To the Most High, Mighty, and Magnificent Empresse
Renowned for Pietie, Vertue, and All Gratious Government
Elizabeth
By the Grace of God
Queen of England, France and Ireland, and of Virginia,
Defender of the Faith etc.
Her Most Humble Servant Edmund Spenser Doth in All
Humilitie Dedicate, Present, and Consecrate These His Labours
to Live with the Eternitie of Her Fame.

*       *       *       *       *

THE FIRST BOOKE OF
THE FAERIE QUEENE

CONTAINING
THE LEGENDE OF THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE, OR OF HOLINESSE

*       *       *       *       *

I
Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepheards weeds,
Am now enforst a far unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose prayses having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broade amongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.

II
Helpe then, O holy Virgin chiefe of nine,
Thy weaker Novice to performe thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting 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 undeserved wrong:
O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.

III
And thou most dreaded impe of highest Jove,
Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly
didst rove,
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 loves and gentle jollities arrayd,
After his murdrous spoiles and bloudy rage allayd.

IV
And with them eke, O Goddesse heavenly bright,
Mirrour of grace and Majestie divine,
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 dread, a-while.

* * * * *

CANTO I

The Patron of true Holinesse
foule Errour doth defeate;
Hypocrisie him to entrappe
doth to his home entreate.

I

A GENTLE Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
The cruel markes of many’a blody fiele;  
Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

II

And 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 living ever him ador’d:
Upon his shield the like was also scor’d,
For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had:  
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere did seeme too solemnse sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

III

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie lond,
To winne him worship, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly things he most did crave;
And ever as he rode, his hart did earne
To prove his puissance in battell brave  
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

IV

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

V
So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every 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 subjection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld:
Whom to avenge, she had this Knight from far compeld.

Faire harbour that them seemes; so in they entred arre.

VI

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

VII

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not far away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand:
Whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starre:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worn, and leading inward farre:

VIII

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying 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 never dry,
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all,
The Aspine good for staves, the Cypresse funerall.

IX

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage, the firre that weepeth still,
The Willow worn 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 Olive, and the Platane round,
The carver Holme, the Maple seeldom inward sound.

X

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustering storme is overblowne;
When weening to returne, whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in ways unknowne,
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 diverse doubt they been.

XI

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 cave
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the Dwarf awhile his needesse spere he gave.

XII

Be well aware, quoth then that Ladie milde,
Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne 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 revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade.

XIII

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 wisedome warnes, whilst foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandering 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 living men.

XIV

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

XV

And as she lay upon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes upwound,
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred
A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
Sucking upon her poisnous dugs, eachone
Of sundry shapes, yet all ill favored:
Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddein all were gone.
135

XVI

Their dam upstart, 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 entraile.
140
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 plain none might her see, nor she see any plaine.

XVII

Which when the valiant Elfe perceiv'd, he lept
As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
From turning backe, and forced her to stay:
145
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
And turning fierce, her speckled taile advaunst,
Threatning her angry sting, him to dismay:
Who nought aghast his mightie hand enhaunst:
The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glaunst.

XVIII

Much daunted with that dint, her sence was dazd,
Yet kindling rage, her selfe she gathered round,
And all attonce her beastly body raizd
155

With doubled forces high above the ground:
Tho wrapping up her wreted sterne arounwd,
Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirre he strove in vaine:
God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine.

XIX

His Lady sad to see his sore constraint,
Cride out, Now now Sir knight, shew what ye bee,
Add faith unto your force, and be not faint:
160
Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee.
That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
His gall did grate for griefe 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.

XX

Therewith she spewd out of her filthy maw
A floud of poysone horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunk so vildly, that it forst him slacke
175
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.

XXI
As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale,
His fattie waves do fertile slime outwell,
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:
But when his later spring gins to avale,
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherein there breed
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly female of his fruitful seed;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elswhere may no man reed.

XXII

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no lenger fight.
Whose corage when the feend perceiv'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,
With swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

XXIII

As gentle Shepheard in sweete even-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 striving to infixe their feeble stings,
That from their noyance he no where can rest,
But with his clownish hands their tender wings

XXIV

He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

XXXV

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame,
Then of the certeine perill he stood in,
Halfe furious unto 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 from her corse.

XXV

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

XXVI

That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th' unkindly Impes, of heaven accurst,
Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Having all satisfide their bloody thurst,
Their bellies swnle he saw with fulnesse burst, 230
And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
Of such as drunke her life, the whic them nurst;
Now needeth him no lenger labour spend,
His foes have slaine themselves, with whom he should contend.

