:
Begin, O Clio,* and recount from hence

6. Spenser invokes the Neoplatonic doctrines that love is the desire for beauty, and that virtue is true beauty.
7. I.e., the golden trumpet, emblem of good fame.
8. Clio, muse of history, is invoked (instead of Calliope, muse of epic poetry) because this book incorporates a chronicle history of Britain.
My glorious Soverainees goodly auncestrie,
Till that by dew degrees and long protense,\(^\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\)
Thou hast it lastly\(^\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\) brought unto her Excellence.\(^\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\)

5
Full many wayes within her troubled mind,
Old Glauce cast,\(^\text{\textsuperscript{4}}\) to cure this Ladies griefe:
Full many waies she sought, but none could find,
Nor herbes, nor charmes, nor counsell that is chiefe
And choiset med’cine for sicke harts reliefe:
For thy\(^\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\) great care she tooke, and greater feare,
Least that it should her turne to foule reproofe,\(^\text{\textsuperscript{6}}\)
And sore reproch, when so her father deare

45
Should of his dearest daughters hard misfortune heare.

6
At last she her avisd,\(^\text{\textsuperscript{7}}\) that he, which made
That mirrhour, wherein the sicke Damosell
So straungely vewe`d her straunge lovers shade,
To weet, the learne`d Merlin, well could tell,
Under what coast\(^\text{\textsuperscript{8}}\) of heaven the man did dwell,
And by what meanes his love might best be wrought:\(^\text{\textsuperscript{9}}\)
For though beyond the Africk Ismaell,\(^\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\)
Or th’ Indian Peru he were, she thought
Him forth through infinite endeavours to have sought.

7
Forthwith themselves disguising both in straunge
And base attyre, that none might them bewray,\(^\text{\textsuperscript{8}}\)
To Maridunum, that is now by chaunge
Of name Cayr-Merdin\(^\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\) cald, they tooke their way:
There the wise Merlin whylome wont (they say)
To make his wonne,\(^\text{\textsuperscript{3}}\) low underneath the ground,
In a deepe delve,\(^\text{\textsuperscript{9}}\) farre from the vew of day,
That of no living wight he mote\(^\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\) be found,
When so he counseld with his sprights encompast round.\(^\text{\textsuperscript{4}}\)

8
And if thou ever happen that same way
To travell, goe to see that dreadfull place:
It is an hideous hollow cave (they say)
Under a rocke that lyes a litle space
From the swift Barry, tombling downe apace,
Emongst the woodie hilles of Dynevowre:\(^\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\)
But dare thou not, I charge, in any cace,
To enter into that same balefull Bowre,
For feare the cruell Feends should thee unwares devour.

9. I.e., Queen Elizabeth.
1. Africa was supposedly inhabited by the descendants of the biblical Ishmael.
2. Carmethen, in Wales.
3. I.e., Merlin was formerly accustomed ("why-lome wont") to make his dwelling place ("wonne") there.
4. I.e., when he conjured with his spirits gathered around him.
5. Dynevor Castle, seat of the princes of South Wales. "Barry": the river Cadoxton in Wales.
But standing high aloft, low lay thine eare,
   And there such ghastly noise of yron chaines,
And brasen Caudrons thou shalt rombling heare,
   Which thousand sprights with long enduring paines
Doe tosse,\(^6\) that it will stonne\(^o\) thy feeble brains,\(\,\)  
   And oftentimes great grones, and grievous stounds,\(\,\)  
When too huge toile and labour them constraines:\(\,\)  
And oftentimes loud strokes, and ringing sounds
From under that deepe Rocke most horribly rebounds.

The cause some say is this: A little while
   Before that Merlin dyde, he did intend,
A brasen wall in compas to compile
   About Cairmardin,\(^6\) and did it commend
Unto these Sprights, to bring to perfect end.
During which worke the Ladie of the Lake,
   Whom long he loved, for him in hast did send,
Who thereby forst his workemen to forsake,
   Them bound till his returne, their labour not to slake.\(^o\)

In the meane time through that false Ladies traine,\(^o\)
   He was surprisd, and buried under beare,\(^o\)
Ne ever to his worke returnd againe:  
   Nath'lesse those feends may not their worke forbeare,
So greatly his commandement they feare,  
   But there doe toyle and travell\(^o\) day and night,
Untill that brasen wall they up doe reare:
For Merlin had in Magicke more insight,  
Then ever him before or after living wight.\(^7\)

For he by words could call out of the sky
   Both Sunne and Moone, and make them him obay:
The land to sea, and sea to maineland dry,
   And darkesome night he eke\(^o\) could turne to day:
Huge hostes of men he could alone dismay,\(^o\)
   And hostes of men of\(^o\) meanest things could frame,\(^o\)
When so him list\(^o\) his enimies to fray:\(\,\)
That to this day for terror of his fame,
The feends do quake, when any him to them does name.

And sooth, men say that he was not the sonne
   Of mortall Syre, or other living wight,
But wondrously begotten, and begonne
By false illusion of a guilefull Spright,
   On a faire Ladie Nonne, that whilome hight\(^o\)
Matilda, daughter to Pubidius,
\(^6\) I.e., Merlin intended to build ("compile") a wall of brass to encompass ("in compas") Cairmardin.  
\(^7\) I.e., Merlin had more understanding of magic than any person before or after him.
Who was the Lord of Mathravall by right,
And coosen\(^8\) unto king Ambrosius: \(^8\) kinsman
Whence he indued\(^9\) was with skill so marvellous. \(^9\) endowed

They here ariving, staid a while without,
Ne durst adventure rashly in to wend,\(^6\) go
But of their first intent gan make new dout\(^6\) scruple
For dread of daunger, which it might portend:
Untill the hardie\(^7\) Mayd (with love to frend)\(^9\) bold
First entering, the dreadful Mage\(^8\) there found awesome magician
And writing strange characters in the ground,
With which the stubborn feends he to his service bound.

He thought was mov\(\text{\'}d\)\(^9\) at their entrance bold: surprised
For of their coming well he wist\(^8\) afore, knew
Yet list them bid their businesse to unfold,
As if ought in this world in secret store
Were from him hidden, or unknowne of yore.
Then Glauce thus, “Let not it thee offend,
That we thus rashly through thy darkesome dore,
Unwares have prest: for either fatall end,\(^6\) fated purpose
Or other mightie cause us two did hither send.”

He had tell on; And then she thus began.
“Now have three Moones with borrowed brothers light,
Thrice shined faire, and thrice seemed dim and wan,\(^1\) since
Sith\(^6\) a sore evill, which this virgin bright
Tormenteth, and doth plonge in dolefull plight,
First rooting tooke; but what thing it mote\(^9\) bee,
Or whence it sprong, I cannot read aright:
But this I read,\(^9\) that but if\(^6\) remedee know / unless
Thou her afford, full shortly I her dead shall see.”

Therewith th’ Enchaunter softly gan to smyle
At her smooth speeches, weeting\(^6\) inly well,
That she to him dissembled womanish guyle,\(^2\) good mother
And to her said, “Beldame,\(^6\) by that ye tell,
More need of leach-craft\(^6\) hath your Damozell,
Then of my skill: who helpe may have elsewhere,
In vaine seekes wonders out of Magicke spell.”
Th’ old woman wox half blanck,\(^9\) bewilderer
And yet was loth to let her purpose plain appeare.

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8. Spenser here elaborates on the account in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain* (12th century). Mathravall was one of the three divisions of Wales; Ambrosius was king just before his brother, Uther Pendragon (father of King Arthur).
9. I.e., with her love acting as a friend, encouraging her.
1. The moon, borrowing its light from the sun (Apollo, god of the sun, is brother of Diana, goddess of the moon), has gone through three cycles of waxing and waning.
2. He knows that Glauce does understand what ails Britomart.
And to him said, “If any leaches skill,
Or other learned means could have redrest,°
This my dear daughters deep engraffed ill,
Certes I should be loth thee to molest:
But this sad evil, which doth her infect,°
Doth course of natural cause far exceed,
And housed is within her hollow breast,
That either seems some cursed witches deed,
Or evil spright, that in her doth such torment breed.”

The wisard could no longer bear her bord,° idle talk
But bursting forth in laughter, to her said;
“Glaucé, what needs this colourable° word,
To cloke the cause, that hath it selfe bewrayed?°
Ne ye faire Britomartis, thus arayd,
More hidden are, then Sunne in cloudy vele;
Whom thy good fortune, having fate obeyd,
Hath hither brought, for succour to appeale:
The which the powres to thee are pleased to Reveale.”

The doubtfull° Maid, seeing herselfe descryde,° apprehensive / discovered
Was all abash’d, and her pure yvoy Into a cleare Carnation suddeine dyde;
As faire Aurora rising hastily,
Doth by her blushing tell, that she did ly
All night in old Tithonus frozen bed,°
Whereof she seems ashamed inwardly.
But her old Nourse was nought disheartened,
But vauntage° made of that, which Merlin had ared.° opportunity / disclosed
And said, “Sith then thou knowest all our grieue,
(For what doest not thou know?) of grace° I pray,
Pitty our plaint, and yield us meet° reliefe.”
With that the Prophet still awhile did stay,
And then his spirit thus gan forth display;° declare
“Most noble Virgin, that by fatall lore° the teaching of fate
Hast learned to love, let no whit thee dismay
The hard begin,° that meets thee in the dore,
And with sharpe fits° thy tender hart oppresseth sore.

“For so must all things excellent begin,
And eke° enrooted deep must be that Tree,
Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin,° cease
Till they to heavens hight forth stretched bee.
From for thy wombe a famous Progenie
Shall spring, out of the auncient Trojan blood,

3. Aurora, goddess of dawn, won for her mortal husband, Tithonus, the boon of immortality, but because he grows ever older she rises “hastily” from his “frozen bed.”
Which shall revive the sleeping memorie
Of those same antique Peres, the heavens brood,
Which Greeke and Asian rivers stained with their blood.4

23

“Renownèd kings, and sacred Emperours,
Thy fruitfull Ofspring, shall from thee descend,
Brave Captaines, and most mighty warriours,
That shall their conquests through all lands extend,
And their decayèd kingdomes shall amend:5
The feeble Britons, broken with long warre,
They shall upreare,6 and mightily defend
Against their forrein foe, that comes from farre,
Till universall peace compound7 all civill iarre.5

24

“It was not, Britomart, thy wandring eye,
Glauncing unwares8 in charmed looking glas,
But the streight9 course of heavenly destiny,
Led with eternall providence, that has
Guided thy glaunce, to bring his will to pas:
Ne9 is thy fate, ne is thy fortune ill,
To love the prowest9 knight, that ever was.
Therefore submit thy wayes unto his will,
And do by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill.”

