

Edmund Spencer's

The
Faerie
Queene
Book One



THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE. Contayning THE LEGENDE OF THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE, OR OF HOLINESSE. by Edmund Spencer is a publication of The Electronic Classics Series. This Portable Document file is furnished free and without any charge of any kind. Any person using this document file, for any purpose, and in any way does so at his or her own risk. Neither the Pennsylvania State University nor Jim Manis, Editor, nor anyone associated with the Pennsylvania State University assumes any responsibility for the material contained within the document or for the file as an electronic transmission, in any way.

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**THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE
FAERIE QVEENE.
Contayning
THE LEGENDE OF THE
KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE,
OR
OF HOLINESSE.**

LO I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepherds weeds,
Am now enforst a far vnfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose prayes hauing slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broad emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithfull loues shall moralize my song.

Helpe then, ô holy Virgin chiefe of nine,
Thy weaker Nouice to performe thy will,
Lay forth out of thine euerlasting scryne
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights and fairest Tanaquill,

Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his vnderued wrong:
O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.

And thou most dreaded impe of highest Ioue,
Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst roue,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart,
Lay now thy deadly Heben bow apart,
And with thy mother milde come to mine ayde:
Come both, and with you bring triumphant Mart,
In loues and gentle iollities arrayd,
After his murdrous spoiles and bloody rage allayd.

And with them eke, O Goddess heauenly bright,
Mirroure of grace and Maiestie diuine,
Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phoebus lampe throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughts too humble and too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile:
The which to heare, vouchsafe, O dearest dred a-while.

Canto I

The Patron of true Holinesse,
Foule Errour doth defeate:
Hypocrisie him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.

Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Y cladd in mightie armes and siluer shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
The cruell markes of many' a bloody field;
Yet armes till that time did he neuer wield:
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full iolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

But on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead as liuing euer him ador'd:
Vpon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For soueraine hope, which in his helpe he had:
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but euer was ydrad.

Vpon a great aduerture he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gaue,
That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie lond,
To winne him worship, and her grace to haue,
Which of all earthly things he most did craue;
And euer as he rode, his hart did earne
To proue his puissance in battell braue
Vpon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Vpon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

A louely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Vpon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
Vnder a vele, that wimpled was full low,
And ouer all a blacke stole she did throw,
As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,
And heaueie sat vpon her palfrey slow:
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her in a line a milke white lambe she lad.

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and euery vertuous lore,
And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Westerne shore,
And all the world in their subiection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule vprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld:
Whom to auenge, she had this Knight from far cōpeld.

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd in being euer last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine ouercast,
And angry Ioue an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his Lemans lap so fast,
That euery wight to shrowd it did constrain,
And this faire couple eke to shroud theselues were fain.

Enforst to seeke some couert nigh at hand,
A shadie groue not far away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand:
Whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heauens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starre:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farre:
Faire harbour that them seemes; so in they entred arre.

And fourth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Ioying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they prayse the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling Pine, the Cedar proud and tall,
The vine-prop Elme, the Poplar neuer dry,
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all,
The Aspine good for staues, the Cypresse funerall.

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage, the Firre that weepeth still,
The Willow worne of forlorne Paramours,
The Eugh obedient to the benders will,
The Birch for shaftes, the Sallow for the mill,
The Mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,
The warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill,
The fruitfull Oliue, and the Platane round,
The caruer Holme, the Maple seeldom inward sound.

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Vntill the blustring storme is ouerblowne;
When weening to returne, whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in wayes vnknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,
That makes them doubt, their wits be not their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take, in diuerse doubt they been.

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde or in or out,
That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about;
Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,
At length it brought them to a hollow caue,
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser braue,
And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere he gaue.

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Be well aware, quoth then that Ladie milde,
Least suddaine mischief ye too rash prouoke:
The danger hid, the place vnknowne and wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts: Oft fire is without smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your stroke
Sir knight with-hold, till further triall made.
Ah Ladie (said he) shame were to reuoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue giues her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade.

Yea but (quoth she) the perill of this place
I better wot then you, though now too late
To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
Yet wisdomes warnes, whilst foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this Errours den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I read beware. Fly fly (quoth then
The fearefull Dwarf:) this is no place for liuing men.

But full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide,
But forth vnto the darksome hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armor made
A litle glooming light, much like a shade,
By which he saw the vgly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

And as she lay vpon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all ouerspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes vpwound,
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred
A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
Sucking vpon her poisonous duges, each one
Of sundry shapes, yet all ill fauored:
Soone as that vncouth light vpon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone.

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Their dam vpstart, out of her den effraide,
And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile
About her cursed head, whose folds displaid
Were stretcht now forth at length without entraille.
She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle
Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;
For light she hated as the deadly bale,
Ay wont in desert darknesse to remaine,
Where plaine none might her see, nor she see any plaine.

Which when the valiant Elfe perceiu'd, he leapt
As Lyon fierce vpon the flying pray,
And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
From turning backe, and forced her to stay:
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
And turning fierce, her speckled taile aduaunst,
Threatning her angry sting, him to dismay:
Who nought aghast, his mightie hand enhaunst:
The stroke down frō her head vnto her shoulder glaunst.

Much daunted with that dint, her sence was dazd,
Yet kindling rage, her selfe she gathered round,
And all attonce her beastly body raizd
With doubled forces high aboute the ground:
Tho wrapping vp her wrethed sterne arownd,
Lept fierce vpon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirre he stroue in vaine:
God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine.

His Lady sad to see his sore constraint,
Cride out, Now now Sir knight, shew what ye bee,
Add faith vnto your force, and be not faint:
Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee.
That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
His gall did grate for grieffe and high disdaine,
And knitting all his force got one hand free,
Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great paine,
That soone to loose her wicked bands did her constraine.

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Therewith she spewd out of her filthy maw
A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke
His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe:
Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,
And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthy parbreake all the place defiled has.

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride aboue the Aegyptian vale,
His fattie waues do fertile slime outwell,
And ouerflow each plaine and lowly dale:
But when his later spring gins to auale,
Huge heapes of mudd he leaues, wherein there breed
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly female of his fruitfull seed;
Such vgly monstrous shapes elsewhere may no man reed.

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no longer fight.
Whose corage when the feend perceiu'd to shrinke,
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke
Her fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents small,
Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

As gentle Shepheard in sweete euen-tide,
When ruddy Phoebus gins to welke in west,
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
Markes which do byte their hasty supper best;
A cloud of combrous gnattes do him molest,
All striuing to infixe their feeble stings,
That from their noyance he no where can rest,
But with his clownish hands their tender wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

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Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame,
Then of the certaine perill he stood in,
Halfe furious vnto his foe he came,
Resolv'd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;
And strooke at her with more then manly force,
That from her body full of filthie sin
He raft her hatefull head without remorse;
A streame of cole black bloud forth gushed frō her corse.

Her scattred brood, soone as their Parent deare
They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare,
Gathred themselues about her body round,
Weening their wonted entrance to haue found
At her wide mouth: but being there withstood
They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
And sucked vp their dying mothers blood,
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.

That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th'vnkindly Impes of heauen accurst,
Deuoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Hauing all satisfide their bloody thirst,
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst,
And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
Of such as drunke her life, the which them nurst;
Now needeth him no lenger labour spend,
His foes haue slaine themselues, with whom he should
contend.

His Ladie seeing all, that chaunst, from farre
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,
And said, Faire knight, borne vnder happy starre,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye:
Well worthy be you of that Armorie,
Wherein ye haue great glory wonne this day,
And prou'd your strength on a strong enemie,
Your first aduventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth euer wish, that like succeed it may.

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Then mounted he vpon his Steede againe,
And with the Lady backward sought to wend;
That path he kept, which beaten was most plaine,
Ne euer would to any by-way bend,
But still did follow one vnto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them brought.
So forward on his way (with God to frend)
He passed forth, and new aduventure sought;
Long way he trauelled, before he heard of ought.

At length they chaunst to meet vpon the way
An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had;
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voyde of malice bad,
And all the way he prayed, as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was:
And after asked him, if he did know
Of straunge aduentures, which abroad did pas.
Ah my deare Sonne (quoth he) how should, alas,
Silly old man, that liues in hidden cell,
Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits not with such things to mell.

But if of daunger which hereby doth dwell,
And homebred euill ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrey farre and neare.
Of such (said he) I chiefly do inquere,
And shall you well reward to shew the place,
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare:
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature liues so long a space.

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Far hence (quoth he) in wastfull wilderness
His dwelling is, by which no liuing wight
May euer passe, but thorough great distresse.
Now (sayd the Lady) draweth toward night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be: for what so strong,
But wanting rest will also want of might?
The Sunne that measures heauen all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the Ocean waues emong.

Then with the Sunne take Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Vntroubled night they say giues counsell best.
Right well Sir knight ye haue aduised bin,
(Quoth then that aged man;) the way to win
Is wisely to aduise: now day is spent;
Therefore with me ye may take vp your In
For this same night. The knight was well content:
So with that goodly father to his home they went.

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In trauell to and froe: a little wyde
There was an holy Chappell edifyde,
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy things each morne and euentide:
Thereby a Christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

Arriued there, the little house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainment, where none was:
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will;
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the euening so they pas:
For that old man of pleasing wordes had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas;
He told of Saintes and Popes, and euermore
He strowd an Aue-Mary after and before.

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The drouping Night thus creepeth on them fast,
And the sad humour loading their eye liddes,
As messenger of Morpheus on them cast
Sweet slōbring deaw, the which to sleepe them biddes.
Vnto their lodgings then his gwestes he riddes:
Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes,
He to his study goes, and there amidst
His Magick bookes and artes of sundry kindes,
He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy mindes

Then choosing out few wordes most horrible,
(Let none them read) thereof did verses frame,
With which and other spelles like terrible,
He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly Dame,
And cursed heauen, and spake reprochfull shame
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light;
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name
Great Gorgon, Prince of darknesse and dead night,
At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put to flight.

And forth he cald out of deepe darknesse dred
Legions of Sprights, the which like little flyes
Fluttring about his euer damned hed,
A-waite whereto their seruice he applies,
To aide his friends, or fray his enimies:
Of those he chose out two, the falsest two,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes;
The one of them he gaue a message too,
The other by him selfe staide other worke to doo.

He making speedy way through spersed ayre,
And through the world of waters wide and deepe,
To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire.
Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
And low, where dawning day doth neuer peepe,
His dwelling is; there Tethys his wet bed
Doth euer wash, and Cynthia still doth steepe
In siluer deaw his euer-drouping hed,
Whiles sad Night ouer him her mātle black doth spred

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Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,
The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yuory,
The other all with siluer ouercast;
And wakefull dogges before them farre do lye,
Watching to banish Care their enemy,
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.
By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,
And vnto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deepe
In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes keepe.

And more, to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rocke tumbling downe
And euer-drizling raine vpon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne:
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard: but carelesse Quiet lyes,
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enemies.

The messenger approaching to him spake,
But his wast wordes returnd to him in vaine:
So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,
Whereat he gan to stretch: but he againe
Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.
As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
And threatned vnto him the dreaded name
Of Hecate: whereat he gan to quake,
And lifting vp his lompish head, with blame
Halfe angry asked him, for what he came.
Hither (quoth he) me Archimago sent,
He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely tame,
He bids thee to him send for his intent
A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers sent.

The God obeyde, and calling forth straight way
A diuerse dreame out of his prison darke,
Deliuered it to him, and downe did lay
His heauie head, deuoide of carefull carke,
Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke.
He backe returning by the Yuorie dore,
Remounted vp as light as chearefull Larke,
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
In hast vnto his Lord, where he him left afore.

Who all this while with charmes and hidden artes,
Had made a Lady of that other Spright,
And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes
So liuely, and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sence it could haue raisht quight:
The maker selfe for all his wondrous witt,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight:
Her all in white he clad, and ouer it
Cast a blacke stole, most like to seeme for Vna fit.

Now when that ydle dreame was to him brought,
Vnto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,
Where he slept soundly void of euill thought,
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
In sort as he him schooled priuily:
And that new creature borne without her dew,
Full of the makers guile, with vsage sly
He taught to imitate that Lady trew,
Whose semblance she did carrie vnder feigned hew.

Thus well instructed, to their worke they hast,
And comming where the knight in slomber lay,
The one vpon his hardy head him plast,
And made him dreame of loues and lustfull play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked ioy:
Then seemed him his Lady by him lay,
And to him playnd, how that false winged boy,
Her chast hart had subdewd, to learne Dame pleasures toy.

And she her selfe of beautie soueraigne Queene,
Faire Venus seemde vnto his bed to bring
Her, whom he waking euermore did weene,
To be the chastest flowre, that ay did spring
On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,
Now a loose Lemane to vile seruice bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing,
Hymen iô Hymen, dauncing all around,
Whilst freshest Flora her with Yuie girlond crownd.

In this great passion of vnwonted lust,
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,
He started vp, as seeming to mistrust,
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:
Lo there before his face his Lady is,
Vnder blake stole hyding her bayted hooke,
And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,
With gentle blandishment and louely looke,
Most like that virgin true, which for her knight him took.

All cleane dismayd to see so vncouth sight,
And halfe enraged at her shamelesse guise,
He thought haue slaine her in his fierce despight:
But hasty heat tempring with sufferance wise,
He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe aduise
To proue his sense, and tempt her faigned truth.
Wringing her hands in wemens pitteous wise,
Tho can she weepe, to stirre vp gentle ruth,
Both for her noble bloud, and for her tender youth.

And said, Ah Sir, my liege Lord and my loue,
Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heauen aboue,
Or the blind God, that doth me thus amate,
For hoped loue to winne me certaine hate?
Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
Die is my dew: yet rew my wretched state
You, whom my hard auenging destinie
Hath made iudge of my life or death indifferently.

Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leaue
My Fathers kingdome,—There she stopt with teares;
Her swollen hart her speach seemd to bereaue,
And then againe begun, My weaker yeares
Captiu'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde:
Let me not dye in languor and long teares.
Why Dame (quoth he) what hath ye thus dismayd?
What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me affrayd?

Loue of your selfe, she said, and deare constraint
Lets me not sleepe, but wast the wearie night
In secret anguish and vnppittied plaint,
Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned quight.
Her doubtfull words made that redoubted knight
Suspect her truth: yet since no' vntruth he knew,
Her fawning loue with foule disdainfull spight
He would not shend, but said, Deare dame I rew,
That for my sake vnknowne such grieffe vnto you grew.

Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
For all so deare as life is to my hart,
I deeme your loue, and hold me to you bound;
Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart,
Where cause is none, but to your rest depart.
Not all content, yet seemd she to appease
Her mournfull plaintes, beguiled of her art,
And fed with words, that could not chuse but please,
So slyding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much grieu'd to thinke that gentle Dame so light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last dull wearinesse of former fight
Hauing yrockt a sleepe his irkesome spright,
That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his braine,
With bowres, and beds, and Ladies deare delight:
But when he saw his labour all was vaine,
With that misformed spright he backe returnd againe.

Canto II

The guilefull great Enchaunter parts
 The Redcrosse Knight from Truth:
 Into whose stead faire falshood steps,
 And workes him wofull ruth.

BY this the Northerne wagoner had set
 His seuenfold teme behind the stedfast starre,
 That was in Ocean waues yet neuer wet,
 But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
 To all, that in the wide deepe wandring arre:
 And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note shrill
 Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
 In hast was climbing vp the Easterne hill,
 Full enuious that night so long his roome did fill.
 When those accursed messengers of hell,
 That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged Spright
 Came to their wicked maister, and gan tell

Their bootelesse paines, and ill succeeding night:
 Who all in rage to see his skilfull might
 Deluded so, gan threaten hellish paine
 And sad Proserpines wrath, them to affright.
 But when he saw his threatning was but vaine,
 He cast about, and searcht his balefull bookes againe.

Eftsoones he tooke that miscreated faire,
 And that false other Spright, on whom he spred
 A seeming body of the subtile aire,
 Like a young Squire, in loues and lusty-hed
 His wanton dayes that euer loosely led,
 Without regard of armes and dreaded fight:
 Those two he tooke, and in a secret bed,
 Couered with darknesse and misdeeming night,
 Them both together laid, to ioy in vaine delight.

Forthwith he runnes with feigned faithfull hast
Vnto his guest, who after troublous sights
And dreames, gan now to take more sound repast,
Whom suddenly he wakes with fearefull frights,
As one aghast with feends or damned sprights,
And to him cals, Rise rise vnhappy Swaine,
That here wex old in sleepe, whiles wicked wights
Haue knit themselues in Venus shamefull chaine;
Come see, where your false Lady doth her honour staine.

All in amaze he suddenly vp start
With sword in hand, and with the old man went;
Who soone him brought into a secret part,
Where that false couple were full closely ment
In wanton lust and lewd embracement:
Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire,
The eye of reason was with rage yblent,
And would haue slaine them in his furious ire,
But hardly was restrained of that aged sire.

Returning to his bed in torment great,
And bitter anguish of his guiltie sight,
He could not rest, but did his stout heart eat,
And wast his inward gall with deepe despight,
Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring night.
At last faire Hesperus in highest skie
Had spent his lampe, and brought forth dawning light,
Then vp he rose, and clad him hastily;
The Dwarfe him brought his steed: so both away do fly.

Now when the rosy-fingred Morning faire,
Weary of aged Tithones saffron bed,
Had spred her purple robe through deawy aire,
And the high hils Titan discouered,
The royall virgin shooke off drowsy-hed,
And rising forth out of her baser bowre,
Lookt for her knight, who far away was fled,
And for her Dwarfe, that wont to wait each houre;
Then gan she waile and weepe, to see that woefull stowre.

And after him she rode with so much speede
As her slow beast could make; but all in vaine:
For him so far had borne his light-foot steede,
Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdain,
That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine;
Yet she her weary limbes would neuer rest,
But euery hill and dale, each wood and plaine
Did search, sore griued in her gentle brest,
He so vnghently left her, whom she loued best.

But subtill Archimago, when his guests
He saw diuided into double parts,
And Vna wandring in woods and forrests,
Th'end of his drift, he praisd his diuelish arts,
That had such might ouer true meaning harts;
Yet rests not so, but other meanes doth make,
How he may worke vnto her further smarts:
For her he hated as the hissing snake,
And in her many troubles did most pleasure take.

He then deuisde himselfe how to disguise;
For by his mightie science he could take
As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
As euer Proteus to himselfe could make:
Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,
Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell,
That of himselfe he oft for feare would quake,
And oft would flie away. O who can tell
The hidden power of herbes, and might of Magicke spell?

But now seemde best, the person to put on
Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest:
In mighty armes he was yclad anon,
And siluer shield vpon his coward brest
A bloody crosse, and on his crauen crest
A bouch of haire discolourd diuersly:
Full iolly knight he seemde, and well adrest,
And when he sate vpon his courser free,
Saint George himselfe ye would haue deemed him to be.

But he the knight, whose semblaunt he did beare,
The true Saint George was wandred far away,
Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare;
Will was his guide, and griefe led him astray.
At last him chaunst to meete vpon the way
A faithlesse Sarazin all arm'd to point,
In whose great shield was writ with letters gay
Sans foy: full large of limbe and euery ioint
He was, and cared not for God or man a point.

He had a faire companion of his way,
A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red,
Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay,
And like a Persian mitre on her hed
She wore, with crownes and owches garnished,
The which her lauish louers to her gaue;
Her wanton palfrey all was ouerspred
With tinsell trappings, wouen like a waue,
Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses braue.

With faire disport and courting dalliaunce
She intertaine her louer all the way:
But when she saw the knight his speare aduance,
She soone left off her mirth and wanton play,
And bad her knight addresse him to the fray:
His foe was nigh at hand. He prickt with pride
And hope to winne his Ladies heart that day,
Forth spurred fast: adowne his coursers side
The red blood trickling staine the way, as he did ride.

The knight of the Redcrosse when him he spide,
Spurring so hote with rage despiteous,
Gan fairely couch his speare, and towards ride:
Soone meete they both, both fell and furious,
That daunted with their forces hideous,
Their steeds do stagger, and amazed stand,
And eke themselues too rudely rigorous,
Astonied with the stroke of their owne hand,
Do backe rebut, and each to other yeeldeth land.

As when two rams stird with ambitious pride,
Fight for the rule of the rich fleeced flocke,
Their horned fronts so fierce on either side
Do meete, that with the terrour of the shocke
Astonied both, stand sencelesse as a blocke,
Forgetfull of the hanging victory:
So stood these twaine, vnmoued as a rocke,
Both staring fierce, and holding idely
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

The Sarazin sore daunted with the buffe
Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him flies;
Who well it wards, and quyteth cuff with cuff:
Each others equall puissaunce enuies,
And through their iron sides with cruell spies
Does seeke to perce: repining courage yields
No foote to foe. The flashing fier flies
As from a forge out of their burning shields,
And streames of purple bloud new dies the verdant fields.

Curse on that Crosse (quoth then the Sarazin)
That keepes thy body from the bitter fit;
Dead long ygoe I wote thou haddest bin,
Had not that charme from thee forwarned it:
But yet I warne thee now assured sitt,
And hide thy head. Therewith vpon his crest
With rigour so outrageous he smitt,
That a large share it hewd out of the rest,
And glauncing downe his shield, from blame him fairely
blest.

Who thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark
Of natiue vertue gan eftsoones reuiue,
And at his haughtie helmet making mark,
So hugely stroke, that it the steele did riue,
And cleft his head. He tumbling downe aliue,
With bloody mouth his mother earth did kis,
Greeting his graue: his grudging ghost did striue
With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is,
Whither the soules do fly of men, that liue amis.

The Lady when she saw her champion fall,
 Like the old ruines of a broken towre,
 Staid not to waile his woefull funerall,
 But from him fled away with all her powre;
 Who after her as hastily gan scowre,
 Bidding the Dwarfe with him to bring away
 The Sarazins shield, signe of the conqueroure.
 Her soone he ouertooke, and bad to stay,
 For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.

She turning backe with ruefull countenance,
 Cride, Mercy mercy Sir vouchsafe to show
 On silly Dame, subiect to hard mischaunce,
 And to your mighty will. Her humblesse low
 In so ritche weedes and seeming glorious show,
 Did much emmoue his stout heroïcke heart,
 And said, Deare dame, your suddein ouerthrow
 Much rueth me; but now put feare apart,
 And tell, both who ye be, and who that tooke your part.

Melting in teares, then gan she thus lament;
 The wretched woman, whom vnhappy howre
 Hath now made thrall to your commandement,
 Before that angry heauens list to lowre,
 And fortune false betraide me to your powre,
 Was, (O what now auaieth that I was!)
 Borne the sole daughter of an Emperour,
 He that the wide West vnder his rule has,
 And high hath set his throne, where Tiberis doth pas.

He in the first flowre of my freshest age,
 Betrothed me vnto the onely haire
 Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage;
 Was neuer Prince so faithfull and so faire,
 Was neuer Prince so meeke and debonaire;
 But ere my hoped day of spousall shone,
 My dearest Lord fell from high honours staire,
 Into the hands of his accursed fone,
 And cruelly was slaine, that shall I euer mone.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

His blessed body spoild of liuely breath,
Was afterward, I know not how, conuaid
And fro me hid: of whose most innocent death
When tidings came to me vnhappy maid,
O how great sorrow my sad soule assaid.
Then forth I went his woefull corse to find,
And many yeares throughout the world I straid,
A virgin widow, whose deepe wounded mind
With loue, long time did languish as the stricken hind.

At last it chaunced this proud Sarazin
To meete me wandring, who perforce me led
With him away, but yet could neuer win
The Fort, that Ladies hold in soueraigne dread.
There lies he now with foule dishonour dead,
Who whiles he liu'de, was called proud Sans foy,
The eldest of three brethren, all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sans ioy,
And twixt them both was borne the bloody bold Sans loy.

In this sad plight, friendlesse, vnfortunate,
Now miserable I Fidessa dwell,
Crauing of you in pittie of my state,
To do none ill, if please ye not do well.
He in great passion all this while did dwell,
More busying his quicke eyes, her face to view,
Then his dull eares, to heare what she did tell;
And said, Faire Lady hart of flint would rew
The vnderued woes and sorrowes, which ye shew.

Henceforth in safe assuraunce may ye rest,
Hauing both found a new friend you to aid,
And lost an old foe, that did you molest:
Better new friend then an old foe is said.
With change of cheare the seeming simple maid
Let fall her eyen, as shamefast to the earth,
And yeelding soft, in that she nought gain-said,
So forth they rode, he feining seemely merth,
And she coy lookes: so dainty they say maketh derth.

Long time they thus together traueiled,
Till weary of their way, they came at last,
Where grew two goodly trees, that faire did spred
Their armes abroad, with gray mosse ouercast,
And their greene leaues trembling with euery blast,
Made a calme shadow far in compasse round:
The fearefull Shepheard often there aghast
Vnder them neuer sat, ne wont there sound
His mery oaten pipe, but shund th'vn lucky ground.

But this good knight soone as he them can spie,
For the coole shade him thither hastily got:
For golden Phoebus now ymounted hie,
From fiery wheelles of his faire chariot
Hurled his beame so scorching cruell hot,
That liuing creature mote it not abide;
And his new Lady it endured not.
There they alight, in hope themselues to hide
From the fierce heat, and rest their weary limbs a tide.

Faire seemely pleasaunce each to other makes,
With goodly purposes there as they sit:
And in his falsed fancy he her takes
To be the fairest wight, that liued yit;
Which to expresse, he bends his gentle wit,
And thinking of those braunches greene to frame
A girlond for her dainty forehead fit,
He pluckt a bough; out of whose rift there came
Small drops of gory bloud, that trickled downe the same.

Therewith a piteous yelling voyce was heard,
Crying, O spare with guilty hands to teare
My tender sides in this rough rynd embard,
But fly, ah fly far hence away, for feare
Least to you hap, that happened to me heare,
And to this wretched Lady, my deare loue,
O too deare loue, loue bought with death too deare.
Astond he stood, and vp his haire did houe,
And with that suddein horror could no member moue.

At last whenas the dreadfull passion
Was ouerpast, and manhood well awake,
Yet musing at the straunge occasion,
And doubting much his sence, he thus bespake;
What voyce of damned Ghost from Limbo lake,
Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,
Both which fraile men do oftentimes mistake,
Sends to my doubtfull eares these speaches rare,
And ruefull plaints, me bidding guiltlesse bloud to spare?

Then groning deepe, Nor damned Ghost, (quoth he,)
Nor guilefull sprite, to thee these wordes doth speake,
But once a man Fradubio, now a tree,
Wretched man, wretched tree; whose nature weake,
A cruell witch her cursed will to wreake,
Hath thus transformd, and plast in open plaines,
Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleake,
And scorching Sunne does dry my secret vaines:
For though a tree I seeme, yet cold and heat me paines.

Say on Fradubio then, or man, or tree,
Quoth then the knight, by whose mischieuous arts
Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see?
He oft finds med'cine, who his grieffe imparts;
But double griefs afflict concealing harts,
As raging flames who striueth to suppress.
The author then (said he) of all my smarts,
Is one Duessa a false sorceresse,
That many errāt knights hath brought to wretchednesse.

In prime of youthly yeares, when corage hot
The fire of loue and ioy of cheualree
First kindled in my brest, it was my lot
To loue this gentle Lady, whom ye see,
Now not a Lady, but a seeming tree;
With whom as once I rode accompanye,
Me chaunced of a knight encountred bee,
That had a like faire Lady by his syde,
Like a faire Lady, but did fowle Duessa hyde.

Whose forged beauty he did take in hand,
All other Dames to haue exceeded farre;
I in defence of mine did likewise stand,
Mine, that did then shine as the Morning starre:
So both to battell fierce arraunged arre,
In which his harder fortune was to fall
Vnder my speare: such is the dye of warre:
His Lady left as a prise martiall,
Did yield her comely person, to be at my call.