XXVII

His Ladie seeing all that chaunst, from farre
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,
And said, Faire knight, borne under happy starre,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye:
Well worthie be you of that Armorie,
Wherin ye have great glory wonne this day,
And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie,
Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it may.

XXVIII

Then mounted he upon his Steede againe,
And with the Lady backward sought to wend;
That path he kept which beaten was most plaine,
Ne ever would to any by-way bend,
But still did follow one unto 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 adventure sought;
Long way he travelled, before he heard of ought.

XXIX

At length they chaunst to meet upon 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.

XXX

He faire the knight saluted, louting low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was:
And after asked him, if he d
id know
Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.
Ah my deare Sonne (quoth he) how should, alas,
Silly old man, that lives 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.

XXXI

But if of daunger which hereby doth dwell,
And homebred evil 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 lives so long a space.
XXXII

Far hence (quoth he) in wastfull wildernesse
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever 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 heaven all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the Ocean waves emong.

XXXIII

Then with the Sunne take Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Untroubled night they say gives counsell best.
Right well Sir knight ye have advisd bin,
(Quoth then that aged man;) the way to win
Is wisely to advise: now day is spent;
For this same night. The knight was well content:
So with that godly father to his home the y went.

XXXIV

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In travell 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 eventyde:
Thereby a Christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

XXXV

Arrived there, the little house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainement, where none was: Rest is their feast, and all things at their will:
The noblest mind the best contentment has.  
With faire discourse the evening 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 evermore
He strowd an _Ave-Mary_ after and before.

XXXVI

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

XXXVII

Then choosing out few words 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 heaven 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.

XXXVIII

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

XXXIX

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 never peepe,
His dwelling is; there Tethys his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steepe
In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,
Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spred.

XL

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,
XLIII

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
And threatened unto him the dreaded name
Of Hecate: whereat he gan to quake,
And lifting up his lumpish 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 send for his intent
A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers sent.

XLIV

The God obayde, and, calling forth straightway
A diverse dreame out of his prison darke,
Delivered it to him, and downe did lay
His heavie head, devoide of carefull carke,
Whose sences all were straight benumbed and starke.
He backe returning by the Yvorie dore,
Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke,
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
In hast unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

XLV

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 lively, and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight:
The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight:

Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for Una fit.

XLVI

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

XLVII

Thus well instructed, to their worke they hast,
And coming where the knight in slomber lay,
The one upon his hardy head him plast
And made him dreame of loves and lustfull play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked joy:
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.

XLVIII

And she herselfe of beautie soveraigne Queene,
Fayre Venus seemde unto his bed to bring
Her, whom he waking evermore did weene,
To bee the chastest flowre, that ay did spring
On earthly banch, the daughter of a king,
Now a loose Leman to vile service bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing,
_Hymen Io Hymen_ dauncing all around,
Whilst freshest Flora her with Yvie girond crownd.

XLIX

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

L

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
And half enraged at her shamelesse guise,
He thought have slaine her in his fierce despight:
But hasty heat tempring with suffrance wise,
He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe advise
To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned truth.
Wringing her hands in womans pitteous wise,
Tho can she weepe, to stirre up gentle ruth,
Both for her noble bloud, and for her tender youth.

LI

And said, Ah Sir, my liege Lord and my love,

Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heaven above,
Or the blind God, that doth me thus amate,
For hoped love 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 avenging destinie
Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently.

LII

Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leave
My Fathers kingdome--There she stopt with teares;
Her swollen hart her speech seemd to bereave,
And then againe begun; My weaker yeares
Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
Fly to your fayth 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?

LIII

Love of your selfe, she saide, and deare constraint,
Lets me not sleepe, but wast the wearie night
In secret anguish and unpittied plaint,
Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned quight.
Her doubtfull words made that redoubted knight
Suspect her truth: yet since no' untruth he knew,
Her fawning love with foule disdainefull spight
He would not shend; but said, Deare dame I rew,
That for my sake unknowne such griefe unto you grew.
LIV
Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
For all so deare as life is to my hart,
I deeme your love, 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 mournefull plaintes, beguiled of her art,
And fed with words that could not chuse but please,
So slyding softly forth, she turned as to her ease.

LV
Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much griev'd to thinke that gentle Dame so light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last, dull wearinesse of former fight
Having yrockt asleepe 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.
Those two he tooke, and in a secret bed,
Coverd with darknesse and misdeeming night,
Them both together laid, to joy in vaine delight.

IV

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

V

All in amaze he suddenly upstart
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 leud embracement:
Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire,
The eye of reason was with rage yblent,
And would have slaine them in his furious ire,
But hardly was restreined of that aged sire.

VI

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 up he rose, and clad him hastily;
The Dwarfe him brought his steed: so both away do fly.

