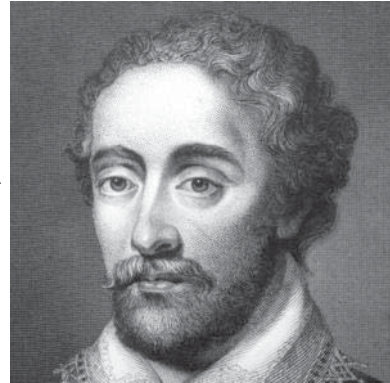


EDMUND SPENSER

1552? – 1599

Edmund Spenser has consistently been accorded a special place in the history of English literature. In the seventeenth century John Milton, as much impressed by *The Faerie Queene's* subtle treatment of the moral virtues as by its aesthetic charm, called him “our sage and serious Spenser, whom I dare to name a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.” In the nineteenth, Wordsworth wrote of “Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven / With the moon’s beauty and the moon’s soft pace.” And in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries poets and critics have continued to hold Spenser and *The Faerie Queene* in extraordinarily high regard.



Spenser’s career as a servant of the Crown was less glorious. He was not the moping failure some have thought him (he had steady work in Ireland helping the English govern its often rebellious and resentful population), but in England he was never the courtier that he seems to have wanted to be. His bid for more direct royal patronage was the first part of *The Faerie Queene* (1590). This is an allegorical epic poem with debts to Virgil, elements of Arthurian and Italian epic or romance, traces of medieval pilgrimage allegory, Chaucerian moments, and passages indebted to a range of other genres from the fabliau to the pastoral. The central if often absent figure is Prince Arthur, the future British king, who is seeking the always absent heroine, Gloriana, queen of Fairyland and an allegorical “mirror,” Spenser told his friend Sir Walter Raleigh in a letter published at the end of the volume, of Queen Elizabeth in her public role as ruler. Modern scholars may perceive veiled criticisms of Elizabeth in the poetry, but the queen either did not notice or thought it wise to read the epic as purely complimentary, so she gave the author a generous yearly pension of fifty pounds.

Little is known with any certainty of Spenser’s early life, although his writings provide some information. He was born, probably in London, to parents of modest means, and it was as an “impoverished” student that he entered the Merchant Taylors’ School, headed by the scholar Richard Mulcaster, remembered today for his impassioned defense of the English language. There Spenser studied Latin, Greek, and possibly Hebrew; he also learned French and Italian. From there he went to Pembroke Hall (now Pembroke College) at Cambridge University, where he was registered as a “sizar,” a poor student who was required to work for his keep, earning his bachelor’s degree in 1573 and his M.A. in 1576. While at Pembroke, Spenser made friends with Gabriel Harvey, soon to be a prominent Cambridge don, who introduced him to useful patrons and whose correspondence with the young poet demonstrates a shared interest in poetic theory, genres, and metrics.

In 1579 Spenser produced his first significant, if pseudonymous, publication, *The Shepheardes Calender*, a set of illustrated pastoral poems for each month of the year and written, says a prefatory poem, by one “Immerito.” The work, dedicated to Philip Sidney, comes with a preface and annotations by the still unidentified “E.K.” In this innovative work, which saw a number of editions, Spenser exploits a genre that hearkened back to Theocritus and Virgil in the third and first centuries BCE but that had since added the potential for religious and political commentary because of the Christian associations of “pastor” and “flock.” The book’s presentation is fashionably Continental and the metrical variation innovative, yet the language is deliberately old-fashioned, reminiscent of

Chaucer and with a name for the protagonist—Colin Clout—taken from the work of an earlier poet, John Skelton.

In that same year, 1579, Spenser was in the service, as secretary, of the Earl of Leicester, an important royal advisor and at one point suitor to Queen Elizabeth. There he would have met Sidney, Leicester's nephew, and Edward Dyer, both poets and both eventually knighted, whose friendship, or at least notice, would have seemed valuable. Sidney may have helped Spenser later gain an appointment as secretary to Lord Grey, the Lord Deputy of Ireland. It is not quite clear how Spenser regarded Grey's brutality against the Spanish troops who supported the Irish rebels, but his later tract, *A Viewe of the Present State of Ireland* (printed 1633—see the anthology's online component of *Literature in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales* for excerpts), whatever the ambiguities of its dialogue form and a few residual doubts about its authorship, displays little regard for the Irish and even less for the insurgents. After Grey was recalled to England, Spenser remained in Ireland and continued to work as a civil servant, gaining considerable acreage and a small castle.

In 1589 Spenser traveled with Sir Walter Raleigh to England, where in 1590 he published the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*, on which he had been working for about a decade. Politically as well as poetically motivated, this Protestant, but hardly "Puritan," epic creates a romance world filled with monsters, giants, knights, and enchanters, allegorical personifications who enact a subtle, complex, and often elusive interplay between the Aristotelian or Christian virtues and their enemies, both those active out in the world and those operating within the leading figures' own souls. According to his letter to Raleigh, Spenser hoped to write twelve books, but only six were completed (the second set being published in the 1596 edition): the "legends" of holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice, and courtesy, as well as a fragment on "Mutabilitie." Spenser won his pension, but Elizabeth's patronage seems to have gone no further, perhaps because his satirical "Mother Hubberds Tale," included in his *Complaints* (1591), angered the authorities.

In between the first and second installments of *The Faerie Queene* Spenser published his *Complaints*, a collection of poems; *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* (1595), a sometimes satirical anti-court pastoral; *Astrophel*, an elegy for Philip Sidney (1596); and *Amoretti and Epithalamion* (1595), sonnets that commemorate Spenser's courtship of Elizabeth Boyle, followed by a magnificently stately marriage hymn celebrating their wedding. The sonnets, which depart from the Petrarchan tradition of adulterous or futile desire, are structured by allusions to the liturgical year; the twenty-four stanzas of the "Epithalamion" allude to the day (June 11, then the summer solstice), and its 365 long lines recall the year.

In 1597 Spenser became Sheriff of Cork, but later that year Irish rebels ransacked and burned his castle. He returned to London carrying dispatches for the Privy Council, but his time there was to be short. He died early in 1599 and is buried in Westminster Abbey, next to Chaucer. A memorial erected in 1620 reads, in part, "Heare lyes . . . the body of Edmond Spenser, the prince of poets in his tyme; whose divine spirit needs noe other witsnesse then the works which he left behinde him."



The Faerie Queene

In a letter to his friend Sir Walter Raleigh, Spenser writes that his unfinished *Faerie Queene* aimed to "fashion" a gentleman or noble person who would combine the virtues represented by twelve knightly heroes. In his epic poem, each of the books features one of these knights, who represents a virtue and who struggles to fight the specific vices that threaten his quest. The hero of Book 1's "Legend of Holinesse," is Saint George (the Redcrosse Knight), patron saint of England and, with God's help, slayer of a satanic dragon that has been threatening a royal family and its kingdom, Eden. In the legend as it came down to Spenser, George rescues the royal maiden and the kingdom by defeating the dragon but

then leaves, soon to be martyred. In Spenser's Protestant version, however, the knight will marry the princess, Una (representing the One, the Truth, and the True Church), although not until his earthly service to the Fairy Queen, Gloriana (who represents, among other things, Queen Elizabeth), is finished. Then, at the end of human time, the marriage of Christ and his Church can be completed.