So doubly lou'd of Ladies vnlike faire,
Th'one seeming such, the other such indeede,
One day in doubt I cast for to compare,
Whether in beauties glorie did exceede;
A Rosy girlond was the victors meede:
Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to bee,
So hard the discord was to be agreede.
Frælissa was as faire, as faire mote bee,
And euer false Duessa seemde as faire as shee.

The wicked witch now seeing all this while
The doubtfull ballaunce equally to sway,
What not by right, she cast to win by guile,
And by her hellish science raisd streightway
A foggy mist, that ouercast the day,
And a dull blast, that breathing on her face,
Dimmed her former beauties shining ray,
And with foule vgly forme did her disgrace:
Then was she faire alone, when none was faire in place.

Then cride she out, Fye, fye, deformed wight,
Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth plaine
To haue before bewitched all mens sight;
O leaue her soone, or let her soone be slaine.
Her loathly visage viewing with disdain,
Eftsoones I thought her such, as she me told,
And would haue kild her; but with faigned paine,
The false witch did my wrathfull hand with-hold;
So left her, where she now is turnd to treen mould.

Thensforth I tooke Duessa for my Dame,
And in the witch vnweeting ioyd long time,
Ne euer wist, but that she was the same,
Till on a day (that day is euery Prime,
When Witches wont do penance for their crime)
I chaunst to see her in her proper hew,
Bathing her selfe in origane and thyme:
A filthy foule old woman I did vew,
That euer to haue toucht her, I did deadly rew.

Her neather partes misshapen, monstrous,
Were hidd in water, that I could not see,
But they did seeme more foule and hideous,
Then womans shape man would beleue to bee.
Thensforth from her most beastly companie
I gan refraine, in minde to slip away,
Soone as appeard safe opportunitie:
For danger great, if not assur'd decay
I saw before mine eyes, if I were knowne to stray.

The diuelish hag by chaunges of my cheare
Perceiu'd my thought, and drownd in sleepe night,
With wicked herbes and ointments did besmeare
My bodie all, through charmes and magicke might,
That all my senses were bereaued quight:
Then brought she me into this desert waste,
And by my wretched louers side me pight,
Where now enclosd in wooden wals full faste,
Banisht from liuing wights, our wearie dayes we waste.

But how long time, said then the Elfin knight,
Are you in this misformed house to dwell?
We may not chaunge (quoth he) this euil plight,
Till we be bathed in a liuing well;
That is the terme prescribed by the spell.
O how, said he, mote I that well out find,
That may restore you to your wonted well?
Time and suffised fates to former kynd
Shall vs restore, none else from hence may vs vnbynd.

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight,
Heard how in vaine Fradubio did lament,
And knew well all was true. But the good knight
Full of sad feare and ghaſtly dreriment,
When all this ſpeech the liuing tree had ſpent,
The bleeding bough did thruſt into the ground,
That from the bloud he might be innocent,
And with freſh clay did cloſe the wooden wound:
Then turning to his Lady, dead with feare her found.

Her ſeeming dead he found with feigned feare,
As all vnweeting of that well ſhe knew,
And paynd himſelfe with buſie care to reare
Her out of careſſe ſwowne. Her eyelids blew
And dimmed ſight with pale and deadly hew
At laſt ſhe vp gan liſt: with trembling cheare
Her vp he tooke, too ſimple and too trew,
And oft her kiſt. At length all paſſed feare,
He ſet her on her ſteede, and forward forth did beare.

Canto III

Forsaken Truth long ſeekes her loue,
And makes the Lyon mylde,
Marres blind Deuotions mart, and fals
In hand of leachour vylde.

Nought there vnder heau'ns wilde hollowneſſe,
That moues more deare compaſſion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'vnworthy wretchedneſſe
Through enuies ſnares or fortunes freakes vnkind:
I, whether lately through her brightneſſe blind,
Or through alleageance and faſt fealtie,
Which I do owe vnto all woman kind,
Feele my heart perſt with ſo great agonie,
When ſuch I ſee, that all for pittie I could die.

And now it is empassioned so deepe,
For fairest Vnaes sake, of whom I sing,
That my fraile eyes these lines with teares do steepe,
To thinke how she through guilefull handeling,
Though true as touch, though daughter of a king,
Though faire as euer liuing wight was faire,
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,
Is from her knight diuorced in despaire
And her due loues deriu'd to that vile witches share.

Yet she most faithfull Ladie all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd
Farre from all peoples prease, as in exile,
In wilderness and wastfull deserts strayd,
To seeke her knight; who subtilly betrayd
Through that late vision, which th'Enchaunter wrought,
Had her abandond. She of nought affrayd,
Through woods and wastnesse wide him daily sought;
Yet wished tydings none of him vnto her brought.

One day nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her vnastie beast she did alight,
And on the grasse her daintie limbes did lay
In secret shadow, farre from all mens sight:
From her faire head her fillet she vndight,
And laid her stole aside. Her angels face
As the great eye of heauen shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shadie place;
Did neuer mortall eye behold such heauenly grace.

It fortun'd out of the thickest wood
A ramping Lyon rushed suddainly,
Hunting full greedie after saluage blood;
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To haue attonce deuour'd her tender corse:
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloudie rage asswaged with remorse,
And with the sight amazd, forgot his furious forse.

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wronged innocence did weet.
O how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue auenging wrong?
Whose yeilded pride and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassion,
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

The Lyon Lord of euerie beast in field,
Quoth she, his princely puissance doth abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does yield,
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:
But he my Lyon, and my noble Lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her that him lou'd, and euer most adord,
As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord?

Redounding teares did choke th'end of her plaint,
Which softly echoed from the neighbour wood;
And sad to see her sorrowfull constraint
The kingly beast vpon her gazing stood;
With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry mood.
At last in close hart shutting vp her paine,
Arose the virgin borne of heauenly brood,
And to her snowy Palfrey got againe,
To seeke her strayed Champion, if she might attaine.

The Lyon would not leaue her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard
Of her chaste person, and a faithfull mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
Still when she slept, he kept both watch and ward,
And when she wakt, he waited diligent,
With humble seruice to her will prepard:
From her faire eyes he tooke commaundement,
And euer by her lookes conceiued her intent.

Long she thus traueiled through deserts wyde,
By which she thought her wandring knight shold pas,
Yet neuer shew of liuing wight espyde;
Till that at length she found the troden gras,
In which the tract of peoples footing was,
Vnder the steepe foot of a mountaine hore;
The same she followes, till at last she has
A damzell spyde slow footing her before,
That on her shoulders sad a pot of water bore.

To whom approching she to her gan call,
To weet, if dwelling place were nigh at hand;
But the rude wench her answer'd nought at all,
She could not heare, nor speake, nor vnderstand;
Till seeing by her side the Lyon stand,
With suddaine feare her pitcher downe she threw,
And fled away: for neuer in that land
Face of faire Ladie she before did vew,
And that dread Lyons looke her cast in deadly hew.

Full fast she fled, ne euer lookt behynd,
As if her life vpon the wager lay,
And home she came, whereas her mother blynd
Sate in eternall night: nought could she say,
But suddaine catching hold, did her dismay
With quaking hands, and other signs of feare:
Who full of ghastly fright and cold affray,
Gan shut the dore. By this arriued there
Dame Vna, wearie Dame, and entrance did requere.

Which when none yeelded, her vnruely Page
With his rude clawes the wicket open rent,
And let her in; where of his cruell rage
Nigh dead with feare, and faint astonishment,
She found them both in darkesome corner pent;
Where that old woman day and night did pray
Vpon her beades deuoutly penitent;
Nine hundred Pater nosters euery day,
And thrise nine hundred Aues she was wont to say.

And to aaugment her painefull pennance more,
Thrise euery weeke in ashes she did sit,
And next her wrinkled skin rough sackcloth wore,
And thrise three times did fast from any bit:
But now for feare her beads she did forget.
Whose needlesse dread for to remoue away,
Faire Vna framed words and count'nance fit:
Which hardly doen, at length she gan them pray,
That in their cotage small, that night she rest her may.

The day is spent, and commeth drowsie night,
When euery creature shrowded is in sleepe;
Sad Vna downe her laies in wearie plight,
And at her feet the Lyon watch doth keepe:
In stead of rest, she does lament, and weepe
For the late losse of her deare loued knight,
And sighes, and grones, and euermore does steepe
Her tender brest in bitter teares all night,
All night she thinks too long, and often lookes for light.

Now when Aldeboran was mounted hie
About the shynie Cassiopeias chaire,
And all in deadly sleepe did drowned lie,
One knocked at the dore, and in would fare;
He knocked fast, and often curst, and sware,
That readie entrance was not at his call:
For on his backe a heauy load he bare
Of nightly stelths and pillage seuerall,
Which he had got abroad by purchase criminall.

He was to weete a stout and sturdie thiefe,
Wont to robbe Churches of their ornaments,
And poore mens boxes of their due reliefe,
Which giuen was to them for good intents;
The holy Saints of their rich vestiments
He did disrobe, when all men carelesse slept,
And spoild the Priests of their habiliments,
Whiles none the holy things in safety kept;
Then he by cunning sleights in at the window crept.

And all that he by right or wrong could find,
Vnto this house he brought, and did bestow
Vpon the daughter of this woman blind,
Abessa daughter of Corceca slow,
With whom he whoredome vsd, that few did know,
And fed her fat with feast of offerings,
And plentie, which in all the land did grow;
Ne spared he to giue her gold and rings:
And now he to her brought part of his stolen things.

Thus long the dore with rage and threats he bet,
Yet of those fearefull women none durst rize,
The Lyon frayed them, him in to let:
He would no longer stay him to aduize,
But open breakes the dore in furious wize,
And entring is; when that disdainfull beast
Encountring fierce, him suddaine doth surprize,
And seizing cruell clawes on trembling brest,
Vnder his Lordly foot him proudly hath suppress.

Him booteth not resist, nor succour call,
His bleeding hart is in the vengers hand,
Who streight him rent in thousand peeces small,
And quite dismembred hath: the thirstie land
Drunke vp his life; his corse left on the strand.
His fearefull friends weare out the wofull night,
Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to vnderstand
The heauie hap, which on them is alight,
Affraid, least to themselues the like mishappen might.

Now when broad day the world discovered has,
Vp Vna rose, vp rose the Lyon eke,
And on their former iourney forward pas,
In wayes vnknowne, her wandring knight to seeke,
With paines farre passing that long wandring Greeke,
That for his loue refused deitie;
Such were the labours of this Lady meeke,
Still seeking him, that from her still did flie,
Then furthest from her hope, when most she weened nie.

Soone as she parted thence, the fearefull twaine,
That blind old woman and her daughter deare
Came forth, and finding Kirkrapine there slaine,
For anguish great they gan to rend their heare,
And beat their brests, and naked flesh to teare.
And when they both had wept and wayld their fill,
Then forth they ranne like two amazed deare,
Halfe mad through malice, and reuenging will,
To follow her, that was the causer of their ill.

Whom ouertaking, they gan loudly bray,
With hollow howling, and lamenting cry,
Shamefully at her rayling all the way,
And her accusing of dishonesty,
That was the flowre of faith and chastity;
And still amidst her rayling, she did pray,
That plagues, and mischiefs, and long misery
Might fall on her, and follow all the way,
And that in endlesse error she might euer stray.

But when she saw her prayers nought preuaile,
She backe returned with some labour lost;
And in the way as she did weepe and waile,
A knight her met in mighty armes embost,
Yet knight was not for all his bragging bost,
But subtill Archimag, that Vna sought
By traynes into new troubles to haue tost:
Of that old woman tydings he besought,
If that of such a Ladie she could tellen ought.

Therewith she gan her passion to renew,
And cry, and curse, and raile, and rend her heare,
Saying, that harlot she too lately knew,
That caused her shed so many a bitter teare,
And so forth told the story of her feare:
Much seemed he to mone her haplesse chaunce,
And after for that Ladie did inquere;
Which being taught, he forward gan aduance
His fair enchaunted steed, and eke his charmed launce.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

Ere long he came, where Vna traueild slow,
And that wilde Champion wayting her besyde:
Whom seeing such, for dread he durst not show
Himselfe too nigh at hand, but turned wyde
Vnto an hill; from whence when she him spyde,
By his like seeming shield, her knight by name
She weend it was, and towards him gan ryde:
Approching nigh, she wist it was the same,
And with faire fearefull humblesse towards him shee came.

And weeping said, Ah my long lacked Lord,
Where haue ye bene thus long out of my sight?
Much feared I to haue bene quite abhord,
Or ought haue done, that ye displeasen might,
That should as death vnto my deare hart light:
For since mine eye your ioyous sight did mis,
My chearefull day is turnd to chearelesse night,
And eke my night of death the shadow is;
But welcome now my light, and shining lampe of blis.

He thereto meeting said, My dearest Dame,
Farre be it from your thought, and fro my will,
To thinke that knighthood I so much should shame,
As you to leaue, that haue me loued still,
And chose in Faery court of meere goodwill,
Where noblest knights were to be found on earth:
The earth shall sooner leaue her kindly skill
To bring forth fruit, and make eternall derth,
Then I leaue you, my liefe, yborne of heauenly berth.

And sooth to say, why I left you so long,
Was for to seeke aduerture in strange place,
Where Archimago said a felon strong
To many knights did daily worke disgrace;
But knight he now shall neuer more deface:
Good cause of mine excuse; that mote ye please
Well to accept, and euermore embrace
My faithfull seruice, that by land and seas
Haue vowd you to defend. Now then your plaint appease.

His louely words her seemd due recompence
Of all her passed paines: one louing howre
For many yeares of sorrow can dispençe:
A dram of sweet is worth a pound of sowre:
She has forgot, how many a wofull stowre
For him she late endur'd; she speakes no more
Of past: true is, that true loue hath no powre
To looken backe; his eyes be fixt before.
Before her stands her knight, for whom she toyld so sore.

Much like, as when the beaten marinere,
That long hath wandred in the Ocean wide,
Oft soust in swelling Tethys saltish teare,
And long time hauing tand his tawney hide
With blustring breath of heauen, that none can bide,
And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound,
Soone as the port from farre he has espide,
His chearefull whistle merrily doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups; his mates him pledg around.

Such ioy made Vna, when her knight she found;
And eke th'enchaunter ioyous seemd no lesse,
Then the glad marchant, that does vew from ground
His ship farre come from watrie wilderness,
He hurles out vowes, and Neptune oft doth blesse:
So forth they past, and all the way they spent
Discoursing of her dreadfull late distresse,
In which he askt her, what the Lyon ment:
Who told her all that fell in iourney as she went.

They had not ridden farre, when they might see
One pricking towards them with hastie heat,
Full strongly armd, and on a courser free,
That through his fiercenesse fomed all with sweat,
And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,
When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side;
His looke was sterne, and seemed still to threat
Cruell reuenge, which he in hart did hyde,
And on his shield Sans loy in bloudie lines was dyde.

When nigh he drew vnto this gentle payre
And saw the Red-crosse, which the knight did beare,
He burnt in fire, and gan eftsoones prepare
Himselfe to battell with his couched speare.
Loth was that other, and did faint through feare,
To taste th'vntryed dint of deadly steele;
But yet his Lady did so well him cheare,
That hope of new good hap he gan to feele;
So bent his speare, and spurnd his horse with yron heele.

But that proud Paynim forward came so fierce,
And full of wrath, that with his sharp-head speare
Through vainely crossed shield he quite did pierce,
And had his staggering steede not shrunke for feare,
Through shield and bodie eke he should him beare:
Yet so great was the puissance of his push,
That from his saddle quite he did him beare:
He tombling rudely downe to ground did rush,
And from his gored wound a well of bloud did gush.

Dismounting lightly from his loftie steed,
He to him lept, in mind to reauue his life,
And proudly said, Lo there the worthie meed
Of him, that slew Sansfoy with bloudie knife;
Henceforth his ghost freed from repining strife,
In peace may passen ouer Lethe lake,
When morning altars purgd with enemies life,
The blacke infernall Furies doen aslake:
Life from Sansfoy thou tookst, Sansloy shall frō thee take.

Therewith in haste his helmet gan vnlace,
Till Vna cride, O hold that heauie hand,
Deare Sir, what euer that thou be in place:
Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquisht stand
Now at thy mercy: Mercie not withstand:
For he is one the truest knight aliuie,
Though conquered now he lie on lowly land,
And whilest him fortune fauour'd, faire did thriue
In bloudie field: therefore of life him not depriue.

Her piteous words might not abate his rage,
But rudely rending vp his helmet, would
Haue slaine him straight: but when he sees his age,
And hoarie head of Archimago old,
His hastie hand he doth amazed hold,
And halfe ashamed, wondred at the sight:
For the old man well knew he, though vntold,
In charmes and magicke to haue wondrous might,
Ne euer wont in field, ne in round lists to fight.

And said, Why Archimago, lucklesse syre,
What doe I see? what hard mishap is this,
That hath thee hither brought to taste mine yre?
Or thine the fault, or mine the error is,
In stead of foe to wound my friend amis?
He answered nought, but in a traunce still lay,
And on those guilefull dazed eyes of his
The cloud of death did sit. Which doen away,
He left him lying so, ne would no lenger stay.

But to the virgin comes, who all this while
Amased stands, her selfe so mockt to see
By him, who has the guerdon of his guile,
For so misfeigning her true knight to bee:
Yet is she now in more perplexitie,
Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold,
From whom her booteth not at all to flie;
Who by her cleanly garment catching hold,
Her from her Palfrey pluckt, her visage to behold.

But her fierce seruant full of kingly awe
And high disdain, whenas his soueraine Dame
So rudely handled by her foe he sawe,
With gaping iawes full greedy at him came,
And ramping on his shield, did weene the same
Haue reft away with his sharpe rending clawes:
But he was stout, and lust did now inflame
His corage more, that frō his griping pawes
He hath his shield redeem'd, and forth his sword he drawes.

O then too weake and feeble was the forse
Of saluage beast, his puissance to withstand:
For he was strong, and of so mightie corse,
As euer wielded speare in warlike hand,
And feates of armes did wisely vnderstand.
Eftsoones he perced through his chaufed chest
With thrilling point of deadly yron brand,
And launcht his Lordly hart: with death opprest
He roar'd aloud, whiles life forsooke his stubborne brest.

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne maid
From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will?
Her faithfull gard remou'd, her hope dismaid,
Her selfe a yeelded pray to saue or spill.
He now Lord of the field, his pride to fill,
With foule reproches, and disdainfull spight
Her vildly entertaines, and will or nill,
Beares her away vpon his courser light:
Her prayers nought preuaile, his rage is more of might.

And all the way, with great lamenting paine,
And piteous plaints she filleth his dull eares,
That stony hart could riuen haue in twaine,
And all the way she wets with flowing teares:
But he enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares.
Her seruile beast yet would not leaue her so,
But followes her farre off, ne ought he feares,
To be partaker of her wandring woe,
More mild in beastly kind, then that her beastly foe.

Cant. IV.

To sinfull house of Pride, Duessa
guides the faithfull knight,
Where brothers death to wreak Sansioy
doth challenge him to fight.

Young knight, what euer that dost armes professe,
And through long labours hunttest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
In choice, and change of thy deare loued Dame,
Least thou of her beleue too lightly blame,
And rash misweening doe thy hart remoue:
For vnto knight there is no greater shame,
Then lightnesse and inconstancie in loue;
That doth this Redcrosse knights ensample plainly proue.

Who after that he had faire Vna lorne,
Through light misdeeming of her loialtie,
And false Duessa in her sted had borne,
Called Fidess', and so supposd to bee;
Long with her traueild, till at last they see
A goodly building, brauely garnished,
The house of mightie Prince it seemd to bee:
And towards it a broad high way that led,
All bare through peoples feet, which thither traueiled.

Great troupes of people traueild thitherward
Both day and night, of each degree and place,
But few returned, hauing scaped hard,
With balefull beggerie, or foule disgrace,
Which euer after in most wretched case,
Like loathsome lazars, by the hedges lay.
Thither Duessa bad him bend his pace:
For she is wearie of the toilesome way,
And also nigh consumed is the lingring day.

A stately Pallace built of squared bricke,
Which cunningly was without mortar laid,
Whose wals were high, but nothing strong, nor thick,
And golden foile all ouer them displaid,
That purest skye with brightnesse they dismaid:
High lifted vp were many loftie towres,
And goodly galleries farre ouer laid,
Full of faire windowes, and delightfull bowres;
And on the top a Diall told the timely howres.

It was a goodly heape for to behould,
And spake the praises of the workmans wit;
But full great pittie, that so faire a mould
Did on so weake foundation euer sit:
For on a sandie hill, that still did flit,
And fall away, it mounted was full hie,
That euery breath of heauen shaken it:
And all the hinder parts, that few could spie,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

Arriued there they passed in forth right;
For still to all the gates stood open wide,
Yet charge of them was to a Porter hight
Cald Maluenú, who entrance none denide:
Thence to the hall, which was on euery side
With rich array and costly arras dight:
Infinite sorts of people did abide
There waiting long, to win the wished sight
Of her, that was the Lady of that Pallace bright.

By them they passe, all gazing on them round,
And to the Presence mount; whose glorious vew
Their frayle amazed senses did confound:
In liuing Princes court none euer knew
Such endlesse richesse, and so sumptuous shew;
Ne Persia selfe, the nourse of pompous pride
Like euer saw. And there a noble crew
Of Lordes and Ladies stood on euery side
Which with their presence faire, the place much beautifide.

High aboue all a cloth of State was spred,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day,
On which there sate most braue embellished
With royall robes and gorgeous array,
A mayden Queene, that shone as Titans ray,
In glistring gold, and peerelesse pretious stone:
Yet her bright blazing beautie did assay
To dim the brightnesse of her glorious throne,
As enuying her selfe, that too exceeding shone.

Exceeding shone, like Phoebus fairest childe,
That did presume his fathers firie wayne,
And flaming mouthes of steedes vnwonted wilde
Through highest heauen with weaker hand to rayne;
Proud of such glory and aduancement vaine,
While flashing beames do daze his feeble eyen,
He leaues the welkin way most beaten plaine,
And rapt with whirling wheelles, inflames the skyen,
With fire not made to burne, but fairely for to shyne.

So proud she shyned in her Princely state,
Looking to heauen; for earth she did disdayne,
And sitting high; for lowly she did hate:
Lo vnderneath her scornefull feete, was layne
A dreadfull Dragon with an hideous trayne,
And in her hand she held a mirrhour bright,
Wherein her face she often vewed fayne,
And in her selfe-lou'd semblance tooke delight;
For she was wondrous faire, as any liuing wight.

Of griesly Pluto she the daughter was,
And sad Proserpina the Queene of hell;
Yet did she thinke her pearelesse wroth to pas
That parentage, with pride so did she swell,
And thundring Ioue, that high in heauen doth dwell,
And wield the world, she claymed for her syre,
Or if that any else did Ioue excell:
For to the highest she did still aspyre, Or if ought higher
were then that, did it desyre.

And proud Lucifera men did her call,
That made her selfe a Queene, and crownd to be,
Yet rightfull kingdome she had none at all,
Ne heritage of natiue soueraintie,
But did vsurpe with wrong and tyrannie
Vpon the scepter, which she now did hold:
Ne ruld her Realmes with lawes, but pollicie,
And strong aduizement of six wisards old,
That with their counsels bad her kingdome did vphold.

Soone as the Elfing knight in presence came,
And false Duessa seeming Lady faire,
A gentle Husher, Vanitie by name
Made rowme, and passage for them did prepaire:
So goodly brought them to the lowest staire
Of her high throne, where they on humble knee
Making obeysance, did the cause declare,
Why they were come, her royall state to see,
To proue the wide report of her great Maiestee.

With loftie eyes, halfe loth to looke so low,
She thanked them in her disdainefull wise,
Ne other grace vouchsafed them to show
Of Princesse worthy, scarce them bad arise.
Her Lordes and Ladies all this while deuise
Themselues to setten forth to straungers sight:
Some frounce their curled haire in courtly guise,
Some prancke their ruffes, and others trimly dight
Their gay attire: each others greater pride does spight.

Goodly they all that knight do entertaine,
Right glad with him to haue increast their crew:
But to Duess' each one himselfe did paine
All kindnesse and faire courtesie to shew;
For in that court whylome her well they knew:
Yet the stout Faerie mongst the middest crowd
Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly vew,
And that great Princesse too exceeding prouwd,
That to strange knight no better countenance allowd.

Suddein vpriseth from her stately place
The royall Dame, and for her coche doth call:
All hurtlen forth, and she with Princely pace,
As faire Aurora in her purple pall,
Out of the East the dawning day doth call:
So forth she comes: her brightnesse brode doth blaze;
The heapes of people thronging in the hall,
Do ride each other, vpon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitterand light doth all mens eyes amaze.

So forth she comes, and to her coche does clyme,
Adorned all with gold, and girlonds gay,
That seemd as fresh as Flora in her prime,
And stroue to match, in royall rich array,
Great Iunoes golden chaire, the which they say
The Gods stand gazing on, when she does ride
To Ioues high house through heauens bras-paued way
Drawne of faire Pecoocks, that excell in pride,
And full of Argus eyes their tailes dispredden wide.

But this was drawne of six vnequall beasts,
On which her six sage Counsellours did ryde,
Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts,
With like conditions to their kinds applyde:
Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde,
Was sluggish Idlenesse the nourse of sin;
Vpon a slouthfull Asse he chose to ryde,
Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin,
Like to an holy Monck, the seruice to begin.

And in his hand his Portesse still he bare,
That much was worne, but therein little red,
For of deuotion he had little care,
Still drownd in sleepe, and most of his dayes ded;
Scarse could he once vphold his heauie hed,
To looken, whether it were night or day:
May seeme the wayne was very euill led,
When such an one had guiding of the way,
That knew not, whether right he went, or else astray.

From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne,
And greatly shunned manly exercise,
From euery worke he chalenged essoynе,
For contemplation sake: yet otherwise,
His life he led in lawlesse riotise;
By which he grew to grieuous malady;
For in his lustlesse limbs through euill guise
A shaking feuer raignd continually:
Such one was Idlenesse, first of this company.

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
Deformed creature, on a filthie swyne,
His belly was vp-blowne with luxury,
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne,
And like a Crane his necke was long and fyne,
With which he swallowd vp excessiue feast,
For want whereof poore people oft did pyne;
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spued vp his gorge, that all did him deteast.

In greene vine leaues he was right fitly clad;
For other clothes he could not weare for heat,
And on his head an yuie girland had,
From vnder which fast trickled downe the sweat:
Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did beare a bouzing can,
Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat
His dronken corse he scarce vpholden can,
In shape and life more like a monster, then a man.

Vnfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke vnhable once to stirre or go,
Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drinke was drowned so,
That from his friend he seldome knew his fo:
Full of diseases was his carcas blew,
And a dry dropsie through his flesh did flow:
Which by misdiet daily greater grew:
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.

And next to him rode lustfull Lechery,
Vpon a bearded Goat, whose rugged haire,
And whally eyes (the signe of gelosy.)
Was like the person selfe, whom he did beare:
Who rough, and blacke, and filthy did appeare,
Vnseemely man to please faire Ladies eye;
Yet he of Ladies oft was loued deare,
When fairer faces were bid standen by:
O who does know the bent of womens fantasy?

In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire,
Which vnderneath did hide his filthinesse,
And in his hand a burning hart he bare,
Full of vaine follies, and new fanglenesse:
For he was false, and fraught with ficklenesse,
And learned had to loue with secret lookes,
And well could daunce, and sing with ruefulness,
And fortunes tell, and read in louing bookes,
And thousand other wayes, to bait his fleshly hookes.