VII

Now when the rosy-tringed Morning faire,
Weary of aged Tithones saffron bed,
Had spread her purple robe through deawy aire,
And the high hils Titan discovered,
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 wepe, to see that woefull stowre.

VIII

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 discdaine,
That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine;
Yet she her weary limbes would never rest,
But every hill and dale, each wood and plaine,
Did search, sore grieved in her gentle brest,
He so ungently left her, whom she loved best.

IX
But still Archimago, when his guests
He saw divided into double parts,
And Una wandering in woods and forests,
Th' end of his drift, he praised his diabolish arts,
That had such might over true meaning harts:
Yet rests not so, but other means doth make,
How he may work unto her further smarts:
For her he hated as the hissing snake,
And in her many troubles did most pleasure take.

He then devisde himselfe how to disguise;
For by his mightie science he could take
As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
As ever 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 ofte for feare would quake,
And oft would fly away. O who can tell
The hidden power of herbes and might of Magicke spell?

But now seemed best the person to put on
Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest:
In mighty armes he was yclad anon:
And silver shield, upon his coward brest
A bloudy crosse, and on his craven crest
A bounch of haires discolourd diversly:
Full jolly knight he seemde, and well addrest,
And when he sate upon his courser free,
Saint George himself ye would have deemed him to be.

But he the knight, whose semblant 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 chancst to meete upon the way
A faithless Sarazin all arm'd to point,
In whose great shield was writ with letters gay
_Sans foy:_ full large of limbe and every joint
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 crowns and owches garnished,
The which her lavish lovers to her gave;
Her wanton palfrey all was overspred
With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose bridle rung with golden bels and bosses brave.

With faire disport and courting dalliaunce
She entertainde her lover all the way:
But when she saw the knight his speare advaunce,
120
She soone left off her mirth and wanton play,
And bade 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 bloud trickling staind the way, as he did ride.

XV

The knight of the Redcrosse when him he spide,
Spurring so hote with rage dispiteous,
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 themselves, too rudely rigorous,
Astonied with the stroke of their owne hand
Doe backe rebut, and each to other yeeldeth land.

XVI

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 terroure of the shocke
Astonied both, stand senselesse as a blocke,
Forgetfull of the hanging victory:
So stood these twaine, unmoved as a rocke,
Both staring fierce, and holding idely
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

XVII

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 puissunce envies,
And through their iron sides with cruel 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 streams of purple bloud new dies the verdant fields.

XVIII

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 upon his crest
With rigour so outrageous he smitt,
That a large share it hewd out of the rest,
And glauncing down his shield from blame him fairly blest.

XIX

Who thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark
Of native vertue gan eftsoones revive,
And at his haughtie helmet making mark,
So hugely stroke, that it the steele did rive,
And cleft his head. He tumbling downe alive,
With bloudy mouth his mother earth did kis.
Greeting his grave: his grudging ghost did strive
With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is,
Whither the soules do fly of men that live amis.
XX

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 overtooke, and bad to stay,
For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.

XXI

She turning backe with ruefull countenaunce,
Cride, Mercy mercy Sir vouchsafe to shew
On silly Dame, subject to hard mischaunce,
And to your mighty will. Her humblesse low
In so rich weedes and seeming glorious show,
Did much emmove his stout heroicke heart,
And said, Deare dame, your suddin overthrow
Much rueth me; but now put feare apart,
And tell, both who ye be, and who that tooke your part.

XXII

Melting in teares, then gan she thus lament;
The wretched woman, whom unhappy howre
Hath now made thrall to your commandement,
Before that angry heavens list to lowre,
And fortune false betraide me to your powre,
Was, (O what now availeth that I was!) 195
Borne the sole daughter of an Emperour,
He that the wide West under his rule has,
And high hath set his throne, where Tiberis doth pas.

XXII

He in the first flowre of my freshest age,
Betrothed me unto the onely haire 200
Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage;
Was never Prince so faithfull and so faire,
Was never 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 ever mone.

XXIV

His blessed body spoild of lively breath,
Was afterward, I know not how, convaid 210
And fro me hid: of whose most innocent death
When tidings came to me, unhappy 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 love long time did languish as the striken hind.

XXV

At last it chaunced this proud Sarazin
To meete me wandring, who perforce me led
With him away, but yet could never win
The Fort, that Ladies hold in soveraigne dread;
There lies he now with foule dishonour dead,
Who whiles he livde, was called proud Sansfoy,
The eldest of three brethren, all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sansjoy;
And twixt them both was born the bloudy bold Sansloy.

XXVI

In this sad plight, friendlesse, unfortunate,
Now miserable I Fidessa dwell,
Craving of you in pitty 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 undeserved woes and sorrowes which ye shew.