The somewhat chilly hero of Book 2 is Sir Guyon, Knight of Temperance, who with the intermittent guidance of a Palmer (usually a religious figure, but here signifying rectified reason) seeks not so much a middle way as a dynamic mixture of positive and negative energies, fire and water, excess and lack—a mixture that parallels the healthy body's balance of elements and the cosmos's own tense harmony. The villain is the seductively beautiful but murderous Acrasia ("Excess") who, like Homer's Circe, turns men to beasts. After a journey recalling that of Odysseus, Guyon arrives at her island, a pseudo-paradise of sensuous but sterile pleasures and largely artificial beauty.

The Garden of Adonis is the Bower's parallel and correction, made beautiful by Nature's own art. To this garden will come the lovely Amoret to be raised by Venus in "goodly womanhed." The Garden is the center, structurally and conceptually, of Book 3, the Legend of Chastity. For Spenser, Chastity (represented by the armed lady knight, Britomart) is an energetic love that embraces a sexuality culminating in faithful marriage. In Book 3's last two cantos Britomart sets out to liberate Amoret from the enchanter Busirane, who holds her in a house furnished with artworks and a procession illustrating what many see as literary and mythical *eros*, not the genuine love of faithful spouses. Rescued, Amoret and her beloved Scudamore embrace, although in the 1596 edition Spenser undoes that moment so he can send the pair on more adventures. After Book 4, on friendship, comes the Book of Justice, starring Britomart's beloved Sir Artegall. One challenge to Justice is offered by "The Equality Giant," as he is now often called, who demands the abolition of private property and a return to humanity's primal equality. The scene has provoked debate on Spenser's attitude toward the longing, felt by some radicals in his day, to restore a supposedly lost social and economic justice. In all the books, the epic's chief hero is Prince Arthur, a Briton who is in love with Gloriana and who will, in Spenser's version of the tale, establish the royal line from which will eventually derive the Welsh Tudor dynasty.

Book 1 derives from a saint's legend, a genre that many Protestants contemptuously dismissed as medieval and Catholic. It is also a dynastic epic, as loosely defined in the Renaissance: its opening lines signal Spenser's aims, and his ambition to be a national poet, through paraphrasing the canceled start of Virgil's *Aeneid* and the opening of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Spenser takes his structure of twelve books, each consisting of twelve cantos, from Virgil's *Aeneid*, but his rhyme scheme is distinctly his own. Each nine-line stanza (later referred to as the Spenserian stanza) consists of eight lines of iambic pentameter and a final line of iambic hexameter (an alexandrine) with an interlocking rhyme scheme (*ababbcbcc*). Structurally, the poem follows a pattern set by St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) in a sermon that allegorizes the parable of the Prodigal Son: a young man on an impatient horse journeys with a number of personifications through Error, to Pride, to Despair, and finally to a house where he recovers and is ready for Heaven. Spenser also borrows heavily from Ariosto, Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, Virgil, Chaucer, Arthurian legend, and Tudor anti-Catholic polemic, so that the poem incorporates epic, romance, legend, personification allegory, satire, and pastoral. The Bible figures too, for the narrative moves from a besieged Eden through a fall into error and eventually by way of a victory over the old dragon Satan to the promise of the New Jerusalem and the union of God and humanity at the end of time. George's very name, from the Greek for farmer, or "earth-worker," parallels that of Adam (Hebrew for "red earth"), because the Legend of Holinesse also narrates the conversion by God's grace of earthy flesh into Saint George of "merry" England.

Book 1 also allegorizes England's loss of the true Church to Catholicism—just when this had occurred, historically, was a matter of debate at the time, and Spenser is not clear on that point—and its recovery under the Protestant Tudors. In this regard, Spenser's poem exemplifies the anti-Catholicism common in his time and place. Yet he also incorporates a number of Catholic touches, from the hermit

who instructs Redcrosse to elements of the Catholic Easter Eve liturgy that deepen the concluding betrothal ceremony. Indeed, in recent years Spenser has seemed less urgently Protestant, and although there can be no doubt that he feared and detested the might of Catholic Spain (allegorized by the giant Orgoglio) and what he saw as the mendaciously seductive powers of the Papacy (allegorized by the magician Archimago and the witch Duessa), his theology has been read as less rigidly Calvinist, with at least a little more room for a free human will than strict Protestants would have liked, and with an acceptance of formal and communal ceremony that would make radical Puritans wince.

In recent years, then, Spenser's moral and religious understanding has come to seem more flexible. Similarly, his treatment of the virtues that his knightly heroes represent has been seen as less illustrative or demonstrative and more interrogative or exploratory. In all the books, even Book 1 (which deals with a virtue hard to live by but easy for readers to value), Spenser is willing to show the problems and paradoxes attendant upon the six virtues he examines: holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice, and courtesy. Although few at his time would deny the virtue of holiness, Spenser can still suggest that it might need, or lead to, the other virtues, and when he comes to the remaining five he is willing to show their limits and their need of correction by yet others. In all cases his knights, and especially the usually less than brilliant St. George, make terrible mistakes. Through these knights' errors Spenser implies that we live in a world that makes virtuous action difficult because perceiving what is good, or even simply knowing what is going on, is often harder than wanting to be good. Spenser's readers may (and perhaps should) find his allegory confusing, but his knights are usually just as confused. Eventually both hero and reader realize what is happening, but each experiences the error and puzzlement that, for Spenser, characterize human life.

The first three books of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1590 with an appended letter to Sir Walter Raleigh in which Spenser outlines his designs for the epic; some modern editions print it as a preface and others, including this anthology, as the "annex" Spenser himself called it.

from *The Faerie Queene*

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QUEENE
CONTAYNING THE LEGENDE OF THE KNIGHT OF
THE RED CROSSE, OR OF HOLINESSE

1

L o I the man, whose Muse¹ whilome^o did *formerly*
maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepheards weeds,^o *garments*
Am now enforst a far unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,²
5 And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle^o deeds; *noble*
Whose prayes having slept in silence long,

¹ *Muse* One of the nine goddesses who preside over the arts and sciences. In line 10 it seems that Spenser is referring either to Clio, the Muse of history, or Calliope, the Muse of epic.

² *Oaten reeds* I.e., the shepherd's pipe, the symbol of pastoral poetry. Spenser exchanges these pipes for the trumpet, the symbol of heroic poetry.

Me, all too meane,^o the sacred Muse *common*
areeds^o *advises*
To blazon^o broad^o emongst her learned *proclaim / abroad*
throng:
Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.

2

10 Helpe then, O holy Virgin chiefe of nine,
Thy weaker^o Novice to performe thy will, *weak*
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne³
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights and fairest Tanaquill,⁴
15 Whom that most noble Briton Prince^o so long *Arthur*
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeservèd wrong:
O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.

³ *scryne* Chest for valuables, especially sacred objects such as saints' relics.

⁴ *Tanaquill* I.e., Gloriana, a symbolic representation of Queen Elizabeth I.

3
 And thou most dreaded impe^o of highest Jove,¹ *child*
 20 Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
 At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,^o *shoot*
 That glorious fire it kindled in his hart,
 Lay now thy deadly Heben^o bow apart, *ebony*
 And with thy mother milde come to mine ayde:
 25 Come both, and with you bring triumphant Mart,²
 In loves and gentle jollities arrayd,
 After his murdrous spoiles and bloody rage allayd.