25

“But read,”10 said Glauce, “thou Magitian
What meanes shall she out seeke, or what wayes take?
How shall she know, how shall she find the man?
Or what needs her to toyle, sith fates can make
Way for themselves, their purpose to partake?”10
Then Merlin thus; “Indeed the fates are firme,
And may not shrinck, though all the world do shake:
Yet ought mens good endeavours them confirme,
And guide the heavenly causes to their constant terme.0

26

“The man whom heavens have ordaynd to bee
The spouse of Britomart, is Arthegall:
He wonneth9 in the land of Fayeree,
Yet is no Fary borne, ne sib9 at all
To Elfes, but sprong of seed terrestrial,
And whilome9 by false Faries stolne away,
Whiles yet in infant cradle he did crall;
Ne other to himselfe is knowne this day,
But that he by an Elfe was gotten of a Fay.”6

4. The chroniclers usually traced the origins of the British people to Brute, great-grandson of Aeneas; the Britons are thereby descendants of the Trojan heroes (“those same antique Peres”), who were descended from the gods.
5. A brief forecasting of the long history of Britomart’s descendants, concluding with the universal peace of Elizabeth’s reign.
6. He is a Briton knight kidnapped in his cradle by fairies, and so he thinks himself a fairy knight. “Elf” and “Fay” refer to male and female inhabitants of Faerie Land, without connotations of the supernatural or the diminutive.
Summary  In the remainder of the canto, Merlin recounts a chronicle history of Britain, deriving the British kings from the union of Britomart and Arthegall (half-brother to Arthur). He narrates the struggles of Britons and Saxons, the succession of Saxon and then Norman kings, and the return of Briton rule with the Tudor monarchs; he concludes with a prophecy of Elizabeth's glorious reign. Inspired to fulfill the prophecy, Britomart takes on the role and arms of a knight, with her nurse, Glaucce, as her squire.

Canto 4 Summary  This canto treats the story of Marinell, a figure of the sea and its riches, and Florimell, whose name suggests the rich products of the land, flowers and honey. Florimell also represents Beauty itself, which attracts all men and makes female chastity vulnerable to all. Florimell loves Marinell, but he, warned that a woman will do him deadly harm, has repudiated all women. However, the prophecy is fulfilled when he accosts Britomart (not knowing she is a woman) and she wounds him almost to the death—suggesting the opposition between Britomart's chaste love and the fear-inspired renunciations of Marinell. Seeing Florimell in flight from a lecherous forester, Arthur pursues them, but is forced to abandon his quest at nightfall.

From Canto 5

Summary  In stanzas 1 to 26, Arthur learns from Florimell's dwarf about her love of Marinell, Marinell's repudiation of her and its cause, and Florimell's flight from the court at the report of Marinell's supposed death. Meanwhile, Arthur's squire, Timias, fights and kills the forester and his two brothers, but the desperate fight leaves him near death himself.

[BELPHOEBE AND TIMIAS]

27 Providence heavenly passeth⁰ living thought, surpasses
    And doth for wretche`d mens reliefe make way;
230    For loe great grace or fortune thither brought help
    Comfort⁰ to him, that comfortlesse now lay.
    In those same woods, ye well remember may, dwell
    How that a noble hunteresse did wonne,⁰ frighten
    She, that base Braggadochio did affray,⁰
    And made him fast out of the forrest runn.;⁰
235    Belphoebe was her name, as faire as Phoebus sunne.⁰

28 She on a day, as she pursewd the chace track
    Of some wild beast, which with her arrowes keene
    She wounded had, the same along did trace
    By tract⁰ of bloud, which she had freshly seene,
    To have besprinckled all the grassy greene;

7. In 2.3, the braggart but cowardly knight fitly named Braggadochio sought to force his love on Belphoebe and was put to ignominious flight.  8. Her name relates her to Phoebe (Diana), goddess of the moon, of the hunt, and of chastity, but also to the sun god Phoebus for her bright beauty.
By the great persue, which she there perceived, track of blood
Well hopèd she the beast engored had beene,
And made more hast, the life to have bereaved: 9

But ah, her expectation greatly was deceived.

Shortly she came, whereas that woefull Squire disfigured
With bloud deformed, lay in deadly swownd:
In whose faire eyes, like lamps of quenchèd fire, fluid
The Christall humour stood congealèd round;
His locks, like faded leaves fallen to ground,
Knotted with bloud, in bounces rudely ran,
And his sweete lips, on which before that stownd violent attack
The bud of youth to blossom faire began,
Spoild of their rosie red, were woxen pale and wan.

Saw never living eye more heavy sight,
That could have made a rocke of stone to rew, pity
Or rive in twaine: which when that Lady bright
Besides all hope with melting eyes did vew,
All suddeinly abasht she chaungeèd hew,
And with sterne horrour backward gan to start:
But when she better him beheld, she grew
Full of soft passion and unwonted smart:

The point of pitty percèd through her tender hart. 2

Meekely she bowèd downe, to weete if life
Yet in his frozen members did remaine,
And feeling by his pulses beating rife, strongly
That the weake soule her seat did yet retaine,
She cast to comfort him with busie paine:
His double folded necke she reard upright,
And rubd his temples, and each trembling vaine;
His mayled haberjeon she did undight, coat of mail / undo
And from his head his heavy burganet did light. 3

Into the woods thenceforth in hast she went,
To seeke for hearbes, that mote him remedy;
For she of hearbes had great intendment, understanding
Taught of the Nymphè, which from her infancy
Her nourceèd had in trew Nobility:
There, whether it divine Tobacco were,
Or Panachaea, or Polygony, 3
She found, and brought it to her patient deare
Who al this while lay bleeding out his hart-bloud neare.

9. She hoped the beast had been wounded and hastened to finish the kill.
1. Arthur’s squire, Timias, sorely wounded from his battle with the forester pursuing Florimell and the forester’s two brothers.
2. An echo of Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale (line 1761): “For pitee renneth soone in gentil herte.”
3. All these herbs were thought to have curative properties. This is the first reference in English literature to tobacco, introduced to England in 1584.
33

The soveraigne weede betwixt two marbles plaine
She pounded small, and did in peeces bruze,
And then atweene her lilly handes twaine,
Into his wound the juycz thereof did scruze,
And round about, as she could well it uze,
The flesh therewith she supplde and did steepe,
T’ abate all spasme, and soke the swelling bruze,
And after having searcht the intuase deepe,
She with her scarfe did bind the wound from cold to keepe.

34

By this he had sweete life recured againe,
And groning inly deepe, at last his eyes,
His watty eyes, drizling like deawy raine,
He up gan lift toward the azure skies,
From whence descend all hopelesse remedies:
Therewith he sighed, and turning him aside,
The goodly Mayd full of divinities,
And gifts of heavenly grace he by him spide,
Her bow and gilden quiver lying him beside.

35

“Mercy deare Lord,” said he, “what grace is this,
That thou hast shewed to me sinfull wight,
To send thine Angell from her bowre of blis,
To comfort me in my distresse’d plight?
Angell, or Goddesse do I call thee right?
What service may I do unto thee meete,
That hast from darkenesse me returnd to light,
And with thy heavenly salves and med’cines sweete,
Hast drest my sinfull wounds? I kisse thy blessèd feete.”

36

Thereat she blushing said, “Ah gentle Squire,
Nor Goddesse I, nor Angell, but the Mayd,
And daughter of a woody Nymphe desire
No service, but thy safety and ayd;
Which if thou gaine, I shalbe well apayd.
We mortall wights, whose lives and fortunes bee
To commun accidents still open layd,
Are bound with commun bond of frailtee,
To succour wretched wights, whom we captived see.”

37

By this her Damzels, which the former chace
Had undertaken after her, arriv’d,
As did Belphoebe, in the bloudy place,
And thereby deemd the beast had bene depriv’d
Of life, whom late their Ladies arrow ryv’d.
For thy° the bloody tract° they followd fast,
And every one to runne the swiftest stryv'd;
But two of them the rest far overpast,
And where their Lady was, arriv'd at the last.

Where when they saw that goodly boy, with blood
Defowlèd, and their Lady dresse his wound,
They wondred much, and shortly understood,
How him in deadly case their Lady found,
And reskewed out of the heavy stownd.°

Eftsoones° his warlike courser, which was strayd
Farre in the woods, whiles that he lay in swownd,°
She made those Damzels search, which being stayd,
They did him set thereon, and forth with them convayd.

Into that forest farre they thence him led,
Where was their dwelling, in a pleasant glade,
With mountaines round about environed,
And mighty woods, which did the valley shade,
And like a stately Theatre° it made,
Spreading it selfe into a spatious plaine.
And in the midst a little river plaide°
Emongst the pumy° stones, which seemd to plaine°
With gentle murmure, that his course they did restraine.

Beside the same a dainty place there lay,
Planted with mirtle trees° and laurels greene,
In which the birds song many a lovely lay
Of gods high prayse, and of their loves sweet teene,°
As it an earthly Paradize had beene:
In whose enclose`d shadow there was pight°
A faire Pavilion, scarcely to be seene,
The which was all within most richly dight,
That greatest Princes living it mote° well delight.

Thither they brought that wounded Squire, and layd
In easie couch his feeble limbes to rest.
He rested him a while, and then the Mayd
His ready° wound with better salves new drest;
Dayly she dresse`d him, and did the best
His grievous hurt to garish,° that she might,
That shortly she his dolour° hath redrest,°
And his foule sore reducèd to faire plight;°
It she reducèd, but himselfe destroyed quight.

O foolish Physick, and unfruitfull paine,°
That heales up one and makes another wound:

7. i.e., an amphitheater formed by elements of nature.
8. Myrtles are sacred to Venus.
She his hurt thigh to him recured againe,
But hurt his hart, the which before was sound,
Through an unwary\(^{\text{unexpected}}\) dart, which did rebound
From her faire eyes and gracious countenaunce.
What bootes it him from death to be unbound,
To be captivèd in endlesse duraunce\(^{\text{prison}}\)
Of sorrow and despaire without aleggeaunce\(^{\text{relief}}\).