XXVII

Henceforth in safe assuraunce may ye rest,
Having 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 chaunge of cheare the seeming simple maid
Let fall her eyen, as shamefast to the earth,
And yeelding soft, in that she nought gain-
So forth they rode, he feining seemely merth,
And she coy lookes: so dainty they say maketh derth.

XXVIII

Long time they thus together traveiled,
Till weary of their way, they came at last
Where grew two goodly trees, that faire did spred
Their armes abroad, with gray mosse overcast,
And their Greene leaves trembling with every blast,
Made a calme shadow far in compasse round:
The fearfull Shepheard often there aghast
Under them never sat, ne wont there sound
His mery oaten pipe, but shund th' unlucky ground.

XXIX

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

XXX

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 lived yit;
Which to expresse he bends his gentle wit,
And thinking of those braunches greene to frame
XXXI

Therewith a piteous yelling voce 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 love,
O too deare love, love bought with death too deare.
Astond he stood, and up his haire did hove,
And with that suddein horror could no member move.

XXXII

At last whenas the dreadfull passion
Was overpast, 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?

XXXIII

Then groning deepe, Nor damned Ghost, (quoth he,)
Nor guileful 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 seeume, yet cold and heat me paines.

XXXIV

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

XXXV

In prime of youthly yeares, when corage hot
The fire of love and joy of chevalree
First kindled in my brest, it was my lot
To love this gentle Lady, whom ye see,
Now not a Lady, but a seeming tree;
With whom as once I rode accompanyde,
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 have exceeded farre;
I in defence of mine did likewise stand,
Mine, that did then shine as the Morning starre.
So both to batail fierce arraunged arre,
In which his harder fortune was to fall
Under 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.

XXXVII

So doubly lov'd of Ladies unlike 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 girland was the victors meede:
Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to bee,
So hard the discord was to be agreede.
Fraelissa was as faire, as faire mote bee,
And ever false Duessa seemde as faire as shee.

XXXVIII

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 overcast the day,
And a dull blast, that breathing on her face,
Dimmed her former beauties shining ray,
And with foule ugly forme did her disgrace:
Then was she faire alone, when none was faire in place.

XXXIX

Then cride she out, Fye, fye, deformed wight,
Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth plaine
To have before bewitched all mens sight;
O leave her soone, or let her soone be slaine.
Her loathly visage viewing with disdaine,
Eftsoones I thought her such, as she me told,
And would have 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.

XL

Then forth I tooke Duessa for my Dame,
And in the witch unweeting joyd long time,
Ne ever wist but that she was the same,
Till on a day (that day is every 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 ever to have toucht her I did deadly rew.

XLI

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

XLII

The divelish hag by chaunges of my cheare
Perceiv'd my thought, and drownd in sleepe night,
With wicked herbs and ointments did besmeare
My body all, through charms and magicke might,
That all my senses were bereaved quight:
Then brought she me into this desert waste,
And by my wretched lovers side me pight,
Where now enclosd in wooden wal\s full faste,
Banisht from living wights, our wearie dayes we waste.

XLIII

But how long time, said then the Elfin knight,
Are you in this misformed house to dwell?
We may not chaunge (quoth he) this evil plight,
Till we be bathed in a living 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 us restore, none else from hence may us unbynd.

XLIV

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 living 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.

XLV

Her seeming dead he found with feigned feare,
As all unweeting of that well she knew,
And paynd himselfe with busie care to reare
Her out of carelesse swowne. Her eyelids blew
And dimmed sight with pale and deadly hew
At last she up gan lift: with trembling cheare
Her up 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 IV

To sinfull house of Pride, Duessa
guides the faithfull knight,
Where brother's death to wreak Sansjoy
doth chalenge him to fight.

I
Young knight whatever that dost armes professe,
And through long labours huntest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
In choice, and change of thy deare loved Dame,
Least thou of her beleeve too lightly blame,
And rash misweening doe thy hart remove:
For unto knight there is no greater shame,
Then lightnesse and inconstancie in love;
That doth this Redcrosse knights ensample plainly prove.

II

Who after that he had faire Una 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 traveild, till at last they see
A goodly building, bravely 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 traveiled.

III

Great troupe s of people traveild thitherward
Both day and night, of each degree and place,
But few returned, having scaped hard,
With balefull beggerie, or foule disgrace;
Which ever 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.

IV

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

V

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 ever sit:
For on a sandie hill, that still did flit
And fall away, it mounted was full hie:
That every breath of heaven shaked it:
And all the hinder parts, that few could spie,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

VI

Arrived 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 Malvenu, who entrance none denide:
Thence to the hall, which was on every 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.