4
 And with them eke,^o O Goddesse heavenly bright, *also*
 Mirroure of grace and Majestie divine,
 30 Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light
 Like Phoebus lampe³ throughout the world doth shine,
 Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,^o *eyes*
 And raise my thoughts too humble and too vile,
 To thinke of that true glorious type⁴ of thine,
 35 The argument^o of mine afflicted^o stile:^o *topic/humble/work*
 The which to heare, vouchsafe, O dearest dred⁵ 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^o on the plaine, *galloping*
 AY cladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
 Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
 The cruell markes of many a bloody field;
 Yet armes till that time did he never wield:⁶

¹ *And thou ... Jove* Here Cupid is the son of Jove, Roman King of the gods, and Venus, goddess of beauty and love. Cupid's father is sometimes said to be Hermes or Mars rather than Jove.

² *Mart* Mars, god of war and one of Venus's lovers.

³ *Phoebus lampe* I.e., the sun (Phoebus Apollo is god of the sun).

⁴ *that ... type* Gloriana.

⁵ *dred* Object of reverence.

⁶ *Y cladd ... wield* The knight wears the "whole armor of God" (Ephesians 13-17), worn by those who struggle against sin. Though the armor itself bears marks from many battles, this particular knight has never fought in it before.

His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
 As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
 Full jolly^o knight he seemd, and faire did sitt, *handsome*
 As one for knightly giusts^o and fierce encounters fitt. *jousts*

2
 10 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 living ever him ador'd:
 Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
 15 For souveraine^o hope, which in his helpe he had: *greatest*
 Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
 But of his cheere^o did seeme too solemne *demeanor*
 sad;^o *serious*
 Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.^o *dreaded*

3
 Upon a great adventure he was bond,
 20 That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
 That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie lond,
 To winne him worship,^o and her grace to have, *renown*
 Which of all earthly things he most did crave;
 And ever as he rode, his hart did earne^o *yearn*
 25 To prove his puissance^o in battell brave *strength*
 Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
 Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and steame.

4
 A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
 Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
 30 Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
 Under a vele, that wimpled^o was full low, *folded*
 And over all a blacke stole she did throw,
 As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,
 And heavie sat upon her palfrey slow:
 35 Seemèd in heart some hidden care she had,
 And by her in a line a milke white lambe she lad.

5
 So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
 She was in life and every vertuous lore,
 And by descent from Royall lynage came
 40 Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore
 Their scepters stretcht from East to Western shore,

And all the world in their subjection held;
 Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
 Forwasted° all their land, and them expeld: *lay waste*
 45 Whom to avenge, she had this Knight from far compeld.

6

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,
 50 The day with cloudes was suddaine overcast,
 And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
 Did poure into his Lemans lap¹ so fast,
 That every wight° to shrowd° it did *creature / cover*
 constrain,° *impel*
 And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were
 fain.° *eager*

7

Enforst to seeke some covert° nigh at hand, *shelter*
 A shadie grove not far away they spide,
 That promist ayde° the tempest to withstand: *aid*
 Whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride,
 Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
 60 Not perceable² 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.

8

And fourth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
 65 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, *did*
 The sayling Pine, the Cedar proud and tall,
 70 The vine-prop Elme, the Poplar never dry,
 The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all,
 The Aspine good for staves, the Cypresse funerall.

9

The Laurell, meed° of mightie Conquerours *reward*
 And Poets sage, the Firre that weepeth³ still,° *continuously*

¹ *his Lemans lap* His beloved's lap; i.e., the earth.

² *perceable* Able to be perceived.

³ *weepeth* I.e., by exuding resin.

75 The Willow worne of forlorne Paramours,
 The Eugh° obedient to the benders will, *yew*
 The Birch for shaftes,° the Sallow for the mill, *lances*
 The Mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,
 The warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill,
 80 The fruitfull Olive, and the Platane° round, *plane-tree*
 The carver Holme,° the Maple seeldom inward *holly*
 sound.

10

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
 Untill the blustering storme is overblowne;
 When weening° to returne, whence they *expecting*
 did stray,
 85 They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
 But wander too and fro in wayes 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,
 90 That which of them to take, in diverse doubt they been.

11

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;° *out from*
 95 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 *soon afterwards*
 brave,
 And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere he gave.

12

100 Be well aware, quoth then that Ladie milde,
 Least suddaine mischief 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
 105 Sir knight with-hold, till further triall made.
 Ah Ladie (said he) shame were to revoke° *withdraw*
 The forward footing° an hidden shade: *because of*
 Vertue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to
 wade.

13

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

14

But full of fire and greedy hardiment,^o *daring*
 The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide,
 120 But forth unto 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 ugly monster plaine,
 Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
 125 But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine,
 Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile
 disdaine.^o *loathsomeness*

15

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

16

Their dam^o upstart, out of her den effraide,^o *mother / alarmed*
 And rushèd forth, hurling her hideous taile
 About her cursèd head, whose folds displaid
 Were stretcht now forth at length without
 entraile.^o *coil*
 140 She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle
 Armèd to point,^o sought backe to turne againe; *completely*
 For light she hated as the deadly bale,^o *injury*
 Ay^o wont^o in desert darknesse to *ever / accustomed*
 remaine,

Where plaine^o none might her see, nor she see any *plainly*
 plaine.

17

145 Which when the valiant Elfe¹ perceiv'd, he lept
 As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
 And with his trenchand^o blade her boldly kept *cutting*
 From turning backe, and forcèd her to stay:
 Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
 150 And turning fierce, her speckled taile advaunst,
 Threatning her angry sting, him to dismay:^o *defeat*
 Who nought aghast, his mightie hand^o *raised up*
 enhaunst:
 The stroke down from her head vnto her shoulder
 glaunst.

18

Much daunted with that dint, her sence was dazd,
 155 Yet kindling rage, her selfe she gathered round,
 And all attonce^o her beastly body raizd *at once*
 With doubled forces high above the ground:
 Tho^o wrapping up her wrethèd^o sterne *then / coiled*
 arownd,
 Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine^o *tail*
 160 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.

19

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

20

Therewith she spewd out of her filthy maw^o *mouth*
 A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,

¹ *valiant Elfe* I.e., the Redcrosse Knight (who is from Fairyland, and not yet discovered to be English).

175 Full of great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunck so vildly,^o that it forst him slacke *vilely*
His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe:
Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,¹
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,
And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
180 Her filthy parbreake^o all the place defiled has. *vomit*

21
As when old father Nilus^o gins to swell *Nile river*
With timely^o pride above the Aegyptian vale, *seasonal*
His fattie^o waves do fertile slime outwell,^o *rich / gush forth*
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:
185 But when his later spring gins to avale,^o *subside*
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherein there breed
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly female of his fruitfull seed;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elsewhere may no man
reed.^o *see*

22
190 The same so sore annoyèd has the knight,
That welnigh chokèd with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no longer fight.
Whose corage when the feend perceiv'd to shrinke,
She pourèd forth out of her hellish sinke
195 Her fruitfull cursèd spawne of serpents small,
Deformèd monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

23
200 As gentle Shepheard in sweete even-tide,
When ruddy Phoebus gins to welke^o in west, *set*
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
Markes^o which do byte their hasty supper best; *notes*
A cloud of combrous gnattes do him molest,
All striving to infixe their feeble stings,
205 That from their noyance he no where can rest,
But with his clownish^o hands their tender wings *rustic*
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

24
Thus ill bestedd,^o and fearefull more of shame, *situated*
Then of the certaine perill he stood in,
210 Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
Resolv'd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;^o *cease*
And strooke at her with more then manly force,
That from her body full of filthie sin
215 He raft^o her hatefull head without remorse; *cut off*
A streame of cole black bloud forth gushed from her corse.