Still as his wound did gather,\(^{9}\) and grow hole,
So still his hart woxe\(^{\text{grew}}\) sore, and health decayd:
Madnesse to save a part, and lose the whole.
Still whenas he beheld the heavenly Mayd,
While dayly plaisters to his wound she layd,
So still his Malady the more increast,
The whiles her matchlesse beautie him dismayd.\(^{\text{conquered}}\)
Ah God, what other could he do at least,
But love so faire a Lady, that his life releast?\(^{\text{saved}}\).

Long while he strove in his courageous brest,
With reason dew\(^{\text{proper}}\) the passion to subdew,
And love for to dislodge out of his nest:
Still when her excellencies he did vew,
Her soveraigne bounty, and celestiaall hew,
The same to love he strongly was constraind:
But when his meane estate\(^{\text{humble condition}}\) he did revew,
He from such hardy boldnesse was restraind,
And of his lucklesse lot and cruel love thus plaind.

"Unthankfull wretch," said he, "is this the meed,\(^{\text{recompense}}\)
With which her soveraigne mercy thou dost quight?\(^{\text{requite}}\)
Thy life she save\(^{\text{think / wickedness}}\) by her gracious deed,
But thou dost wee\(^{\text{think / wickedness}}\) with villeinous despiught,
To blot her honour, and her heavenly light.
Dye rather, dye, then so disloyally
Deeme of her high desert, or seeme so light:
Faire death it is to shonne more shame, to dye!'
Dye rather, dye, then ever love disloyally.

"But if to love disloyalty it bee,
Shall I then hate her, that from deathès dore
Me brought? ah farre be such reproch fro mee.
What can I lesse do, then her love therefore,
Sith I her dew reward cannot restore:
Dye rather, dye, and dying do her serve,
Dying her serve, and living her adore;
Thy life she gave, thy life she doth deserve:
Dye rather, dye, then ever from her service swerve.

9. I.e., permitting the infection to be drawn out.
1. I.e., it is a worthy death to die to avoid more shame.
47
“But foolish boy, what bootes thy service bace
To her, to whom the heavens do serve and sew?
Thou a meane Squire, of meke and lowly place,
She heavenly borne, and of celestiall hew.
How then? of all love taketh equall vew:
And doth not highest God vouchsafe to take
The love and service of the basest crew?
If she will not, dye meekly for her sake;
Dye rather, dye, then ever so faire love forsake.”

48
Thus warred he long time against his will,
Till that through weaknesse he was forst at last,
To yield himselfe unto the mighty ill:
Which as a victour proud, gan ransack fast
His inward parts, and all his entrayles wast,
That neither bloud in face, nor life in hart
It left, but both did quite drye up, and blast;
As percing levin, which the inner part
Of every thing consumes, and calcineth by art.2

49
Which seeing faire Belphoebe, gan to feare,
Least that his wound were inly well not healed,
Or that the wicked steele empoyyned were:
Little she weend, that love he close concealed;
Yet still he wasted, as the snow congealed,
When the bright sunne his beams thereon doth beat;
Yet never he his hart to her revealed,
But rather chose to dye for sorrow great,
Then with dishonorable termes her to entreat.

50
She gracious Lady, yet no paines did spare,
To do him ease, or do him remedy:
Many Restoratives of vertues rare,
And costly Cordialles she did apply,
To mitigate his stubborne mallady:
But that sweet Cordiall, which can restore
A love-sick hart, she did to him envy;
To him, and to all th’ unworthy world forlore
She did envy that soveraigne salve, in secret store.

51
That dainty Rose, the daughter of her Morne,
More deare then life she tendered, whose flowre
The girland of her honour did adorne:
Ne suffred she the Middayes scorching powre,
Ne the sharp Northerne wind thereon to showre,
But lapped up her silken leaves most chaire,

2. I.e., piercing lightning (“levin”) disintegrates the body’s inward parts, and by its action (“art”) reduces everything to dust (“calcineth”).
3. The rose is a long-enduring symbol of female virginity.
450 When so the froward skye began to lowre:⁴
But soone as calmèd was the Christall aire,
She did it faire dispred, and let to flourish faire.

52
Eternall God in his almighty powre,
To make ensample of his heavenly grace,
In Paradize whilome did plant this flowre;
Whence he it fetcht out of her native place,
And did in stocke of earthly flesh enrace,
That mortall men her glory should admire:
In gentle Ladies brest, and bounteous race
Of woman kind it fairest flowre doth spire,
And beareth fruit of honour and all chast desire.

53
Faire ympes of beautie, whose bright shining beames
Adorne the world with like to heavenly light,
And to your willes both royalties and Realmes
Subdew, through conquest of your wondrous might,
With this faire flowre your goodly gironds dight,
Of chastity and vertue virginall,
That shall embellish more your beautie bright,
And crowne your heads with heavenly coronall,
Such as the Angels weare before Gods tribunall.

54
To youre faire selves a faire ensample frame,
Of this faire virgin, this Belphoebe faire,
To whom in perfect love, and spotlesse fame
Of chastitie, none living may compaire:
Ne poysnous Envy justly can empaire
The prayse of her fresh flowring Maidenhead;
For thy she standeth on the highest staire
Of th’ honorable stage of womanhead,
That Ladies all may follow her ensample dead.⁵

55
In so great prayse of stedfast chastity,
Nathlesse she was so curteous and kind,
Tempred with grace, and goodly modesty,
That seemèd those two vertues strove to find
The higher place in her Heroick mind:
So striving each did other more augment,
And both encreast the prayse of woman kind,
And both encreast her beautie excellent;
So all did make in her a perfect complement.⁶

Cantos 7 and 8 Summary These cantos treat the adventures of the true and false Florimells. Always in flight, Florimell narrowly escapes a series of disasters.

⁴ I.e., she folded up (“lapped”) the rose’s leaves most carefully (“chaire”), when the angry sky began to threaten.
The son of a witch in whose cottage she takes refuge is smitten with passion for her; when she escapes in the night the witch sends a hyena “that feeds on womens flesh” to capture or kill her. To escape him she leaps into the boat of an aged fisherman who promptly tries to rape her; she is saved by the god Proteus, who carries her off to his bower in the sea and presses his suit to her continually, in every shape and guise. Meantime, to save her pining son from death, the witch creates for him a false Florimell made of snow, but he loses her quickly to the braggart knight Braggadochio, who himself loses her to a stranger knight. Meanwhile, Sir Satyrane (1.6) tames the hyena and rescues the Squire of Dames (a knight whose name reflects his promiscuity) from the giantess Argante, a figure of unnatural lust in female form. These two knights meet up with a third, Paridell, and all seek shelter from a sudden thunderstorm in Malbecco’s castle.

Cantos 9 and 10 Summary These cantos tell the story of Paridell, Hellenore, and Malbecco. Malbecco, miser and aged husband of a young wife, Hellenore, at first refuses entrance to the three knights and to Britomart, who also seeks shelter from the storm. But at length he gives way before their show of force. At dinner Paridell woos Hellenore with all manner of courtly address. He also tells the story of Troy, identifying himself as the descendant of Paris; at Britomart’s behest he carries the tale forward to the founding of Troynovant (Britain) by Aeneas’s descendant, Brute. Soon after, Paridell enacts a version of Paris’s rape of Helen from Menelaus: he entices Hellenore to flee with him, setting fire to the castle. The miser saves his money first and then goes after his wife (whom Paridell quickly abandons); he finds her serving as sexual partner to a band of satyrs, but she flatly refuses to leave them to return to him. He is also tricked out of his money by Braggadochio. Desperate, he wastes away and is transformed into the very allegorical essence of jealousy: “he has quight/Forgot he was a man, and Gealosie is hight.”

Two Cantos of Mutabilitie:

WHICH, BOTH FOR FORME AND MATTER, APPEAR
TO BE PARCELL OF SOME FOLLOWING BOOKE OF THE
FAERIE QUEENE

(U:-)

Under the Legend
of
Constancie.¹

Canto VI

Proud Change (not pleasd, in mortall things,
beneath the Moone, to raigne)

Pretends, as well of Gods, as Men attempts
to be the Soveraine.

¹. Two cantos and two stanzas of another, called “the Mutabilitie Cantos,” were first published in 1609, ten years after Spenser’s death. According to the title pages, they “appeare to be parcell of some following booke of The Faerie Queene, under the legend of Constancie.” If so, they are a longer digression from the story than any now in the poem. These cantos give Spenser’s reflections, influenced perhaps by Lucretius, on change and permanence in the world—a subject that fascinated the Elizabethan imagination.
What man that sees the ever-whirling wheele
Of Change, the which all mortall things doth sway,\(^\circ\)
But that therby doth find, and plainly feele,
How Mutability in them doth play
Her cruell sports, to many mens decay?\(^\circ\)
Which that to all may better yet appeare,
I will rehearse that whylome\(^\circ\) I heard say,
How she at first her selfe began to reare,
Gainst all the Gods, and th'empire sought from them to beare.\(^\circ\)

But first, here falleth fittest to unfold
Her antique race and linage ancient,
As I have found it registred of old,
In Faery Land mongst records permanent:
She was, to weet, a daughter by descent
Of those old Titans,\(^2\) that did whylome strive
With Saturnes sonne for heavens regiment.\(^\circ\)
Whom, though high Jove of kingdome did deprive,
Yet many of their stemme\(^\circ\) long after did survive.

And many of them, afterwards obtained
Great power of Jove, and high authority;
As Hecate,\(^3\) in whose almighty hand,
He plac't all rule and principality,
To be by her disposéd diversly,
To Gods, and men, as she them list\(^\circ\) divide:
And dread\(^\circ\) Bellona,\(^4\) that doth sound on hie
Warres and allarums unto Nations wide,
That makes both heaven and earth to tremble at her pride.

So likewise did this Titanesse aspire,
Rule and dominion to her selfe to gaine;
That as a Goddesse, men might her admire.\(^\circ\)
And heavenly honours yield, as to them twaine.
And first, on earth she sought it to obtaine;
Where she such proofe and sad\(^\circ\) examples shewed
Of her great power, to many ones great paine,
That not men onely (whom she soone subdewed)
But eke all other creatures, her bad dooings rewed.