VII

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

VIII

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

IX

Exceeding shone, like Phoebus fairest childe,
That did presume his fathers firie wayne,
XII

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 native soveraintie,
But did usurpe with wrong and tyrannie
Upon the scepter, which she now did hold:
Ne ruld her Realmes with lawes, but pollicie,
And strong advizement of six wisards old,
That with their counsels had her kingdome did uphold.

XIII

Soone as the Elfin 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 obeyssance, did the cause declare,
Why they were come, her royall state to see,
To prove the wide report of her great Majestee.

XIV

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 Lords and Ladies all this while devise
Themselves 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.

XV

Goodly they all that knight do entertaine,
Right glad with him to have 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
Though all their glorie vaine in knightly vew,
And that great Princesse too exceeding proud,
That to strange knight no better countenance allowd.

XVI

Sudden upriseth from her stately place
The royall Dame, and for her coche did 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, upon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitterand light doth all mens eyes amaze.

XVII

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

XVIII

But this was drawne of six unequall 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; 
Upon a slouthful Asse he chose to ryde, 
Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin, 
Like to an holy Monck, the service to begin.  

XIX

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

XX

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

XXI

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

XXII

In greene vine leaves he was right fitly clad; 
For other clothes he could not weare for heat, 
And on his head an yvie girland had, 
From under 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 upholden can,
In shape and life more like a monster, then a man.

**XXIII**

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke unhable once to stirre or go,
Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drink was drowned so,
That from his friend he seldome knew his foe:
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.

**XXIV**

And next to him rode lustfull Lechery,
Upon 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,
Unseemely man to please faire Ladies eye;
Yet he of Ladies oft was loved deare,
When fairer faces were bid standen by:
O who does know the bent of womens fantasy?

**XXV**

In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire,
Which underneath 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 love with secret lookes;
And well could daunce, and sing with ruefulnesse,
And well could daunce, and sing with ruefulnesse,
And fortunes tell, and read in loving bookes,
And thousand other wayes, to bait his fleshly hookes.

**XXVI**

Inconstant man, that loved all he saw,
And lusted after all that he did love;
Ne would his looser life be tide to law,
But joyd weak wemens hearts to tempt and prove,
If from their loyall loves he might them move;
Which lewdnesse fild him with reprochfull paine
Of that fowle evill, which all men reprove,
That rots the marrow and consumes the braine:
Such one was Lecherie, the third of all this traine.

**XXVII**

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Upon 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 unto hell him selfe for money sold;
Accursed usurie was all his trade,
And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide.

**XXVIII**

His life was nigh unto deaths doore yplast,
And thred-bare cote, and cobbled 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 living had he none To leave them to; but thorough daily care To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne, He led a wretched life unto him selfe unknowne.

XXIX

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

XXX

And next to him malicious Envie rode, Upon a ravenous 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 ever 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.

XXXI

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

XXXII

He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds, And him no lesse, that any like did use, And who with gracious bread the hungry feeds, His almes for want of faith he doth accuse; So every 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 ever writt: Such one vile Envie was, that fifte in row did sitt.

XXXIII

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath, Upon 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, when choler in him sweld.

XXXIV

His ruffin raiment all was staind with blood,
Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent,
Through unadvized rashnesse woxen wood;
For of his hands he had no governement,
Ne car'd for bloud in his avengement:
But when the furious fit was overpast,
His cruell facts he often would repent;
Yet wilfull man he never would forecast,
How many mischieves should ensue his heedlesse hast.

XXXV

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

XXXVI

And after all, upon 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.
Hugh routs of people did about them band,
Showting for joy, and still before their way
A foggy mist had covered all the land;
And underneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead sculs and bones of men, whose life had gone astray.

XXXVII

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort,
To take the solace of the open aire,
And in fresh flowering fields themselves to sport;
Emongst the rest rode that false Lady faire,
The foule Duessa, next unto the chaire
Of proud Lucifera, as one of the traine:
But that good knight would not so nigh repaire,
Him selfe estrauenging from their joyaunce vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far unfit for warlike swaine.

XXXVIII

So having solaced themselves a space
With pleasaunce of the breathing fields yfed,
They backe retournted to the Princely Place;
Whereas an errant knight in armes ycled,
And heathnish shield, wherein with letters red
Was writ _Sans joy_, they new arrived find:
Enflam'd with fury and fiers hardy-hed
He seemd in hart to harbour thoughts unkind,
And nourish bloody vengeance in his bitter mind.