25
Her scatted brood, soone as their Parent deare
They saw so rudely^o falling to the ground, *violently*
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare,
220 Gathred themselves about her body round,
Weening^o their wonted entrance to have found *believing*
At her wide mouth: but being there withstood
They flockèd all about her bleeding wound,
And suckèd up their dying mothers blood,
225 Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.

26
That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th'unkindly Impes^o of heaven *unnatural offspring*
accurst,
Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Having all satisfide their bloody thirst,
230 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 have slaine themselves, with whom he should
contend.

27
235 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 worthy be you of that Armorie,^o *armor*
240 Wherein 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.

¹ *Her vomit ... was* I.e., works of Roman Catholic propaganda.

28

Then mounted he upon his Steede againe,
 245 And with the Lady backward sought to wend;^o *travel*
 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.
 250 So forward on his way (with God to^o frend^o) *as / friend*
 He passèd forth, and new adventure sought;
 Long way he travellèd, before he heard of ought.

29

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
 An agèd Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
 255 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,^o *serious*
 And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
 Simple in shew, and voyde of malice bad,
 260 And all the way he prayèd, as he went,
 And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

30

He faire the knight saluted, louting^o low, *bowing*
 Who faire him quited,^o as that courteous was: *returned*
 And after askèd him, if he did know
 265 Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.
 Ah my deare Sonne (quoth he) how should, alas,
 Silly^o old man, that lives in hidden cell, *simple*
 Bidding his beades¹ all day for his trespas,
 Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
 270 With holy father sits not with such things to
 mell.^o *meddle*

31

But if of daunger which hereby doth dwell,
 And homebred evill ye desire to heare,
 Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
 That wasteth all this countrey farre and neare.
 275 Of such (said he) I chiefly do inquire,
 And shall you well reward to shew the place,
 In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare:^o *spend*

¹ *Bidding his beades* I.e., praying with the aid of rosary beads. These beads, each of which represents a prayer, are counted off as each prayer is completed.

For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
 That such a cursèd creature lives so long a space.

32

Far hence (quoth he) in wastfull^o wilderness *barren*
 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,^o that of your later^o fight *know / recent*
 285 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^o his steedes the Ocean *refresh*
 waves emong.

33

Then with the Sunne take Sir, your timely rest,
 290 And with new day new worke at once begin:
 Untroubled night they say gives counsell best.
 Right well Sir knight ye have advisèd bin,
 (Quoth then that agèd man;) the way to win
 Is wisely to advise:^o now day is spent; *consider*
 295 Therefore with me ye may take up your In
 For this same night. The knight was well content:
 So with that godly father to his home they went.

34

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
 Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
 300 Far from resort of people, that did pas
 In travell to and froe: a little wyde^o *apart*
 There was an holy Chappell edifyde,^o *built*
 Wherein the Hermite dewly wont^o to say *was accustomed*
 His holy things each morne and eventyde:
 305 Thereby a Christall streame did gently play,
 Which from a sacred fountaine wellèd forth alway.

35

Arrivèd there, the little house they fill,
 Ne looke for entertainment, where none was:
 Rest is their feast, and all things at their will;
 310 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;

315 He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore
He strowd an *Ave-Mary*¹ after and before.

36

The drouping Night thus creepeth on them fast,
And the sad humour² loading their eye liddes,
As messenger of Morpheus on them cast
Sweet slombring deaw,^o the which to sleepe *dew*
them biddes.
320 Unto their lodgings then his guestes he riddes:^o *leads*
Where when all drown'd in deadly^o sleepe *death-like*
he findes,
He to his study goes, and there amiddes
His Magick bookes and artes of sundry kindes,
He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepey mindes.

37

325 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,³
And cursèd heaven, and spake reprochfull shame
330 Of highest God, the Lord of life and light;
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name
Great Gorgon,⁴ Prince of darknesse and dead night,
At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx⁵ is put to flight.

38

And forth he cald out of deepe darknesse dred
335 Legions of Sprights, the which like little flies
Fluttring about his ever damnèd hed,
A-waite whereto their service he applies,
To aide his friends, or fray^o his enimies: *frighten*
Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
340 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.

¹ *Ave-Mary* I.e., "Hail, Mary!," a prayer to the Virgin Mary.

² *sad humour* Heavy moisture, sent by Morpheus, god of sleep.

³ *Plutoes griesly Dame* Persephone, or Proserpine, wife of Pluto and goddess of the underworld.

⁴ *Gorgon* Demogorgon, a pseudo-classical demon of the underworld, associated with the early days of creation.

⁵ *Cocytus ... Styx* Two rivers of the underworld.

39

He making speedy way through spersèd^o ayre, *dispersed*
And through the world of waters wide and deepe,
345 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 Tethys⁶ his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia⁷ still^o *continually*
doth steepe
350 In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,
Whiles sad^o Night over him her mantle black *grave*
doth spred.

40

Whose double gates he findeth lockèd fast,
The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yvory,
The other all with silver overcast;
355 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 unto Morpheus comes, whom drownèd deepe
360 In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes keepe.^o *notice*

41

And more, to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rocke tumbling downe
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the
sowne^o *sound*
365 Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne:^o *swoon*
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cries,
As still are wont t'annoy the wallèd towne,
Might there be heard: but carelesse^o Quiet lyes, *without care*
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimies.

42

370 The messenger approaching to him spake,
But his wast^o wordes returnd to him in vaine: *wasted*
So sound he slept, that nought mought^o *might*
him awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,
Whereat he gan to stretch: but he againe

⁶ *Tethys* Goddess of the sea.

⁷ *Cynthia* Goddess of the moon.

375 Shooke him so hard, that forcèd 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.

43

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
 380 And threatned unto him the dreaded name
 Of Hecate:¹ 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 Archimago² sent,
 385 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.

44

The God obeyde, and calling forth straight way
 A diverse^o dreame out of his prison darke, *diverting*
 390 Delivered it to him, and downe did lay
 His heavie head, devoide of carefull carke,³
 Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke.
 He backe returning by the Yvorie dore,
 Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke,
 395 And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
 In hast unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

45

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
 400 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
 405 Cast a blacke stole, most like to seeme for Una⁴ fit.

¹ *Hecate* Greek goddess of the crossroads, often perceived as evil and linked to witchcraft.

² *Archimago* Meaning both arch-image maker and arch-magician in Latin.

³ *carefull* I.e., full of care; *carke* Anxiety, distress.

⁴ *Una* From *unus*, the Latin word for one or unity.