Inconstant man, that loued all he saw,
And lusted after all, that he did loue,
Ne would his looser life be tide to law,
But ioyd weake wemens hearts to tempt, and proue
If from their loyall loues he might then moue;
Which lewdnesse fild him with reprochfull paine
Of that fowle euill, which all men reprove,
That rots the marrow, and consumes the braine:
Such one was Lecherie, the third of all this traine.

And greedy Auarice by him did ride,
Vpon a Camell loaden all with gold;
Two iron coffers hong on either side,
With precious mettall full, as they might hold,
And in his lap an heape of coine he told;
For of his wicked pelfe his God he made,
And vnto hell him selfe for money sold;
Accursed vsurie was all his trade,
And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide.

His life was nigh vnto deaths doore yplast,
And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes he ware,
Ne scarce good morsell all his life did tast,
But both from backe and belly still did spare,
To fill his bags, and richesse to compare;
Yet chylde ne kinsman liuing had he none
To leaue them to; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,
He led a wretched life vnto him selfe vnknowne.

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffise,
Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store,
Whose need had end, but no end couetise,
Whose wealth was want, whose plenty made him pore,
Who had enough, yet wished euer more;
A vile disease, and eke in foote and hand
A grieuous gout tormented him full sore,
That well he could not touch, nor go, nor stand:
Such one was Auarice, the fourth of this faire band.

And next to him malicious Enuie rode,
Vpon a rauinous wolfe, and still did chaw
Betweene his cankred teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his chaw;
But inwardly he chawed his owne maw
At neighbours wealth, that made him euer sad;
For death it was, when any good he saw,
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had,
But when he heard of harme, he waxed wondrous glad.

All in a kirtle of discoloured say
He clothed was, y painted full of eyes;
And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hatefull Snake, the which his taile vptyes
In many folds, and mortall sting implyes.
Still as he rode, he gnasht his teeth, to see
Those heapes of gold with griple Couetyse,
And grudged at the great felicitie
Of proud Lucifera, and his owne companie.

He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds,
And him no lesse, that any like did vse,
And who with gracious bread the hungry feeds,
His almes for want of faith he doth accuse;
So euery good to bad he doth abuse:
And eke the verse of famous Poets witt
He does backebite, and spightfull poison spues
From leprous mouth on all, that euer writt:
Such one vile Enuie was, that fift in row did sitt.

And him beside rides fierce reuenging VVrath,
Vpon a Lion, loth for to be led;
And in his hand a burning brond he hath,
The which he brandisheth about his hed;
His eyes did hurle forth sparkles fiery red,
And stared sterne on all, that him beheld,
As ashes pale of hew and seeming ded;
And on his dagger still his hand he held,
Trembling through hasty rage, wh&etilde; choler in
him sweld.

His ruffin raiment all was staind with blood,
Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent,
Through vnaduized rashnesse woxen wood;
For of his hands he had no gouernement,
Ne car'd for bloud in his auengement:
But when the furious fit was ouerpast,
His cruell facts he often would repent;
Yet wilfull man he neuer would forecast,
How many mischieues should ensue his heedlesse hast.

Full many mischiefes follow cruell VVrath;
Abhorred bloudshed, and tumultuous strife,
Vnmanly murder, and vnthrifty scath,
Bitter despight, with rancours rusty knife,
And fretting griefe the enemy of life;
All these, and many euils moe haunt ire,
The swelling Splene, and Frenzy raging rife,
The shaking Palsey, and Saint Fraunces fire:
Such one was VVrath, the last of this vngodly tire.

And after all, vpon the wagon beame
Rode Sathan, with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lasht the laesie teme,
So oft as Slowth still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs of people did about them band,
Showting for ioy, and still before their way
A foggy mist had couered all the land;
And vnderneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead sculs & bones of men, whose life had gone astray.

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort,
To take the solace of the open aire,
And in fresh flowring fields themselues to sport;
Emongst the rest rode that false Lady faire,
The fowle Duessa, next vnto the chaire
Of proud Lucifer', as one of the traine:
But that good knight would not so nigh repaire,
Him selfe estraunging from their ioyauce vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far vnfit for warlike swaine.

So hauing solaced themselues a space
With pleasaunce of the breathing fields yfed
They backe returned to the Princely Place;
Whereas an errant knight in armes yclod,
And heathnish shield, wherein with letters red
Was writ Sans ioy, they new arriued find:
Enflam'd with fury and fiers hardy-hed,
He seemd in hart to harbour thoughts vnkind,
And nourish bloody vengeance in his bitter mind.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

Who when the shamed shield of slaine Sans foy
He spide with that same Faery champions page,
Bewraying him, that did of late destroy
His eldest brother, burning all with rage
He to him leapt, and that same enuious gage
Of victors glory from him snatcht away:
But th'Elfin knight, which ought that warlike wage,
Disdained to loose the meed he wonne in fray,
And him rencountring fierce, reskewd the noble pray.
Therewith they gan to hurtlen greedily,
Redoubted battaile ready to darrayne,
And clash their shields, and shake their swords on hy,
That with their sturre they troubled all the traine;
Till that great Queene vpon eternall paine
Of high displeasure, that ensewen might,
Commaunded them their fury to refraine,
And if that either to that shield had right,
In equall lists they should the morrow next it fight.

Ah dearest Dame, (quoth then the Paynim bold,)
Pardon the error of enraged wight,
Whom great grieffe made forget the raines to hold
Of reasons rule, to see this recreant knight,
No knight, but treachour full of false despight
And shamefull treason, who through guile hath slayn
The prowest knight, that euer field did fight,
Euen stout Sans foy (O who can then refrayn?)
Whose shield he beares renuerst, the more to heape disdayn.

And to augment the glorie of his guile,
His dearest loue the faire Fidessa loe
Is there possessed of the traytour vile,
Who reapes the haruest sowen by his foe,
Sowen in bloody field, and bought with woe:
That brothers hand shall dearely well requight
So be, ô Queene, you equall fauour showe.
Him litle answerd th'angry Elfin knight;
He neuer meant with words, but swords to plead his right.

But threw his gauntlet as a sacred pledge,
 His cause in combat the next day to try:
 So been they parted both, with harts on edge,
 To be aueng'd each on his enemy.
 That night they pas in ioy and iollity,
 Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall;
 For Steward was excessiue Gluttonie,
 That of his plenty poured forth to all:
 Which doen, the Chamberlain Slowth did to rest them call.

Now whenas darkesome night had all displayd
 Her coleblacke curtein ouer brightest skye,
 The warlike youtnes on dayntie couches layd,
 Did chace away sweet sleepe from sluggish eye,
 To muse on meanes of hoped victory.
 But whenas Morpheus had with leaden mace
 Arrested all that courtly company,
 Vp-rose Duessa from her resting place,
 And to the Paynims lodging comes with silent pace.

Whom broad awake she finds, in troublous fit,
 Forecasting, how his foe he might annoy,
 And him amoues with speaches seeming fit:
 Ah deare Sans ioy, next dearest to Sans foy,
 Cause of my new grieffe, cause of my new ioy,
 Ioyous, to see his ymage in mine eye,
 And greeu'd, to thinke how foe did him destroy,
 That was the flowre of grace and cheualrye;
 Lo his Fidessa to thy secret faith I flye.

With gentle wordes he can her fairely greet,
 And bad say on the secret of her hart.
 Then sighing soft, I learne that litle sweet
 Oft tempred is (quoth she) with muchell smart:
 For since my brest was launcht with louely dart
 Of deare Sansfoy, I neuer ioyed howre,
 But in eternall woes my weaker hart
 Haue wasted, louing him with all my powre,
 And for his sake haue felt full many an heauie stowre.

At last when perils all I weened past,
 And hop'd to reape the crop of all my care,
 Into new woes vnweeting I was cast,
 By this false faytor, who vnworthy ware
 His worthy shield, whom he with guilefull snare
 Entrapped slew, and brought to shamefull graue.
 Me silly maid away with him he bare,
 And euer since hath kept in darksome caue,
 For that I would not yeeld, that to Sans-foy I gauē.

But since faire Sunne hath sperst that lowring clowd,
 And to my loathed life now shewes some light,
 Vnder your beames I will me safely shrowd,
 From dreaded storme of his disdainfull spight:
 To you th'inheritance belongs by right
 Of brothers prayse, to you eke longs his loue.
 Let not his loue, let not his restlesse spight
 Be vnreueng'd, that calles to you aboue
 From wandring Stygian shores, where it doth endlesse moue.

Thereto said he, Faire Dame be nought dismayd
 For sorrowes past; their grieue is with them gone:
 Ne yet of present perill be affraid;
 For needlesse feare did neuer vantage none,
 And helplesse hap it booteth not to mone.
 Dead is Sans-foy, his vitall paines are past,
 Though greeued ghost for vengeance deepe do grone:
 He liues, that shall him pay his dewties last,
 And guiltie Elfin bloud shall sacrifice in hast.

O but I feare the fickle freakes (quoth shee)
 Of fortune false, and oddes of armes in field.
 Why dame (quoth he) what oddes can euer bee,
 Where both do fight alike, to win or yield?
 Yea but (quoth she) he beares a charmed shield,
 And eke enchaunted armes, that none can perce,
 Ne none can wound the man, that does them wield.
 Charmd or enchaunted (answerd he then ferce)
 I no whit reck, ne you the like need to reherce.

But faire Fidessa, sithens fortunes guile,
Or enimies powre hath now captiued you,
Returne from whence ye came, and rest a while
Till morrow next, that I the Elfe subdew,
And with Sans-foyes dead dowry you endew.
Ay me, that is a double death (she said)
With proud foes sight my sorrow to renew:
Where euer yet I be, my secrete aid
Shall follow you. So passing forth she him obaid.

Cant. V.

The faithfull knight in equall field
subdewes his faithlesse foe,
Whom false Duessa saues, and for
his cure to hell does goe.

The noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
And is with child of glorious great intent,
Can neuer rest, vntill it forth haue brought
Th'eternall brood of glorie excellent:
Such restlesse passion did all night torment
The flaming corage of that Faery knight,
Deuizing, how that doughtie turnament
With greatest honour he atchieuen might;
Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light.

At last the golden Orientall gate
Of greatest heauen gan to open faire,
And Phoebus fresh, as bridegrome to his mate,
Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie haire:
And hurld his glistring beames through gloomy aire.
Which when the wakeful Elfe perceiu'd, streight way
He started vp, and did him selfe prepaire,
In sun-bright armes, and battailous array:
For with that Pagan proud he combat will that day.

And forth he comes into the commune hall,
Where earely waite him many a gazing eye,
To weet what end to straunger knights may fall.
There many Minstrales maken melody,
To driue away the dull melancholy,
And many Bardes, that to the trembling chord
Can tune their timely voyces cunningly,
And many Chroniclers, that can record
Old loues, and warres for Ladies doen by many a Lord.

Soone after comes the cruell Sarazin,
In wouen maile all armed warily,
And sternly lookes at him, who not a pin
Does care for looke of liuing creatures eye.
They bring them wines of Greece and Araby,
And daintie spices fetcht from furthest Ynd,
To kindle heat of corage priuily:
And in the wine a solemne oth they bynd
T'obserue the sacred lawes of armes, that are assynd.

At last forth comes that far renowned Queene,
With royall pomp and Princely maiestie;
She is ybrought vnto a paled greene,
And placed vnder stately canapee,
The warlike feates of both those knights to see.
On th'other side in all mens open vew
Duessa placed is, and on a tree
Sans-foy his shield is hangd with bloody hew:
Both those the lawrell girlonds to the victor dew.

A shrilling trompet sounded from on hye,
And vnto battaill bad them selues addresse:
Their shining shieldes about their wrestes they tye,
And burning blades about their heads do blesse,
The instruments of wrath and heauinesse:
With greedy force each other doth assayle,
And strike so fiercely, that they do impresse
Deepe dinted furrowes in the battred mayle;
The yron walles to ward their blowes are weake & fraile.

The Sarazin was stout, and wondrous strong,
And heaped blowes like yron hammers great:
For after bloud and vengeance he did long.
The knight was fiers, and full of youthly heat:
And doubled strokes, like dreaded thunders threat:
For all for prayse and honour he did fight.
Both stricken strike, and beaten both do beat,
That from their shields forth flyeth firie light,
And helmets hewen deepe, shew marks of eithers might.

So th'one for wrong, the other striues for right:
As when a Gryfon seized of his pray,
A Dragon fiers encountreth in his flight,
Through widest ayre making his ydle way,
That would his rightfull rauine rend away:
With hideous horroure both together smight,
And souce so sore, that they the heauens affray:
The wise Southsayer seeing so sad sight,
Th'amazed vulgar tels of warres and mortall fight.

So th'one for wrong, the other striues for right,
And each to deadly shame would driue his foe:
The cruell steele so greedily doth bight
In tender flesh, that streames of bloud down flow,
With which the armes, that earst so bright did show,
Into a pure vermillion now are dyde:
Great ruth in all the gazers harts did grow,
Seeing the gored woundes to gape so wyde,
That victory they dare not wish to either side.

At last the Paynim chaunst to cast his eye,
His suddein eye, flaming with wrathfull fyre,
Vpon his brothers shield, which hong thereby:
Therewith redoubled was his raging yre,
And said, Ah wretched sonne of wofull syre,
Doest thou sit wayling by black Stygian lake,
Whilest here thy shield is hangd for victors hyre,
And sluggish german doest thy forces slake,
To after-send his foe, that him may ouertake?

Goe caytiue Elfe, him quickly ouertake,
And soone redeeme from his long wandring woe;
Goe guiltie ghost, to him my message make,
That I his shield haue quit from dying foe.
Therewith vpon his crest he stroke him so,
That twice he reeled, readie twice to fall;
End of the doubtfull battell deemed tho
The lookers on, and lowd to him gan call
The false Duessa, Thine the shield, and I, and all.

Soone as the Faerie heard his Ladie speake,
Out of his swowning dreame he gan awake,
And quickning faith, that earst was woxen weake,
The creeping deadly cold away did shake:
Tho mou'd with wrath, and shame, and Ladies sake,
Of all attonce he cast auengd to bee,
And with so'exceeding furie at him strake,
That forced him to stoupe vpon his knee;
Had he not stouped so, he should haue clouen bee.

And to him said, Goe now proud Miscreant,
Thy selfe thy message doe to german deare,
Alone he wandring thee too long doth want:
Goe say, his foe thy shield with his doth beare.
Therewith his heauie hand he high gan reare,
Him to haue slaine; when loe a darkesome clowd
Vpon him fell: he no where doth appeare,
But vanisht is. The Elfe him cals alowd,
But answer none receiues: the darknes him does shrowd.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

In haste Duessa from her place arose,
And to him running said, O prowest knight,
That euer Ladie to her loue did chose,
Let now abate the terror of your might,
And quench the flame of furious despight,
And bloudie vengeance; lo th'infernall powres
Couering your foe with cloud of deadly night,
Haue borne him hence to Plutoes balefull bowres.
The conquest yours, I yours, the shield, and glory yours.

Not all so satisfide, with greedie eye
He sought all round about, his thirstie blade
To bath in bloud of faithlesse enemy;
Who all that while lay hid in secret shade:
He standes amazed, how he thence should fade.
At last the trumpets Triumph sound on hie,
And running Heralds humble homage made,
Greeting him goodly with new victorie,
And to him brought the shield, the cause of enmitie.

Wherewith he goeth to that soueraine Queene,
And falling her before on lowly knee,
To her makes present of his seruice seene:
Which she accepts, with thankes, and goodly gree,
Greatly aduauncing his gay cheualree.
So marcheth home, and by her takes the knight,
Whom all the people follow with great glee,
Shouting, and clapping all their hands on hight,
That all the aire it fills, and flyes to heauen bright.

Home is he brought, and laid in sumptuous bed:
Where many skilfull leaches him abide,
To salue his hurts, that yet still freshly bled.
In wine and oyle they wash his woundes wide,
And softly can embalme on euery side.
And all the while, most heauenly melody
About the bed sweet musicke did diuide,
Him to beguile of grieffe and agony:
And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly.

As when a wearie traoueller that strays
 By muddy shore of broad seuen-mouthed Nile,
 Vnweeting of the perillous wandring wayes,
 Doth meet a cruell craftie Crocodile,
 Which in false grieffe hyding his harmefull guile,
 Doth weepe full sore, and sheddeth tender teares:
 The foolish man, that pitties all this while
 His mournefull plight, is swallowd vp vnwares,
 Forgetfull of his owne, that mindes anothers cares.

So wept Duessa vntill euentide,
 That shyning lampes in Ioues high house were light:
 Then forth she rose, ne lenger would abide,
 But comes vnto the place, where th'Hethen knight
 In slombring swownd nigh voyd of vitall spright,
 Lay couer'd with inchaunted cloud all day:
 Whom when she found, as she him left in plight,
 To wayle his woefull case she would not stay,
 But to the easterne coast of heauen makes speedy way.

Where griesly Night, with visage deadly sad,
 That Phoebus chearefull face durst neuer vew,
 And in a foule blacke pitchie mantle clad,
 She findes forth comming from her darkesome mew,
 Where she all day did hide her hated hew.
 Before the dore her yron charet stood,
 Alreadie harnesssed for iourney new;
 And coleblacke steedes yborne of hellish brood,
 That on their rustie bits did champ, as they were wood.

Who when she saw Duessa sunny bright,
 Adornd with gold and iewels shining cleare,
 She greatly grew amazed at the sight,
 And th'vnacquainted light began to feare:
 For neuer did such brightnesse there appeare,
 And would haue backe retyred to her caue,
 Vntill the witches speech she gan to heare,
 Saying, Yet ô thou dreaded Dame, I craue
 Abide, till I haue told the message, which I haue.

She stayd, and fourth Duessa gan proceede,
O thou most auncient Grandmother of all,
More old then Ioue, whom thou at first didst breede,
Or that great house of Gods cælestiall,
Which wast begot in Dæmogorgons hall,
And sawst the secrets of the world vnmade,
Why suffredst thou thy Nephewes deare to fall
With Elfin sword, most shamefully betrade?
Lo where the stout Sansioy doth sleepe in deadly shade.

And him before, I saw with bitter eyes
The bold Sansfoy shrinke vnderneath his speare;
And now the pray of fowles in field he lyes,
Nor wayld of friends, nor laid on groning beare,
That whylome was to me too dearely deare.
O what of Gods then boots it to be borne,
If old Aveugles sonnes so euill heare?
Or who shall not great Nightes children scorne,
When two of three her Nephews are so fowle forlorne?

Vp then, vp dreary Dame, of darknesse Queene,
Go gather vp the reliques of thy race,
Or else goe them auenge, and let be seene,
That dreaded Night in brightest day hath place,
And can the children of faire light deface.
Her feeling speeches some compassion moued
In hart, and chaunge in that great mothers face:
Yet pittie in her hart was neuer proued
Till then: for euermore she hated, neuer loued.

And said, Deare daughter rightly may I rew
The fall of famous children borne of mee,
And good successes, which their foes ensew:
But who can turne the streame of destinee,
Or breake the chayne of strong necessitee,
Which fast is tyde to Ioues eternall seat?
The sonnes of Day he faououreth, I see,
And by my ruines thinkes to make them great:
To make one great by others losse, is bad excheat.

Yet shall they not escape so freely all;
For some shall pay the price of others guilt:
And he the man that made Sansfoy to fall,
Shall with his owne bloud price that he hath spilt.
But what art thou, that telst of Nephews kilt?
I that do seeme not I, Duessa am,
(Quoth she) how euer now in garments gilt,
And gorgeous gold arayd I to thee came;
Duessa I, the daughter of Deceipt and Shame.

Then bowing downe her aged backe, she kist
The wicked witch, saying; In that faire face
The false resemblance of Deceipt, I wist
Did closely lurke; yet so true-seeming grace
It carried, that I scarce in darkesome place
Could it discerne, though I the mother bee
Of falshood, and root of Duessaes race.
O welcome child, whom I haue longd to see,
And how haue seene vnwares. Lo now I go with thee.

Then to her yron wagon she betakes,
And with her beares the fowle welfauourd witch:
Through mirkesome aire her readie way she makes.
Her twyfold Teme, of which two blacke as pitch,
And two were browne, yet each to each vnlich,
Did softly swim away, ne euer stampe,
Vnlesse she chaunst their stubborne mouths to twitch;
Then foming tarre, their bridles they would champe,
And trampling the fine element, would fiercely rampe.

So well they sped, that they be come at length
Vnto the place, whereas the Paynim lay,
Deuoid of outward sense, and natiue strength,
Couerd with charmed cloud from vew of day,
And sight of men, since his late luckelesse fray.
His cruell wounds with cruddy bloud congealed,
They binden vp so wisely, as they may,
And handle softly, till they can be healed:
So lay him in her charet, close in night concealed.

And all the while she stood vpon the ground,
The wakefull dogs did neuer cease to bay,
As giuing warning of th'vnwonted sound,
With which her yron wheelles did them affray,
And her darke griesly looke them much dismay;
The messenger of death, the ghastly Owle
With drearie shriekes did also her bewray;
And hungry Wolues continually did howle,
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so fowle.

Thence turning backe in silence soft they stole,
And brought the heauie corse with easie pace
To yawning gulfe of deepe Auernus hole.
By that same hole an entrance darke and bace
With smoake and sulphure hiding all the place,
Descends to hell: there creature neuer past,
That backe returned without heauenly grace;
But dreadfull Furies, which their chaines haue brast,
And damned sprights sent forth to make ill men aghast.

By that same way the direfull dames doe driue
Their mournfull charet, fild with rusty blood,
And downe to Plutoes house are come biliue:
Which passing through, on euery side them stood
The trembling ghosts with sad amazed mood,
Chattring their yron teeth, and staring wide
With stonie eyes; and all the hellish brood
Of feends infernall flockt on euery side,
To gaze on earthly wight, that with the Night durst ride.

They pas the bitter waues of Acheron,
Where many soules sit wailing woefully,
And come to fiery flood of Phlegeton,
Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fry,
And with sharpe shrilling shriekes doe bootlesse cry,
Cursing high Ioue, the which them thither sent.
The house of endlesse paine is built thereby,
In which ten thousand sorts of punishment
The cursed creatures doe eternally torment.

Before the threshold dreadfull Cerberus
His three deformed heads did lay along,
Curled with thousand adders venemous,
And lilled forth his bloudie flaming tong:
At them he gan to reare his bristles strong,
And felly gnarre, vntill dayes enemy
Did him appease; then downe his taile he hong
And suffered them to passen quietly:
For she in hell and heauen had power equally.

There was Ixion turned on a wheele,
For daring tempt the Queene of heauen to sin;
And Sisyphus an huge round stone did reele
Against an hill, ne might from labour lin;
There thirstie Tantalus hong by the chin;
And Tityus fed a vulture on his maw;
Typhoeus ioynets were stretched on a gin,
Theseus condemned to endlesse slouth by law,
And fifty sisters water in leake vessels draw.

They all beholding worldly wights in place,
Leaue off their worke, vnmindfull of their smart,
To gaze on them; who forth by them doe pace,
Till they be come vnto the furthest part:
Where was a Caue ywrought by wondrous art,
Deepe, darke, vneasie, dolefull, comfortlesse,
In which sad Æsculapius farre a part
Emprisond was in chaines remedillesse,
For that Hippolytus rent corse he did redresse.

Hippolytus a iolly huntsman was,
That wont in charet chace the foming Bore;
He all his Peeres in beautie did surpas,
But Ladies loue as losse of time forbore:
His wanton stepdame loued him the more,
But when she saw her offred sweets refused
Her loue she turnd to hate, and him before
His father fierce of treason false accused,
And with her gealous termes his open eares abused.

Who all in rage his Sea-god syre besought,
Some cursed vengeance on his sonne to cast:
From surging gulf two monsters straight were brought,
With dread whereof his chasing steedes aghast,
Both charet swift and huntsman ouercast.
His goodly corps on ragged cliffs yrent,
Was quite dismembred, and his members chast
Scattered on euery mountaine, as he went,
That of Hippolytus was left no monument.

His cruell stepdame seeing what was donne,
Her wicked dayes with wretched knife did end,
In death auowing th'innocence of her sonne.
Which hearing his rash Syre, began to rend
His haire, and hastie tongue, that did offend:
Tho gathering vp the relicks of his smart
By Dianes meanes, who was Hippolyts frend,
Them brought to Æsculape, that by his art
Did heale them all againe, and ioyned euery part.

Such wondrous science in mans wit to raine
When Ioue auizd, that could the dead reuiue,
And fates expired could renew againe,
Of endlesse life he might him not depriue,
But vnto hell did thrust him downe aliuie,
With flashing thunderbolt ywounded sore:
Where long remaining, he did alwaies striue
Himselfe wilth salues to health for to restore,
And slake the heauenly fire, that raged euermore.

There auncient Night arriuing, did alight
From her nigh wearie waine, and in her armes
To Æsculapius brought the wounded knight:
Whom hauing softly disarayd of armes,
Tho gan to him discouer all his harmes,
Beseeching him with prayer, and with praise,
If either salues, or oyles, or herbes, or charmes
A fordonne wight from dore of death mote raise,
He would at her request prolong her nephews daies.

Ah Dame (quoth he) thou temptest me in vaine,
To dare the thing, which daily yet I rew,
And the old cause of my continued paine
With like attempt to like end to renew.
Is not enough, that thrust from heauen dew
Here endlesse penance for one fault I pay,
But that redoubled crime with vengeance new
Thou biddest me to eeke? Can Night defray
The wrath of thundring Ioue, that rules both night and day?

Not so (quoth she) but sith that heauens king
From hope of heauen hath thee excluded quight,
Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for thing,
And fearest not, that more thee hurten might,
Now in the powre of euerlasting Night?
Goe to then, ô thou farre renowned sonne
Of great Apollo, shew thy famous might
In medicine, that else hath to thee wonne
Great paines, & greater praise, both neuer to be donne.

Her words preuaild: And then the learned leach
His cunning hand gan to his wounds to lay,
And all things else, the which his art did teach:
Which hauing seene, from thence arose away
The mother of dread darknesse, and let stay
Auegles sonne there in the leaches cure,
And backe returning tooke her wonted way,
To runne her timely race, whilst Phoebus pure
In westerne waues his wearie wagon did recure.

The false Duessa leauing noyous Night,
Returnd to stately pallace of dame Pride;
Where when she came, she found the Faery knight
Departed thence, albe his woundes wide
Not throughly heald, vnreadie were to ride.
Good cause he had to hasten thence away;
For on a day his wary Dwarfe had spide,
Where in a dongeon deepe huge numbers lay
Of caytiue wretched thrals, that wayled night and day.

A ruefull sight, as could be seene with eie;
Of whom he learned had in secret wise
The hidden cause of their captiuitie,
How mortgaging their liues to Couetise,
Through wastfull Pride, and wanton Riotise,
They were by law of that proud Tyrannesse
Proukt with VVrath, and Enuies false surmise,
Condemned to that Dongeon mercillesse,
Where they should liue in woe, & die in wretchednesse.

There was that great proud king of Babylon,
That would compell all nations to adore,
And him as onely God to call vpon,
Till through celestiall doome throwne out of dore,
Into an Oxe he was transform'd of yore:
There also was king Croesus, that enhaunst
His heart too high through his great riches store;
And proud Antiochus, the which aduaunst
His cursed hand gainst God, and on his altars daunst.

And them long time before, great Nimrod was,
That first the world with sword and fire warrayd;
And after him old Ninus farre did pas
In princely pompe, of all the world obeyd;
There also was that mightie Monarch layd
Low vnder all, yet aboue all in pride,
That name of natiue syre did fowle vpbrayd,
And would as Ammons sonne be magnifide,
Till scornd of God and man a shamefull death he dide.

All these together in one heape were throwne,
Like carkases of beasts in butchers stall.
And in another corner wide were strowne
The antique ruines of the Romaines fall:
Great Romulus the Grandsyre of them all,
Proud Tarquin, and too lordly Lentulus,
Stout Scipio, and stubborne Hanniball,
Ambitious Sylla, and sterne Marius,
High Cæsar, great Pompey, and fierce Antonius.