XXXIX
Who when the shamed shield of slaine Sansfoy
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 envious gage
Of victors glory from him snatcht away:
But th' Elfin knight, which ought that warlike wage
Disdaind to loose the meed he wonne in fray,
And him renencountring fierce, reskewd the noble pray.

XL

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 upon 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.

XLII

And to augment the glorie of his guile,
His dearest love, the faire Fidessa, loe
Is there possessed of the traytour vile,
Who reapes the harvest sowen by his foe,
Sowen in bloudy field, and bought with woe:
That brothers hand shall dearly well requight,
So be, O Queene, you equall favour showe.
Him litl answerd th' angry Elfin knight;
He never meant with words, but swords to plead his right.

XLIII

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 aveng'd each on his enimy,
That night they pas in joy and jollity,
Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall;
For Steward was excessive Gluttonie,
That of his plenty poured forth to all;
Which doen, the Chamberlain Slowth did to rest them call.

XLIV

Now whenas darkesome night had all displayed
Her coleblacce curtein over brightest skye,
The warlike youthes 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

28
Arrested all that courtly company,
Up-rose Duessa from her resting place,
And to the Paynims lodging comes with silent pace.

XLV

Whom broad awake she finds, in troublous fit,
Forecasting, how his foe he might annoy,
And him amoves with speaches seeming fit:
Ah deare Sansjoy, next dearest to Sansfoy,
Cause of my new griefe, cause of my new joy,
Joyous, to see his ymage in mine eye,
And greev'd, to thinke how foe did him destroy,
That was the flowre of grace and chevalrye;
Lo his Fidessa to thy secret faith I flye.

XLVI

With gentle wordes he can her fairely greet,
And bad say on the secret of her hart.
Then sighing soft, I learne that little sweet
Oft tempred is (quoth she) with muchell smart:
For since my brest was launcht with lovel ydart
Of deare Sans foy, I never joyed howre,
But in eternall woes my weaker hart
Have wasted, loving him with all my powre,
And for his sake have felt full many an heavie stowre.

XLVII

At last when perils all I weened past,
And hop'd to reape the crop of all my care,
Into new woes unweeting I was cast,

By this false faytor, who unworthy ware
His worthy shield, whom he with guilefull snare
Entrapped slew, and brought to shamefull grave.
Me silly maid away with him he bare,
And ever since hath kept in darksome cave,
For that I would not yeeld, that to Sans foy I gave.

XLVIII

But since faire Sunne hath sperst that lowring clowd,
And to my loathed life now shewes some light,
Under 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 love.
Let not his love, let not his restlesse spright,
Be unreveng'd, that calles to you above
From wandring Stygian shores, where it doth endlesse move.

XLIX

Thereto said he, Faire Dame, be nought dismaid
For sorrowes past; their griefe is with them gone:
Ne yet of present perill be affraid;
For needlesse feare did never vantage none
And helplesse hap it booteth not to mone.
Dead is Sansfoy, his vitall paines are pa
Though greeved ghost for vengeance deepe do grone:
He lives, that shall him pay his dewties last,
And guiltie Elfin blood 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 ever bee,
Where both do fight alike, to win or yield? 445
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.

LI

But faire Fidessa, sithens fortunes guile,
Or enimies powre, hath now captived you,
Returne from whence ye came, and rest a while
Till morrow next, that I the Elfe subdew,
And with Sansfoyes dead dowry you endew.

Ay me, that is a double death (she said)
With proud foes sight my sorrow to renew:
Where ever yet I be, my secret aid
Shall follow you. So passing forth she him obaid.

*       *       *       *       *

CANTO V

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

THE noble hart, that harbours vertuous thought,
And is with child of glorious great intent,
Can never rest, untill it forth have brought
Th’ eternall brood of glorie excellent.
Such restlesse passion did all night torment
The flaming corage of that Faery knight,
Devizing, how that doughtie turnament
With greatest honour he achieven might;
Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light.

II

At last the golden Orientall gate,
Of greatest heaven gan to open faire,
And Phoebus fresh, as bridegrome to his mate,
Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie haire:
And hurls his glistring beams through gloomy aire.
Which when the wakeful Elfe perceiv’d, streightway
He started up, and did him selfe prepaire,
In sunbright armes, and battailous array:
For with that Pagan proud he combat will that day.

III

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 drive 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 loves, and warres for Ladies doen by many a Lord.

IV

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

V

At last forth comes that far renowned Queene,
With royall pomp and Princely majestie;
She is ybrought unto a paled greene,
And placed under stately canapee,
The warlike feates of both those k
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.

VI

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

VII

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 hewn deep show marks of eithers might.

VIII

So th' one for wrong, the other strives 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 ravine rend away;
With hideous horror both together smight,
And souce so sore that they the heavens affray:
The wise Soothsayer seeing so sad sight,
Th' amazed vulgar tels of warres and mortall fight.