46

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,
 410 In sort as he him schoolèd privily:
 And that new creature borne without her dew,⁵
 Full of the makers guile, with usage sly
 He taught to imitate that Lady trew,
 Whose semblance she did carrie under feignèd
 hew.^o *figure*

47

Thus well instructed, to their worke they hast,
 415 And comming 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,
 420 Bathèd in wanton blis and wicked joy:
 Then seemèd him his Lady by him lay,
 And to him playnd,^o how that false *complained*
 wingèd boy,⁶
 Her chast hart had subdewd, to learne Dame pleasures
 toy.^o *play*

48

And she her selfe of beautie soveraigne Queene,
 425 Faire Venus seemde unto his bed to bring
 Her, whom he waking evermore did weene,
 To be the chastest flowre, that ay^o did spring *ever*
 On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,
 Now a loose Leman to vile service bound:
 430 And eke the Graces⁷ seemèd all to sing,
Hymen iò Hymen, dauncing all around,
 Whilst freshest Flora⁸ her with Yvie girlond crownd.

49

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
 Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,

⁵ *without her dew* I.e., unnaturally.

⁶ *wingèd boy* I.e., Cupid.

⁷ *the Graces* Handmaids of Venus who personify pleasure, courtesy, and beauty. Here they sing a hymn to Hymen, the god of weddings, in celebration of the pleasures of the marriage bed.

⁸ *Flora* Goddess of flowers.

435 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,
 440 With gentle blandishment and lovely looke,
 Most like that virgin true, which for her knight him
 took.

50
 All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
 And halfe enragèd at her shamelesse guise,
 He thought have slaine her in his fierce
 despight:° *indignation*
 445 But hasty heat tempring with sufferance wise,
 He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe advise
 To prove his sense, and tempt her faignèd truth.
 Wringing her hands in wemens pitteous wise,
 Tho can° she weepe, to stirre up gentle
 ruth,° *did*
 450 Both for her noble bloud, and for her tender youth. *compassion*

51
 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,° *dismay*
 455 For° hopèd love to winne me certaine hate? *in place of*
 Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
 Die is my dew:° yet rew° my wretched state *due / pity*
 You, whom my hard avenging destinie
 Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently.

52
 460 Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leave
 My Fathers kingdome,—There she stopt with teares;
 Her swollen hart her speach seemd to bereave,
 And then againe begun, My weaker yeares
 Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
 465 Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde:
 Let me not dye in languor° and long teares. *distress*
 Why Dame (quoth he) what hath ye thus dismayd?
 What frayes° ye, that were wont to comfort *frightens*
 me affrayd?

53
 Love of your selfe, she said, and deare° constraint *dire*
 470 Lets me not sleepe, but wast the wearie night
 In secret anguish and unpittied plaint,
 Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drownèd quight.
 Her doubtfull words made that redoubted° *distinguished*
 knight
 Suspect her truth: yet since no untruth he knew,
 475 Her fawning love with foule disdainfull spight
 He would not shend,° but said, Deare dame *reprove*
 I rew,
 That for my sake unknowne such griefe unto you grew.

54
 Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
 For all so deare as life is to my hart,
 480 I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound;
 Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart,° *suffering*
 Where cause is none, but to your rest depart.
 Not all content, yet seemd she to appease
 Her mournfull plaintes, beguiled° of her art, *foiled*
 485 And fed with words, that could not chuse but please,
 So slyding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.

55
 Long after lay he musing at her mood,
 Much griev'd to thinke that gentle Dame so
 light,° *immoral*
 For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
 490 At last dull wearinesse of former fight
 Having yrockt a sleepe his irkesome° *weary*
 spright,° *spirit*
 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,
 495 With that misformèd spright¹ he backe returnd againe.

CANTO 2

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

¹ *that misformèd spright* I.e., the spirit disguised as Una.

1

By this the Northerne wagoner¹ had set
 His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre,
 That was in Ocean waves yet never wet,
 But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
 5 To all, that in the wide deepe wandering arre:
 And chearefull Chaunticlere^o with his note shrill
 Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre^o
 In hast was climbing up the Easteme hill,
 Full envious that night so long his roome did fill.

rooster
 chariot

2

When those accursèd messengers of hell,
 That feigning dreame, and that faire-forgèd Spright
 Came to their wicked maister, and gan tell
 Their bootelesse^o paines, and ill succeeding night:
 10 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^o
 15 bookes againe.

destructive

3

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

misleading

4

Forthwith he runnes with feignèd faithfull hast
 Unto his guest, who after troublous sights
 30 And dreames, gan now to take more sound
 repast,^o
 Whom suddenly he wakes with fearefull frights,

repose

As one aghast with feends or damnèd sprights,
 And to him cals, Rise rise unhappy Swaine,^o
 That here wex^o old in sleepe, whiles wicked
 wights

lover
 grow

35 Have knit themselves in Venus shamefull chaine;
 Come see, where your false Lady doth her honour
 staine.

5

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

joined

blinded

by

6

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,
 50 Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring night.
 At last faire Hesperus² in highest skie
 Had spent his lampe, and brought forth dawning light,
 Then up he rose, and clad him hastily;
 The Dwarfè him brought his steed: so both away do fly.

7

Now when the rosy-fingred Morning faire,
 Weary of agèd Tithones³ saffron bed,
 Had spred her purple robe through deawy aire,
 And the high hils Titan^o discovered,
 55 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 Dwarfè, that wont to wait each houre;
 Then gan she waile and weepe, to see that woefull
 60 stowre.^o

the sun

plight

¹ *Northerne wagoner* Constellation, probably Ursa Major (in England also called “Charles’s Wain,” or cart), imagined as a farmer guiding a wagon. The “steadfast starre” that never sets in the ocean, however, is the North Star, in the nearby Ursa Minor.

² *Hesperus* Venus as the morning or evening star.

³ *agèd Tithones* Husband of the goddess of the dawn, Aurora. Aurora asked Jupiter to give the mortal Tithonus eternal life, but forgot to ask for eternal youth.

8

And after him she rode with so much speede
 65 As her slow beast could make; but all in vaine:
 For him so far had borne his light-foot steede,
 Prickèd with wrath and fiery fierce disdainè,
 That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine;
 Yet she her weary limbes would never rest,
 70 But every hill and dale, each wood and plaine
 Did search, sore grievèd in her gentle brest,
 He so ungently left her, whom she lovèd best.

9

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

10

He then devisde himselfe how to disguise;
 For by his mightie science^o he could take
 As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,¹
 85 As ever Proteus² to himselfe could make:
 Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,
 Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell,^o
 That of himselfe he oft for feare would quake,
 And oft would flie away. O who can tell
 90 The hidden power of herbes, and might of Magicke
 spell?

11

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 silver shield upon his coward brest
 95 A bloody crosse, and on his craven^o crest^o *cowardly / head*
 A bunch of haire discolourd diversly:
 Full jolly knight he seemde, and well address^o *armed*

And when he sate upon his courser free,
 Saint George himself ye would have deemèd him to be.

12

But he the knight, whose semblaunt he did beare,
 100 The true Saint George was wandred far away,
 Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare;
 Will was his guide, and grieffe led him astray.
 At last him chaunst to meete upon the way
 105 A faithlesse Sarazin³ all arm'd to point,
 In whose great shield was writ with letters gay
Sans foy.⁴ full large of limbe and every joint
 He was, and cared not for God or man a point.