Amongst these mighty men were wemen mixt,
Proud wemen, vaine, forgetfull of their yoke:
The bold Semiramis, whose sides transfixt
With sonnes owne blade, her fowle reproches spoke;
Faire Sthenoboea, that her selfe did choke
With wilfull cord, for wanting of her will;
High minded Cleopatra, that with stroke
Of Aspes sting her selfe did stoutly kill:
And thousands moe the like, that did that dongeon fill.

Besides the endlesse routs of wretched thralles,
Which thither were assembled day by day,
From all the world after their wofull falles,
Through wicked pride, and wasted wealthes decay.
But most of all, which in the Dongeon lay
Fell from high Princes courts, or Ladies bowres,
Where they in idle pompe, or wanton play,
Consumed had their goods, and thriftlesse howres,
And lastly throwne themselues into these heauy stowres.

Whose case when as the carefull Dwarfe had tould,
And made ensample of their mournfull sight
Vnto his maister, he no lenger would
There dwell in perill of like painefull plight,
But early rose, and ere that dawning light
Discouered had the world to heauen wyde,
He by a priuie Posterne tooke his flight,
That of no enuious eyes he mote be spyde:
For doubtlesse death ensewd, if any him descryde.

Scarse could he footing find in that fowle way,
For many corses, like a great Lay-stall
Of murdred men which therein strowed lay,
Without remorse, or decent funerall:
Which all through that great Princesse pride did fall
And came to shamefull end. And them beside
Forth ryding vnderneath the castell wall,
A donghill of dead carkases he spide,
The dreadfull spectacle of that sad house of Pride.

Cant. VI.

From lawlesse lust by wondrous grace
fayre Vna is releast:
Whom saluage nation does adore,
and learnes her wise beheast.

As when a ship, that flyes faire vnder saile,
An hidden rocke escaped hath vnwares,
That lay in waite her wrack for to bewaile,
The Marriner yet halfe amazed stares
At perill past, and yet in doubt ne dares
To ioy at his foole-happie ouersight:
So doubly is distrest twixt ioy and cares
The dreadlesse courage of this Elfin knight,
Hauing escapt so sad ensamples in his sight.

Yet sad he was that his too hastie speed
The faire Duesse had forst him leaue behind;
And yet more sad, that Vna his deare dreed
Her truth had stained with treason so vnkind;
Yet crime in her could neuer creature find,
But for his loue, and for her owne selfe sake,
She wandred had from one to other Ynd,
Him for to seeke, ne euer would forsake,
Till her vnwares the fierce Sansloy did ouertake.

Who after Archimagoes fowle defeat,
Led her away into a forrest wilde,
And turning wrathfull fire to lustfull heat,
With beastly sin thought her to haue defilde,
And made the vassall of his pleasures vilde.
Yet first he cast by treatie, and by traynes,
Her to perswade, that stubborne fort to yilde:
For greater conquest of hard loue he gaynes,
That workes it to his will, then he that it constraines.

With fawning wordes he courted her a while,
And looking louely, and oft sighing sore,
Her constant hart did tempt with diuerse guile:
But wordes, and lookes, and sighes she did abhore,
As rocke of Diamond stedfast euermore.
Yet for to feed his fyrie lustfull eye,
He snatcht the vele, that hong her face before;
Then gan her beautie shine, as brightest skye,
And burnt his beastly hart t'efforce her chastitye.

So when he saw his flatt'ring arts to fayle,
And subtile engines bet from batteree,
With greedy force he gan the fort assayle,
Whereof he weend possessed soone to bee,
And win rich spoile of ransackt chastetee.
Ah heauens, that do this hideous act behold,
And heauenly virgin thus outraged see,
How can ye vengeance iust so long withhold,
And hurle not flashing flames vpon that Paynim bold?

The pitteous maiden carefull comfortlesse,
Does throw out thrilling shriekes, & shrieking cryes,
The last vaine helpe of womens great distresse,
And with loud plaints importuneth the skyes,
That molten starres do drop like weeping eyes;
And Phoebus flying so most shamefull sight,
His blushing face in foggy cloud implyes,
And hides for shame. What wit of mortall wight
Can now devise to quit a thrall from such a plight?

Eternall prouidence exceeding thought,
Where none appeares can make her selfe a way:
A wondrous way it for this Lady wrought,
From Lyons clawes to pluck the griped pray.
Her shrill outcryes and shriekes so loud did bray,
That all the woodes and forestes did resownd;
A troupe of Faunes and Satyres far away
Within the wood were dauncing in a rownd,
Whiles old Syluanus slept in shady arber sownd.

Who when they heard that pitteous strained voice,
In hast forsooke their rurall meriment,
And ran towards the far rebownded noyce,
To weet, what wight so loudly did lament.
Vnto the place they come incontinent:
Whom when the raging Sarazin espide,
A rude, misshapen, monstrous rablement,
Whose like he neuer saw, he durst not bide,
But got his ready steed, and fast away gan ride.

The wyld woodgods arriued in the place,
There find the virgin dolefull desolate,
With ruffled rayments, and faire blubbred face,
As her outrageous foe had left her late,
And trembling yet through feare of former hate;
All stand amazed at so vncouth sight,
And gin to pittie her vnhappy state,
All stand astonied at her beautie bright,
In their rude eyes vnworthie of so wofull plight.

She more amaz'd, in double dread doth dwell;
And euery tender part for feare does shake:
As when a greedie Wolfe through hunger fell
A seely Lambe farre from the flocke does take,
Of whom he meanes his bloudie feast to make,
A Lyon spyes fast running towards him,
The innocent pray in hast he does forsake,
Which quit from death yet quakes in euery lim
With change of feare, to see the Lyon looke so grim.

Such fearefull fit assaid her trembling hart,
Ne word to speake, ne ioynt to moue she had:
The saluage nation feele her secret smart,
And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad;
Their frowning foreheads with rough hornes yclad,
And rusticke horror all a side doe lay,
And gently grenning, shew a semblance glad
To comfort her, and feare to put away,
Their backward bent knees teach her humbly to obey.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

The doubtfull Damzell dare not yet commit
Her single person to their barbarous truth,
But still twixt feare and hope amazd does sit,
Late learnd what harme to hastie trust ensu'th,
They in compassion of her tender youth,
And wonder of her beautie soueraine,
Are wonne with pittie and vnwonted ruth,
And all prostrate vpon the lowly plaine,
Do kisse her feete, and fawne on her with count'nance faine.

Their harts she ghesseth by their humble guise,
And yieldes her to extremitie of time;
So from the ground she fearelesse doth arise,
And walketh forth without suspect of crime:
They all as glad, as birdes of ioyous Prime,
Thence lead her forth, about her dauncing round,
Shouting, and singing all a shepherds ryme,
And with greene braunches strowing all the ground,
Do worship her, as Queene, with oliue girlond croud.

And all the way their merry pipes they sound,
That all the woods with doubled Eccho ring,
And with their horned feet do weare the ground,
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant Spring.
So towards old Syluanus they her bring;
Who with the noyse awaked, commeth out,
To weet the cause, his weake steps gouerning,
And aged limbs on Cypresse stadle stout,
And with an yuie twyne his wast is girt about.

Far off he wonders, what them makes so glad,
If Bacchus merry fruit they did inuent,
Or Cybeles franticke rites haue made them mad;
They drawing nigh, vnto their God present
That flowre of faith and beautie excellent.
The God himselfe vewing that mirrhour rare,
Stood long amazd, and burnt in his intent;
His owne faire Dryope now he thinkes not faire,
And Pholoe fowle, when her to this he doth compaire.

The woodborne people fall before her flat,
And worship her as Goddesse of the wood;
And old Syluanus selfe bethinkes not, what
To thinke of wight so faire, but gazing stood,
In doubt to deeme her borne of earthly brood;
Sometimes Dame Venus selfe he seemes to see,
But Venus neuer had so sober mood;
Sometimes Diana he her takes to bee,
But misseth bow, and shaftes, and buskins to her knee.

By vew of her he ginneth to reuiue
His ancient loue, and dearest Cyparisse,
And calles to mind his pourtraiture aliue,
How faire he was, and yet not faire to this,
And how he slew with glauncing dart amisse
A gentle Hynd, the which the louely boy
Did loue as life, aboue all worldly blisse;
For grieffe whereof the lad n'ould after ioy,
But pynd away in anguish and selfe-wild annoy.

The woody Nymphes, faire Hamadryades
Her to behold do thither runne apace,
And all the troupe of light-foot Naiades,
Flocke all about to see her louely face:
But when they vewed haue her heauenly grace,
They enuie her in their malitious mind,
And fly away for feare of fowle disgrace:
But all the Satyres scorne their woody kind,
And henceforth nothing faire, but her on earth they find.

Glad of such lucke, the luckelesse lucky maid,
Did her content to please their feeble eyes,
And long time with that saluage people staid,
To gather breath in many miseries.
During which time her gentle wit she plyes,
To teach them truth, which worshipt her in vaine,
And made her th'Image of Idolatryes;
But when their bootlesse zeale she did restraine
Frō her own worship, they her Asse would worship fayn.

It fortun'd a noble warlike knight
By iust occasion to that forrest came,
To seeke his kindred, and the lignage right,
From whence he tooke his well deserued name:
He had in armes abroad wonne muchell fame,
And fild far landes with glorie of his might,
Plaine, faithfull, true, and enimy of shame,
And euer lou'd to fight for Ladies right,
But in vaine glorious frayes he litle did delight.

A Satyres sonne yborne in forrest wyld,
By straunge aduenture as it did betyde,
And there begotten of a Lady myld,
Faire Thyamis the daughter of Labryde,
That was in sacred bands of wedlocke tyde
To Therion, a loose vnruly swayne;
Who had more ioy to raunge the forrest wyde,
And chase the saluage beast with busie payne,
Then serue his Ladies loue, and wast in pleasures vayne.

The forlorne mayd did with loues longing burne,
And could not lacke her louers company,
But to the wood she goes, to serue her turne,
And seeke her spouse, that from her still does fly,
And followes other game and venery:
A Satyre chaunst her wandring for to find,
And kindling coles of lust in brutish eye,
The loyall links of wedlocke did vnbind,
And made her person thrall vnto his beastly kind.

So long in secret cabin there he held
Her captiue to his sensuall desire,
Till that with timely fruit her belly sweld,
And bore a boy vnto that saluage sire:
Then home he suffred her for to retire,
For ransome leauing him the late borne childe;
Whom till to ryper yeares he gan aspire,
He noursled vp in life and manners wilde,
Emongst wild beasts and woods, from lawes of men exile.

For all he taught the tender ymp, was but
To banish cowardize and bastard feare;
His trembling hand he would him force to put
Vpon the Lyon and the rugged Beare,
And from the she Beares teats her whelps to teare;
And eke wyld roring Bulls he would him make
To tame, and ryde their backes not made to beare;
And the Robuckes in flight to ouertake,
That euery beast for feare of him did fly and quake.

Thereby so fearelesse, and so fell he grew,
That his owne sire and maister of his guise
Did often tremble at his horrid vew,
And oft for dread of hurt would him aduise,
The angry beasts not rashly to despise,
Nor too much to prouoke; for he would learne
The Lyon stoup to him in lowly wise,
(A lesson hard) and make the Libbard sterne
Leaue roaring, when in rage he for reuenge did earne.

And for to make his powre approued more,
Wyld beasts in yron yokes he would compell;
The spotted Panther, and the tusked Bore,
The Pardale swift, and the Tigre cruell;
The Antelope, and Wolfe both fierce and fell;
And them constraine in equall teme to draw.
Such ioy he had, their stubborne harts to quell,
And sturdie courage tame with dreadfull aw,
That his beheast they feared, as tyrans law,

His louing mother came vpon a day
Vnto the woods, to see her little sonne;
And chaunst vnwares to meet him in the way,
After his sportes, and cruell pastime donne,
When after him a Lyonesse did runne,
That roaring all with rage, did lowd requere
Her children deare, whom he away had wonne:
The Lyon whelps she saw how he did beare,
And lull in rugged armes, withouten childish feare.

The fearefull Dame all quaked at the sight,
 And turning backe, gan fast to fly away,
 Vntill with loue reuokt from vaine affright,
 She hardly yet perswaded was to stay,
 And then to him these womanish words gan say;
 Ah Satyrane, my dearling, and my ioy,
 For loue of me leaue off this dreadfull play;
 To dally thus with death, is no fit toy,
 Go find some other play-fellowes, mine own sweet boy.

In these and like delights of bloody game
 He trayned was, till ryper yeares he raught,
 And there abode, whilst any beast of name
 Walkt in that forest, whom he had not taught
 To feare his force: and then his courage haught
 Desird of forreine foemen to be knowne,
 And far abroad for straunge aduentures sought:
 In which his might was neuer ouerthrowne,
 But through all Faery lond his famous worth was blown.

Yet euermore it was his manner faire,
 After long labours and aduentures spent,
 Vnto those natiue woods for to repaire,
 To see his sire and offspring auncient.
 And now he thither came for like intent;
 Where he vnwares the fairest Vna found,
 Straunge Lady, in so straunge habiliment,
 Teaching the Satyres, which her sat around,
 Trew sacred lore, which from her sweet lips did redound.

He wondred at her wisdome heauenly rare,
 Whose like in womens wit he neuer knew;
 And when her curteous deeds he did compare,
 Gan her admire, and her sad sorrowes rew,
 Blaming of Fortune, which such troubles threw,
 And ioyd to make prooffe of her crueltie
 On gentle Dame, so hurtlesse, and so trew:
 Thenceforth he kept her goodly company,
 And learnd her discipline of faith and veritie.

But she all vowd vnto the Redcrosse knight,
His wandring perill closely did lament,
Ne in this new acquaintaunce could delight,
But her deare heart with anguish did torment,
And all her wit in secret counsels spent,
How to escape. At last in priuie wise
To Satyrane she shewed her intent:
Who glad to gain such fauour, gan deuise,
How with that pensiu Maid he best might thence arise.

So on a day when Satyres all were gone,
To do their seruice to Sylluanus old,
The gentle virgin left behind alone
He led away with courage stout and bold.
Too late it was, to Satyres to be told,
Or euer hope recouer her againe:
In vaine he seekes that hauing cannot hold.
So fast he carried her with carefull paine,
That they the woods are past, & come now to the plaine.

The better part now of the lingring day,
They traueild had, when as they farre espide
A wearie wight forwandring by the way,
And towards him they gan in hast to ride,
To weet of newes, that did abroad betide,
Or tydings of her knight of the Redcrosse.
But he them spying, gan to turne aside,
For feare as seemd, or for some feigned losse;
More greedy they of newes, fast towards him do crosse.

A silly man, in simple weedes forworne,
And soild with dust of the long dried way;
His sandales were with toilesome trauell torne,
And face all tand with scorching sunny ray,
As he had traueild many a sommers day,
Through boyling sands of Arabie and Ynde;
And in his hand a Iacobs staffe, to stay
His wearie limbes vpon: and eke behind,
His scrip did hang, in which his needments he did bind.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

The knight approching nigh, of him inquerd
Tydings of warre, and of aduentures new;
But warres, nor new aduentures none he herd.
Then Vna gan to aske, if ought he knew,
Or heard abroad of that her champion trew,
That in his armour bare a croslet red.
Aye me, Deare dame (quoth he) well may I rew
To tell the sad sight, which mine eies haue red:
These eyes did see that knight both liuing and eke ded.

That cruell word her tender hart so thrild,
That suddein cold did runne through euery vaine,
And stony horror all her sences fild
With dying fit, that downe she fell for paine.
The knight her lightly reared vp againe,
And comforted with curteous kind reliefe:
Then wonne from death, she bad him tellen plaine
The further processe of her hidden grieffe;
The lesser pangs can beare, who hath endur'd the chiefe.

Then gan the Pilgrim thus, I chaunst this day,
This fatall day, that shall I euer rew,
To see two knights in trauell on my way
(A sory sight) arraung'd in battell new,
Both breathing vengeance, both of wrathfull hew:
My fearefull flesh did tremble at their strife,
To see their blades so greedily imbrew,
That drunke with blood, yet thirsted after life:
What more? the Redcrosse knight was slaine with
Paynim knife.

Ah dearest Lord (quoth she) how might that bee,
And he the stoutest knight, that euer wonne?
Ah dearest dame (quoth he) how might I see
The thing, that might not be, and yet was donne?
Where is (said Satyrane) that Paynims sonne,
That him of life, and vs of ioy hath reft?
Not far away (quoth he) he hence doth wonne
Foreby a fountaine, where I late him left
Washing his bloody wounds, that through the steele
were cleft.

Therewith the knight thence marched forth in hast,
Whiles Vna with huge heauinesse opprest,
Could not for sorrow follow him so fast;
And soone he came, as he the place had ghest,
Whereas that Pagan proud him selfe did rest,
In secret shadow by a fountaine side:
Euen he it was, that earst would haue suppress
Faire Vna: whom when Satyrane espide,
With fowle reprochfull words he boldly him defide.

And said, Arise thou cursed Miscreaunt,
That hast with knightlesse guile and trecherous train
Faire knighthood fowly shamed, and doest vaunt
That good knight of the Redcrosse to haue slain:
Arise, and with like treason now maintain
Thy guilty wrong, or else thee guilty yield.
The Sarazin this hearing, rose amain,
And catching vp in hast his three square shield,
And shining helmet, soone him buckled to the field.

And drawing nigh him said, Ah misborne Elfe,
In euill houre thy foes thee hither sent,
Anothers wrongs to wreake vpon thy selfe:
Yet ill thou blamest me, for hauing blent
My name with guile and traiterous intent;
That Redcrosse knight, perdie, I neuer slew,
But had he beene, where earst his armes were lent,
Th'enchaunter vaine his errour should not rew:
But thou his errour shalt, I hope now prouen trew.

Therewith they gan, both furious and fell,
To thunder blowes, and fiersly to assaile
Each other bent his enimy to quell,
That with their force they perst both plate and maile,
And made wide furrowes in their fleshes fraile,
That it would pittie any liuing eie.
Large floods of bloud adowne their sides did raile;
But floods of bloud could not them satisfie:
Both hungred after death: both chose to win, or die.

So long they fight, and fell reuenge pursue,
That fainting each, themselues to breathen let,
And oft refreshed, battell oft renewe:
As when two Bores with rancling malice met,
Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely fret,
Til breathlesse both them selues aside retire,
Where foming wrath, their cruell tuskes they whet,
And trample th'earth, the whiles they may respire;
Then backe to fight againe, new breathed and entire.

So fiersly, when these knights had breathed once,
They gan to fight returne, increasing more
Their puissant force, and cruell rage attonce,
With heaped strokes more hugely, then before,
That with their drerie wounds and bloody gore
They both deformed, scarsely could be known.
By this sad Vna fraught with anguish sore,
Led with their noise, which through the aire was thrown:
Arriu'd, where they in erth their fruitles bloud had sown.

Whom all so soone as that proud Sarazin
Espide, he gan reuiue the memory
Of his lewd lusts, and late attempted sin,
And left the doubtfull battell hastily,
To catch her, newly offred to his eie:
But Satyrane with strokes him turning, staid,
And sternely bad him other businesse plie,
Then hunt the steps of pure vnspotted Maid:
Wherewith he all enrag'd, these bitter speaches said.

O foolish faeries sonne, what furie mad
Hath thee incenst, to hast thy dolefull fate?
Were it not better, I that Lady had,
Then that thou hadst repented it too late?
Most sencelesse man he, that himselfe doth hate,
To loue another. Lo then for thine ayd
Here take thy louers token on thy pate.
So they to fight; the whiles the royall Mayd
Fled farre away, of that proud Paynim sore afrayd.

But that false Pilgrim, which that leasing told,
Being in deed old Archimage, did stay
In secret shadow, all this to behold,
And much reioyced in their bloody fray:
But when he saw the Damsell passe away
He left his stond, and her pursewd apace,
In hope to bring her to her last decay.
But for to tell her lamentable cace,
And eke this battels end, will need another place.

Cant. VII.

The Redcrosse knight is captiue made
By Gyaunt proud opprest,
Prince Arthur meets with Vna great-
ly with those newes distrest.

What man so wise, what earthly wit so ware,
As to descry the crafty cunning traine,
By which deceit doth maske in visour faire,
And cast her colours dyed deepe in graine,
To seeme like Truth, whose shape she well can faine,
And fitting gestures to her purpose frame;
The guiltlesse man with guile to entertaine?
Great maistresse of her art was that false Dame,
The false Duessa, cloked with Fidessaes name.

Who when returning from the dreary Night,
She fownd not in that perilous house of Pryde,
Where she had left, the noble Redcrosse knight,
Her hoped pray, she would no lenger bide,
But forth she went, to seeke him far and wide.
Ere long she fownd, whereas he wearie sate,
To rest him selfe, foreby a fountaine side,
Disarmed all of yron-coted Plate,
And by his side his steed the grassy forage ate.

He feedes vpon the cooling shade, and bayes
His sweatie forehead in the breathing wind,
Which through the tr&etilde;bling leaues full gently playes
Wherein the cherefull birds of sundry kind
Do chaunt sweet musick, to delight his mind:
The Witch approaching gan him fairely greet,
And with reproch of carelesnesse vnkind
Vpbrayd, for leauing her in place vnmeet,
With fowle words tempring faire, soure gall with hony sweet.

Vnkindnesse past, they gan of solace treat,
And bathe in pleasaunce of the ioyous shade,
Which shielded them against the boyling heat,
And with greene boughes decking a gloomy glade,
About the fountaine like a girlond made;
Whose bubbling waue did euer freshly well,
Ne euer would through feruent sommer fade:
The sacred Nymph, which therein went to dwell,
Was out of Dianes fauour, as it then befell.

The cause was this: one day when Phoebe fayre
With all her band was following the chace,
This Nymph, quite tyr'd with heat of scorching ayre,
Sat downe to rest in middest of the race:
The goddesse wroth gan fowly her disgrace,
And bad the waters, which from her did flow,
Be such as she her selfe was then in place.
Thenceforth her waters waxed dull and slow,
And all that drunke thereof, did faint and feeble grow.

Hereof this gentle knight vnweeting was,
And lying downe vpon the sandie graile,
Drunke of the streame, as cleare as cristall glas;
Eftsoones his manly forces gan to faile,
And mightie strong was turnd to feeble fraile.
His chaunged powres at first them selues not felt,
Till crudled cold his corage gan assaile,
And chearefull bloud in faintnesse chill did melt,
Which like a feuer fit through all his body swelt.

Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame,
Pourd out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd,
Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame:
Till at the last he heard a dreadfull sownd,
Which through the wood loud bellowing, did rebownd,
That all the earth for terrour seemd to shake,
And trees did tremble. Th'Elfe therewith astownd,
Vpstarted lightly from his looser make,
And his vnready weapons gan in hand to take.

But ere he could his armour on him dight,
Or get his shield, his monstrous enemy
With sturdie steps came stalking in his sight,
An hideous Geant horrible and hye,
That with his talnesse seemd to threat the skye,
The ground eke groned vnder him for dreed;
His liuing like saw neuer liuing eye,
Ne durst behold: his stature did exceed
The hight of three the tallest sonnes of mortall seed.

The greatest Earth his vncouth mother was,
And blustring AEolus his boasted sire,
Who with his breath, which through the world doth pas,
Her hollow womb did secretly inspire,
And fild her hidden caues with stormie yre,
That she conceiu'd; and trebling the dew time,
In which the wombes of women do expire,
Brought forth this monstrous masse of earthly slime,
Puft vp with emptie wind, and fild with sinfull crime.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

So growen great through arrogant delight
Of th'high descent, whereof he was yborne,
And through presumption of his matchlesse might,
All other powres and knighthood he did scorne.
Such now he marcheth to this man forlorne,
And left to losse: his stalking steps are stayde
Vpon a snaggy Oke, which he had torne
Out of his mothers bowelles, and it made
His mortall mace, wherewith his foemen he dismayde.

That when the knight he spide, he gan aduance
With huge force and insupportable mayne,
And towards him with dreadfull fury prounce;
Who haplesse, and eke hopelesse, all in vaine
Did to him pace, sad battaile to darrayne,
Disarmd, disgrast, and inwardly dismayde,
And eke so faint in euery ioynt and vaine,
Through that fraile fountaine, which him feeble made,
That scarsely could he weeld his bootlesse single blade.

The Geaunt strooke so maynly mercilesse,
That could haue ouerthrowne a stony towre,
And were not heauenly grace, that him did blesse,
He had beene pouldred all, as thin as flowre:
But he was wary of that deadly stowre,
And lightly lept from vnderneath the blow:
Yet so exceeding was the villeins powre,
That with the wind it did him ouerthrow,
And all his sences stound, that still he lay full low.

As when that diuelish yron Engin wrought
In deepest Hell, and framd by Furies skill,
With windy Nitre and quick Sulphur fraught,
And ramd with bullet round, ordaind to kill,
Conceiueth fire, the heauens it doth fill
With thundring noyse, and all the ayre doth choke,
That none can breath, nor see, nor heare at will,
Through smouldry cloud of duskish stincking smoke,
That th'onely breath him daunts, who hath escapt the stroke.

So daunted when the Geaunt saw the knight,
His heauie hand he heaued vp on hye,
And him to dust thought to haue battred quight,
Vntill Duessa loud to him gan crye;
O great Orgoglio, greatest vnder skye,
O hold thy mortall hand for Ladies sake,
Hold for my sake, and do him not to dye,
But vanquisht thine eternall bondsclaue make,
And me thy worthy meed vnto thy Leman take.

He hearkned, and did stay from further harmes,
To gayne so goodly guerdon, as she spake:
So willingly she came into his armes,
Who her as willingly to grace did take,
And was possessed of his new found make.
Then vp he tooke the slombred sencelesse corse,
And ere he could out of his swowne awake,
Him to his castle brought with hastie forse,
And in a Dongeon deepe him threw without remorse.

From that day forth Duessa was his deare,
And highly honourd in his haughtie eye,
He gaue her gold and purple pall to weare,
And triple crowne set on her head full hye,
And her endowd with royall maiestye:
Then for to make her dreaded more of men,
And peoples harts with awfull terrour tye,
A monstrous beast ybred in filthy fen
He chose, which he had kept long time in darksome den.

Such one it was, as that renowned Snake
Which great Alcides in Stremona slew,
Long fostred in the filth of Lerna lake,
Whose many heads out budding euer new,
Did breed him endlesse labour to subdew:
But this same Monster much more vgly was;
For seuen great heads out of his body grew,
An yron brest, and backe of scaly bras,
And all embrewd in bloud, his eyes did shine as glas.

His taylor was stretched out in wondrous length,
That to the house of heauenly gods it raught,
And with extorted powre, and borrow'd strength,
The euer-burning lamps from thence it braught,
And proudly threw to ground, as things of naught;
And vnderneath his filthy feet did tread
The sacred things, and holy heasts foretaught.
Vpon this dreadfull Beast with seuenfold head
He set the false Duessa, for more aw and dread.

The wofull Dwarf, which saw his maisters fall,
Whiles he had keeping of his grasing steed,
And valiant knight become a caytiue thrall,
When all was past, tooke vp his forlorne weed,
His mightie armour, missing most at need;
His siluer shield, now idle maisterlesse;
His poynant speare, that many made to bleed,
The ruefull monuments of heauinesse,
And with them all departes, to tell his great distresse.

He had not trauid long, when on the way
He wofull Ladie, wofull Vna met,
Fast flying from the Paynims greedy pray,
Whilest Satyrane him from pursuit did let:
Who when her eyes she on the Dwarf had set,
And saw the signes, that deadly tydings spake,
She fell to ground for sorrowfull regret,
And liuely breath her sad brest did forsake,
Yet might her pitteous hart be seene to pant and quake.