IX

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for right,
And each to deadly shame would drive 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 vermilion 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 wrathful fyre,
Upon 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 blacke Stygian lake,
Whiles ther thy shield is hangd for victors hyre,
And sluggish german doest thy forces slake
To after-send his foe, that him may overtake?

Goe caytive Elfe, him quickly overtake,
And soone redeeme from his long wandring woe;
Goe guiltie ghost, to him my message make,
That I his shield have quit from dying foe.
Therewith upon his crest he stroke him so,
That twise he reeled, readie twise 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 did shake:
Tho mov'd with wrath, and shame, and Ladies sake,
Of all attonce he cast avengd to bee,
And with so' exceeding furie at him strake,
That forced him to stoupe upon his knee;
Had he not stouped so, he should have cloven bee.

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

In haste Duessa from her place arose,
And to him running said, O prowest knight,
That ever Ladie to her love did chose,
Let now abate the terror of your might,
And quench the flame of furious despight,
And bloudie vengeance; lo th' infernall powres,
Covering your foe with cloud of deadly night,
Have borne him hence to Plutos balefull bowres.
125
The conquest yours, I yours, the shield, the glory yours.

XV

Not all so satisfide, with greedie eye
He sought all round about, his thristie 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.

XVI

Wherewith he goeth to that soveraine Queene,
And falling her before on lowly knee,
To her makes present of his service seene:
Which she accepts, with thankes, and goodly gree,
Greatly advauncing his gay chevalree.
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 fils, and flyes to heaven bright.

XVII

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

XVIII

As when a wearie traveller that strayes
By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile,
155
Unweeting of the perillous wandring wayes,
Doth meete a cruell craftie Crocodile,
Which in false griefe hyding his harmefull guile,
Doth weepe full sore, and sheddeth tender teares:
The foolish man, that pitties all this while
His mournefull plight, is swallowed up unawares,
Forgetfull of his owne, that mindes anothers cares.

XIX

So wept Duessa untill eventide,
That shyning lampes in Joves high house were light:
Then forth she rose, ne lenger would abide,
But comes unto the place, where th' Hethen knight
In slombring swownd nigh voyd of vitall spright,
Lay cover'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 heaven makes speedy way.
Where griesly Night, with visage deadly sad,
That Phoebus chearefull face durst never 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 charret stood,
Alreadie harnessed for journey new;
And coleblacke steedes yborne of hellish brood,
That on their rustie bits did champ, as they were wood.

**XXI**

Who when she saw Duessa sunny bright,
Adorned with gold and jewels shining cleare,
She greatly grew amazed at the sight,
And th' unacquainted light began to feare:
For never did such brightnesse there appeare,
And would have backe retyred to her cave,
Until the witches speech she gan to heare,
Saying, Yet, O thou dreaded Dame, I crave
Abide, till I have told the message which I have.

**XXII**

She stayd, and foorth Duessa gan proceede
O thou most auncient Grandmother of all,
More old then Jove, whom thou at first didst breede,
Or that great house of Gods cælestiall,
Which wast begot in Daemogorgons hall,
And sawst the secrets of the world unmade,

Why suffredst thou thy Nephewes deare to fall
With Elfin sword, most shamefully betrade?
Lo where the stout Sansjoy doth sleepe in deadly shade.

**XXIII**

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

**XXIV**

Up then, up dreary Dame, of darknesse Queene,
Go gather up the reliques of thy race,
Or else goe them avenge, 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 moved
In hart, and chaunce in that great mothers face:
Yet pittie in her hart was never proved
Till then: for evermore she hated, never loved.

**XXV**

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 Joves eternall seat? 
The sonnes of Day he favoureth, I see, 
And by my ruines thinkes to make them great: 
To make one great by others losse, is bad excheat.  

XXVI

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 has spilt. 
But what art thou, that telst of Nephews kilt? 
I that do seeme not I, Duessa am, 
(Quoth she) how ever now in garment 
And gorgeous gold arrayd I to thee came; 
Duessa I, the daughter of Deceipt and Shame.

XXVII

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 roote of Duessaes race. 
O welcome child, whom I have longd to see, 
And now have seene unwares. Lo now I go with thee.

XXVIII

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

XXIX

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

XXX

And all the while she stood upon the ground, 
The wakefull dogs did never cease to bay, 
As giving warning of th' unwonted sound, 
With which her yron wheeles did them affray, 
And her darke griesly looke them much dismay: 
The messenger of death, the ghastly Owle 
With drery shriekes did also her bewray;
And hungry Wolves continually did howle,  
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so fowle.  