13

He had a faire companion of his way,
 110 A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red,
 Purflèd^o with gold and pearle of rich *decorated*
 assay,^o *quality*
 And like a Persian mitre^o on her hed *headdress*
 She wore, with crownes and owches^o garnishèd, *brooches*
 The which her lavish lovers to her gave;
 115 Her wanton palfrey all was overspred
 With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave,
 Whose bridle rung with golden bels and bosses^o *studs*
 brave.^o *handsome*

14

With faire disport^o and courting dalliaunce *amusement*
 She intertainde her lover all the way:
 120 But when she saw the knight his speare advaunce,
 She soone left off her mirth and wanton play,
 And bad her knight addressè him to the fray:
 His foe was nigh at hand. He prickt with pride
 And hope to winne his Ladies heart that day,
 125 Forth spurrèd fast: adowne his coursers side
 The red bloud trickling staid the way, as he did ride.

15

The knight of the Redcrosse when him he spide,
 Spurring so hote with rage despiteous,^o *merciless*
 Gan fairely couch his speare, and towards ride:
 130 Soone meete they both, both fell and furious,
 That daunted with their forces hideous,

¹ *in seeming wise* In the matter of seeming; i.e., in appearance.

² *Proteus* Sea god able to change his shape at will.

³ *Sarazin* I.e., Saracen, a Muslim (but representing Catholicism).

⁴ *Sans foy* French: Without faith.

135 Their steeds do stagger, and amazed stand,
 And eke themselves too rudely rigorous,
 Astonied with the stroke of their owne hand,
 Do backe rebut,^o and each to other yeeldeth land. *retreat*

16

140 As when two rams stird with ambitious pride,
 Fight for the rule of the rich fleecèd flocke,
 Their hornèd 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, unmovèd as a rocke,
 Both staring fierce, and holding idely
 The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

17

145 The Sarazin sore daunted with the buffe
 Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him flies;
 Who well it wards, and quyeth^o cuff with cuff: *requisites*
 Each others equall puissaunce envies,
 And through their iron sides with cruell spies^o *glances*
 150 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.

18

155 Curse on that Crosse (quoth then the Sarazin)
 That keeps thy body from the bitter fit;¹
 Dead long ygoe I wote thou haddest bin,
 Had not that charme from thee forwarnèd^o it: *prevented*
 But yet I warne thee now assured sitt,
 And hide thy head. Therewith upon his crest
 160 With rigour so outrageous he smitt,
 That a large share it hewd out of the rest,
 And glauncing downe his shield, from blame^o *harm*
 him fairely blest.^o *protected*

19

165 Who thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark
 Of native vertue^o gan eftsoones revive, *strength*
 And at his haughtie helmet making mark,

¹ *bitter fit* I.e., death.

So hugely stroke, that it the steele did rive,^o *rend*
 And cleft his head. He tumbling downe alive,
 With bloody mouth his mother earth did kis,
 Greeting his grave: his grudging ghost did strive
 170 With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is,
 Whither the soules do fly of men, that live amis.

20

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

21

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
 185 In so ritche weedes^o and seeming glorious show, *clothes*
 Did much emmove his stout heroicke heart,
 And said, Deare dame, your suddein overthrow
 Much rueth^o me; but now put feare apart, *grieves*
 And tell, both who ye be, and who that tooke your part.

22

190 Melting in teares, then gan she thus lament;
 The wretched woman, whom unhappy howre
 Hath now made thrall^o to your commandement, *slave*
 Before that angry heavens list to lowre,^o *scowl*
 And fortune false betraide me to your powre,
 195 Was, (O what now availeth that I was!)
 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.²

² *where ... pas* Rome (the seat of Roman Catholicism), through which the river Tiber runs. The prince to whom the lady claims to have been betrothed is Christ.

23

He in the first flowre of my freshest age,
 200 Betrothèd me unto the onely haire
 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 hopèd day of spousall shone,
 205 My dearest Lord fell from high honours staire,
 Into the hands of his accursèd fone,^o
 And cruelly was slaine, that shall I ever mone.

24

His blessed body spoild of lively breath,
 Was afterward, I know not how, convoid
 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.^o
 Then forth I went his woefull corse to find,
 And many yeares throughout the world I straid,
 215 A virgin widow, whose deepe wounded mind
 With love, long time did languish as the striken
 hind.^o

25

At last it chauncèd this proud Sarazin
 To meete me wandring, who perforce^o me led
 220 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 liv'de, was callèd proud Sans foy,
 The eldest of three brethren, all three bred
 Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sans joy,^o
 225 And twixt them both was borne the bloudy bold Sans
 loy.^o

26

In this sad plight, friendlesse, unfortunate,
 Now miserable I Fidessa¹ dwell,
 Craving of you in pitty of my state,
 To do none ill, if please ye not do well.
 230 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 undeservèd woes and sorrowes, which ye shew.

27

Henceforth in safe assuraunce may ye rest,
 235 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
 240 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^o they say maketh
 derth.^o

28

Long time they thus together travelèd,
 245 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,^o
 Made a calme shadow far in compasse round:
 250 The fearefull Shepheard often there aghast^o
 Under them never sat, ne wont there sound
 His mery oaten pipe, but shund th'unlucky ground.

29

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

30

Faire seemely pleasaunce^o each to other makes,
 With goodly purposes there as they sit:
 And in his falsèd^o fancy he her takes
 265 To be the fairest wight, that livèd yit;
 Which to expresse, he bends his gentle wit,
 And thinking of those braunches greene to frame

¹ *Fidessa* Fidelity.

A girlond for her dainty forehead fit,
 He pluckt a bough; out of whose rift there came
 270 Small drops of gory bloud, that trickled downe the same.

31

Therewith a piteous yelling voyce was heard,
 Crying, O spare with guilty hands to teare
 My tender sides in this rough rynd embard,^o *enclosed*
 But fly, ah fly far hence away, for feare
 275 Least^o to you hap, that happened to me heare, *lest*
 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,^o *raise*
 And with that suddain horror could no member move.

32

280 At last whenas the dreadfull passion
 Was overpast, and manhood well awake,
 Yet musing at the straunge occasiön,
 And doubting much his sence, he thus bespake;
 What voyce of damnèd Ghost from Limbo lake,¹
 285 Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,
 Both which fraile men do oftentimes mistake,^o *mislead*
 Sends to my doubtfull eares these speaches rare,
 And ruefull plaints, me bidding guillesse bloud to spare?

33

Then groning deepe, Nor damned Ghost, (quoth he,)
 290 Nor guilefull sprite, to thee these wordes doth speake,
 But once a man Fradubio,² now a tree,
 Wretched man, wretched tree; whose nature weake,
 A cruell witch her cursèd will to wreake,
 Hath thus transformd, and plast in open plaines,
 295 Where Boreas³ 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.

34

Say on Fradubio then, or man, or tree,
 Quoth then the knight, by whose mischievous arts
 300 Art thou misshapèd thus, as now I see?

¹ *Limbo lake* Afterlife realm to which the unbaptized are sent.

² *Fradubio* Italian: literally, Brother Doubt.

³ *Boreas* North wind.

He oft finds med^o cine, who his grieffe imparts;
 But double griefs afflict concealing harts,
 As raging flames who striveth to suppress.
 The author then (said he) of all my smarts,
 305 Is one Duessa⁴ a false sorceresse,
 That many errant^o knights hath brought to *wandering*
 wretchednesse.