For, she the face of earthly things so changed,
That all which Nature had establish first
In good estate, and in meet\(^\circ\) order ranged,
survived. Spenser invents another, a Titaness called Mutability.
2. The Titans were the sons and daughters of sky and earth; their king was Cronus (time). Jove, Cronus’s son, dethroned him and established the rule of the gods. But some descendants of the original Titans, such as Prometheus, Hecate, and others,
3. A triple goddess, in heaven known as Luna, on earth Diana, in hell Hecate.
4. Patroness of war and conflict.
She did pervert, and all their statutes burst:
And all the worlds faire frame (which none yet durst
Of Gods or men to alter or misguide)
She altered quite, and made them all accurst
That God had blest; and did at first provide
In that still happy state for ever to abide.

Ne shee the lawes of Nature onely brake,
But eke of Justice, and of Policie;\textsuperscript{6}
government
And wrong of right, and bad of good did make,
And death for life exchanged foolishlie:
Since which, all living wights have learned to die,
And all this world is woxen\textsuperscript{7} daily worse.
O pittious worke of Mutabilitie!
By which, we all are subject to that curse,
And death in stead of life have suck\textsuperscript{d} from our Nurse.

And now, when all the earth she thus had brought
To her behest,\textsuperscript{6} and thrall\textsuperscript{d} to her might,
bidding
She gan to cast\textsuperscript{6} in her ambitious thought,
resolve
T'
attempt the empire of the heavens hight,
And Jove himselfe to shoulder from his right.
And first, she past the region of the ayre,
And of the fire, whose substance thin and slight,
Made no resistance, ne could her contraire,\textsuperscript{6}
withstand
But ready passage to her pleasure did prepaire.

Thence, to the Circle of the Moone she clambe,
Where Cynthia\textsuperscript{5} raignes in everlasting glory,
To whose bright shining palace straight she came,
All fairely deckt with heavens goodly story;\textsuperscript{6}
Whose silver gates (by which there state an hory
Old aged Sire, with hower-glasse in hand,
Hight Tyme) she entred, were he liefe or sory:\textsuperscript{7}
Ne staide till she the highest stage\textsuperscript{6} had scand,\textsuperscript{6}
level / mounted to
Where Cynthia did sit, that never still did stand.

Her sitting on an Ivory throne shee found,
Drawne of two steeds, th’one black, the other white,
call
Environd with tenne thousand starres around,
That duly her attended day and night;
And by her side, there ran her Page, that hight
Vesper, whom we the Evening-starre intend:\textsuperscript{6}
That with his Torche, still twinkling like twylight,
Her lightened all the way where she should wend,
And joy to weary wandring travailers did lend:

\textsuperscript{5} Cynthia, Diana, or Phoebe, the moon goddess,
often associated with Queen Elizabeth in poetry.

\textsuperscript{6} I.e., rows of stars.

\textsuperscript{7} I.e., whether he liked it or not.
That when the hardy Titanesse beheld
The goodly building of her Palace bright,
Made of the heavens substance, and up-held
With thousand Crystallpillors of huge hight,
Shee gan to burne in her ambitious spright,
And t’evnie her that in such glorie raigned.
Eftsoones she cast by force and tortious
Her to displace; and to her selfe to have gained
The kingdome of the Night, and waters by her wained.

Boldly she bid the Goddesse downe descend,
And let her selfe into that Ivory throne;
For, shee her selfe more worthy thereof wend,
And better able it to guide alone:
Whether to men, whose fall she did bemone,
Or unto Gods, whose state she did maligne,
Or to th’infernall Powers, her need give lone
Of her faire light, and bounty most benigne,
Her selfe of all that rule shee deeméd most condigne.

But shee that had to her that soveraigne seat
By highest Jove assigned, therein to beare
Nights burning lamp, regarded not her threat,
Ne yielded ought for favour or for feare;
But with sterne countenaunce and disdainfull cheare;
Bending her hornéd brawes, did put her back:
And boldly blaming her for comming there,
Bade her attonce from heavens coast to pack,
Or at her perill bide the wrathfull Thunders wrack.

Yet nathemore the Giantesse forbare:
But boldly preacing-on, raught forth her hand
To pluck her downe perforce from off her chaire;
And there-with lifting up her golden wand,
Threatned to strike her if she did with-stand.
Where-at the starres, which round about her blazed,
And eke the Moones bright wagon, still did stand,
All beeing with so bold attempt amazed,
And on her uncouth habit and sterne looke still gazed.

Meane-while, the lower World, which nothing knew
Of all that chaunce here, was darkned quite;
And eke the heavens, and all the heavenly crew
Of happy wights, now unpurvaide of light,
Were much afraid, and wondred at that sight;
Fearing least Chaos broken had his chaine,
And brought againe on them eternall night:
125 But chiefly Mercury, that next doth raigne,\(^8\)  
Ran forth in haste, unto the king of Gods to plaine.\(^9\)  

15 All ran together with a great out-cry,  
To Jove's faire Palace, fixt in heavens hight;  
And beating at his gates full earnestly,  
Gan call to him aloud with all their might,  
To know what meant that suddain lack of light.  
The father of the Gods when this he heard,  
Was troubled much at their so strange affright,  
Doubting least Typhon\(^9\) were againe upreared,  
Or other his old foes, that once him sorely feared.\(^9\)  

16 Eftsoones the sonne of Maia\(^1\) forth he sent  
Downe to the Circle of the Moone, to knowe  
The cause of this so strange astonishment,  
And why shee did her wonted course forslowe;\(^9\)  
And if that any were on earth belowe  
That did with charmes or Magick her molest,  
Him to attache,\(^9\) and downe to hell to throwe:  
But, if from heaven it were, then to arrest  
The Author, and him bring before his presence prest.\(^9\)  

17 The wingd-foot God, so fast his plumes did beat,  
That soone he came where-as the Titanesse  
Was striving with faire Cynthia for her seat:  
At whose strange sight, and haughty hardinesse,\(^9\)  
He wondred much, and feare'd her no lesse.  
Yet laying feare aside to doe his charge,\(^9\)  
At last, he bade her (with bold stedfastnesse)  
Ceasse to molest the Moone to walke at large,\(^2\)  
Or come before high Jove, her dooings to discharge.\(^9\)  

18 And there-with-all, he on her shoulder laid  
His snaky-wreathe'd Mace,\(^3\) whose awfull power  
Doth make both Gods and hellish fiends affraid:  
Where-at the Titanesse did sternely lower,\(^9\)  
And stoutly answered, that in evill hower  
He from his Jove such message to her brought,  
To bid her leave faire Cynthia's silver bower;  
Sith shee his Jove and him esteemèd nought,  
No more then Cynthia's selfe; but all their kingdoms sought.  

19 The Heavens Herald staid not to reply,  
But past away, his doings to relate  

8. In the Ptolemaic system, the sphere of Mercury was next beyond that of the moon; in mythology, Mercury was the messenger of the gods. His Greek name was Hermes.  
1. I.e., Mercury.  
2. I.e., stop interfering with the moon's free movement.  
3. I.e., the caduceus, Mercury's rod, which could bring spirits from the underworld.
Unto his Lord; who now in th’highest sky,
Was placéd in his principall Estate,
With all the Gods about him congregate:
To whom when Hermes had his message told,
It did them all exceedingly amate.\(^4\)  
Save Jove; who, changing nought his count’nance bold,
Did unto them at length these speeches wise unfold;

“Harken to mee awhile yee heavenly Powers;
Ye may remember since th’Earths curséd seed
Sought to assaile the heavens eternall towers,
And to us all exceeding feare did breed:
But how we then defeated all their deed,
Yee all doe knowe, and them destroie’d quite;
Yet not so quite, but that there did succeed
An off-spring of their bloud, which did alite
Upon the fruitfull earth, which doth us yet despite.\(^5\)

“Of that bad seed is this bold woman bred,
That now with bold presumption doth aspire
To thrust faire Phoebe from her silver bed,
And eke our selves from heavens high Empire,
If that her might were match to her desire:
Wherefore, it now behoves us to advise\(^6\)
What way is best to drive her to retire;
Whether by open force, or counsell wise,
Areed\(^7\) ye sonnes of God, as best ye can devise.”

So having said, he ceast; and with his brow
(\(\text{His black eye-brow, whose doomefull dreaded beck}\)\(^4\)
Is wont to wield the world unto his vow,\(^8\)
And even the highest Powers of heaven to check)
Made signe to them in their degrees to speake:
Who straight gan cast\(^9\) their counsell grave and wise.
Mean-while, th’Earths daughter,\(^5\) thogh she nought did reck
Of Hermes message; yet gan now advise,
What course were best to take in this hot bold emprize.\(^9\)

Eftsoones she thus resolved; that whil’st the Gods
(After returne of Hermes Embassie)
Were troubled, and amongst themselves at ods,
Before they could new counsels re-allie,\(^6\)
To set upon them in that extasie,\(^6\)
And take what fortune time and place would lend:
So, forth she rose, and through the purest sky
To Joves high Palace straight cast\(^9\) to ascend,
To prosecute her plot: Good on-set boads good end.

\(\text{i.e., his awesome nod of judgment.}\)
\(\text{i.e., Mutability.}\)
Earth is the offspring of Chaos in Hesiod and later mythologies.

6. Titan, eldest son of Uranus, abdicated in favor of his younger brother Saturn on condition that Saturn would eat all his own children. When Jove was born to Rhea, Saturn's wife, she gave Saturn a stone to swallow instead of the baby, and her attendants, the Corybantes, beat on their shields to drown out the baby's cries. Eventually Jove deposed his father.
Of all the Gods, and beautifull of face,
As any of the Goddesses in place,
Stood all astonied, like a sort\textsuperscript{c} of Steeres;\textsuperscript{d}

Mongst whom, some beast of strange and forraine race,
Unwares\textsuperscript{o} is chaunc\textsuperscript{t}, far straying from his peeres:
So did their ghastly gaze bewray\textsuperscript{o} their hidden feares.