The messenger of so vnhappy newes
Would faine haue dyde: dead was his hart within,
Yet outwardly some little comfort shewes:
At last recouering hart, he does begin
To rub her temples, and to chaufe her chin,
And euery tender part does tesse and turne:
So hardly he the flitted life does win,
Vnto her natiue prison to retourne:
Then gins her grieued ghost thus to lament and mourne.

Ye dreary instruments of dolefull sight,
That doe this deadly spectacle behold,
Why do ye lenger feed on loathed light,
Or liking find to gaze on earthly mould,
Sith cruell fates the carefull threds vnfold,
The which my life and loue together tyde?
Now let the stony dart of senselesse cold
Perce to my hart, and pas through euery side,
And let eternall night so sad [sight] fro me hide.

O lightsome day, the lampe of highest loue,
First made by him, mens wandring wayes to guyde,
When darknesse he in deepest dongeon droue,
Henceforth thy hated face for euer hyde,
And shut vp heauens windowes shyning wyde:
For earthly sight can nought but sorow breed,
And late repentance, which shall long abyde.
Mine eyes no more on vanitie shall feed,
But seeled vp with death, shall haue their deadly meed.

Then downe againe she fell vnto the ground;
But he her quickly reared vp againe:
Thrise did she sinke adowne in deadly swownd,
And thrise he her reuiu'd with busie paine:
At last when life recouer'd had the raine,
And ouer-wrestled his strong enemie,
With foltring tong, and trembling euery vaine,
Tell on (quoth she) the wofull Tragedie,
The which these reliques sad present vnto mine eie.

Tempestuous fortune hath spent all her spight,
And thrilling sorrow throwne his vtmost dart;
Thy sad tongue cannot tell more heauy plight,
Then that I feele, and harbour in mine hart:
Who hath endur'd the whole, can beare each part.
If death it be, it is not the first wound,
That launched hath my brest with bleeding smart.
Begin, and end the bitter balefull stound;
If lesse, then that I feare, more fauour I haue found.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

Then gan the Dwarfe the whole discourse declare,
The subtill traines of Archimago old;
The wanton loues of false Fidessa faire,
Bought with the bloud of vanquisht Paynim bold:
The wretched payre transform'd to treen mould;
The house of Pride, and perils round about;
The combat, which he with Sansioy did hould;
The lucklesse conflict with the Gyant stout,
Wherein captiu'd, of life or death he stood in doubt.

She heard with patience all vnto the end,
And stroue to maister sorrowfull assay,
Which greater grew, the more she did contend,
And almost rent her tender hart in tway;
And loue fresh coles vnto her fire did lay:
For greater loue, the greater is the losse.
Was neuer Ladie loued dearer day,
Then she did loue the knight of the Redcrosse;
For whose deare sake so many troubles her did tosse.

At last when feruent sorrow slaked was,
She vp arose, resolving him to find
A liue or dead: and forward forth doth pas,
All as the Dwarfe the way to her assynd:
And euermore in constant carefull mind
She fed her wound with fresh renewed bale;
Long tost with stormes, and bet with bitter wind,
High ouer hils, and low adowne the dale,
She wandred many a wood, and measurd many a vale.

At last she chaunced by good hap to meet
A goodly knight, faire marching by the way
Together with his Squire, arayed meet:
His glitterand armour shined farre away,
Like glauncing light of Phoebus brightest ray;
From top to toe no place appeared bare,
That deadly dint of steele endanger may:
Athwart his brest a bauldrick braue he ware,
That shynd, like twinkling stars, with stons most
pretious rare.

And in the midst thereof one pretious stone
 Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous might,
 Shapt like a Ladies head, exceeding shone,
 Like Hesperus amongst the lesser lights,
 And stroue for to amaze the weaker sights;
 Thereby his mortall blade full comely hong
 In yuory sheath, ycaru'd with curious slights;
 Whose hilts were burnisht gold, and handle strong
 Of mother pearle, and buckled with a golden tong.

His haughtie helmet, horrid all with gold,
 Both glorious brightnesse, and great terrour bred;
 For all the crest a Dragon did enfold
 With greedie pawes, and ouer all did spred
 His golden wings: his dreadfull hideous hed
 Close couched on the beuer, seem'd to throw
 From flaming mouth bright sparkles fierie red,
 That suddeine horror to faint harts did show;
 And scaly tayle was stretcht adowne his backe full low.

Vpon the top of all his loftie crest,
 A bunch of haire discolour'd diuersly,
 With sprinckled pearle, and gold full richly drest,
 Did shake, and seem'd to daunce for iollity,
 Like to an Almond tree ymounted hye
 On top of greene Selinis all alone,
 With blossomes braue bedecked daintily;
 Whose tender locks do tremble euery one
 At euery little breath, that vnder heauen is blowne.

His warlike shield all closely couer'd was,
 Ne might of mortall eye be euer seene;
 Not made of steele, nor of enduring bras,
 Such earthly mettals soone consumed bene:
 But all of Diamond perfect pure and cleene
 It framed was, one massie entire mould,
 Hewen out of Adamant rocke with engines keene,
 That point of speare it neuer percen could,
 Ne dint of direfull sword diuide the substance would.

The same to wight he neuer wont disclose,
But when as monsters huge he would dismay,
Or daunt vnequall armies of his foes,
Or when the flying heauens he would affray;
For so exceeding shone his glistring ray,
That Phoebus golden face it did attain,
As when a cloud his beames doth ouer-lay;
And siluer Cynthia waxed pale and faint,
As when her face is staynd with magicke arts constraint.

No magicke arts hereof had any might,
Nor bloudie wordes of bold Enchaunters call,
But all that was not such, as seemd in sight,
Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall:
And when him list the raskall routes appall,
Men into stones therewith he could transmew,
And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all;
And when him list the prouder lookes subdew,
He would them gazing blind, or turne to other hew.

Ne let it seeme, that credence this exceeds,
For he that made the same, was knowne right well
To haue done much more admirable deedes.
It Merlin was, which whylome did excell
All liuing wightes in might of magicke spell:
Both shield, and sword, and armour all he wrought
For this young Prince, when first to armes he fell;
But when he dyde, the Faerie Queene it brought
To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought.

A gentle youth, his dearely loued Squire
His speare of heben wood behind him bare,
Whose harmefull head, thrice heated in the fire,
Had riuen many a brest with pikehead square;
A goodly person, and could menage faire
His stubborne steed with curbed canon bit,
Who vnder him did trample as the aire,
And chaft, that any on his backe should sit;
The yron rowels into frothy fome he bit.

When as this knight nigh to the Ladie drew,
 With louely court he gan her entertaine;
 But when he heard her answeres loth, he knew
 Some secret sorrow did her heart distraine:
 Which to allay, and calme her storming paine,
 Faire feeling words he wisely gan display,
 And for her humour fitting purpose faine,
 To tempt the cause it selfe for to bewray;
 Wherewith emmou'd, these bleeding words she gan to say.

What worlds delight, or ioy of liuing speach
 Can heart, so plung'd in sea of sorrowes deepe,
 And heaped with so huge misfortunes, reach?
 The carefull cold beginneth for to creepe,
 And in my heart his yron arrow steepe,
 Soone as I thinke vpon my bitter bale:
 Such hellesse harmes yts better hidden keepe,
 Then rip vp griefe, where it may not auaille,
 My last left comfort is, my woes to weepe and waile.

Ah Ladie deare, quoth then the gentle knight,
 Well may I weene, your griefe is wondrous great;
 For wondrous great griefe groneth in my spright,
 Whiles thus I heare you of your sorrowes treat.
 But wofull Ladie let me you intrete,
 For to vnfold the anguish of your hart:
 Mishaps are maistred by aduice discrete,
 And counsell mittigates the greatest smart;
 Found neuer helpe, who neuer would his hurts impart.

O but (quoth she) great griefe will not be tould,
 And can more easily be thought, then said.
 Right so; (quoth he) but he, that neuer would,
 Could neuer: will to might giues greatest aid.
 But griefe (quoth she) does greater grow displaid,
 If then it find not helpe, and breeds despaire.
 Despaire breeds not (quoth he) where faith is staid.
 No faith so fast (quoth she) but flesh does paire.
 Flesh may empaire (quoth he) but reason can repaire.

His goodly reason, and well guided speach
So deepe did settle in her gracious thought,
That her perswaded to disclose the breach,
Which loue and fortune in her heart had wrought,
And said; faire Sir, I hope good hap hath brought
You to inquere the secrets of my grieffe,
Or that your wisdome will direct my thought,
Or that your prowesse can me yield reliefe:
Then heare the storie sad, which I shall tell you briefe.

The forlorne Maiden, whom your eyes haue seene
The laughing stocke of fortunes mockeries,
Am th'only daughter of a King and Queene,
Whose parents deare, whilst equall destinies
Did runne about, and their felicities
The fauourable heauens did not enuy,
Did spread their rule through all the territories,
Which Phison and Euphrates floweth by,
And Gehons golden waues doe wash continually.

Till that their cruell cursed enemy,
An huge great Dragon horrible in sight,
Bred in the loathly lakes of Tartary,
With murdrous rauine, and deuouring might
Their kingdome spoild, and countrey wasted quight:
Themselues, for feare into his iawes to fall,
He forst to castle strong to take their flight,
Where fast embard in mightie brasen wall,
He has them now foure yeres besiegd to make th&etilde;
thrall.

Full many knights aduenturous and stout
Haue enterprizd that Monster to subdew;
From euery coast that heauen walks about,
Haue thither come the noble Martiall crew,
That famous hard atchieuements still pursew,
Yet neuer any could that girlond win,
But all still shronke, and still he greater grew:
All they for want of faith, or guilt of sin,
The pitteous pray of his fierce crueltie haue bin.

At last yledd with farre reported praise,
Which flying fame throughout the world had spred,
Of doughtie knights, whom Faery land did raise,
That noble order hight of Maidenhed,
Forthwith to court of Gloriane I sped,
Of Gloriane great Queene of glory bright,
Whose kingdomes seat Cleopolis is red,
There to obtaine some such redoubted knight,
That Parents deare from tyrants powre deliuer might.

It was my chance (my chance was faire and good)
There for to find a fresh vnproued knight,
Whose manly hands imbrew'd in guiltie blood
Had neuer bene, ne euer by his might
Had throwne to ground the vnregarded right:
Yet of his prowesse prooffe he since hath made
(I witnesse am) in many a cruell fight;
The groning ghosts of many one dismaide
Haue felt the bitter dint of his auenging blade.

And ye the forlorne reliques of his powre,
His byting sword, and his deuouring speare,
Which haue endured many a dreadfull stowre,
Can speake his prowesse, that did earst you beare,
And well could rule: now he hath left you heare,
To be the record of his ruefull losse,
And of my dolefull disauenturous deare:
O heauie record of the good Redcrosse,
Where haue you left your Lord, that could so well you tosse?

Well hoped I, and faire beginnings had,
That he my captiue langour should redeeme,
Till all vnweeting, an Enchaunter bad
His sence abusd, and made him to misdeeme
My loyalty, not such as it did seeme;
That rather death desire, then such despight.
Be iudge ye heauens, that all things right esteeme,
How I him lou'd, and loue with all my might,
So thought I eke of him, and thinke I thought aright.

Thenceforth me desolate he quite forsooke,
To wander, where wilde fortune would me lead,
And other bywaies he himselfe betooke,
Where neuer foot of liuing wight did tread,
That brought not backe the balefull body dead;
In which him chaunced false Duessa meete,
Mine onely foe, mine onely deadly dread,
Who with her witchcraft and misseeming sweete,
Inueigled him to follow her desires vnmeete.

At last by subtill sleights she him betraid
Vnto his foe, a Gyant huge and tall,
Who him disarmed, dissolute, dismaid,
Vnwares surprised, and with mightie mall
The monster mercilesse him made to fall,
Whose fall did neuer foe before behold;
And now in darkesome dungeon, wretched thrall,
Remedilesse, for aie he doth him hold;
This is my cause of grieffe, more great, then may be told.

Ere she had ended all, she gan to faint:
But he her comforted and faire bespake,
Certes, Madame, ye haue great cause of plaint,
That stoutest heart, I weene, could cause to quake.
But be of cheare, and comfort to you take:
For till I haue acquit your captiue knight,
Assure your selfe, I will you not forsake.
His chearefull words reuiu'd her chearelesse spright,
So forth they went, the Dwarfe them guiding euer right.

Cant. VIII.

Faire virgin to redeeme her deare
brings Arthur to the fight,
Who slayes the Gyant, wounds the beast,
and strips Duessa quight.

Ay me, how many perils doe enfold
The righteous man, to make him daily fall?
Were not, that heavenly grace doth him vphold,
And stedfast truth acquite him out of all.
Her loue is firme, her care continuall,
So oft as he through his owne foolish pride,
Or weaknesse is to sinfull bands made thrall:
Else should this Redcrosse knight in bands haue dyde,
For whose deliuerāce she this Prince doth thither guide.

They sadly traueild thus, vntill they came
Nigh to a castle builded strong and hie:
Then cryde the Dwarfe, lo yonder is the same,
In which my Lord my liege doth lucklesse lie,
Thrall to that Gyants hatefull tyrannie:
Therefore, deare Sir, your mightie powres assay.
The noble knight alighted by and by
From loftie steede, and bad the Ladie stay,
To see what end of fight should him befall that day.

So with the Squire, th'admirer of his might,
He marched forth towards that castle wall;
Whose gates he found fast shut, ne liuing wight
To ward the same, nor answeere commers call.
Then tooke that Squire an horne of bugle small,
Which hong adowne his side in twisted gold,
And tassels gay. Wyde wonders ouer all
Of that same hornes great vertues weren told,
Which had approved bene in vses manifold.

Was neuer wight, that heard that shrilling sound,
But trembling feare did feele in euery vaine;
Three miles it might be easie heard around,
And Ecchoes three answerd it selfe againe:
No false enchauntment, nor deceitfull traine
Might once abide the terror of that blast,
But presently was voide and wholly vaine:
No gate so strong, no locke so firme and fast,
But with that percing noise flew open quite, or brast.

The same before the Geants gate he blew,
That all the castle quaked from the ground,
And euery dore of freewill open flew.
The Gyant selfe dismaied with that sownd,
Where he with his Duessa dalliance fownd,
In hast came rushing forth from inner bowre,
With staring countenance sterne, as one astownd,
And staggering steps, to weet, what suddein stowre
Had wrought that horror strange, and dar'd his dreaded powre.

And after him the proud Duessa came,
High mounted on her manyheaded beast,
And euery head with fyrie tongue did flame,
And euery head was crowned on his creast,
And bloudie mouthed with late cruell feast.
That when the knight beheld, his mightie shild
Vpon his manly arme he soone address,
And at him fiercely flew, with courage fild,
And eger greedinesse through euery member thrild.

Therewith the Gyant buckled him to fight,
Inflam'd with scornefull wrath and high disdain,
And lifting vp his dreadfull club on hight,
All arm'd with ragged snubbes and knottie graine,
Him thought at first encounter to haue slaine,
But wise and warie was that noble Pere,
And lightly leaping from so monstrous maine,
Did faire auoide the violence him nere;
It booted nought, to thinke, such thunderbolts to beare.

Ne shame he thought to shunne so hideous might:
The idle stroke, enforcing furious way,
Missing the marke of his misaymed sight
Did fall to ground, and with his heauie sway
So deeply dinted in the driuen clay,
That three yardes deepe a furrow vp did throw:
The sad earth wounded with so sore assay,
Did grone full grieuous vnderneath the blow,
And trembling with strange feare, did like an earthquake
show.

As when almightie Ioue in wrathfull mood,
To wreake the guilt of mortall sins is bent,
Hurles forth his thundring dart with deadly food,
Enrold in flames, and smouldring dreriment,
Through riuen cloudes and molten firmament;
The fierce threeforked engin making way,
Both loftie towres and highest trees hath rent,
And all that might his angrie passage stay,
And shooting in the earth, casts vp a mount of clay.

His boystrous club, so buried in the ground,
He could not rearen vp againe so light,
But that the knight him at auantage found,
And whiles he stroue his combred clubbe to quight
Out of the earth, with blade all burning bright
He smote off his left arme, which like a blocke
Did fall to ground, depriu'd of natiue might;
Large streames of bloud out of the truncked stocke
Forth gushed, like fresh water streame from riuen rocke.

Dismaied with so desperate deadly wound,
And eke impatient of vnwonted paine,
He loudly brayd with beastly yelling sound,
That all the fields rebellowed againe;
As great a noyse, as when in Cymbrian plaine
An heard of Bulles, whom kindly rage doth sting,
Do for the milkie mothers want complaine,
And fill the fields with troublous bellowing,
The neighbour woods around with hollow murmur ring.

That when his deare Duessa heard, and saw
The euill stownd, that daungerd her estate,
Vnto his aide she hastily did draw
Her dreadfull beast, who swolne with bloud of late
Came ramping forth with proud presumptuous gate,
And threatned all his heads like flaming brands.
But him the Squire made quickly to retrate,
Encountring fierce with single sword in hand,
And twixt him and his Lord did like a bulwarke stand.

The proud Duessa full of wrathfull spight,
And fierce disdaine, to be affronted so,
Enforst her purple beast with all her might
That stop out of the way to ouerthro,ue,
Scorning the let of so vnequall foe:
But nathemore would that courageous swayne
To her yeeld passage, gainst his Lord to goe,
But with outrageous strokes did him restraine,
And with his bodie bard the way atwixt them twaine.

Then tooke the angrie witch her golden cup,
Which still she bore, replete with magick artes;
Death and despayre did many thereof sup,
And secret poyson through their inner parts,
Th'eternall bale of heauie wounded harts;
Which after charmes and some enchauntments said,
She lightly sprinkled on his weaker parts;
Therewith his sturdie courage soone was quayd,
And all his senses were with suddeine dread dismayd.

So downe he fell before the cruell beast,
Who on his necke his bloudie clawes did seize,
That life nigh crusht out of his panting brest:
No powre he had to stirre, nor will to rize.
That when the carefull knight gan well aise,
He lightly left the foe, with whom he fought,
And to the beast gan turne his enterprise;
For wondrous anguish in his hart it wrought,
To see his loued Squire into such thraldome brought.

And high aduauncing his bloud-thirstie blade,
Stroke one of those deformed heads so sore,
That of his puissance proud ensample made;
His monstrous scalpe downe to his teeth it tore,
And that misformed shape mis-shaped more:
A sea of bloud gusht from the gaping wound,
That her gay garments staynd with filthy gore,
And ouerflowed all the field around;
That ouer shoes in bloud he waded on the ground.

Thereat he roared for exceeding paine,
That to haue heard, great horror would haue bred,
And scourging th'emptie ayre with his long traine,
Through great impatience of his griued hed
His gorgeous ryder from her loftie sted
Would haue cast downe, and trod in durtie myre,
Had not the Gyant soone her succoured;
Who all enrag'd with smart and franticke yre,
Came hurtling in full fierce, and forst the knight retyre.

The force, which wont in two to be disperst,
In one alone left hand he now vnites,
Which is through rage more strong then both were erst;
With which his hideous club aloft he dites,
And at his foe with furious rigour smites,
That strongest Oake might seeme to ouerthrow.
The stroke vpon his shield so heauie lites,
That to the ground it doubleth him full low
What mortall wight could euer beare so monstrous blow?

And in his fall his shield, that couered was,
Did loose his vele by chaunce, and open flew:
The light whereof, that heauens light did pas,
Such blazing brightnesse through the aier threw,
That eye mote not the same endure to vew.
Which when the Gyaunt spyde with staring eye,
He downe let fall his arme, and soft withdrew
His weapon huge, that heaued was on hye
For to haue slaine the man, that on the ground did lye.

And eke the fruitfull-headed beast, amaz'd
At flashing beames of that sunshiny shield,
Became starke blind, and all his senses daz'd,
That downe he tumbled on the durtie field,
And seem'd himsele as conquered to yield.
Whom when his maistresse proud perceiu'd to fall,
Whiles yet his feeble feet for faintnesse reeld,
Vnto the Gyant loudly she gan call,
O helpe Orgoglio, helpe, or else we perish all.

At her so pitteous cry was much amou'd
Her champion stout, and for to ayde his frend,
Againe his wonted angry weapon prou'd:
But all in vaine: for he has read his end
In that bright shield, and all their forces spend
Themselues in vaine: for since that glauncing sight,
He hath no powre to hurt, nor to defend;
As where th'Almighties lightning brond does light,
It dimmes the dazed eyes, and daunts the senses quight.

Whom when the Prince, to battell new addrest,
And threatning high his dreadfull stroke did see,
His sparkling blade about his head he blest,
And smote off quite his right leg by the knee,
That downe he tombled; as an aged tree,
High growing on the top of rocky clift,
Whose hartstrings with keene steele nigh hewen be,
The mightie trunck halfe rent, with ragged rift
Doth roll adowne the rocks, and fall with fearefull drift.

Or as a Castle reared high and round,
By subtile engins and malicious slight
Is vndermined from the lowest ground
And her foundation forst, and feebled quight,
At last downe falles, and with her heaped hight
Her hastie ruine does more heauie make,
And yields it selfe vnto the victours might;
Such was this Gyaunts fall, that seemd to shake
The stedfast globe of earth, as it for feare did quake.

The knight then lightly leaping to the pray,
With mortall steele him smot againe so sore,
That headlesse his vnweldy bodie lay,
All wallowd in his owne fowle bloody gore,
Which flowed from his wounds in wondrous store,
But soone as breath out of his breast did pas,
That huge great body, which the Gyaunt bore,
Was vanisht quite, and of that monstrous mas
Was nothing left, but like an emptie bladder was.

Whose grieuous fall, when false Duessa spide,
Her golden cup she cast vnto the ground,
And crowned mitre rudely threw aside;
Such percing grieffe her stubborne hart did wound,
That she could not endure that dolefull stound,
But leauing all behind her, fled away:
The light-foot Squire her quickly turnd around,
And by hard meanes enforcing her to stay,
So brought vnto his Lord, as his deserued pray.

The royall Virgin, which beheld from farre,
In pensiuie plight, and sad perplexitie,
The whole atchieuement of this doubtfull warre,
Came running fast to greet his victorie,
With sober gladnesse, and myld modestie,
And with sweet ioyous cheare him thus bespake;
Faire braunch of noblesse, flowre of cheualrie,
That with your worth the world amazed make,
How shall I quite the paines, ye suffer for my sake?

And you fresh bud of vertue springing fast,
Whom these sad eyes saw nigh vnto deaths dore,
What hath poore Virgin for such perill past,
Wherewith you to reward? Accept therefore
My simple selfe, and seruice euermore;
And he that high does sit, and all things see
With equall eyes, their merites to restore,
Behold what ye this day haue done for mee,
And what I cannot quite, requite with vsuree.

But sith the heauens, and your faire handeling
Haue made you maister of the field this day,
Your fortune maister eke with gouerning,
And well begun end all so well, I pray,
Ne let that wicked woman scape away;
For she it is, that did my Lord bethrall,
My dearest Lord, and deepe in dongeon lay,
Where he his better dayes hath wasted all.
O heare, how piteous he to you for ayd does call.

Forthwith he gaued in charge vnto his Squire,
That scarlot whore to keepeen carefully;
Whiles he himselfe with greedie great desire
Into the Castle entred forcibly,
Where liuing creature none he did espye;
Then gan he lowdly through the house to call:
But no man car'd to answer to his crye.
There raignd a solemne silence ouer all,
Nor voice was heard, nor wight was seene in bowre or hall.

At last with creeping crooked pace forth came
An old old man, with beard as white as snow,
That on a staffe his feeble steps did frame,
And guide his wearie gate both too and fro:
For his eye sight him failed long ygo,
And on his arme a bounch of keyes he bore,
The which vnused rust did ouergrow:
Those were the keyes of euery inner dore,
But he could not them vse, but kept them still in store.

But very vncouth sight was to behold,
How he did fashion his vntoward pace,
For as he forward moou'd his footing old,
So backward still was turnd his wrinckled face,
Vnlike to men, who euer as they trace,
Both feet and face one way are wont to lead.
This was the auncient keeper of that place,
And foster father of the Gyant dead;
His name Ignaro did his nature right aread.

His reuerend haire and holy grauitie
The knight much honord, as beseemed well,
And gently askt, where all the people bee,
Which in that stately building wont to dwell.
Who answerd him full soft, he could not tell.
Againe he askt, where that same knight was layd,
Whom great Orgoglio with his puissaunce fell
Had made his caytiue thrall; againe he sayde,
He could not tell: ne euer other answer made.

Then asked he, which way he in might pas:
He could not tell, againe he answered.
Thereat the curteous knight displeasd was,
And said, Old sire, it seemes thou hast not red
How ill it sits with that same siluer hed
In vaine to mocke, or mockt in vaine to bee:
But if thou be, as thou art pourtrahed
With natures pen, in ages graue degree,
Aread in grauer wise, what I demaund of thee.

His answer likewise was, he could not tell.
Whose senceless speach, and doted ignorance
When as the noble Prince had marked well,
He ghest his nature by his countenance,
And calmd his wrath with goodly temperance.
Then to him stepping, from his arme did reach
Those keyes, and made himselfe free enterance.
Each dore he opened without any breach;
There was no barre to stop, nor foe him to empeach.

There all within full rich arayd he found,
With royall arras and resplendent gold.
And did with store of euerie thing abound,
That greatest Princes presence might behold.
But all the floore (too filthy to be told)
With bloud of guiltlesse babes, and innocents trow,
Which there were slaine, as sheepe out of the fold,
Defiled was, that dreadfull was to vew,
And sacred ashes ouer it was strowed new.

And there beside of marble stone was built
An Altare, caru'd with cunning imagery,
On which true Christians bloud was often spilt,
And holy Martyrs often doen to dye,
With cruell malice and strong tyranny:
Whose blessed sprites from vnderneath the stone
To God for vengeance cryde continually,
And with great grieffe were often heard to grone,
That hardest heart would bleede, to heare their piteous
mone.

Through euery rowme he sought, and euery bowr,
But no where could he find that wofull thrall:
At last he came vnto an yron doore,
That fast was lockt, but key found not at all
Emongst that bounch, to open it withall;
But in the same a little grate was pight,
Through which he sent his voyce, and lowd did call
With all his powre, to weet, if liuing wight
Were housed therewithin, whom he enlargen might.

Therewith an hollow, dreary, murmuring voyce
These piteous plaints and dolours did resound;
O who is that, which brings me happy choyce
Of death, that here lye dying euery stound,
Yet liue perforce in balefull darkenesse bound?
For now three Moones haue chāged thrice their hew,
And haue beene thrice hid vnderneath the ground,
Since I the heauens chearefull face did vew,
O welcome thou, that doest of death bring tydings trew.

Which when that Champion heard, with percing point
Of pittie deare his hart was thrilled sore,
And trembling horror ran through euery ioynt,
For ruth of gentle knight so fowle forlore:
Which shaking off, he rent that yron dore,
With furious force, and indignation fell;
Where entred in, his foot could find no flore,
But all a deepe descent, as darke as hell,
That breathed euer forth a filthie banefull smell.

But neither darkenesse fowle, nor filthy bands,
Nor noyous smell his purpose could withhold,
(Entire affection hateth nicer hands)
But that with constant zeale, and courage bold,
After long paines and labours manifold,
He found the meanes that Prisoner vp to reare;
Whose feeble thighes, vnhabable to vphold
His pined corse, him scarce to light could beare,
A ruefull spectacle of death and ghastly dreere.

His sad dull eyes deepe sunck in hollow pits,
Could not endure th'vnwonted sunne to view;
His bare thin cheekes for want of better bits,
And empty sides deceiued of their dew,
Could make a stony hart his hap to rew;
His rawbone armes, whose mighty brawned bowrs
Were wont to riue steele plates, and helmets hew,
Were cleane consum'd, and all his vitall powres
Decayd, and all his flesh shronk vp like withered flowres.