35

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
 310 To love this gentle Lady, whom ye see,
 Now not a Lady, but a seeming tree;
 With whom as once I rode accompanyde,
 Me chauncèd of a knight encountred bee,
 That had a like faire Lady by his syde,
 315 Like a faire Lady, but did fowle Duessa hyde.

36

Whose forgèd beauty he did take in hand,⁵
 All other Dames to have exceeded farre;
 I in defence of mine did likewise stand,
 Mine, that did then shine as the Morning starre:
 320 So both to battell fierce arraungèd 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.

37

325 So doubly lov'd of Ladies unlike^o faire, *differently*
 Th'one seeming such, the other such indeede,
 One day in doubt I cast^o for to compare, *resolved*
 Whether in beauties glorie did exceede;
 A Rosy girlond was the victors meede:
 330 Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to bee,
 So hard the discord was to be agreeede.
 Frælissa⁶ was as faire, as faire mote bee,
 And ever false Duessa seemde as faire as shee.

⁴ *Duessa* Implies two, doubleness.

⁵ *take in hand* Maintain.

⁶ *Frælissa* Frailty.

38

The wicked witch now seeing all this while
 335 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,
 340 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.

39

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

40

Thensforth I tooke Duessa for my Dame,
 And in the witch unweeting^o joyd long time, *unknowingly*
 Ne ever wist, but that she was the same,
 355 Till on a day (that day is every Prime,¹
 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,
 360 That ever to have toucht her, I did deadly rew.

41

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 beleeve to bee.
 365 Thensforth from her most beastly companie
 I gan refraine, in minde to slip away,
 Soone as appeared safe opportunitie:
 For danger great, if not assur'd decay
 I saw before mine eyes, if I were knowne to stray.

¹ *Prime* First day of a new moon.

42

The divelish hag by chaunges of my cheare
 Perceiv'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 bereavèd quight:
 375 Then brought she me into this desert waste,
 And by my wretched lovers side me pight,^o *planted*
 Where now enclod in wooden wals full faste,
 Banisht from living wights, our wearie dayes we waste.

43

But how long time, said then the Elfin knight,
 380 Are you in this misformèd house to dwell?
 We may not chaunge (quoth he) this evil plight,
 Till we be bathèd in a living well;²
 That is the terme prescribèd by the spell.
 O how, said he, mote I that well out find,
 385 That may restore you to your wonted well?^o *well-being*
 Time and suffisèd^o fates to former kind *satisfied*
 Shall us restore, none else from hence may us unbynd.

44

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight,^o *called*
 Heard how in vaine Fradubio did lament,
 390 And knew well all was true. But the good knight
 Full of sad feare and ghastly dreriment,^o *gloom*
 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,
 395 And with fresh clay did close the wooden wound:
 Then turning to his Lady, dead with feare her found.

45

Her seeming dead he found with feignèd feare,
 As all unweeting^o of that well she knew, *unknowing*
 And paynd himselfe with busie care to reare
 400 Her out of carelesse^o swowne. Her eylids blew *unconscious*
 And dimmèd 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 passèd feare,
 405 He set her on her steede, and forward forth did beare.

² *Till ... well* See 1 John 4.14, which describes Christ as the Well of Life, a "well of water, springing up into eternal life," for those who believe in Christ and follow his teachings.

CANTO 3

*Forsaken Truth long seeks her love,
And makes the Lyon mylde,
Marres blind Devotions mart,^o and fals trade
In hand of leachour vylde.*

1

Nought there under heav'ns wilde hollownesse,
That moves more deare compassiön of mind,
Then beautie brought t' unworthy wretchednesse
Through envies snares or fortunes freakes unkind:
5 I, whether lately through her brightnesse blind,
Or through alleageance and fast fealtie,
Which I do owe unto all woman kind,
Feele my heart perst with so great agonie,
When such I see, that all for pittie I could die.

2

10 And now it is empassionèd so deepe,
For fairest Unaes 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,
15 Though faire as ever living wight was faire,
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,
Is from her knight divorcèd in despaire
And her due loves deriv'd to that vile witches share.

3

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

4

30 One day nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her unhastie 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^o she *headband*
undight,^o *undid*
And laid her stole aside. Her angels face
As the great eye of heaven shyned bright,
35 And made a sunshine in the shadie place;
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

5

It fortunèd out of the thickest wood
A ramping Lyon rushed suddainly,
Hunting full greedie after salvage^o blood; *savage*
40 Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devour'd her tender corse:
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloudie rage asswaged with remorse,
45 And with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.

6

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wrongèd innocence did weat.^o *understand*
50 O how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong?
Whose yeilded pride and proud submissiön,
Still dreading death, when she had markèd long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassiön,
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

7

55 The Lyon Lord of everie 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:^o *state*
60 But he my Lyon, and my noble Lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her that him lov'd, and ever most adorn,
As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord?

8

Redounding^o teares did choke th'end of *overflowing*
her plaint,
65 Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour wood;
And sad to see her sorrowfull constraint

The kingly beast upon her gazing stood;
 With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry mood.
 At last in close hart shutting up her paine,
 70 Arose the virgin borne of heavenly brood,
 And to her snowy Palfrey got againe,
 To seeke her strayed Champion, if she might
 attaine.^o

overtake

9

The Lyon would not leave her desolate,
 But with her went along, as a strong gard
 75 Of her chast person, and a faithfull mate
 Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
 Still^o when she slept, he kept both watch and ward, *always*
 And when she wakt, he waited diligent,
 With humble service to her will prepard:
 80 From her faire eyes he tooke commaundement,
 And ever by her lookes conceivèd her intent.

10

Long she thus travellèd through deserts wyde,
 By which she thought her wandring knight shold pas,
 Yet never shew of living wight espyde;
 85 Till that at length she found the troden gras,
 In which the tract of peoples footing was,
 Under the steepe foot of a mountaine hore;^o *grey*
 The same she followes, till at last she has
 A damzell spyde slow footing her before,
 90 That on her shoulders sad^o a pot of water bore. *stooped*

11

To whom approaching 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 understand;¹
 95 Till seeing by her side the Lyon stand,
 With suddaine feare her pitcher downe she threw,
 And fled away: for never in that land
 Face of faire Ladie she before did vew,
 And that dread Lyons looke her cast in deadly hew.

12

100 Full fast she fled, ne ever lookt behynd,
 As if her life upon the wager lay,

¹ *She ... understand* The girl is both deaf and mute.

And home she came, whereas her mother blynd
 Sate in eternall night: nought could she say,
 But suddaine catching hold, did her dismay
 105 With quaking hands, and other signs of feare:
 Who full of ghasly fright and cold affray,^o *fear*
 Gan shut the dore. By this arrivèd there
 Dame Una, wearie Dame, and entrance did
 requere.^o *request*

13

Which when none yeelded, her unruly Page
 110 With his rude^o clawes the wicket open rent, *rough*
 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
 115 Upon her beades devoutly penitent;
 Nine hundred *Pater noster*² every day,
 And thrise nine hundred *Aves* she was wont to say.

14

And to augment her painefull pennance more,
 Thrise every weeke in ashes she did sit,
 120 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 remove away,
 Faire Una framèd words and count'nance fit:
 125 Which hardly^o doen, at length she gan *with difficulty*
 them pray,
 That in their cotage small, that night she rest her may.