Till having pauzed awhile, Jove thus bespake;
"Will never mortall thoughts ceasse to aspire,
In this bold sort, to Heaven claime to make,
And touch celestiall seates with earthly mire?
I would have thought, that bold Procrustes\textsuperscript{8} hire,\textsuperscript{o}
Or Typhons fall, or proud Ixions paine,
Or great Prometheus, tasting of our ire,
Would have suffized, the rest for to restraine;
And warned all men by their example to refraine:

"But now, this off-scum of that curs\textsuperscript{d} fry,
Dare to renew the like bold enterprize,
And chalenge th\textsuperscript{h} heritage of this our skie;
Whom what should hinder, but that we likewise
Should handle as the rest of her allies,
And thunder-drive to hell?" With that, he shooke
His Nectar-deawe\textsuperscript{9}d locks,\textsuperscript{o} with which the skyes
And all the world beneath for terror quooke,\textsuperscript{o}
And eft\textsuperscript{o} his burning Levin-brond\textsuperscript{o} in hand he tooke.

But, when he look\textsuperscript{d} on her lovely face,
In which, faire beames of beauty did appeare,
That could the greatest wrath soone turne to grace
(Such sway\textsuperscript{o} doth beauty even in Heaven beare)

He staide his hand: and having changed his cheare,\textsuperscript{o}
He thus againe in milder wise began;
"But ah! if Gods should strive with flesh yfere,\textsuperscript{o}
Then shortly should the progeny of Man
Be rooted out, if Jove should doe still\textsuperscript{o} what he can:

"But thee faire Titans child, I rather weene,\textsuperscript{o}
Through some vaine errour or inducement light,
To see that\textsuperscript{o} mortall eyes have never seene;
Or through ensample of thy sisters might,
Bellona;\textsuperscript{1} whose great glory thou doost spight,\textsuperscript{o}

8. Procrustes was a robber who waylaid strangers and made them fit his bed by cutting or stretching them (Spenser includes him among those punished by Jove). Ixion tried to seduce Jove’s wife and was punished by being bound to a wheel of fire in hell. Prometheus stole fire from heaven and gave it to humankind, for which Jove punished him by chaining him to a cliff where an eagle consumed his liver, which grew back every night. Typhon was a hundred-headed monster overthrown by Jove.
9. I.e., sprinkled with a fragrant balm; “nectar” more often referred to the drink of the gods.
1. Goddess of war, not a Titan in classical literature.
Since thou hast seen her dreadful power belowe,
Mongst wretched men (dismaide with her affright)
To bandie Crownes, and Kingdomes to bestowe:
And sure thy worth, no lesse then hers doth seem to shewe.

“But wote thou this, thou hardy Titanesse,
That not the worth of any living wight
May challenge ought in Heavens interesse,²
Much lesse the Title of old Titans Right:
For, we by Conquest of our soveraaine might,
And by eternall doome of Fates decree,
Have wonne the Empire of the Heavens bright;
Which to our selves we hold, and to whom wee
Shall worthy deeme partakers of our blisse to bee.

“Then ceasse thy idle claime thou foolish gerle,
And seeke by grace and goodnesse to obtaine
That place from which by folly Titan fell;
There-to thou maist perhaps, if so thou faine³
Have Jove thy gratious Lord and Soveraigne.”
So, having said, she thus to him replide;
“Cease Saturnes sonne, to seeke by proffers vaine
Of idle hopes t’allure mee to thy side,
For to betray my Right, before I have it tride.

“But thee, O Jove, no equall⁴ Judge I deeme
Of my desert, or of my dewfull⁵ Right;
That in thine owne behalfe maist partiall seeme:
But to the highest him, that is behight
Father of Gods and men by equall might;⁶
To weet, the God of Nature, I appeale.”
There-at Jove wexe’d wroth, and in his spright
Did inly grudge, yet did it well conceale;
And bade Dan Phoebus Scribe⁷ her Appellation⁸ seale.

Eftsoones the time and place appointed were,
Where all, both heavenly Powers, and earthly wights,
Before great Natures presence should appeare,
For triall of their Titles and best Rights:
That was, to weet, upon the highest hights
Of Arlo-hill⁹ (Who knowes not Arlo-hill?)
That is the highest head (in all mens sights)
Of my old father Mole, whom Shepheards quill
Renomned hath with hymnes fit for a rurall skill.

2. I.e., no living person, however worthy, can claim any title to power or authority in heaven.
3. I.e., who is called father of gods and humans, with equal authority over both.
4. Phoebus (Apollo) is called “scribe” or secretary of the gods because he is the god of poetry.
5. I.e., Galtymore, a peak in the mountain range Spenser calls “my old father Mole,” near Kilcolman Castle, where he lived in Ireland. The last two lines of the stanza refer to Spenser’s praise of Mole in his pastoral eclogue Colin Clouts Come Home Againe.
And, were it not ill fitting for this file,\(^6\)
To sing of hilles and woods, mongst warres and Knights,
I would abate the sternenesse of my stile,
Mongst these sterne sounds\(^6\) to mingle soft delights;
And tell how Arlo through Dianaes spights
(Beeing of old the best and fairest Hill
That was in all this holy-Islands\(^6\) hights)
Was made the most unpleasant, and most ill.
Meane while, O Clio, lend Calliope thy quill.\(^7\)

Whylome,\(^8\) when Ireland florishéd in fame
Of wealths and goodnesse, far above the rest
Of all that beare the British Islands name,
The Gods then used (for pleasure and for rest)
Oft to resort there-to, when seemed them best:
But none of all there-in more pleasure found,
Then Cynthia;\(^9\) that is soveraine Queene profest\(^6\)
Of woods and forrests, which therein abound,
Sprinkled with wholsom waters, more then most on ground.

But mongst them all, as fittest for her game,\(^9\)
Either for chace of beasts with hound or boawe,
Or for to shroude in shade from Phoebus flame,
Or bathe in fountains that doe freshly flowe,
Or from high hilles, or from the dales belowe,
She chose this Arlo; where shee did resort
With all her Nymphes enrange´d on a rowe,
With whom the woody Gods did oft consort:
For, with the Nymphes, the Satyres love to play and sport.\(^9\)

Amongst the which, there was a Nymph that hight
Molanna;\(^1\) daughter of old father Mole,
And sister unto Mulla, faire and bright:
Unto whose bed false Bregog whylome stole,
That Shepheard Colin dearely\(^0\) did condole,
And made her lucklesse loves well knowne to be.
But this Molanna, were she not so shole,\(^9\)
Were no lesse faire and beautefull then shee:
Yet as she is, a fairer flood may no man see.

For, first, she springs out of two marble Rocks,
On which, a grove of Oakes high mounted growes,

---

6. Ireland is called the “holy-Island” because, according to legend, Christianity first found a foothold there and thence spread to the other British isles.
7. Clio was the muse of history, Calliope of epic poetry.
8. I.e., Diana, goddess of the forest, fond of hunting.
9. Nymphs in Greek mythology were minor female deities of streams, springs, trees, and other parts of nature. Satyrs were minor male gods of the woods, given to drinking and sensual pleasure. The Romans identified them with their goat-footed fauni; hence “Faunus” (line 376) and “Faune” (line 411).
1. The shallow, rocky river Behanna; Mulla is the river Awbeg, whose joining with the river Bregog is told in Colin Clout Come Home Againe.
That as a girdle seemes to deck the locks
Of some faire Bride, brought forth with pompous showes
Out of her bowre, that many flowers strowes:
So, through the flowry Dales she tumbling downe,
Through many woods, and shady covertes flowes
(That on each side her silver channell crowne)
Till to the Plaine she come, whose Valleys shee doth drowne.

In her sweet streams, Diana used oft
(After her sweatie chace and tolesome play)
To bathe her selfe; and after, on the soft
And downy grasse, her dainty limbs to lay
In covert shade, where none behold her may:
For, much she hated sight of living eye.
Foolish God Faunus, though full many a day
He saw her clad, yet longed foolishly
To see her naked mongst her Nymphes in privite.

No way he found to compass his desire.
But to corrupt Molanna, this her maid,
Her to discover for some secret hire:
So, her with flattering words he first assaid;
And after, pleasing gifts for her purvaid;
Queene-apples, and red Cherries from the tree,
With which he her alluréd and betrayd,
To tell what time he might her Lady see
When she her selfe did bathe, that he might secret bee.

There-to hee promist, if she would him pleasure
With this small boone, to quit her with a better;
To weet, that where-as she had out of measure
Long loved the Fanchin, who by nought did set her,
That he would undertake, for this to get her
To be his Love, and of him likéd well:
Besides all which, he vowed to be her debter
The least of which, this little pleasure should excell.

The simple maid did yield to him anone;
And eft him placed where he close might view
That never any saw, save onely one;
Who, for his hire to so fool-hardy dew,
Was of his hounds devoured in Hunters hew.
Tho, as her manner was on sunny day,
Diana, with her Nymphes about her, drew

2. Spenser here adapts the classical story of Actaeon with local Irish geographical references. Actaeon while hunting happened to see Diana bathing; he was turned into a stag and pursued and killed by his own hounds.
3. Probably quinces.
4. I.e., who cared nothing for her. Fanchin is the river Funsheon.
5. I.e., as a deserved punishment for his foolhardiness was devoured by his hunting dogs.
To this sweet spring; where, doffing her array,
She bathed her lovely limbes, for Jove a likely pray.

There Faunus saw that pleaséd much his eye,
And made his hart to tickle in his brest.
That for great joy of some-what he did spy,
He could him not containe in silent rest;
But breaking forth in laughter, loud profess
His foolish thought. A foolish Faune indeed,
That couldst not hold thy selfe so\textsuperscript{th},
But wouldest needs thine owne conceit areed.\textsuperscript{m}

Babblers unworthy been of so divine a meed.\textsuperscript{o}

The Goddesse, all abashéd with that noise,
In haste forth started from the guilty brooke;
And running straight where-as she heard his voice,
Enclosed the bush about, and there him tooke,
Like darréd\textsuperscript{th} Larke; not daring up to looke
On her whose sight before so much he sought.
Thence, forth they drew him by the hornes, and shooke
Nigh all to peeces, that they left him nought;
And then into the open light they forth him brought.