Whom when his Lady saw, to him she ran
With hasty ioy: to see him made her glad,
And sad to view his visage pale and wan,
Who earst in flowres of freshest youth was clad.
Tho when her well of teares she wasted had,
She said, Ah dearest Lord, what euill starre
On you hath fround, and pourd his influence bad,
That of your selfe ye thus berobbed arre,
And this misseeming hew your manly looks doth marre?

But welcome now my Lord, in wele or woe,
Whose presence I haue lackt too long a day;
And fie on Fortune mine auowed foe,
Whose wrathfull wreakes them selues do now alay.
And for these wrongs shall treble penaunce pay
Of treble good: good growes of euils priefe.
The chearelesse man, whom sorrow did dismay,
Had no delight to treaten of his grieffe;
His long endured famine needed more relieffe.

Faire Lady, then said that victorious knight,
The things, that grieuous were to do, or beare,
Them to renew, I wote, breeds no delight:
Best musicke breeds delight in loathing eare:
But th'onely good, that growes of passed feare,
Is to be wise, and ware of like agein.
This dayes ensample hath this lesson deare
Deepe written in my heart with yron pen,
That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men.

Henceforth sir knight, take to you wanted strength,
And maister these mishaps with patient might;
Loe where your foe lyes stretcht in monstrous length,
And loe that wicked woman in your sight,
The roote of all your care, and wretched plight,
Now in your powre, to let her liue, or dye.
To do her dye (quoth Vna) were despight,
And shame t'auenge so weake an enemy;
But spoile her of her scarlot robe, and let her fly.

So as she bad, that witch they disaraid,
And robd of royall robes, and purple pall,
And ornaments that richly were displaid;
Ne spared they to strip her naked all.
Then when they had despoild her tire and call,
Such as she was, their eyes might her behold,
That her misshaped parts did them appall,
A loathly, wrinckled hag, ill faouered, old,
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told.

Her craftie head was altogether bald,
And as in hate of honorable eld,
Was ouergrowne with scurfe and filthy scald;
Her teeth out of her rotten gummes were feld,
And her sowre breath abhominably smeld;
Her dried duges, like bladders lacking wind,
Hong downe, and filthy matter from them weld;
Her wrizled skin as rough, as maple rind,
So scabby was, that would haue loathd all womankind.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

Her neather parts, the shame of all her kind,
My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to write;
But at her rompe she growing had behind
A foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight;
And eke her feete most monstrous were in sight;
For one of them was like an Eagles claw,
With griping talaunts armd to greedy fight,
The other like a Beares vneuen paw:
More vgly shape yet neuer liuing creature saw.

Which when the knights beheld, amazd they were,
And wondred at so fowle deformed wight.
Such then (said Vna) as she seemeth here,
Such is the face of falshood, such the sight
Of fowle Duessa, when her borrowed light
Is laid away, and counterfesaunce knowne.
Thus when they had the witch disrobed quight,
And all her filthy feature open showne,
They let her goe at will, and wander wayes vnknowne.

She flying fast from heauens hated face,
And from the world that her discovered wide,
Fled to the wastfull wildernesse apace,
From liuing eyes her open shame to hide,
And lurkt in rocks and caues long vnespide.
But that faire crew of knights, and Vna faire
Did in that castle afterwards abide,
To rest them selues, and weary powres repaire,
Where store they found of all, that dainty was and rare.

Cant. IX.

His loues and lignage Arthur tells
The knights knit friendly bands:
Sir Treuisan flies from Despayre,
Whom Redcrosse knight withstands.

O Goodly golden chaine, wherewith yfere
The vertues linked are in louely wize:
And noble minds of yore allyed were,
In braue poursuit of cheualrous emprize,
That none did others safety despize,
Nor aid enuy to him, in need that stands,
But friendly each did others prayse deuize
How to aduaunce with fauourable hands,
As this good Prince redeemed the Redcrosse knight from
bands.

Who when their powres, empaird through labour long,
With dew repast they had recured well,
And that weake captiue wight now wexed strong,
Them list no lenger there at leasure dwell,
But forward fare, as their aduentures fell,
But ere they parted, Vna faire besought
That straunger knight his name and nation tell;
Least so great good, as he for her had wrought,
Should die vnknown, & buried be in thanklesse thought.

Faire virgin (said the Prince) ye me require
A thing without the compas of my wit:
For both the lignage and the certain Sire,
From which I sprong, from me are hidden yit.
For all so soone as life did me admit
Into this world, and shewed heauens light,
From mothers pap I taken was vnfit:
And streight deliuered to a Faery knight,
To be vpbrought in gentle thewes and martiall might.

Vnto old Timon he me brought byliue,
Old Timon, who in youthly yeares hath beene
In warlike feates th'expertest man aliue,
And is the wisest now on earth I weene;
His dwelling is low in a valley greene,
Vnder the foot of Rauran mossy hore,
From whence the riuer Dee as siluer cleene
His tomling billowes rolls with gentle rore:
There all my dayes he traird me vp in vertuous lore.

Thither the great Magicien Merlin came,
As was his vse, oftentimes to visit me:
For he had charge my discipline to frame,
And Tutours nouriture to ouersee.
Him oft and oft I askt in priuitie,
Of what loines and what lignage I did spring:
Whose aunswere bad me still assured bee,
That I was sonne and heire vnto a king,
As time in her iust terme the truth to light should bring.

Well worthy impe, said then the Lady gent,
And Pupill fit for such a Tutours hand.
But what aduenture, or what high intent
Hath brought you hither into Faery land,
Aread Prince Arthur, crowne of Martiall band?
Full hard it is (quoth he) to read aright
The course of heauenly cause, or vnderstand
The secret meaning of th'eternall might,
That rules mens wayes, and rules the thoughts of liuing wight.

For whither he through fatall deepe foresight
Me hither sent, for cause to me vnghest,
Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day and night
Whilome doth rancle in my riuen brest,
With forced fury following his behest,
Me hither brought by wayes yet neuer found,
You to haue helpt I hold my selfe yet blest.
Ah curteous knight (quoth she) what secret wound
Could euer find, to grieue the gentlest hart on ground?

Deare Dame (quoth he) you sleeping sparkes awake,
Which troubled once, into huge flames will grow,
Ne euer will their feruent fury slake,
Till liuing moysture into smoke do flow,
And wasted life do lye in ashes low.
Yet sithens silence lesseneth not my fire,
But told it flames, and hidden it does glow,
I will reuele, what ye so much desire:
Ah Loue, lay downe thy bow, the whiles I may respire.

It was in freshest flowre of youthly yeares,
When courage first does creepe in manly chest,
Then first the coale of kindly heat appears
To kindle loue in euery liuing brest;
But me had warnd old Timons wise behest,
Those creeping flames by reason to subdew,
Before their rage grew to so great vnrest,
As miserable louers vse to rew,
Which still wex old in woe, whiles woe still wexeth new.

That idle name of loue, and louers life,
As losse of time, and vertues enemy
I euer scornd, and ioyd to stirre vp strife,
In middest of their mournfull Tragedy,
Ay wont to laugh, when them I heard to cry,
And blow the fire, which them to ashes brent:
Their God himselfe, grieu'd at my libertie,
Shot many a dart at me with fiers intent,
But I them warded all with wary gouernment.

But all in vaine: no fort can be so strong,
Ne fleshly brest can armed be so sound,
But will at last be wonne with battrie long,
Or vnawares at disauantage found;
Nothing is sure, that growes on earthly ground:
And who most trustes in arme of fleshly might,
And boasts, in beauties chaine not to be bound,
Doth soonest fall in disauentrous fight,
And yeeldes his caytiue neck to victours most despiht.

Ensample make of him your haplesse ioy,
And of my selfe now mated, as ye see;
Whose prouder vaunt that proud auenging boy
Did soone pluck downe, and curbd my libertie.
For on a day prickt forth with iollitie
Of looser life, and heat of hardiment,
Raunging the forest wide on courser free,
The fields, the floods, the heauens with one consent
Did seeme to laugh on me, and fauour mine intent.

For-wearied with my sports, I did alight
From loftie steed, and downe to sleepe me layd;
The verdant gras my couch did goodly dight,
And pillow was my helmet faire displayd:
Whiles euery sence the humour sweet embayd,
And slombring soft my hart did steale away,
Me seemed, by my side a royall Mayd
Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay:
So faire a creature yet saw neuer sunny day.

Most goodly glee and louely blandishment
She to me made, and bad me loue her deare,
For dearely sure her loue was to me bent,
As when iust time expired should appeare.
But whether dreames delude, or true it were,
Was neuer hart so rauisht with delight,
Ne liuing man like words did euer heare,
As she to me deliuered all that night;
And at her parting said, She Queene of Faeries hight.

When I awoke, and found her place deuoyd,
And nought but pressed gras, where she had lyen,
I sorrowed all so much, as earst I ioyd,
And washed all her place with watry eyen.
From that day forth I lou'd that face diuine;
From that day forth I cast in carefull mind,
To seeke her out with labour, and long tyne,
And neuer vow to rest, till her I find,
Nine monethes I seeke in vaine yet ni'll that vow vnbind.

Thus as he spake, his visage wexed pale,
And chaunge of hew great passion did bewray;
Yet still he stroue to cloke his inward bale,
And hide the smoke, that did his fire display,
Till gentle Vna thus to him gan say;
O happy Queene of Faeries, that hast found
Mongst many, one that with his prowesse may
Defend thine honour, and thy foes confound:
True Loues are oft&etilde; sown, but seldom grow on ground.

Thine, O then, said the gentle Redcrosse knight,
Next to that Ladies loue, shalbe the place,
O fairest virgin, full of heauenly light,
Whose wondrous faith, exceeding earthly race,
Was firmest fixt in mine extremest case,
And you, my Lord, the Patrone of my life,
Of that great Queene may well gaine worthy grace:
For onely worthy you through prowes priefe
Yf liuing man mote worthy be, to be her liefe.

So diuersly discoursing of their loues,
The golden Sunne his glistring head gan shew,
And sad remembraunce now the Prince amoues,
With fresh desire his voyage to pursew:
Als Vna earnd her traueill to renew.
Then those two knights, fast friendship for to bynd,
And loue establish each to other trew,
Gaued goodly gifts, the signes of gratefull mynd,
And eke as pledges firme, right hands together ioyned.

Prince Arthur gaued a boxe of Diamond sure,
Embowed with gold and gorgeous ornament,
Wherein were closed few drops of liquor pure,
Of wondrous worth, and vertue excellent,
That any wound could heale incontinent:
Which to requite, the Redcrosse knight him gaued
A booke, wherein his Saueours testament
Was writ with golden letters rich and braue;
A worke of wondrous grace, and able soules to saue.

Thus beene they parted, Arthur on his way
To seeke his loue, and th'other for to fight
With Vnaes foe, that all her realme did pray.
But she now weighing the decayed plight,
And shrunken synewes of her chosen knight,
Would not a while her forward course pursew,
Ne bring him forth in face of dreadfull fight,
Till he recouered had his former hew:
For him to be yet weake and wearie well she knew.

So as they traueild, lo they gan espy
An armed knight towards them gallop fast,
That seemed from some feared foe to fly,
Or other griesly thing, that him agast.
Still as he fled, his eye was backward cast,
As if his feare still followed him behind;
Als flew his steed, as he his bands had brast,
And with his winged heeles did tread the wind,
As he had beene a fole of Pegasus his kind.

Nigh as he drew, they might perceiue his head
To be vnarmd, and curld vncombed heares
Vpstaring stiffe, dismayd with vncouth dread;
Nor drop of bloud in all his face appeares
Nor life in limbe: and to increase his feares,
In fowle reproch of knighthoods faire degree,
About his neck an hempen rope he weares,
That with his glistring armes does ill agree;
But he of rope or armes has now no memoree.

The Redcrosse knight toward him crossed fast,
To weet, what mister wight was so dismayd:
There him he finds all sencelesse and aghast,
That of him selfe he seemd to be afraid;
Whom hardly he from flying forward stayd,
Till he these wordes to him deliuer might;
Sir knight, aread who hath ye thus araid,
And eke from whom make ye this hasty flight:
For neuer knight I saw in such misseeming plight.

He answerd nought at all, but adding new
Feare to his first amazment, staring wide
With stony eyes, and hartlesse hollow hew,
Astonisht stood, as one that had aspide
Infernall furies, with their chaines vntide.
Him yet againe, and yet againe bespake
The gentle knight; who nought to him replide,
But trembling euery ioynt did inly quake,
And foltring tongue at last these words seemd forth to shake.

For Gods deare loue, Sir knight, do me not stay;
For loe he comes, he comes fast after mee.
Eft looking backe would faine haue runne away;
But he him forst to stay, and tellen free
The secret cause of his perplexitie:
Yet nathemore by his bold hartie speach,
Could his bloud-frozen hart emboldned bee,
But through his boldnesse rather feare did reach,
Yet forst, at last he made through silence suddein breach.

And am I now in safetie sure (quoth he)
From him, that would haue forced me to dye?
And is the point of death now turnd fro mee,
That I may tell this haplesse history?
Feare nought: (quoth he) no daunger now is nye?
Then shall I you recount a ruefull cace,
(Said he) the which with this vnlucky eye
I late beheld, and had not greater grace
Me reft from it, had bene partaker of the place.

I lately chaunst (Would I had neuer chaunst)
With a faire knight to keepen companee,
Sir Terwin hight, that well himselfe aduaunst
In all affaires, and was both bold and free,
But not so happie as mote happie bee:
He lou'd, as was his lot, a Ladie gent,
That him againe lou'd in the least degree:
For she was proud, and of too high intent,
And ioyd to see her louer languish and lament.

From whom returning sad and comfortlesse,
As on the way together we did fare,
We met that villen (God from him me blesse)
That cursed wight, from whom I scapt whyleare,
A man of hell, that cals himselfe Despaire:
Who first vs greets, and after faire areedes
Of tydings strange, and of aduentures rare:
So creeping close, as Snake in hidden weedes,
Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly deedes.

Which when he knew, and felt ourfeeble harts
Embost with bale, and bitter byting grieffe,
Which loue had launched with his deadly darts,
With wounding words and termes of foule reprieffe
He pluckt from vs all hope of due relieffe,
That earst vs held in loue of lingring life;
Then hopelesse hartlesse, gan the cunning thiefe
Perswade vs die, to stint all further strife:
To me he lent this rope, to him a rustie knife.

With which sad instrument of hastie death,
That wofull louer, loathing lenger light,
A wide way made to let forth liuing breath.
But I more fearefull, or more luckie wight,
Dismayd with that deformed dismall sight,
Fled fast away, halfe dead with dying feare:
Ne yet assur'd of life by you, Sir knight,
Whose like infirmitie like chaunce may beare:
But God you neuer let his charmed speches heare.

How may a man (said he) with idle speach
Be wonne, to spoyle the Castle of his health?
I wote (quoth he) whom triall late did teach,
That like would not for all this worldes wealth:
His subtill tongue, like dropping honny, mealt'th
Into the hart, and searcheth euery vaine,
That ere one be aware, by secret stealth
His powre is reft, and weaknesse doth remaine.
O neuer Sir desire to try his guilefull traine.

Certes (said he) hence shall I neuer rest,
Till I that treachours art haue heard and tride;
And you Sir knight, whose name mote I request,
Of grace do me vnto his cabin guide.
I that hight Treuisan (quoth he) will ride
Against my liking backe, to doe you grace:
But nor for gold nor glee will I abide
By you, when ye arriue in that same place;
For leuer had I die, then see his deadly face.

Ere long they come, where that same wicked wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow caue,
Farre vnderneath a craggie clift ypight,
Darke, dolefull, drearie, like a greedie graue,
That still for carrion carcasses doth craue:
On top whereof aye dwelt the ghastly Owle,
Shrieking his balefull note, which euer draue
Farre from that haunt all other chearefull fowle;
And all about it wandring ghostes did waile and howle.

And all about old stockes and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit, nor leafe was euer seene,
Did hang vpon the ragged rocky knees;
On which had many wretches hanged beene,
Whose carcases were scattered on the greene,
And throwne about the cliffs. Arriued there,
That bare-head knight for dread and dolefull teene,
Would faine haue fled, ne durst approchen neare,
But th'other forst him stay, and comforted in feare.

That darkesome caue they enter, where they find
That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullein mind;
His griesie lockes, long growen, and vnbound,
Disordred hong about his shoulders round,
And hid his face; through which his hollow eyne
Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound;
His raw-bone cheekes through penurie and pine,
Were shronke into his iawes, as he did neuer dine.

His garment nought but many ragged clouts,
With thornes together pind and patched was,
The which his naked sides he wrapt about;
And him beside there lay vpon the gras
A drearie corse, whose life away did pas,
All wallowd in his owne yet luke-warme blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh alas;
In which a rustie knife fast fixed stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood.

Which piteous spectacle, approuing trew
The wofull tale that Treuisan had told,
When as the gentle Redcrosse knight did vew,
With firie zeale he burnt in courage bold,
Him to auenge, before his blood were cold,
And to the villein said, Thou damned wight,
The author of this fact, we here behold,
What iustice can but iudge against thee right,
With thine owne blood to price his blood, here shed in sight.

What franticke fit (quoth he) hath thus distraught
Thee, foolish man, so rash a doome to giue?
What iustice euer other iudgement taught,
But he should die, who merites not to liue?
None else to death this man despayring driue,
But his owne guiltie mind deseruing death.
Is then vniust to each his due to giue?
Or let him die, that loatheth liuing breath?
Or let him die at ease, that liueth here vneath?

Who trauels by the wearie wandring way,
To come vnto his wished home in haste,
And meetes a flood, that doth his passage stay,
Is not great grace to helpe him ouer past,
Or free his feet, that in the myre sticke fast?
Most enuious man, that grieues at neighbours good,
And fond, that ioyest in the woe thou hast,
Why wilt not let him passe, that long hath stood
Vpon the banke, yet wilt thy selfe not passe the flood?

He there does now enioy eternall rest
And happie ease, which thou doest want and craue,
And further from it daily wanderest:
What if some litle paine the passage haue,
That makes fraile flesh to feare the bitter waue?
Is not short paine well borne, that brings long ease,
And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet graue?
Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please.

The knight much wondred at his suddeine wit,
And said, The terme of life is limited,
Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten it;
The souldier may not moue from watchfull sted,
Nor leaue his stand, vntill his Captaine bed.
Who life did limit by almightie doome,
(Quoth he) knowes best the termes established;
And he, that points the Centonell his roome,
Doth license him depart at sound of morning droome.

Is not his deed, what euer thing is donne,
In heauen and earth? did not he all create
To die againe? all ends that was begonne.
Their times in his eternall booke of fate
Are written sure, and haue their certaine date.
Who then can striue with strong necessitie,
That holds the world in his still chaunging state,
Or shunne the death ordaynd by destinie?
When houre of death is come, let none aske whence, nor
why.

The lenger life, I wote the greater sin,
The greater sin, the greater punishment:
All those great battels, which thou boasts to win,
Through strife, and blood-shed, and auengement,
Now praysd, hereafter deare thou shalt repent:
For life must life, and blood must blood repay.
Is not enough thy euill life forespent?
For he, that once hath missed the right way,
The further he doth goe, the further he doth stray.

Then do no further goe, no further stray,
 But here lie downe, and to thy rest betake,
 Th'ill to preuent, that life ensewen may.
 For what hath life, that may it loued make,
 And giues not rather cause it to forsake?
 Feare, sicknesse, age, losse, labour, sorrow, strife,
 Paine, hunger, cold, that makes the hart to quake;
 And euer fickle fortune rageth rife,
 All which, and thousands mo do make a loathsome life.

Thou wretched man, of death hast greatest need,
 If in true ballance thou wilt weigh thy state:
 For neuer knight, that dared warlike deede,
 More lucklesse disauentures did amate:
 Witnessse the dongeon deepe, wherein of late
 Thy life shut vp, for death so oft did call;
 And though good lucke prolonged hath thy date,
 Yet death then, would the like mishaps forestall,
 Into the which hereafter thou maiest happen fall.

Why then doest thou, ô man of sin, desire
 To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree?
 Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire
 High heaped vp with huge iniquitie,
 Against the day of wrath, to burden thee?
 Is not enough, that to this Ladie milde
 Thou falsed hast thy faith with periurie,
 And sold thy selfe to serue Duessa vilde,
 With whom in all abuse thou hast thy selfe defilde?

Is not he iust, that all this doth behold
 From highest heauen, and beares an equall eye?
 Shall he thy sins vp in his knowledge fold,
 And guiltie be of thine impietie?
 Is not his law, Let euery sinner die:
 Die shall all flesh? what then must needs be donne,
 Is it not better to doe willinglie,
 Then linger, till the glasse be all out ronne?
 Death is the end of woes: die soone, O faeries sonne.

The knight was much enmoued with his speach,
That as a swords point through his hart did perse,
And in his conscience made a secret breach,
Well knowing true all, that he did reherse,
And to his fresh remembrance did reuerse
The vgly vew of his deformed crimes,
That all his manly powres it did disperse,
As he were charmed with inchaunted rimes,
That oftentimes he quakt, and fainted oftentimes.

In which amazement, when the Miscreant
Perceiued him to wauer weake and fraile,
Whiles trembling horror did his conscience dant,
And hellish anguish did his soule assaile,
To driue him to despaire, and quite to quaile,
He shew'd him painted in a table plaine,
The damned ghosts, that doe in torments waile,
And thousand feends that doe them endlesse paine
With fire and brimstone, which for euer shall remaine.

The sight whereof so throughly him dismaid,
That nought but death before his eyes he saw,
And euer burning wrath before him laid,
By righteous sentence of th'Almighties law:
Then gan the vellein him to ouercraw,
And brought vnto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw;
And bad him choose, what death he would desire:
For death was due to him, that had prouokt Gods ire.

But when as none of them he saw him take,
He to him raught a dagger sharpe and keene,
And gaue it him in hand: his hand did quake,
And tremble like a leafe of Aspin greene,
And troubled bloud through his pale face was seene
To come, and goe with tydings from the hart,
As it a running messenger had beene.
At last resolu'd to worke his finall smart,
He lifted vp his hand, that backe againe did start.

Which when as Vna saw, through euery vaine
The crudled cold ran to her well of life,
As in a swowne: but soone reliu'd againe,
Out of his hand she snatcht the cursed knife,
And threw it to the ground, enraged rife,
And to him said, Fie, fie, faint harted knight,
What meanest thou by this reprochfull strife?
Is this the battell, which thou vauntst to fight
With that fire-mouthed Dragon, horrible and bright?

Come, come away, fraile, seely, fleshly wight,
Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart,
Ne diuelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright.
In heauenly mercies hast thou not a part?
Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art?
Where iustice growes, there grows eke greater grace,
The which doth quench the brond of hellish smart,
And that accurst hand-writing doth deface,
Arise, Sir knight arise, and leaue this cursed place.

So vp he rose, and thence amounte streight.
Which when the carle beheld, and saw his guest
Would safe depart, for all his subtill sleight,
He chose an halter from among the rest,
And with it hung himselfe, vnbid vnblest.
But death he could not worke himselfe thereby;
For thousand times he so himselfe had drest,
Yet nathelesse it could not doe him die,
Till he should die his last, that is eternally.

Cant. X.

Her faithfull knight faire Vna brings
to house of Holinesse,
Where he is taught repentance, and
the way to heauenly blesse.

What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might,
And vaine assurance of mortality,
Which all so soone, as it doth come to fight,
Against spirituall foes, yeelds by and by,
Or from the field most cowardly doth fly?
Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That thorough grace hath gained victory.
If any strength we haue, it is to ill,
But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will.

By that, which lately hapned, Vna saw,
That this her knight was feeble, and too faint;
And all his sinews woxen weake and raw,
Through long enprisonment, and hard constraint,
Which he endured in his late restraint,
That yet he was vnfit for bloudie fight:
Therefore to cherish him with diets daint,
She cast to bring him, where he chearen might,
Till he recouered had his late decayed plight.

There was an auntient house not farre away,
Renowmd throughout the world for sacred lore,
And pure vnspotted life: so well they say
It gouerned was, and guided euermore,
Through wisdom of a matrone graue and hore;
Whose onely ioy was to relieue the needes
Of wretched soules, and helpe the helpelesse pore:
All night she spent in bidding of her bedes,
And all the day in doing good and godly deedes.

Dame Cælia men did her call, as thought
From heauen to come, or thither to arise,
The mother of three daughters, well vpbrought
In goodly thewes, and goodly exercise:
The eldest two most sober, chaste, and wise,
Fidelia and Speranza virgins were,
Though spoused, yet wanting wedlocks solemnize;
But faire Charissa to a louely fere
Was lincked, and by him had many pledges dere.

Arriued there, the dore they find fast lockt;
For it was warely watched night and day,
For feare of many foes: but when they knockt,
The Porter opened vnto them streight way:
He was an aged syre, all hory gray,
With lookes full lowly cast, and gate full slow,
Wont on a staffe his feeble steps to stay,
Hight Humiltá. They passe in stouping low;
For streight & narrow was the way, which he did show.

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin,
But entred in a spacious court they see,
Both plaine, and pleasant to be walked in,
Where them does meete a francklin faire and free,
And entertaines with comely courteous glee,
His name was Zele, that him right well became,
For in his speeches and behaiour hee
Did labour liuely to expresse the same,
And gladly did them guide, till to the Hall they came.

There fairely them receiues a gentle Squire,
Of milde demeanure, and rare courtesie,
Right cleanly clad in comely sad attire;
In word and deede that shew'd great modestie,
And knew his good to all of each degree,
Hight Reuerence. He them with speeches meet
Does faire entreat; no courting nicetie,
But simple true, and eke vnfained sweet,
As might become a Squire so great persons to greet.

And afterwards them to his Dame he leades,
That aged Dame, the Ladie of the place:
Who all this while was busie at her beades:
Which doen, she vp arose with seemely grace,
And toward them full matronely did pace.
Where when that fairest Vna she beheld,
Whom well she knew to spring from heauenly race,
Her hart with ioy vnwonted inly sweld,
As feeling wondrous comfort in her weaker eld.

And her embracing said, ô happie earth,
Whereon thy innocent feet doe euer tread,
Most vertuous virgin borne of heauenly berth,
That to redeeme thy woefull parents head,
From tyrans rage, and euer-dying dread,
Hast wandred through the world now long a day;
Yet ceasest not thy wearie soles to lead,
What grace hath thee now hither brought this way?
Or doen thy feeble feet vnweeting hither stray?

Strange thing it is an errant knight to see
Here in this place, or any other wight,
That hither turnes his steps. So few there bee,
That chose the narrow path, or seeke the right:
All keepe the broad high way, and take delight
With many rather for to go astray,
And be partakers of their euill plight,
Then with a few to walke the rightest way;
O foolish men, why haste ye to your owne decay?

Thy selfe to see, and tyred limbs to rest,
O matrone sage (quoth she) I hither came,
And this good knight his way with me adrest,
Led with thy prayses and broad-blazed fame,
That vp to heauen is blowne. The auncient Dame
Him goodly greeted in her modest guise,
And entertaynd them both, as best became,
With all the court'sies, that she could deuise.
Ne wanted ought, to shew her bounteous or wise.

Thus as they gan of sundry things deuise,
Loe two most goodly virgins came in place,
Ylinked arme in arme in louely wise,
With countenance demure, and modest grace,
They numberd euen steps and equall pace:
Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight,
Like sunny beames threw from her Christall face,
That could haue dazd the rash beholders sight,
And round about her head did shine like heauens light.

She was araied all in lilly white,
And in her right hand bore a cup of gold,
With wine and water fild vp to the hight,
In which a Serpent did himselfe enfold,
That horrour made to all, that did behold;
But she no whit did chaunge her constant mood:
And in her other hand she fast did hold
A booke, that was both signd and seald with blood,
Wherein darke things were writ, hard to be vnderstood.