XXXI

Thence turning backe in silence soft they stole,  
And brought the heauie corse with easie pace  
To yawning gulfe of deepe Avernus hole.  
By that same hole an entrance darke and bace  
With smoake and sulphure hiding all the place,  
By that same way the direfull dames doe drive  
Their mournefull charet, fild with rusty blood,  
And downe to Plutos house are come bilive:  
Which passing through, on every 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 every side,  
To gaze on earthly wight that with the Night durst ride.

XXXII

They pas the bitter waves of Acheron,  
Where many soules sit wailing woefullly,  
And come to fiery flood of Phlegeton,  
Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fry,  
And with sharpe shrilling shriekes doe bootlesse cry,  
Cursing high Jove, 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.

XXXIII

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, until Dayes enemy  
Did him appease; then downe his taile he hong  
And suffred them to passen quietly:  
For she in hell and heaven had power equally.  

XXXIV

There was Ixion turned on a wheele,  
For daring tempt the Queene of heaven to sin;  
And Sisyphus an huge round stone did reele  
Against an hill, ne might from labour lin;  
There thirsty Tantalus hong by the chin;  
And Tityus fed a vulture on his maw;  
Typhoeus joynts were stretched on a gin,  
Theseus condemnd to endlesse slouth by law,  
And fifty sisters water in leake vessels draw.
Leave off their worke, unmindfull of their smart,
To gaze on them; who forth by them doe pace,
Till they be come unto the furthest part;
Where was a Cave ywrought by wondrous art,

320
Deep, darke, uneasie, dolefull, comfortlesse,
In which sad Aesculapius farre apart
Emprisond was in chaines remedlesse,
For that Hippolytus rent corse he did redresse.

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

Who all in rage his Sea-god syre besought,
Some cursed vengeaunce 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 overcast.
His goodly corps on ragged cliffs yrent,
Was quite dismembred, and his members chast
Scattered on every mountaine, as he went,
That of Hippolytus was left no moniment.

XXXIX

His cruell step-dame seeing what was donne,
Her wicked dayes with wretched knife did end,
In death avowing th' innocence of her sonne,
Which hearing, his rash Syre began to rend
His haire, and hastie tongue that did offend.
Tho gathering up the relicks of his smart,
By Dianes meanes, who was Hippolyts frend,
Them brought to Aesculape, that by his art
Did heale them all againe, and joynd every part.

XL

Such wondrous science in mans wit to raine
When Jove avizd, that could the dead revive,
And fates expired could renew againe,
Of endlesse life he might him not deprive,
But unto hell did thrust him downe alive,
With flashing thunderbolt ywounded sore:
Where long remaining, he did alwaies strive
Himselfe with salves to health for to restore,
And slake the heavenly fire, that raged evermore.

XLI

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

XLII

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 heaven 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 Jove that rules both night and day?

XLIII

Not so (quoth she) but sith that heavens king  
From hope of heaven 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 everlasting Night?

Goe to then, O thou farre renowmed sonne  
Of great Apollo, shew thy famous might                           385
In medicine, that else hath to thee wonne  
Great paines, and greater praise, both never to be donne.

XLIV

Her words prevaild: 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 having seene, from thence arose away  
The mother of dread darknesse, and let stay  
Aveugles sonne there in the leaches cure,  
And backe returning tooke her wonted way,  
To runne her timely race, whilst Phoebus pure,  
In westerne waves his weary wagon did recurse.

XLV

The false Duessa leaving 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, unreadie 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 caytive wretched thrals, that wayled night and day.

XLVI

A ruefull sight, as could be seene with eie;  
Of whom he learned had in secret wise  
The hidden cause of their captivitie,  
How mortgaging their lives to Covetise,

Through wastfull Pride and wanton Riotise,  
They were by law of that proud Tyrannesse,  
Provokt with Wrath, and Envies false surmise,  
Condemned to that Dongeon mercilesse,

Where they should live in woe, and die in wretchednesse.
XLVII

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

XLVIII

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 obayd;
There also was that mightie Monarch layd
Low under all, yet above all in pride,
That name of native syre did fowle upbrayd,
And would as Ammons sonne be magnifide,
Till scornd of God and man a shamefull death he dide.

XLIX

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 Caesar, great Pompey, and fierce Antonius.

L

Amongst these mightie men were wemen mixt,
Proud wemen, vaine, forgetfull of their yoke:
The bold Semiramis, whose sides transfixed
With sonnes own 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 dungeon fill;

LI

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 Dungeon 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 themselves into these heavy stowres.

LII

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

LIII

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 underneath the castell wall,
A donghill of dead carkases he spide,
The dreadfull spectacle of that sad house of Pride.