Like as an huswife, that with busie care
Thinks of her Dairie to make wondrous gaine,
Finding where-as some wicked beast unware\textsuperscript{u}
That breakes into her Dayr’house, there doth draine
Her creaming pannes, and frustrate all her paine
Hath in some snare or gin\textsuperscript{t} set close behind,
Entrappéd him, and caught into her traine,\textsuperscript{o}
Then thinkes what punishment were best assigned,
And thousand deathes deviseth in her vengefull mind:

So did Diana and her maydens all
Use silly Faunus, now within their baile:\textsuperscript{c}
They mocke and scorne him, and him foule miscall;
Some by the nose him pluckt, some by the taile,
And by his goatish beard some did him haile:\textsuperscript{o}
Yet he (poore soule) with patience all did beare;
For, nought against their wils might countervaile:\textsuperscript{o}
Ne ought he said what ever he did heare;
But hanging downe his head, did like a Mome\textsuperscript{o} appeare.

At length, when they had flouted him their fill,
They gan to cast what penaunce him to give.
Some would have gelt\textsuperscript{o} him, but that same would spill\textsuperscript{o}
The Wood-gods breed, which must for ever live:
Others would through the river him have drive,
And duckéd deepe: but that seemed penaunce light;
The Mutabilitie Cantos, Canto VI / 75

But most agreed and did this sentence give,
Him in Deares skin to clad; and in that plight,
To hunt him with their hounds, him selfe save how hee might.

But Cynthia’s selfe, more angry then the rest,
Thought not enough, to punish him in sport,
And of her shame to make a gamesome jest;
But gan examine him in stricter sort,
Which of her Nymphe, or other close consort,
Him thither brought, and her to him betray’d?
He, much afffeard, to her confessed short,
That 'twas Molanna which her so betray’d.
Then all attonce their hands upon Molanna laid.

But him (according as they had decreed)
With a Deeres-skin they covered, and then chast
With all their hounds that after him did speed;
But he more speedy, from them fled more fast
Then any Deere: so sore him dread aghast.
They after followed all with shrill out-cry,
Shouting as they the heavens would have brast:
That all the woods and dales where he did flie,
Did ring againe, and loud reeccho to the skie.

So they him followed till they weary were;
When, back returning to Molann’ againe,
They, by commaund’ment of Diana, there
Her whelmed with stones. Yet Faunus (for her paine)
Of her beloved Fanchin did obtaine,
That her he would receive unto his bed.
So now her waves passe through a pleasant Plaine,
Till with the Fanchin she her selfe doe wed,
And (both combined) themselves in one faire river spred.

Nath’lesse, Diana, full of indignation,
Thence-forth abandoned her delicious brooke;
In whose sweet streame, before that bad occasion,
So much delight to bathe her limbes she tooke:
Ne onely her, but also quite forsooke
All those faire forrests about Arlo hid,
And all that Mountaine, which doth over-looke
The richest champian that may else be rid,
And the faire Shure, in which are thousand Salmons bred.

Them all, and all that she so deare did way,
Thence-forth she left; and parting from the place,
There-on an heavy haplesse curse did lay,
6. I.e., filled with stones (an allusion to the shallowness of the river, mentioned in line 358).
7. The river Suir.
To weet, that Wolves, where she was wont to space,\(^{\circ}\) roam
Should harboured be, and all those Woods deface,
And Thieves should rob and spoile that Coast around.
Since which, those Woods, and all that goodly Chase,\(^{\circ}\) hunting ground
Doth to this day with Wolves and Thieves abound:
Which too-too true that lands in-dwellers since have found.

Canto VII

Pealing,\(^{\circ}\) from Jove, to Natur's Bar, appealing
bold Alteration\(^{1}\) pleads
Large Evidence: but Nature soone her righteous Doome areads.\(^{2}\)

1
Ah! whither doost thou now thou greater Muse\(^{3}\)
Me from these woods and pleasing forrests bring?
And my fraile spirit (that dooth oft refuse
This too high flight, unfit for her weake wing)
Lift up aloft, to tell of heavens King
(Thy soveraine Sire)\(^{4}\) his fortunate successse,
And victory, in bigger\(^{5}\) noates to sing,
Which he obtained against that Titanesse,
That him of heavens Empire sought to dispossesse.

2
Yet sith I needs must follow thy behest,
Doe thou my weaker\(^{6}\) wit with skill inspire,
too weak
Fit for this turne; and in my feeble brest
Kindle fresh sparks of that immortall fire,
Which learnéd minds inflameth with desire
Of heavenly things: for, who but thou alone,
That art yborne of heaven and heavenly Sire,
Can tell things doen in heaven so long ygone;
So farre past memory of man that may be knowe.

3
Now, at the time that was before agreed,
The Gods assembled all on Arlo hill;\(^{5}\)
As well those that are sprung of heavenly seed,
As those that all the other world\(^{6}\) doe fill,
And rule both sea and land unto their will:
Onely th'infernall Powers might not appeare;
Aswell for horror of their count'naunce ill,
As for th'unruly fiends which they did feare;\(^{6}\) keep in awe
Yet Pluto and Proserpina were present there.

4
And thither also came all other creatures,
What-ever life or motion doe retaine,

---

1. I.e., Mutability.
2. Proclaims judgment.
3. I.e., Clio, muse of history.
4. Jove, father of Apollo, hence grandfather of the Muses.
5. Galteemore in southern Ireland, near Spenser's home, Kilcolman Castle.
6. I.e., the Earth.
According to their sundry kinds of features;  
That Arlo scarcely could them all contain;  
So full they filled every hill and Plaine:  
And had not Natures Sergeant (that is Order)  
Them well disposed by his busie paine;  
And rang’d far abroad in every border,  
They would have caus’d much confusion and disorder.

Then forth issewed (great goddess) great dame Nature,  
With goodly port and gracious Majesty;  
Being far greater and more tall of stature  
Then any of the gods or Powers on hie:  
Yet certes by her face and phynomy,  
Whether she man or woman inly were,  
That could not any creature well descry:  
For, with a veil that wimpled every where,  
Her head and face was hid, that mote to none appeare.

That some doe say was so by skill devized,  
To hide the terror of her uncouth hew,  
From mortall eyes that should be sore agrized;  
For that her face did like a Lion shew,  
That eye of wight could not indure to view:  
But others tell that it so beautious was,  
That it the Sunne a thousand times did pass,  
Ne could be seen, but like an image in a glass.

That well may seemen true: for, well I weene  
That this same day, when she on Arlo sat,  
Her garment was so bright and wondrous sheene,  
That my fraile wit cannot devize to what  
It to compare, nor finde like stuffe to that,  
As those three sacred Saints, though else most wise,  
Yet on mount Thabor quite their wits forgat,  
When they their glorious Lord in strange disguise  
Transfigured sawe; his garments so did daze their eyes.

In a fayre Plaine upon an equal Hill,  
She placed was in a pavilion;  
Not such as Craftes-men by their idle skill  
Are wont for Princes states to fashion:  
But th’eart her self of her owne motion,  
Out of her fruitfull bosome made to growe  
Most dainty trees; that, shooting up anon,  
Did seeme to bow their blossoming heads full lowe,  
For homage unto her, and like a throne did shew.

7. Strange appearance.  
8. i.e., sat in judgment.  
9. Peter, James, and John saw Jesus transfigured on a mountain. See Matthew 17.1–8.
So hard it is for any living wight,
    All her array and vestiments to tell,
That old Dan Geffrey (in whose gentle spright
    The pure well head of Poesie did dwell)
In his *Foules parley* durst not with it mel,"\(^\text{meddle}\)
But it transferd\(^\text{transferred}\) to Alane, who he thought
Had in his *Plaint of kindes* described it well:\(^1\)
Which who will read set forth so as it ought,
Go seek he out that Alane where he may be sought.

And all the earth far underneath her feete
    Was dight with flowres, that voluntary grew
Out of the ground, and sent forth odours sweet,
Tenne thousand mores\(^2\) of sundry sent and hew,
    That might delight the smell, or please the view:
The which, the Nymphes, from all the brooks thereby
Had gathered, which they at her foot-stoole threw;
    That richer seemed then any tapestry,
That Princes bowres adornne with painted imagery.

And Mole\(^3\) himself, to honour her the more,
    Did deck himself in freshest faire attire,
And his high head, that seemeth alwaies hore
With hardned frosts of former winters ire,
He with an Oaken girllond now did tire,
    As if the love of some new Nymph late seene,
Had in him kindled youthfull fresh desire,
And made him change his gray attire to greene;
Ah gentle Mole! such joyance hath thee well beseene.\(^4\)

Was never so great joyance since the day,
    That all the gods whylome assembled were,
On Haemus hill in their divine array,
To celebrate the solemne bridall cheare,
Twixt Peleus, and dame Thetis pointed\(^5\) there;\(^6\)
Where Phoebus self, that god of Poets hight,
They say did sing the spousall hymne full cleere,
    That all the gods were ravisht with delight
Of his celestiall song, and Musicks wondrous might.

This great Grandmother of all creatures bred
Great Nature, ever young yet full of eld,\(^7\)
Still mooving, yet unmovéd from her sted;\(^8\)
    Unseene of any, yet of all beheld;
Thus sitting in her throne as I have teld,

---
1. Chaucer, in his *Parliament of Fowls*, lines 316–18, refers to Alanus de Insulis’s *De Planctu Naturae* as *Aleyne’s Pleynt of Kind* (‘Complaint of Nature’).
2. The mountain range of which Arlo is the highest peak.
Before her came dame Mutabilite;
And being love before her presence feld,\textsuperscript{a} prostrated
With meek obaysance and humilitie,
Thus gan her plaintiff Plea, with words to amplifie:

“To thee O greatest goddesse, onely\textsuperscript{o} great,
An humble suppliant loe, I lowely fly
Seeking for Right, which I of thee entreat;
Who Right to all dost deale indifferently,\textsuperscript{c} impartially
Damning all Wrong and tortious\textsuperscript{o} Injurie,
Which any of thy creatures doe to other\textsuperscript{o} unjustly
(Oppressing them with power, unequally)
Sith of them all thou are the equall mother,
And knittest each to each, as brother unto brother.

“To thee therefore of this same Jove I plaine,
And of his fellow gods that faine\textsuperscript{o} to be,
That challenge\textsuperscript{e} to themselves the whole worlds raign;
Of which, the greatest part is due to me,
And heaven it selfe by heritage in Fee\textsuperscript{e}
For, heaven and earth I both alike do deeme,
Sith heaven and earth are both alike to thee;
And, gods no more then men thou doest esteeme:
For, even the gods to thee, as men to gods do seeme.