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight,
Was clad in blew, that her beseemed well;
Not all so chearefull seemed she of sight,
As was her sister; whether dread did dwell,
Or anguish in her hart, is hard to tell:
Vpon her arme a siluer anchor lay,
Whereon she leaned euer, as befell:
And euer vp to heauen, as she did pray,
Her stedfast eyes were bent, ne swarued other way.

They seeing Vna, towards her gan wend,
Who them encounters with like courtesie;
Many kind speeches they betwene them spend,
And greatly ioy each other well to see:
Then to the knight with shamefast modestie
They turne themselues, at Vnaes meeke request,
And him salute with well beseeming glee:
Who faire them quites, as him beseemed best,
And goodly gan discourse of many a noble gest.

Then Vna thus; But she your sister deare;
The deare Charissa where is she become?
Or wants she health, or busie is elsewhere?
Ah no, said they, but forth she may not come:
For she of late is lightned of her wombe,
And hath encreast the world with one sonne more,
That her to see should be but troublesome.
Indeede (quoth she) that should her trouble sore,
But thankt be God, and her encrease so euermore.

Then said the aged Coelia, Deare dame,
And you good Sir, I wote that of your toyle,
And labours long, through which ye hither came,
Ye both forwearing be: therefore a while
I read you rest, and to your bowres recoyle.
Then called she a Groome, that forth him led
Into a goodly lodge, and gan despoile
Of puissant armes, and laid in easie bed;
His name was meeke Obedience rightfully ared.

Now when their wearie limbes with kindly rest,
And bodies were refresht with due repast,
Faire Vna gan Fidelia faire request,
To haue her knight into her schoolehouse plaste,
That of her heauenly learning he might taste,
And heare the wisdom of her words diuine.
She graunted, and that knight so much agraste,
That she him taught celestiall discipline,
And opened his dull eyes, that light mote in them shine.

And that her sacred Booke, with bloud ywrit,
That none could read, except she did them teach,
She vnto him disclosed euery whit,
And heauenly documents thereout did preach,
That weaker wit of man could neuer reach,
Of God, of grace, of iustice, of free will,
That wonder was to heare her goodly speach:
For she was able, with her words to kill,
And raise againe to life the hart, that she did thrill.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

And when she list poure out her larger spright,
She would commaund the hastie Sunne to stay,
Or backward turne his course from heauens hight;
Sometimes great hostes of men she could dismay,
Dry-shod to passe, she parts the flouds in tway;
And eke huge mountaines from their natiue seat
She would commaund, themselues to beare away,
And throw in raging sea with roaring threat.
Almightie God her gaue such powre, and puissance great.

The faithfull knight now grew in litle space,
By hearing her, and by her sisters lore,
To such perfection of all heauenly grace,
That wretched world he gan for to abhore,
And mortall life gan loath, as thing forlore,
Greeu'd with remembrance of his wicked wayes,
And prickt with anguish of his sinnes so sore,
That he desirede to end his wretched dayes:
So much the dart of sinfull guilt the soule dismayes.

But wise Speranza gaue him comfort sweet,
And taught him how to take assured hold
Vpon her siluer anchor, as was meet;
Else had his sinnes so great, and manifold
Made him forget all that Fidelia told.
In this distressed doubtfull agonie,
When him his dearest Vna did behold,
Disdeining life, desiring leaue to die,
She found her selfe assayld with great perplexitie.

And came to Coelia to declare her smart,
Who well acquainted with that commune plight,
Which sinfull horror workes in wounded hart,
Her wisely comforted all that she might,
With goodly counsell and aduisement right;
And streightway sent with carefull diligence,
To fetch a Leach, the which had great insight
In that disease of griued conscience,
And well could cure the same; His name was Patience.

Who comming to that soule-diseased knight,
Could hardly him intreat, to tell his grieffe:
Which knowne, and all that noyd his heauie spright
Well searcht, eftsoones he gan apply reliefe
Of salues and med'cines, which had passing priefe,
And thereto added words of wondrous might:
By which to ease he him recured briefe,
And much asswag'd the passion of his plight,
That he his paine endur'd, as seeming now more light.

But yet the cause and root of all his ill,
Inward corruption, and infected sin,
Not purg'd nor heald, behind remained still,
And festring sore did rankle yet within,
Close creeping twixt the marrow and the skin.
Which to extirpe, he laid him priuily
Downe in a darkesome lowly place farre in,
Whereas he meant his corrosiues to apply,
And with streight diet tame his stubborne malady.

In ashes and sackcloth he did array
His daintie corse, proud humors to abate,
And dieted with fasting euery day,
The swelling of his wounds to mitigate,
And made him pray both earely and eke late:
And euer as superfluous flesh did rot
Amendment readie still at hand did wayt,
To pluck it out with pincers firie whot,
That soone in him was left no one corrupted iot.

And bitter Penance with an yron whip,
Was wont him once to disple euery day:
And sharpe Remorse his hart did pricke and nip,
That drops of bloud thence like a well did play;
And sad Repentance vsed to embay
His bodie in salt water smarting sore,
The filthy blots of sinne to wash away.
So in short space they did to health restore
The man that would not liue, but earst lay at deathes dore.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

In which his torment often was so great,
That like a Lyon he would cry and rore,
And rend his flesh, and his owne synewes eat.
His owne deare Vna hearing euermore
His ruefull shriekes and gronings, often tore
Her guiltlesse garments, and her golden heare,
For pittie of his paine and anguish sore;
Yet all with patience wisely she did beare;
For well she wist, his crime could else be neuer cleare.

Whom thus recouer'd by wise Patience,
And trew Repentance they to Vna brought:
Who ioyous of his cured conscience,
Him dearely kist, and fairely eke besought
Himselfe to chearish, and consuming thought
To put away out of his carefull brest.
By this Charissa, late in child-bed brought,
Was woxen strong, and left her fruitfull nest;
To her faire Vna brought this vnacquainted guest.

She was a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bountie rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage,
That was on earth not easie to compare;
Full of great loue, but Cupids wanton snare
As hell she hated, chast in worke and will;
Her necke and breasts were euer open bare,
That ay thereof her babes might sucke their fill;
The rest was all in yellow robes arayed still.

A multitude of babes about her hong,
Playing their sports, that ioyd her to behold,
Whom still she fed, whiles they were weake & young,
But thrust them forth still, as they waxed old:
And on her head she wore a tyre of gold,
Adornd with gemmes and owches wondrous faire,
Whose passing price vneath was to be told;
And by her side there sate a gentle paire
Of turtle doues, she sitting in an yuorie chaire.

The knight and Vna entring, faire her greet,
And bid her ioy of that her happie brood;
Who them requites with court'sies seeming meet,
And entertaines with friendly chearefull mood.
Then Vna her besought, to be so good,
As in her vertuous rules to schoole her knight,
Now after all his torment well withstood,
In that sad house of Penance, where his spright
Had past the paines of hell, and long enduring night.

She was right ioyous of her iust request,
And taking by the hand that Faeries sonne,
Gan him instruct in euery good behest,
Of loue, and righteousnesse, and well to donne,
And wrath, and hatred warely to shonne,
That drew on men Gods hatred, and his wrath,
And many soules in dolours had fordonne:
In which when him she well instructed hath,
From thence to heauen she teacheth him the ready path.

Wherein his weaker wandring steps to guide,
An auncient matrone she to her does call,
Whose sober lookes her wisdom well descride:
Her name was Mercie, well knowne ouer all,
To be both gracious, and eke liberall:
To whom the carefull charge of him she gaue,
To lead aright, that he should neuer fall
In all his wayes through this wide worldes waue,
That Mercy in the end his righteous soule might saue.

The godly Matrone by the hand him beares
Forth from her presence, by a narrow way,
Scattered with bushy thornes, and ragged breares,
Which still before him she remou'd away,
That nothing might his ready passage stay:
And euer when his feet encombred were,
Or gan to shrink, or from the right to stray,
She held him fast, and firmly did vpbeare,
As carefull Nourse her child from falling oft does reare.

Eftsoones vnto an holy Hospitall,
That was fore by the way, she did him bring,
In which seuen Bead-men that had vowed all
Their life to seruice of high heauens king
Did spend their dayes in doing godly thing:
Their gates to all were open euermore,
That by the wearie way were traueiling,
And one sate wayting euer them before,
To call in-commers by, that needy were and pore.

The first of them that eldest was, and best,
Of all the house had charge and gouernement,
As Guardian and Steward of the rest:
His office was to giue entertainement
And lodging, vnto all that came, and went:
Not vnto such, as could him feast againe,
And double quite, for that he on them spent,
But such, as want of harbour did constraîne:
Those for Gods sake his dewty was to entertaîne.

The second was as Almner of the place,
His office was, the hungry for to feed,
And thristy giue to drinke, a worke of grace:
He feard not once him selfe to be in need,
Ne car'd to hoord for those, whom he did breede:
The grace of God he layd vp still in store,
Which as a stocke he left vnto his seede;
He had enough, what need him care for more?
And had he lesse, yet some he would giue to the pore.

The third had of their wardrobe custodie,
In which were not rich tyres, nor garments gay,
The plumes of pride, and wings of vanitie,
But clothes meet to keepe keene could away,
And naked nature seemely to aray;
With which bare wretched wights he dayly clad,
The images of God in earthly clay;
And if that no spare cloths to giue he had,
His owne coate he would cut, and it distribute glad.

The fourth appointed by his office was,
Poore prisoners to relieue with gracious ayd,
And captiues to redeeme with price of bras,
From Turkes and Sarazins, which them had stayd;
And though they faultie were, yet well he wayd,
That God to vs forgiueth euery howre
Much more then that, why they in bands were layd,
And he that harrowd hell with heauie stowre,
The faultie soules from thence brought to his heauenly bowre.

The fift had charge sicke persons to attend,
And comfort those, in point of death which lay;
For them most needeth comfort in the end,
When sin, and hell, and death do most dismay
The feeble soule departing hence away.
All is but lost, that liuing we bestow,
If not well ended at our dying day.
O man haue mind of that last bitter throw;
For as the tree does fall, so lyes it euer low.

The sixt had charge of them now being dead,
In seemely sort their corses to engraue,
And deck with dainty flowres their bridall bed,
That to their heauenly spouse both sweet and braue
They might appeare, when he their soules shall saue.
The wondrous workemanship of Gods owne mould,
Whose face he made, all beasts to feare, and gaue
All in his hand, euen dead we honour should.
Ah dearest God me graunt, I dead be not defould.

The seuenth now after death and buriall done,
Had charge the tender Orphans of the dead
And widowes ayd, least they should be vndone:
In face of iudgement he their right would plead,
Ne ought the powre of mighty men did dread
In their defence, nor would for gold or fee
Be wonne their rightfull causes downe to tread:
And when they stood in most necessitee,
He did supply their want, and gaue them euer free.

There when the Elfin knight arriued was,
The first and chiefest of the seuen, whose care
Was guests to welcome, towards him did pas:
Where seeing Mercie, that his steps vp bare,
And alwayes led, to her with reuerence rare
He humbly louted in meeke lowlinesse,
And seemely welcome for her did prepare:
For of their order she was Patronesse,
Albe Charissa were their chiefest founderesse.

There she awhile him stayes, him selfe to rest,
That to the rest more able he might bee:
During which time, in euery good behest
And godly worke of Almes and charitee
She him instructed with great industree;
Shortly therein so perfect he became,
That from the first vnto the last degree,
His mortall life he learned had to frame
In holy righteousnesse, without rebuke or blame.

Thence forward by that painfull way they pas,
Forth to an hill, that was both steepe and hy;
On top whereof a sacred chappell was,
And eke a litle Hermitage thereby,
Wherein an aged holy man did lye,
That day and night said his deuotion,
Ne other worldly busines did apply;
His name was heauenly Contemplation;
Of God and goodnesse was his meditation.

Great grace that old man to him giuen had;
For God he often saw from heauens hight,
All were his earthly eyen both blunt and bad,
And through great age had lost their kindly sight,
Yet wondrous quick and persant was his spright,
As Eagles eye, that can behold the Sunne:
That hill they scale with all their powre and might,
That his frayle thighes nigh wearie and fordonne
Gan faile, but by her helpe the top at last he wonne.

There they do finde that godly aged Sire,
With snowy lockes adowne his shoulders shed,
As hoarie frost with spangles doth attire
The mossy braunches of an Oke halfe ded.
Each bone might through his body well be red,
And euery sinew seene through his long fast:
For nought he car'd his carcas long vnfed;
His mind was full of spirituall repast,
And pyn'd his flesh, to keepe his body low and chast.

Who when these two approaching he aspide,
At their first presence grew agriued sore,
That forst him lay his heauenly thoughts aside;
And had he not that Dame respected more,
Whom highly he did reuerence and adore,
He would not once haue moued for the knight.
They him saluted standing far afore;
Who well them greeting, humbly did requight,
And asked, to what end they clomb that tedious height.

What end (quoth she) should cause vs take such paine,
But that same end, which euery liuing wight
Should make his marke, high heauen to attaine?
Is not from hence the way, that leadeth right
To that most glorious house, that glistreth bright
With burning starres, and euerliuing fire,
Whereof the keyes are to thy hand behight
By wise Fidelia? she doth thee require,
To shew it to this knight, according his desire.

Thrise happy man, said then the father graue,
Whose staggering steps thy steady hand doth lead,
And shewes the way, his sinfull soule to saue.
Who better can the way to heauen aread,
Then thou thy selfe, that was both borne and bred
In heauenly throne, where thousand Angels shine?
Thou doest the prayers of the righteous sead
Present before the maiestie diuine,
And his auenging wrath to clemencie incline.

Yet since thou bidst, thy pleasure shalbe donne.
Then come thou man of earth, and see the way,
That neuer yet was seene of Faeries sonne,
That neuer leads the traueiler astray,
But after labours long, and sad delay,
Brings them to ioyous rest and endlesse blis.
But first thou must a season fast and pray,
Till from her bands the spright assoiled is,
And haue her strength recur'd from fraile infirmitis.

That done, he leads him to the highest Mount;
Such one, as that same mighty man of God,
That bloud-red billowes like a walled front
On either side disparted with his rod,
Till that his army dry-foot through them yod,
Dwelt fortie dayes vpon; where writ in stone
With bloody letters by the hand of God,
The bitter doome of death and balefull mone
He did receiue, whiles flashing fire about him shone.

Or like that sacred hill, whose head full hie,
Adornd with fruitfull Oliues all arownd,
Is, as it were for endlesse memory
Of that deare Lord, who oft thereon was fownd,
For euer with a flowring girlond crownd:
Or like that pleasaunt Mount, that is for ay
Through famous Poets verse each where renownd,
On which the thrise three learned Ladies play
Their heauenly notes, and make full many a louely lay.

From thence, far off he vnto him did shew
A litle path, that was both steepe and long,
Which to a goodly Citie led his vew;
Whose wals and towres were builded high and strong
Of perle and precious stone, that earthly tong
Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell;
Too high a ditty for my simple song;
The Citie of the great king hight it well,
Wherein eternall peace and happinesse doth dwell.

As he thereon stood gazing, he might see
The blessed Angels to and fro descend
From highest heauen, in gladsome companee,
And with great ioy into that Citie wend,
As commonly as friend does with his frend.
Whereat he wondred much, and gan enquire,
What stately building durst so high extend
Her loftie towres vnto the starry sphere,
And what vnknown nation there empeopled were.

Faire knight (quoth he) Hierusalem that is,
The new Hierusalem, that God has built
For those to dwell in, that are chosen his,
His chosen people purg'd from sinfull guilt,
With pretious blood, which cruelly was spilt
On cursed tree, of that vnspotted lam,
That for the sinnes of all the world was kilt:
Now are they Saints all in that Citie sam,
More deare vnto their God, then yo&uilde;glings to
their dam.

Till now, said then the knight, I weened well,
That great Cleopolis, where I haue beene,
In which that fairest Faerie Queene doth dwell,
The fairest Citie was, that might be seene;
And that bright towre all built of christall cleene,
Panthea, seemd the brightest thing, that was:
But now by prooffe all otherwise I weene;
For this great Citie that does far surpas,
And this bright Angels towre quite dims that towre of glas.

Most trew, then said the holy aged man;
Yet is Cleopolis for earthly frame,
The fairest peece, that eye beholden can:
And well beseemes all knights of noble name,
That couet in th'immortall booke of fame
To be eternized, that same to haunt,
And doen their seruice to that soueraigne Dame,
That glorie does to them for guerdon graunt:
For she is heauenly borne, and heauen may iustly vaunt.

And thou faire ymp, sprong out from English race,
How euer now accompted Elfins sonne,
Well worthy doest thy seruice for her grace,
To aide a virgin desolate foredonne.
But when thou famous victorie hast wonne,
And high emongst all knights hast hong thy shield,
Thenceforth the suit of earthly conquest shonne,
And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field:
For bloud can nought but sin, & wars but sorrowes yield.

Then seeke this path, that I to thee presage,
Which after all to heauen shall thee send;
Then peaceably thy painefull pilgrimage
To yonder same Hierusalem do bend,
Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end:
For thou emongst those Saints, whom thou doest see,
Shalt be a Saint, and thine owne nations frend
And Patrone: thou Saint George shalt called bee,
Saint George of mery England, the signe of victoree.

Vnworthy wretch (quoth he) of so great grace,
How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?
These that haue it attained, were in like cace
(Quoth he) as wretched, and liu'd in like paine.
But deeds of armes must I at last be faine,
And Ladies loue to leaue so dearely bought?
What need of armes, where peace doth ay remaine,
(Said he) and batailles none are to be fought?
As for loose loues they are vaine, and vanish into nought.

O let me not (quoth he) then turne againe
Backe to the world, whose ioyes so fruitlesse are;
But let me here for aye in peace remaine,
Or streight way on that last long voyage fare,
That nothing may my present hope empare.
That may not be (said he) ne maist thou yit
Forgo that royall maides bequeathed care,
Who did her cause into thy hand commit,
Till from her cursed foe thou haue her freely quit.

Then shall I soone, (quoth he) so God me grace,
Abet that virgins cause disconsolate,
And shortly backe returne vnto this place,
To walke this way in Pilgrims poore estate.
But now aread, old father, why of late
Didst thou behight me borne of English blood,
Whom all a Faeries sonne doen nominate?
That word shall I (said he) auouchen good,
Sith to thee is vnknowne the cradle of thy brood.

For well I wote, thou springst from ancient race
Of Saxon kings, that haue with mightie hand
And many bloudie battailes fought in place
High reard their royall throne in Britane land,
And vanquisht them, vnable to withstand:
From thence a Faerie thee vnweeting reft,
There as thou slepst in tender swadling band,
And her base Elfin brood there for thee left.
Such men do Chaungelings call, so chaungd by Faeries theft.

Thence she thee brought into this Faerie lond,
And in an heaped furrow did thee hyde,
Where thee a Ploughman all vnweeting fond,
As he his toylesome teme that way did guyde,
And brought thee vp in ploughmans state to byde,
Whereof Georgos he thee gaued to name;
Till prickt with courage, and thy forces pryde,
To Faery court thou cam'st to seeke for fame,
And proue thy puissaunt armes, as seemes thee best became.

O holy Sire (quoth he) how shall I quight
The many fauours I with thee haue found,
That hast my name and nation red aright,
And taught the way that does to heauen bound?
This said, adowne he looked to the ground,
To haue returnd, but dazed were his eyne,
Through passing brightnesse, which did quite cōfound
His feeble sence, and too exceeding shyne.
So darke are earthly things compar'd to things diuine.

At last whenas himselfe he gan to find,
To Vna back he cast him to retire;
Who him awaited still with pensiuē mind.
Great thanks and goodly meed to that good syre,
He thence departing gauē for his paines hyre.
So came to Vna, who him ioyd to see,
And after litle rest, gan him desire,
Of her aduēture mindfull for to bee.
So leaue they take of Coelia, and her daughters three.

Cant. XI.

The knight with that old Dragon fights
two dayes incessantly:
The third him ouerthrowes, and gayns
most glorious victory.

High time now gan it wex for Vna faire,
To thinke of those her captiue Parents deare,
And their forwasted kingdome to repaire:
Whereto whenas they now approched neare,
With hartie words her knight she gan to cheare,
And in her modest manner thus bespake;
Deare knight, as deare, as euer knight was deare,
That all these sorrowes suffer for my sake,
High heauen behold the tedious toyle, ye for me take.

Now are we come vnto my natiue soyle,
And to the place, where all our perils dwell;
Here haunts that feend, and does his dayly spoyle,
Therefore henceforth be at your keeping well,
And euer ready for your foeman fell.
The sparke of noble courage now awake,
And striue your excellent selfe to excell;
That shall ye euermore renowned make,
Aboue all knights on earth, that batteill vndertake.

And pointing forth, lo yonder is (said she)
The brasen towre in which my parents deare
For dread of that huge feend emprisond be
Whom I from far see on the walles appeare
Whose sight my feeble soule doth greatly cheare:
And on the top of all I do espye
The watchman wayting tydings glad to heare,
That ô my parents might I happily
Vnto you bring, to ease you of your misery.

With that they heard a roaring hideous sound,
That all the ayre with terrour filled wide,
And seemd vneath to shake the stedfast ground.
Eftsoones that dreadfull Dragon they espide,
Where stretcht he lay vpon the sunny side
Of a great hill, himselfe like a great hill.
But all so soone, as he from far descride
Those glistring armes, that heauen with light did fill,
He rousd himselfe full blith, and hastned them vntill.

Then bad the knight his Lady yede aloofe,
And to an hill her selfe with draw aside,
From whence she might behold that battailles proof
And eke be safe from daunger far descryde:
She him obeyd, and turnd a little wyde.
Now O thou sacred Muse, most learned Dame,
Faire ympe of Phoebus, and his aged bride,
The Nourse of time, and euerlasting fame,
That warlike hands ennoblest with immortall name;

O gently come into my feeble brest,
Come gently, but not with that mighty rage,
Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest infest,
And harts of great Heroës doest enrage,
That nought their kindled courage may aswage,
Soone as thy dreadfull trompe begins to sownd;
The God of warre with his fiers equipage
Thou doest awake, sleepe neuer he so sownd,
And scared nations doest with horroure sterne astownd.

Faire Goddesses lay that furious fit aside,
 Till I of warres and bloody Mars do sing,
 And Briton fields with Sarazin blood bedyde,
 Twixt that great faery Queene and Paynim king,
 That with their horrour heauen and earth did ring,
 A worke of labour long, and endlesse prayse:
 But now a while let downe that haughtie string,
 And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
 That I this man of God his godly armes may blaze.

By this the dreadfull Beast drew nigh to hand,
 Halfe flying, and halfe footing in his hast,
 That with his largenesse measured much land,
 And made wide shadow vnder his huge wast;
 As mountaine doth the valley ouercast.
 Approching nigh, he reared high afore
 His body monstrous, horrible, and vast,
 Which to increase his wondrous greatnesse more,
 Was swolne with wrath, & poyson, & with bloody gore.

And ouer, all with brasen scales was armd,
 Like plated coate of steele, so couched neare,
 That nought mote perce, ne might his corse be harmd
 With dint of sword, nor push of pointed speare;
 Which as an Eagle, seeing pray appeare,
 His aery plumes doth rouze, full rudely dight,
 So shaked he, that horrour was to heare,
 For as the clashing of an Armour bright,
 Such noyse his rouzed scales did send vnto the knight.

His flaggy wings when forth he did display,
 Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wynd
 Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
 And eke the pennes, that did his pineons bynd,
 Were like mayne-yards, with flying canuas lynd,
 With which whenas him list the ayre to beat,
 And there by force vnwonted passage find,
 The cloudes before him fled for terrour great,
 And all the heauens stood still amazed with his threat.

His huge long tayle wound vp in hundred foldes,
Does ouerspred his long bras-scaly backe,
Whose wreathed boughts when euer he vnfoldes,
And thicke entangled knots adown does slacke.
Bespotted all with shields of red and blacke,
It sweepeth all the land behind him farre,
And of three furlongs does but litle lacke;
And at the point two stings in-fixed arre,
Both deadly sharpe, that sharpest steele exceeden farre.

But stings and sharpest steele did far exceed
The sharpnesse of his cruell rending clawes;
Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed,
What euer thing does touch his rauenuous pawes,
Or what within his reach he euer drawes.
But his most hideous head my tounge to tell
Does tremble: for his deepe deuouring iawes
Wide gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell,
Through which into his darke abisse all rauin fell.

And that more wondrous was, in either iaw
Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged were,
In which yet trickling bloud and gobbets raw
Of late deuoured bodies did appeare,
That sight thereof bred cold congealed feare:
Which to increase, and as atonce to kill,
A cloud of smothering smoke and sulphur seare
Out of his stinking gorge forth steemed still,
That all the ayre about with smoke and stench did fill.

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shields,
Did burne with wrath, and sparkled liuing fyre;
As two broad Beacons, set in open fields,
Send forth their flames farre off to euery shyre,
And warning giue, that enemies conspyre,
With fire and sword the region to inuade;
So flam'd his eyne with rage and rancorous yre:
But farre within, as in a hollow glade,
Those glaring lampes were set, that made a dreadfull shade.

So dreadfully he towards him did pas,
Forelifting vp aloft his speckled brest,
And often bounding on the brused gras,
As for great ioyance of his newcome guest.
Eftsoones he gan aduance his haughtie crest,
As chauffed Bore his bristles doth vpreare,
And shoke his scales to battell readie drest;
That made the Redcrosse knight nigh quake for feare,
As bidding bold defiance to his foeman neare.

The knight gan fairely couch his steadie speare,
And fiercely ran at him with rigorous might:
The pointed steele arriuing rudely theare,
His harder hide would neither perce, nor bight,
But glauncing by forth passed forward right;
Yet sore amoued with so puissant push,
The wrathfull beast about him turned light,
And him so rudely passing by, did brush
With his long tayle, that horse and man to ground did rush.

Both horse and man vp lightly rose againe,
And fresh encounter towards him address:
But th'idle stroke yet backe recoyld in vaine,
And found no place his deadly point to rest.
Exceeding rage enflam'd the furious beast,
To be auenged of so great despight;
For neuer felt his imperceable brest
So wondrous force, from hand of liuing wight;
Yet had he prou'd the powre of many a puissant knight.

Then with his wauing wings displayed wyde,
Himselfe vp high he lifted from the ground,
And with strong flight did forcibly diuide
The yielding aire, which nigh too feeble found
Her flitting partes, and element vnsound,
To beare so great a weight: he cutting way
With his broad sayles, about him soared round:
At last low stouping with vnweldie sway,
Snatcht vp both horse & man, to beare them quite away.

Long he them bore aboue the subiect plaine,
 So farre as Ewghen bow a shaft may send,
 Till struggling strong did him at last constraine,
 To let them downe before his flightes end:
 As hagarde hauke presuming to contend
 With hardie fowle, aboue his hable might,
 His wearie pounces all in vaine doth spend,
 To trusse the pray too heauie for his flight;
 Which comming downe to ground, does free it selfe by fight.

He so disseized of his gryping grosse,
 The knight his thrillant speare againe assayd
 In his bras-plated body to embosse,
 And three mens strength vnto the stroke he layd;
 Wherewith the stiffe beame quaked, as affrayd,
 And glauncing from his scaly necke, did glyde
 Close vnder his left wing, then broad displayd.
 The percing steele there wrought a wound full wyde,
 That with the vncouth smart the Monster lowdly cryde.

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore,
 When wintry storme his wrathfull wreck does threat,
 The rolling billowes beat the ragged shore,
 As they the earth would shoulder from her seat,
 And greedie gulfe does gape, as he would eat
 His neighbour element in his reuenge:
 Then gin the blustering brethren boldly threat,
 To moue the world from off his stedfast henge,
 And boystrous battell make, each other to auenge.

The steely head stucke fast still in his flesh,
 Till with his cruell clawes he snatcht the wood,
 And quite a sunder broke. Forth flowed fresh
 A gushing riuer of blacke goarie blood,
 That drowned all the land, whereon he stood;
 The streame thereof would driue a water-mill.
 Trebly augmented was his furious mood
 With bitter sense of his deepe rooted ill,
 That flames of fire he threw forth frō his large nosethrill.

His hideous taylor then hurled he about,
 And therewith all enwrapt the nimble thyes
 Of his froth-fomy steed, whose courage stout
 Striuing to loose the knot, that fast him tyes,
 Himselfe in streighter bandes too rash implies,
 That to the ground he is perforce constaynd
 To throw his rider: who can quickly ryse
 From off the earth, with durty bloud distaynd,
 For that reprochfull fall right fowly he disdaynd.

And fiercely tooke his trenchand blade in hand,
 With which he stroke so furious and so fell,
 That nothing seemd the puissance could withstand:
 Vpon his crest the hardned yron fell,
 But his more hardned crest was armd so well,
 That deeper dint therein it would not make;
 Yet so extremely did the buffe him quell,
 That from thenceforth he shund the like to take,
 But when he saw them come, he did them still forsake.

The knight was wrath to see his stroke beguyld,
 And smote againe with more outrageous might;
 But backe againe the sparckling steele recoyld,
 And left not any marke, where it did light;
 As if in Adamant rocke it had bene pight.
 The beast impatient of his smarting wound,
 And of so fierce and forcible despight,
 Thought with his wings to stye aboue the ground;
 But his late wounded wing vnseruiceable found.

Then full of grieffe and anguish vehement,
 He lowdly brayd, that like was neuer heard,
 And from his wide deuouring ouen sent
 A flake of fire, that flashing in his beard,
 Him all amazd, and almost made affeard:
 The scorching flame sore swunged all his face,
 And through his armour all his bodie seard,
 That he could not endure so cruell cace,
 But thought his armes to leaue, and helmet to vnlace.

Not that great Champion of the antique world,
Whom famous Poetes verse so much doth vaunt,
And hath for twelue huge labours high extold,
So many furies and sharpe fits did haunt,
When him the poysoned garment did enchaunt
With Centaures bloud, and bloudie verses charm'd,
As did this knight twelue thousand dolours daunt,
Whom fyrie steele now burnt, that earst him arm'd,
That erst him goodly arm'd, now most of all him harm'd.

Faint, wearie, sore, emboyled, griued, brent
With heat, toyle, wounds, armes, smart, & inward fire
That neuer man such mischiefes did torment;
Death better were, death did he oft desire,
But death will neuer come, when needes require.
Whom so dismayd when that his foe beheld,
He cast to suffer him no more respire,
But gan his sturdie sterne about to weld,
And him so strongly stroke, that to the ground him feld.

It fortun'd (as faire it then befell)
Behind his backe vnweeting, where he stood,
Of auncient time there was a springing well,
From which fast trickled forth a siluer flood,
Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good.
Whylome, before that cursed Dragon got
That happie land, and all with innocent blood
Defyld those sacred waues, it rightly hot
The well of life, ne yet his vertues had forgot.

For vnto life the dead it could restore,
And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away,
Those that with sicknesse were infected sore,
It could recure, and aged long decay
Renew, as one were borne that very day.
Both Silo this, and Iordan did excell,
And th'English Bath, and eke the german Spau,
Ne can Cephise, nor Hebrus match this well:
Into the same the knight backe ouerthrowen, fell.

Now gan the golden Phoebus for to steepe
His fierie face in billowes of the west,
And his faint steedes watred in Ocean deepe,
Whiles from their iournall labours they did rest,
When that infernall Monster, hauing kest
His wearie foe into that liuing well,
Can high aduance his broad discoloured brest,
Aboue his wonted pitch, with countenance fell,
And clapt his yron wings, as victor he did dwell.

Which when his pensiuie Ladie saw from farre,
Great woe and sorrow did her soule assay,
As weening that the sad end of the warre,
And gan to highest God entirely pray,
That feared chance from her to turne away;
With folded hands and knees full lowly bent
All night she watcht, ne once adowne would lay
Her daintie limbs in her sad dreriment,
But praying still did wake, and waking did lament.

The morrow next gan early to appeare,
That Titan rose to runne his daily race:
But early ere the morrow next gan reare
Out of the sea faire Titans deawy face,
Vp rose the gentle virgin from her place,
And looked all about, if she might spy
Her loued knight to moue his manly pace:
For she had great doubt of his safety,
Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.

At last she where he vpstarted braue
Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay;
As Eagle fresh out of the Ocean waue,
Where he hath left his plumes all hoary gray,
And deckt himselfe with feathers youthly gay,
Like Eyas hauke vp mounts vnto the skies,
His newly budded pineons to assay,
And marueiles at himselfe, still as he flies:
So new this new-borne knight to battell new did rise.

Whom when the damned feend so fresh did spy,
No wonder if he wondred at the sight,
And doubted, whether his late enemy
It were, or other new supplied knight.
He, now to proue his late renewed might,
High brandishing his bright deaw-burning blade,
Vpon his crested scalpe so sore did smite,
That to the scull a yawning wound it made:
The deadly dint his dulled senses all dismaid.

I wote not, whether the reuenging steele
Were hardned with that holy water dew,
Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele,
Or his baptized hands now greater grew;
Or other secret vertue did ensew;
Else neuer could the force of fleshly arme,
Ne molten mettall in his bloud embrew:
For till that stownd could neuer wight him harme,
By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor mighty charme.

The cruell wound enraged him so sore,
That loud he yelded for exceeding paine;
As hundred ramping Lyons seem'd to rore,
Whom rauinous hunger did thereto constraîne:
Then gan he tosse aloft his stretched traine,
And therewith scourge the buxome aire so sore,
That to his force to yeelden it was faine;
Ne ought his sturdie strokes might stand afore,
That high trees ouerthrew, and rocks in peeces tore.

The same aduauncing high aboue his head,
With sharpe intended sting so rude him smot,
That to the earth him droue, as stricken dead,
Ne liuing wight would haue him life behot:
The mortall sting his angry needle shot
Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder seasd,
Where fast it stucke, ne would there out be got:
The grieffe thereof him wondrous sore diseasd,
Ne might his ranckling paine with patience be appeasd.

But yet more mindfull of his honour deare,
 Then of the grieuous smart, which him did wring,
 From loathed soile he can him lightly reare,
 And stroue to loose the farre infixed sting:
 Which when in vaine he tryde with struggling.
 Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he heft,
 And strooke so strongly, that the knotty string
 Of his huge taile he quite a sunder cleft,
 Fiue ioynts thereof he hewd, and but the stump him left.

Hart cannot thinke, what outrage, and what cries,
 With foule enfoldred smoake and flashing fire,
 The hell-bred beast threw forth vnto the skyes,
 That all was couered with darknesse dire:
 Then fraught with rancour, and engorged ire,
 He cast at once him to auenge for all,
 And gathering vp himselfe out of the mire,
 With his vneuen wings did fiercely fall
 Vpon his sunne-bright shield, and gript it fast withall.

Much was the man encombred with his hold,
 In feare to lose his weapon in his paw,
 Ne wist yet, how his talants to vnfold;
 Nor harder was from Cerberus greedie iaw
 To plucke a bone, then from his cruell claw
 To reauue by strength the griped gage away:
 Thrise he assayd it from his foot to draw,
 And thrise in vaine to draw it did assay,
 It booted nought to thinke, to robbe him of his pray.

Tho when he saw no power might preuaile,
 His trustie sword he cald to his last aid,
 Wherewith he fiercely did his foe assaile,
 And double blowes about him stoutly laid,
 That glauncing fire out of the yron plaid;
 As sparckles from the Anduile vse to fly,
 When heauie hammers on the wedge are swaid;
 Therewith at last he forst him to vnty
 One of his grasping feete, him to defend thereby.

The other foot, fast fixed on his shield,
Whenas no strength, nor stroks mote him constraîne
To loose, ne yet the warlike pledge to yield,
He smot thereat with all his might and maine,
That nought so wondrous puissance might sustaine;
Vpon the ioynt the lucky steele did light,
And made such way, that hewd it quite in twaine;
The paw yet missed not his minisht might,
But hong still on the shield, as it at first was pight.

For grieffe thereof, and diuelish despight,
From his infernall founnace forth he threw
Huge flames, that dimmed all the heauens light,
Enrold in duskish smoke and brimstone blew;
As burning Aetna from his boyling stew
Doth belch out flames, and rockes in peeces broke,
And ragged ribs of mountaines molten new,
Enwrapt in coleblacke clouds and filthy smoke,
That all the land with stench, and heauen with horror choke.

The heate whereof, and harmefull pestilence
So sore him noyd, that forst him to retire
A little backward for his best defence,
To saue his bodie from the scorching fire,
Which he from hellish entrailles did expire.
It chaunst (eternall God that chaunce did guide)
As he recoyled backward, in the mire
His nigh forweared feeble feet did slide,
And downe he fell, with dread of shame sore terrifide.

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosie red,
As they in pure vermilion had beene dide,
Whereof great vertues ouer all were red:
For happie life to all, which thereon fed,
And life eke euerlasting did befall:
Great God it planted in that blessed sted
With his almightie hand, and did it call
The tree of life, the crime of our first fathers fall.

In all the world like was not to be found,
Saue in that soile, where all good things did grow,
And freely sprong out of the fruitfull ground,
As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
Till that dread Dragon all did ouerthrow.
Another like faire tree eke grew thereby,
Whereof who so did eat, eftsoones did know
Both good and ill: O mornefull memory:
That tree through one mans fault hath doen vs all to dy.

From that first tree forth flowd, as from a well,
A trickling streame of Balme, most soueraine
And daintie deare, which on the ground still fell,
And ouerflowed all the fertill plaine,
As it had deawed bene with timely raine:
Life and long health that gracious ointment gaue,
And deadly woundes could heale, and reare againe
The senselesse corse appointed for the graue.
Into that same he fell: which did from death him saue.

For nigh thereto the euer damned beast
Durst not approch, for he was deadly made,
And all that life preserued, did detest:
Yet he it oft aduentur'd to inuade.
By this the drouping day-light gan to fade
And yeeld his roome to sad succeeding night,
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
The face of earth, and wayes of liuing wight,
And high her burning torch set vp in heauen bright.

When gentle Vna saw the second fall
Of her deare knight, who wearie of long fight,
And faint through losse of bloud, mou'd not at all,
But lay as in a dreame of deepe delight,
Besmeard with pretious Balme, whose vertuous might
Did heale his wounds, and scorching heat alay,
Againe she stricken was with sore affright,
And for his safetie gan deuoutly pray;
And watch the noyous night, and wait for ioyous day.

The ioyous day gan early to appeare,
And faire Aurora from the deawy bed
Of aged Tithone gan her selfe to reare,
With rosie cheekes, for shame as blushing red;
Her golden lockes for haste were loosely shed
About her eares, when Vna her did marke
Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred;
From heauen high to chase the chearelesse darke,
With merry note her loud salutes the mounting larke.

Then freshly vp arose the doughtie knight,
All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
And did himselfe to battell readie dight;
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To haue deuourd, so soone as day he spyde,
When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare,
As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,
He woxe dismayd, and gan his fate to feare;
Nathlesse with wonted rage he him aduaunced neare.

And in his first encounter, gaping wide,
He thought attonce him to haue swallowd quight,
And rusht vpon him with outrageous pride;
Who him r'encountring fierce, as hauke in flight,
Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon bright
Taking aduantage of his open iaw,
Ran through his mouth with so importune might,
That deepe emperst his darksome hollow maw,
And back retyrd, his life bloud forth with all did draw.

So downe he fell, and forth his life did breath,
That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift;
So downe he fell, that th'earth him vnderneath
Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift;
So downe he fell, as an huge rockie clift,
Whose false foundation waues haue washt away,
With dreadfull poyse is from the mayneland rift,
And rolling downe, great Neptune doth dismay;
So downe he fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay.

The knight himselve euen trembled at his fall,
So huge and horrible a masse it seem'd;
And his deare Ladie, that beheld it all,
Durst not approach for dread, which she misdeem'd,
But yet at last, when as the direfull feend
She saw not stirre, off-shaking vaine affright,
She nigher drew, and saw that ioyous end:
Then God she praysd, and thankt her faithfull knight,
That had atchieu'd so great a conquest by his might.

Cant. XII.

Faire Vna to the Redcrosse knight
betrouthed is with ioy:
Though false Duessa it to barre
her false sleights doe imploy.

BEhold I see the hauen nigh at hand,
To which I meane my wearie course to bend;
Vere the maine shete, and beare vp with the land,
The which afore is fairely to be kend,
And seemeth safe from stormes, that may offend;
There this faire virgin wearie of her way
Must landed be, now at her iourneyes end:
There eke my feeble barke a while may stay,
Till merry wind and weather call her thence away.

Scarsely had Phoebus in the glooming East
Yet harnessed his fire-footed teeme,
Ne reard aboue the earth his flaming creast,
When the last deadly smoke aloft did steeme,
That signe of last outbreathed life did seeme,
Vnto the watchman on the castle wall;
Who thereby dead that balefull Beast did deeme,
And to his Lord and Ladie lowd gan call,
To tell, how he had seene the Dragons fatall fall.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

Vprose with hastie ioy, and feeble speed
That aged Sire, the Lord of all that land,
And looked forth, to weet, if true indeede
Those tydings were, as he did vnderstand,
Which whenas true by tryall he out fond,
He bad to open wyde his brazen gate,
Which long time had bene shut, and out of hond
Proclaymed ioy and peace through all his state;
For dead now was their foe, which them forrayed late.

Then gan triumphant Trompets sound on hie,
That sent to heauen the ecchoed report
Of their new ioy, and happie victorie
Gainst him, that had them long opprest with tort,
And fast imprisoned in sieged fort.
Then all the people, as in solemne feast,
To him assembled with one full consort,
Reioycing at the fall of that great beast,
From whose eternall bondage now they were releast.

Forth came that auncient Lord and aged Queene,
Arayd in antique robes downe to the ground,
And sad habiliments right well beseene;
A noble crew about them waited round
Of sage and sober Peres, all grauely gownd;
Whom farre before did march a goodly band
Of tall young men, all habile armes to sownd,
But now they laurell braunches bore in hand;
Glad signe of victorie and peace in all their land.

Vnto that doughtie Conquerour they came,
And him before themselues prostrating low,
Their Lord and Patrone loud did him proclame,
And at his feet their laurell boughes did throw.
Soone after them all dauncing on a row
The comely virgins came, with girlands dight,
As fresh as flowres in medow greene do grow,
When morning deaw vpon their leaves doth light:
And in their hands sweet Timbrels all vpheld on hight.

And them before, the fry of children young
Their wanton sports and childish mirth did play,
And to the Maydens sounding tymbrels sung
In well attuned notes, a ioyous lay,
And made delightfull musicke all the way,
Vntill they came, where that faire virgin stood;
As faire Diana in fresh sommers day
Beholds her Nymphes, enraung'd in shadie wood,
Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in christall flood.

So she beheld those maydens meriment
With chearefull vew; who when to her they came,
Themselues to ground with gracious humblesse bent,
And her ador'd by honorable name,
Lifting to heauen her euerlasting fame:
Then on her head they set a girland greene,
And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt game;
Who in her selfe-resemblance well beseene,
Did seeme such, as she was, a goodly maiden Queene.

And after, all the raskall many ran,
Heaped together in rude rablement
To see the face of that victorious man:
Whom all admired, as from heauen sent,
And gazd vpon with gaping wonderment.
But when they came, where that dead Dragon lay,
Stretcht on the ground in monstrous large extent,
The sight with idle feare did them dismay,
Ne durst approach him nigh, to touch, or once assay.

Some feard, and fled; some feard and well it faynd;
One that would wiser seeme, then all the rest,
Warnd him not touch, for yet perhaps remaynd
Some lingring life within his hollow brest,
Or in his wombe might lurke some hidden nest
Of many Dragonets, his fruitfull seed;
Another said, that in his eyes did rest
Yet sparkling fire, and bad thereof take heed;
Another said, he saw him moue his eyes indeed.

One mother, when as her foolehardie chyld
Did come too neare, and with his talants play,
Halfe dead through feare, her litle babe reuyld,
And to her gossips gan in counsell say;
How can I tell, but that his talants may
Yet scratch my sonne, or rend his tender hand?
So diuersly themselues in vaine they fray;
Whiles some more bold, to measure him nigh stand,
To proue how many acres he did spread of land.

Thus flocked all the folke him round about,
The whiles that hoarie king, with all his traine,
Being arriued, where that champion stout
After his foes defeasance did remaine,
Him goodly greetes, and faire does entertaîne,
With princely gifts of yuorie and gold,
And thousand thanks him yeelds for all his paine.
Then when his daughter deare he does behold,
Her dearely doth imbrace, and kisseth manifold.

And after to his Pallace he them brings,
With shaumes, & trompets, & with Clarions sweet;
And all the way the ioyous people sings,
And with their garments strowes the paued street:
Whence mounting vp, they find purueyance meet
Of all, that royall Princes court became,
And all the floore was vnderneath their feet
Bespred with costly scarlot of great name,
On which they lowly sit, and fitting purpose frame.

What needs me tell their feast and goodly guize,
In which was nothing riotous nor vaine?
What needs of daintie dishes to deuize,
Of comely seruices, or courtly trayne?
My narrow leaues cannot in them containe
The large discourse of royall Princes state.
Yet was their manner then but bare and plaine:
For th'antique world excesse and pride did hate;
Such proud luxurious pompe is swollen vp but late.

Then when with meates and drinckes of euery kinde
Their feruent appetites they quenched had,
That auncient Lord gan fit occasion finde,
Of straunge aduentures, and of perils sad,
Which in his trauell him befallen had,
For to demaund of his renowned guest:
Who then with vttrance graue, and count'nance sad
From point to point, as is before exprest,
Discourst his voyage long, according his request.

Great pleasure mixt with pittifull regard,
That godly King and Queene did passionate,
Whiles they his pittifull aduentures heard,
That oft they did lament his lucklesse state,
And often blame the too importune fate,
That heapd on him so many wrathfull wreakes:
For neuer gentle knight, as he of late,
So tossed was in fortunes cruell freakes;
And all the while salt teares bedewd the hearers cheaks.

Then said that royall Pere in sober wise;
Deare Sonne, great beene the euils, which ye bore
From first to last in your late enterprise,
That I note, whether prayse, or pittie more:
For neuer liuing man, I weene, so sore
In sea of deadly daungers was distrest;
But since now safe ye seised haue the shore,
And well arriued are, (high God be blest)
Let vs deuize of ease and euerlasting rest.

Ah dearest Lord, said then that doughty knight,
Of ease or rest I may not yet deuize;
For by the faith, which I to armes haue plight,
I bounden am streight after this emprize,
As that your daughter can ye well aduize,
Backe to returne to that great Faerie Queene,
And her to serue six yeares in warlike wize,
Gainst that proud Paynim king, that workes her teene:
Therefore I ought craue pardon, till I there haue beene.

Vnhappie falles that hard necessitie,
(Quoth he) the troubler of my happie peace,
And vowed foe of my felicitie;
Ne I against the same can iustly preace:
But since that band ye cannot now release,
Nor doen vndo; (for vowes may not be vaine)
Soone as the terme of those six yeares shall cease,
Ye then shall hither backe returne againe,
The marriage to accomplish vowd betwixt you twain.

Which for my part I couet to performe,
In sort as through the world I did proclame,
That who so kild that monster most deforme,
And him in hardy battaile ouercame,
Should haue mine onely daughter to his Dame,
And of my kingdome heire apparaunt bee:
Therefore since now to thee pertaines the same,
By dew desert of noble cheualree,
Both daughter and eke kingdome, lo I yield to thee.

Then forth he called that his daughter faire,
The fairest Vn' his onely daughter deare,
His onely daughter, and his onely heyre;
Who forth proceeding with sad sober cheare,
As bright as doth the morning starre appeare
Out of the East, with flaming lockes bedight,
To tell that dawning day is drawing neare,
And to the world does bring long wished light;
So faire and fresh that Lady shewd her selfe in sight.

So faire and fresh, as freshest flowre in May;
For she had layd her mournefull stole aside,
And widow-like sad wimple throwne away,
Wherewith her heauenly beautie she did hide,
Whiles on her wearie iourney she did ride;
And on her now a garment she did weare,
All lilly white, withoutten spot, or pride,
That seemd like silke and siluer wouen neare,
But neither silke nor siluer therein did appeare.

The blazing brightnesse of her beauties beame,
And glorious light of her sunshyny face
To tell, were as to striue against the streame.
My ragged rimes are all too rude and bace,
Her heauenly lineaments for to enchace.
Ne wonder; for her owne deare loued knight,
All were she dayly with himselfe in place,
Did wonder much at her celestially sight:
Oft had he seene her faire, but neuer so faire dight.

So fairely dight, when she in presence came,
She to her Sire made humble reuerence,
And bowed low, that her right well became,
And added grace vnto her excellence:
Who with great wisdom, and graue eloquence
Thus gan to say. But eare he thus had said,
With flying speede, and seeming great pretence,
Came running in, much like a man dismaid,
A Messenger with letters, which his message said.

All in the open hall amazed stood,
At suddeinnesse of that vnwarie sight,
And wondred at his breathlesse hastie mood.
But he for nought would stay his passage right,
Till fast before the king he did alight;
Where falling flat, great humblesse he did make,
And kist the ground, whereon his foot was pight;
Then to his hands that writ he did betake,
Which he disclosing, red thus, as the paper spake.

To thee, most mighty king of Eden faire,
Her greeting sends in these sad lines address,
The wofull daughter, and forsaken heire
Of that great Emperour of all the West;
And bids thee be aduized for the best,
Ere thou thy daughter linck in holy band
Of wedlocke to that new vnknown guest:
For he already plighted his right hand
Vnto another loue, and to another land.

To me sad mayd, or rather widow sad,
He was affiaunced long time before,
And sacred pledges he both gaue, and had,
False erraunt knight, infamous, and forswore:
Witnesse the burning Altars, which he swore,
And guiltie heauens of his bold periury,
Which though he hath polluted oft of yore,
Yet I to them for iudgement iust do fly,
And them coniure t'auenge this shamefull iniury.

Therefore since mine he is, or free or bond,
Or false or trew, or liuing or else dead,
Withhold, O soueraine Prince, your hasty hond
From knitting league with him, I you aread;
Ne weene my right with strength adowne to tread,
Through weakenesse of my widowhed, or woe:
For truth is strong, her rightfull cause to plead,
And shall find friends, if need requireth soe,
So bids thee well to fare, Thy neither friend, nor foe, Fidessa.

When he these bitter byting words had red,
The tydings straunge did him abashed make,
That still he sate long time astonished
As in great muse, ne word to creature spake.
At last his solemne silence thus he brake,
With doubtfull eyes fast fixed on his guest;
Redoubted knight, that for mine onely sake
Thy life and honour late aduentrest,
Let nought be hid from me, that ought to be exprest.

What meane these bloody vowes, and idle threats,
Throwne out from womanish impatient mind?
What heauens? what altars? what enraged heates
Here heaped vp with termes of loue vnkind,
My conscience cleare with guilty bands would bind?
High God be witnesse, that I guiltlesse ame.
But if your selfe, Sir knight, ye faultie find,
Or wrapped be in loues of former Dame,
With crime do not it couer, but disclose the same.

To whom the Redcrosse knight this answere sent,
My Lord, my King, be nought hereat dismayd,
Till well ye wote by graue intendiment,
What woman, and wherefore doth me vpbrayd
With breach of loue, and loyalty betrayd.
It was in my mishaps, as hitherward
I lately traueild, that vnwares I strayd
Out of my way, through perils straunge and hard;
That day should faile me, ere I had them all declar'd.

There did I find, or rather I was found
Of this false woman, that Fidessa hight,
Fidessa hight the falsest Dame on ground,
Most false Duessa, royall richly dight,
That easie was t'inuegle weaker sight:
Who by her wicked arts, and wylie skill,
Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,
Vnwares me wrought vnto her wicked will,
And to my foe betrayd, when least I feared ill.

Then stepped forth the goodly royall Mayd,
And on the ground her selfe prostrating low,
With sober countenaunce thus to him sayd;
O pardon me, my soueraigne Lord, to show
The secret treasons, which of late I know
To haue bene wrought by that false sorceresse.
She onely she it is, that earst did throw
This gentle knight into so great distresse,
That death him did awaite in dayly wretchednesse.

And now it seemes, that she suborned hath
This craftie messenger with letters vaine,
To worke new woe and improuided scath,
By breaking of the band betwixt vs twaine;
Wherein she vsed hath the practicke paine
Of this false footman, clokt with simplenesse,
Whom if ye please for to discouer plaine,
Ye shall him Archimago find, I ghesse,
The falsest man aliuie; who tries shall find no lesse.

The king was greatly moued at her speach,
And all with suddein indignation fraight,
Bad on that Messenger rude hands to reach.
Eftsoones the Gard, which on his state did wait,
Attacht that faylor false, and bound him strait:
Who seeming sorely chauffed at his band,
As chained Beare, whom cruell dogs do bait,
With idle force did faine them to withstand,
And often semblaunce made to scape out of their hand.

But they him layd full low in dungeon deepe,
And bound him hand and foote with yron chains.
And with continuall watch did warely keepe;
Who then would thinke, that by his subtile trains
He could escape fowle death or deadly paines?
Thus when that Princes wrath was pacifide,
He gan renew the late forbidden banes,
And to the knight his daughter deare he tyde,
With sacred rites and vowes for euer to abyde.

His owne two hands the holy knots did knit,
That none but death for euer can deuide;
His owne two hands, for such a turne most fit,
The housling fire did kindle and prouide,
And holy water thereon sprinckled wide;
At which the bushy Teade a groome did light,
And sacred lampe in secret chamber hide,
Where it should not be quenched day nor night,
For feare of euill fates, but burnen euer bright.

Then gan they sprinckle all the posts with wine,
And made great feast to solemnize that day;
They all perfumde with frankincense diuine,
And precious odours fetcht from far away,
That all the house did sweat with great aray:
And all the while sweete Musicke did apply
Her curious skill, the warbling notes to play,
To driue away the dull Melancholy;
The whiles one sung a song of loue and iollity.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

During the which there was an heauenly noise
Heard sound through all the Pallace pleasantly,
Like as it had bene many an Angels voice,
Singing before th'eternall maiesty,
In their trinall triplicities on hye;
Yet wist no creature, whence that heauenly sweet
Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly
Himselfe thereby reft of his sences meet,
And rauished with rare impression in his sprite.

Great ioy was made that day of young and old,
And solemne feast proclaimd throughout the land,
That their exceeding merth may not be told:
Suffice it heare by signes to vnderstand
The vsuall ioyes at knitting of loues band.
Thrise happy man the knight himselfe did hold,
Possessed of his Ladies hart and hand,
And euer, when his eye did her behold,
His heart did seeme to melt in pleasures manifold.

Her ioyous presence and sweet company
In full content he there did long enioy,
Ne wicked enuie, ne vile gealosity
His deare delights were able to annoy:
Yet swimming in that sea of blisfull ioy,
He nought forgot, how he whilome had sworne,
In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,
Vnto his Farie Queene backe to returne:
The which he shortly did, and Vna left to mourne.

Now strike your sailes ye iolly Mariners,
For we be come vnto a quiet rode,
Where we must land some of our passengers,
And light this wearie vessell of her lode.
Here she a while may make her safe abode,
Till she repaired haue her tackles spent,
And wants supplide. And then againe abroad
On the long voyage whereto she is bent:
Well may she speede and fairely finish her intent.

FINIS