Then weigh, O soveraigne goddesse, by what right
These gods do claime the worlds whole soverainty;
And that\textsuperscript{e} is onely uncerto thy might
Arrogate to themselves ambitiously:
As for the gods owne principality,\textsuperscript{e}
Which Jove usurpes unjustly; that to be
My heritage, Jove’s self cannot deny,
From my great Grandsire Titan, unto mee,
Derived by dew descent; as is well knowen to thee.

Yet mauger\textsuperscript{o} Jove, and all his gods beside,
I doe possesse the worlds most regiment;\textsuperscript{e}
As, if ye please it into parts divide,
And every parts inholders\textsuperscript{e} to convene,\textsuperscript{f}
Shall to your eyes appeare incontinent;\textsuperscript{f}
And first, the Earth (great mother of us all)
That only seems unmoved and permanent,
And unto Mutability not thrall;
Yet is she changed in part, and eeke in generall.

“For, all that from her springs, and is ybredde,
How-ever fayre it flourish for a time,

\textsuperscript{a} Legally.
Yet see we soone decay; and, being dead,
To turne again unto their earthly slime:
Yet, out of their decay and mortall crime,\(^5\)
corruption
We daily see new creatures to arize;
And of their Winter spring another Prime.\(^6\)
spring
Unlike in forme, and changed by strange disguise:
So turne they still about, and change in restlesse wise.

19

“As for her tenants; that is, man and beasts,
The beasts we daily see massacred dy,
As thralls and vassalls unto mens beheasts:
And men themselves doe change continually,
From youth to eld, from wealth to poverty,
From good to bad, from bad to worst of all.
Ne doe their bodies only flit and fly:
But eke their minds (which they immortal call)
Still change and vary thoughts, as new occasions fall.

20

“Ne is the water in more constant case;
Whether those same on high,\(^5\) or these belowe.
For, th’Ocean moveth stil, from place to place;
And every River still doth ebb and flowe:
Ne any Lake, that seems most still and slowe,
Ne Poole so small, that can his smoothnesse holde,
When any winde doth under heaven blowe;
With which, the clouds are also tost and rolled;
Now like great hills; and, streight,\(^9\) like sluces, open
they unfold.\(^9\)

21

“So likewise are all watry living wights
Still tost, and turnéd, with continuall change,
Never abyding in their stedfast plights.\(^9\)
The fish, still floting, doe at randon\(^9\) range,
And never rest; but evermore exchange
Their dwelling places, as the streams them carrie:
Ne have the watry foules a certaine grange,\(^9\)
Wherein to rest, ne in one stead\(^9\) do tarry;
But flitting still doe flie, and still their places vary.

22

“Next is the Ayre: which who feels not by sense
(For, of all sense it is the middle meane)\(^6\)
To flit still? and, with subtill influence
Of his thin spirit, all creatures to maintaine,
In state of life? O weake life! that does leane
On thing so tickle\(^6\) as th’unsteady ayre;
Which every howre is changed, and altred cleane\(^9\)
With every blast that bloweth fowle or faire:
The faire doth it prolong; the fowle doth it impaire.

5. I.e., the clouds.
6. The conductor or medium.
“Therein the changes infinite beholde,
Which to her creatures every minute chaunce;
Now, boyling hot: streight, friezing deadly cold:
Now, faire sun-shine, that makes all skip and daunce:
Straight, bitter storms and balefull countenance,
That makes them all to shiver and to shake:
Rayne, hayle, and snowe do pay them sad penance,
And dreadfulfull thunder-claps (that make them quake)
With flames and flashing lights that thousand changes make.

“Last is the fire: which, though it live for ever,
Ne can be quenchéd quite; yet, every day,
We see his parts, so soone as they do sever,
To lose their heat, and shortly to decay;
So, makes himself his owne consuming pray.
Ne any living creatures doth he breed:
But all, that are of others bredd, doth slay;
And, with their death, his cruell life dooth feed;
Nought leaving but their barren ashes, without seede.

“Thus, all these fower (the which the ground-work bee
Of all the world, and of all living wights)
To thousand sorts of Change we subject see:
Yet are they changed (by other wondrous slightes)\(^\circ\)
Into themselves, and lose their native mights;
The Fire to Aire, and th’ Aire to Water sheere,\(^\circ\)
And Water into Earth: yet Water fights
With Fire, and Aire with Earth approaching neere:
Yet all are in one body, and as one appeare.

“So, in them all reignes Mutabilitie;
How-ever these, that Gods themselves do call,
Of them doe claime the rule and soverainty:
As, Vesta, of the fire aethereall;\(^7\)
Vulcan, of this, with us so usuall;
Ops, of the earth; and Juno of the Ayre;
Neptune, of Seas; and Nymphes, of Rivers all.
For, all those Rivers to me subject are:
And all the rest, which they usurp, be all my share.

“Which to approven\(^\circ\) true, as I have told,
Vouchsafe, O goddesse, to they presence call
The rest which doe the world in being hold:
As, times and seasons of the yeare that fall:
Of all the which, demand in generall,

---

7. Vesta, Roman goddess of the hearth, is assigned by Spenser to rule over the fire that is above the air, as Vulcan rules over earthly fire (“this, with us so usuall”). Ops, Roman goddess of plenty and fertility, rules the earth.
Or judge thy selfe, by verdit\(^8\) of thine eye, 
Whether to me they are not subject all.” 
Nature did yeeld thereto; and by-and-by,\(^9\) 
Bade Order call them all, before her Majesty. 

28
So, forth issewed the Seasons of the yeare; 
First, lusty Spring, all dight in leaves of flowres 
That freshly budded and new bloosmes did beare 
(In which a thousand birds had built their bowres 
That sweetly sung, to call forth Paramours): 
And in his hand a javelin he did beare, 
And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures)\(^\circ\) 
A guilt engraven morion\(^\circ\) he did weare; 
That as some did him love, so others did him feare. 

29
Then came the jolly Sommer, being dight 
In a thin silken cassock\(^\circ\) coloured greene, 
That was unlyned all, to be more light; 
And on his head a girldon well beseeene\(^\circ\) 
He wore, from which as he had chaufféd\(^\circ\) been 
The sweat did drop; and in his hand he bore 
A boawe and shaftes, as he in forrest greene 
Had hunted late the Libbard\(^\circ\) or the Bore, 
And now would bathe his limbes, with labor heated sore. 

30
Then came the Autumne all in yellow clad, 
As though he joyéd in his plentious store, 
Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad 
That he had banisht hunger, which to-fore\(^\circ\) 
Had by the belly oft him pinched sore. 
Upon his head a wreath that was enrold\(^\circ\) 
With eares of corn, of every sort he bore: 
And in his hand a sickle he did holde, 
To reape the ripened fruits the which the earth had yold.\(^\circ\) 

31
Lastly, came Winter cloathed all in frize.\(^8\) 
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill, 
Whil’s on his hoary beard his breath did freese; 
And the dull drops that from his purpled bill\(^\circ\) 
As from a limbeck\(^\circ\) did adown distill. 
In his right hand a tippéd staffe he held, 
With which his feeble steps he stayéd still:\(^\circ\) 
For, he was faint with cold, and weak with eld; 
That scarce his loose’d limbes he hable was to weld.\(^\circ\) 

32
These, marching softly, thus in order went, 
And after them, the Monthes all riding came; 
First, sturdy March\(^9\) with brows full sternly bent, 

---

8. A coarse woolen cloth. 9. In the old calendar, the year began in March.
And arméd strongly, rode upon a Ram,  
The same which over Hellespontus swam:¹
Yet in his hand a spade he also hent,⁰  
And in a bag all sorts of seeds ysame,⁰
Which on the earth he strowéd as he went,  
And fild her womb with fruitfull hope of nourishment.

Next came fresh Aprill full of lustyhed,⁰  
And wanton as a Kid whose horne new buds:
Upon a Bull he rode, the same which led  
Europa floting through th’Argolick fluds:²
His hornes were gilden all with golden studs,
And garnishéd with garlonds goodly dight
Of all the fairest flowres and freshest buds
Which th’earth brings forth, and wet he seemed in sight
With waves, through which he waded for his loves³ delight.

Then came faire May, the fayrest mayd on ground,  
Deckt all with dainties of her seasons pryde,
And throwing flowres out of her lap around:
Upon two brethrens shoulders she did ride,
The twinnes of Leda;⁴ which on eyther side
Supported her like to their soveraine Queene.
Lord! how all creatures laught, when her they spide,
And leapt and daunc’t as they had ravish⁰ beene!
And Cupid selfe about her fluttred all in greene.

And after her, came jolly June, arrayd
All in greene leaves, as he a Player were;
Yet in his time, he wrought⁰ as well as playd,
That by his plough-yrongs⁰ mote right well appeare:
Upon a Crab he rode, that him did beare
With crooked crawling steps an uncouth pase,
And backward yode,⁰ as Bargemen wont to fare
Bending their force contrary to their face,
Like that ungracious crew which faines demurest grace.

Then came hot July boyling like to fire,
That all his garments he had cast away:
Upon a Lyon raging yet with ire
He boldly rode and made him to obay:
It was the beast that whylome did forray
The Nemaean forrest, till th’Amphytrionide⁵
Him slew, and with his hide did him array;

¹. The ram with the golden fleece, on which Helle and her brother Phrixus flew through the air to escape an evil stepmother. Helle fell off into a body of water that was named after her: the Hellespont.  
². The bull was Jupiter in disguise. He swam with Europa to Crete. ‘Argolick’: Greek.  
³. I.e., Europa’s.  
⁴. Castor and Pollux (the zodiacal sign of Gemini). Each month brings its zodiacal sign to the conference.  
⁵. I.e., Hercules.
Behinde his back a sithe,\(^6\) and by his side
Under his belt he bore a sickle circling wide.

37
The sixth was August, being rich arrayd
In garment all of gold downe to the ground:
Yet rode he not, but led a lovely Mayd
Forth by the lilly hand, the which was crownd
With eares of corne, and full her hand was found;
That was the righteous Virgin,\(^6\) which of old
Lived here on earth, and plenty made abound;
But, after Wrong was loved and Justice solde,
She left th’unrighteous world and was to heaven extold.\(^6\)

38
Next him, September marche’d eke on foote;
Yet was he heavy laden with the spoyle
Of harvests riches, which he made his boot,\(^6\)
And him enricht with bounty of the soyle:
In his one hand, as fit for harvest toyle,
He held a knife-hook; and in th’other hand
A paire of waights, with which he did assoyle\(^6\)
Both more and lesse, where it in doubt did stand,
And equall gave to each as Justice duly scanned.\(^6\)

39
Then came October full of merry glee:
For, yet his noule was totty of the must,\(^7\)
Which he was treading in the wine-fats see,
And of the joyous oyle, whose gentle gust\(^6\)
Made him so frolick and so full of lust:
Upon a dreadful Scorpion he did ride,
The same which by Dianaes doom unjust
Slew great Orion: \(^8\) and eke by his side
He had his ploughing share, and coulter\(^9\) ready tyde.

40
Next was November, he full grosse and fat,
As fed with lard, and that right well might seeme;
For, he had been a fattening\(^8\) hogs of late,
That yet his browes with sweat, did reek and steem,
And yet the season was full sharp and breem;\(^9\)
In planting eke he took no small delight:
Whereon he rode, not easie was to deeme;
For it a dreadfull Centaure was in sight,
The seed of Saturne, and faire Nais, Chiron hight.

41
And after him, came next the chill December:
Yet he through merry feasting which he made,

---

7. I.e., his head was unsteady from the wine-mash. "Wine-fats see": wine vats’ sea.
8. According to one legend, Orion boasted that he could kill anything that came from the earth. Indignant at his arrogance, Diana sent a scorpion that stung and killed him.
9. Cutting edge of a plow.
And great bonfires, did not the cold remember;  
His Saviour's birth his mind so much did glad:

365 Upon a shaggy-bearded Goat he rode,\(^6\)  
The same wherewith Dan Jove in tender yeares,  
They say, was nourisht by th'Idaean mayd;\(^1\)  
And in his hand a broad deep boawle he beares;  
Of which, he freely drinks an health to all his peeres.

42

370 Then came old January, wrappéd well  
In many weeds to keep the cold away;  
Yet did he quake and quiver like to quell,\(^9\)  
And blowe his nayles to warme them if he may:  
For, they were numbd with holding all the day

375 An hatchet keene, with which he felléd wood,  
And from the trees did lop the needlesse spray:\(^9\)  
Upon an huge great Earth-pot steane\(^2\) he stood;  
From whose wide mouth, there flowéd forth the Romane floud.\(^3\)

43

And lastly, came cold February, sitting  
In an old wagon, for he could not ride;  
Drawne of two fishes for the season fitting,  
Which through the flood before did softly slyde  
And swim away: yet had he by his side

385 And tooles to prune the trees, before the pride  
Of hasting Prime did make them burgein\(^8\) round:  
So past the twelve Months forth, and their dew places found.

44

And after these, there came the Day, and Night,  
Riding together both with equall passe,  
Th'one on a Palfrey blacke, the other white;  
But Night had covered her uncomely face  
With a blacke veile, and held in hand a mace,

390 And sleep and darknesse round about did trace:\(^5\)  
But Day did beare, upon his scepters hight,  
The goodly Sun, encompast all with beamés bright.

45

Then came the Howres, faire daughters of high Jove,  
And timely Night, the which were all endewed  
With wondrous beauty fit to kindle love;  
But they were Virgins all, and love eschewed,  
That might forslack\(^2\) the charge to them foreshewed

400 By mighty Jove; who did them Porters make  
Of heavens gate (whence all the gods issued)

---

1. Jove was saved by his mother, Rhea, from being eaten by Cronus, his father. He was brought up in Crete and suckled by a goat. The “Idaean mayd” is the nymph of Mount Ida in Crete.

2. Jar (here standing for the constellation Aquarius).

3. I.e., the Tiber River.
Which they did dayly watch, and nightly wake\textsuperscript{o} guard
By even turnes, ne ever did their charge forsake.

And after all came Life, and lastly Death;
Death with most grim and griesly visage seene,
Yet is he nought but parting of the breath;
Ne ought to see, but like a shade to weene,\textsuperscript{o} conceive
Unbodiéd, unsouled, unheard, unseen.
But Life was like a faire young lusty boy,
Such as they faine Dan Cupid to have bee
Full of delightfull health and lively joy,
Deckt all with flowres, and wings of gold fit to employ.

When these were past, thus gan the Titanesse:
“Lo, mighty mother, now be judge and say,
Whether in all thy creatures more or lesse
Change doth not raing and beare the greatest sway:
For, who sees not, that Time on all doth prey?\textsuperscript{o} prey
But Times do change and move continually.
So nothing here long standeth in one stay:
Wherefore, this lower world who can deny
But to be subject still to Mutabilitie?”

Then thus gan Jove: “Right true it is, that these
And all things else that under heaven dwell
Are chaunged of Time, who doth them all disseise\textsuperscript{o} deprive
Of being: But, who is it (to me tell)
That Time himselfe doth move and still compell
To keepe his course? Is not that namely wee
Which poure that vertue\textsuperscript{o} from our heavenly cell,
That moves them all, and makes them changed be?
So them we gods doe rule, and in them also thee.”

To whom, thus Mutability: “The things
Ye may attribute to your selves as Kings,
And say they by your secret powre are made:
But what we see not, who shall us perswade?
But were they so, as ye them faine to be,
Moved by your might, and ordred by your ayde;
Yet what if I can prove, that even yee
Your selves are likewise changed, and subject unto mee?

“And first, concerning her that is the first,\textsuperscript{4}
Even you faire Cynthia, whom so much ye make
Joves dearest darling, she was bred and nurst
On Cynthus hill, whence she her name did take:
Then is she mortall borne, how-so ye crake;\textsuperscript{o} brag

---

\textsuperscript{4} The moon is first because its orbit is closest to the earth.
The Mutabilitie Cantos, The Mutabilitie Cantos, Canto VII / 87

Besides, her face and countenance every day
We changéd see, and sundry forms partake,
Now hornd, now round, now bright, now brown and gray:
So that 'as changefull as the Moone' men use to say.

“Next, Mercury, who though he lesse appeare
To change his hew, and always seeme as one;
Yet, he his course doth altar every yeare,
And is of late far out of order gone:
So Venus eeke, that goodly Paragone, model of excellence
Though faire all night, yet is she darke all day;
And Phoebus self, who lightsome is alone,
Yet is he oft eclipséd by the way,
And fills the darkned world with terror and dismay.

“Now Mars that valiant man is changéd most:
For, he some times so far runs out of square,
That he his way doth seem quite to have lost,
And cleane without his usuall sphere to fare;
That even these Star-gazers stonisht are
At sight thereof, and damne their lying booke:
So likewise, grim Sir Saturne oft doth spare
His sterne aspect, and calme his crabbéd lookes:
So many turning cranks these have, so many crookes.

“But you Dan Jove, that only constant are,
And King of all the rest, as ye do clame,
Are you not subject eeke to this misfare?
Then let me aske you this withouten blame,
Where were ye borne? some say in Crete by name,
Others in Thebes, and others other-where;
But wheresoever they comment the same,
They all consent that ye begotten were,
And borne here in this world, ne other can appeare.

“Then are ye mortall borne, and thrall to me,
Unless the kingdome of the sky yee make
Immortall, and unchangeable to bee;
Besides, that power and vertue which ye spake,
That ye here worke, doth many changes take,
And your owne natures change: for, each of you
That vertue have, or this, or that to make,
Is checkt and changéd from his nature trew,
By others opposition or obliquid view.

“Besides, the sundry motions of your Spheares,
So sundry waies and fashions as clerkes faine,

5. Alone is radiant.
6. In his course.
7. A reference to the central idea of astrology—that each planet has a “virtue” that it sheds on earth; the effect is dependent upon its position and the position of other planets.
Some in short space, and some in longer yeares;
What is the same but alteration plaine?
Onely the starrie skie doth still remaine:
Yet do the Starres and Signes therein still move,
And even it self is moved, as wizards saine.8
But all that moveth, doth mutation love:
Therefore both you and them to me I subject prove.

56

“Then since within this wide great Universe
Nothing doth firme and permanent appeare,
But all things tost and turned by transverse:9
What then should let,9 but I aloft should reare hinder
My Trophee, and from all, the triumph beare?
Now judge then (O thou greatest goddess trew!) phrases
According as thy selfe doest see and heare,
And unto me addoom that is my dew;
That is the rule of all, all being ruled by you.”

57

So having ended, silence long ensewed, awaiting
Ne Nature to or fro spake for a space,
But with firme eyes affixt, the ground still viewed.
Meane while, all creatures, looking in her face,
Expecting the end of this so doubtfull case,
Did hang in long suspence what would ensew, phrases
To whether side should fall the soveraigne place:
At length, she looking up with chearefull view,
The silence brake, and gave her doome in speeches few.

58

“I well consider all that ye have sayd,
And find that all things steadfastnes doe hate
And changed be: yet being rightly wayd weighed
They are not changed from their first estate;
But by their change their being doe dilate:
And turning to themselves at length againe,
Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
Then over them Change doth not rule and raigne;
But they raigne over change, and doe their states maintaine.

59

“Cease therefore daughter further to aspire, ruin
And thee content thus to be ruled by me:
For thy decay thou seekst by thy desire;
But time shall come that all shall changéd bee,
And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see.”
silenced
So was the Titaness put downe and whist,6
And Jove confirmed in his imperall see.
Then was that whole assembly quite dismist,
And Natur's selfe did vanish, whither no man wist.
The VIII Canto, unperfite. unfinished

1
When I bethinke me on that speech whyleare,\textsuperscript{o} earlier
Of Mutability, and well it way:\textsuperscript{o} consider
Me seemes, that though she all unworthy were
Of the Heav'ns Rule; yet very sooth to say,
In all things else she beares the greatest sway.
Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,\textsuperscript{o} uncertain
And love of things so vaine to cast away;
Whose flouring pride, so fading and so fickle,
Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

2
Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,\textsuperscript{1}
Of that same time when no more Change shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things firmely stayd
Upon the pillours of Eternity,
That is contrayr to Mutabilitie:
For, all that moveth, doth in Change delight:
But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
O that great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight.\textsuperscript{1}

1590, 1596, 1609

1. Spenser here confuses, perhaps intentionally, the Hebrew words for “armies, hosts” and for “rest.”