15

The day is spent, and commeth drowsie night,
 When every creature shrowded is in sleepe;
 Sad Una downe her laies in wearie plight,
 130 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 lovèd knight,
 And sighes, and grones, and evermore does steepe
 Her tender brest in bitter teares all night,
 135 All night she thinks too long, and often looks for light.

² *Pater noster* Latin: Our Fathers; i.e., repetitions of the Lord's Prayer.

16

Now when Aldeboran was mounted hie
 Above the shynie Cassiopeias chaire,¹
 And all in deadly sleepe did drowned lie,
 One knockèd at the dore, and in would fare;
 140 He knockèd fast,^o and often curst, and sware, *vigorously*
 That readie entrance was not at his call:
 For on his backe a heavy load he bare
 Of nightly stelths and pillage severall,
 Which he had got abroad by purchase criminall.

17

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

18

And all that he by right or wrong could find,
 155 Unto this house he brought, and did bestow
 Upon the daughter of this woman blind,
 Abessa daughter of Corceca² slow,
 With whom he whoredome usd, that few did know,
 And fed her fat with feast of offerings,
 160 And plentie, which in all the land did grow;
 Ne sparèd he to give her gold and rings:
 And now he to her brought part of his stolen things.

19

Thus long the dore with rage and threats he bet,^o *beat*
 Yet of those fearefull women none durst rize,
 165 The Lyon frayèd^o them, him in to let: *frightened*
 He would no longer stay him to advize,^o *consider*
 But open breaks the dore in furious wize,

¹ *Aldeboran ... chaire* Aldeboran, a star in the constellation Taurus, rises above the northern constellation Cassiopeia.

² *Abessa ... Corceca* Abessa's name derives from the word abbess and associates her with Roman Catholic abbies, monasteries, and absence (from the Latin *abesse*, to be absent). Corceca suggests blindness of heart.

And entring is; when that disdainfull^o beast *indignant*
 Encountring fierce, him suddaine doth surprize,
 170 And seizing cruell clawes on trembling brest,
 Under his Lordly foot him proudly hath supprest.

20

Him booteth not resist,³ nor succour call,
 His bleeding hart is in the vengers hand,
 Who streight him rent in thousand peeces small,
 175 And quite dismembred hath: the thirstie land
 Drunke up his life; his corse^o left on the *body*
 strand.^o *ground*
 His fearefull friends weare out the wofull night,
 Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to understand
 The heavie hap,^o which on them is alight, *occurrence*
 180 Affraid, least to themselves the like mishappen might.⁴

21

Now when broad day the world discovered has,
 Up Una rose, up rose the Lyon eke,
 And on their former journey forward pas,
 In wayes unknowne, her wandring knight to seeke,
 185 With paines farre passing that long wandring Greeke,
 That for his love refused deitie;⁵
 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
 weenèd^o nie. *believed*

22

190 Soone as she parted thence, the fearefull twaine,^o *pair*
 That blind old woman and her daughter deare
 Came forth, and finding Kirkrapine⁶ there slaine,
 For anguish great they gan to rend their heare,^o *hair*
 And beat their brests, and naked flesh to teare.
 195 And when they both had wept and wayld their fill,
 Then forth they ranne like two amazèd deare,

³ *Him ... resist* It did no good for him to resist.

⁴ *least ... might* I.e., lest the same mishap befall them.

⁵ *that long ... deitie* Odysseus, King of Ithaca who, according to Homer's *Odyssey*, wandered for ten years seeking his home after the Trojan War. On the way, he was detained by the sea nymph Calypso, who offered him immortality if he would stay with her.

⁶ *Kirkrapine* Church robber.

Halfe mad through malice, and revenging will,
To follow her, that was the causer of their ill.

And with faire fearefull humblesse^o towards *humility*
him shee came.

23
Whom overtaking, they gan loudly bray,
200 With hollow howling, and lamenting cry,
Shamefully at her rayling^o all the way, *insulting*
And her accusing of dishonesty,^o *lewdness*
That was the flowre of faith and chastity;
And still amidst her rayling, she^o did pray, *Corceca*
205 That plagues, and mischiefs, and long misery
Might fall on her, and follow all the way,
And that in endlesse error^o she might ever stray. *roaming*

27
235 And weeping said, Ah my long lackèd Lord,
Where have ye bene thus long out of my sight?
Much fearèd I to have bene quite abhord,
Or ought^o have done, that ye displeasen might, *ought*
That should as death unto my deare^o hart *heavy*
light.^o *descend*
240 For since mine eye your joyous 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.

24
But when she saw her prayers nought prevaile,
She backe returnèd with some labour lost;
210 And in the way as she did weepe and waile,
A knight her met in mighty armes embost,^o *covered*
Yet knight was not for all his bragging bost,^o *boast*
But subtill Archimag, that Una sought
By traynes into new troubles to have tost:
215 Of that old woman tydings he besought,
If that of such a Ladie she could tellen ought.^o *anything*

28
He thereto meeting¹ said, My dearest Dame,
245 Farre be it from your thought, and fro my will,
To thinke that knighthood I so much should shame,
As you to leave, that have me lovèd still,
And chose in Faery court of meere^o goodwill, *absolute*
Where noblest knights were to be found on earth:
250 The earth shall sooner leave her kindly^o skill *natural*
To bring forth fruit, and make eternall derth,^o *famine*
Then I leave you, my lief^e,^o yborne of *beloved*
heavenly berth.

25
Therewith she gan her passion to renew,
And cry, and curse, and raile, and rend her heare,
220 Saying, that harlot she too lately knew,
That causd her shed so many a bitter teare,
And so forth told the story of her feare:
Much seemèd he to mone her haplesse chaunce,
And after for that Ladie did inquere;
Which being taught, he forward gan advaunce
225 His fair enchanted steed, and eke his charmèd launce.

29
And sooth to say, why I left you so long,
Was for to seeke adventure in strange place,
255 Where Archimago said a felon strong
To many knights did daily worke disgrace;
But knight he now shall never more deface:
Good cause of mine excuse; that mote^o ye please *may*
Well to accept, and evermore embrace
260 My faithfull service, that by land and seas
Have vovd you to defend. Now then your plaint
appease.^o *cease*

26
Ere long he came, where Una traveild slow,
And that wilde Champion wayting her besyde:
Whom seeing such, for dread he durst not show
Himselfe too nigh at hand, but turnèd wyde
230 Unto 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,

30
His lovely words her seemd due recompence
Of all her passèd paines: one loving howre^o *hour*
For many yeares of sorrow can dispence:^o *compensate*

¹ *thereto meeting* Meeting her manner; i.e., answering in a like fashion.

265 A dram of sweet is worth a pound of sowre:
 She has forgot, how many a wofull stowre° *time of turmoil*
 For him she late endur'd; she speakes no more
 Of past: true is, that true love hath no powre
 To looken backe; his eyes be fixt before.

270 Before her stands her knight, for whom she
 toylde° so sore. *toiled*

31
 Much like, as when the beaten marinere,
 That long hath wandred in the Ocean wide,
 Oft soust° in swelling Tethys saltish teare, *soaked*
 And long time having tand his tawney hide
 275 With blustring breath of heaven, that none can bide,
 And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound,¹
 Soone as the port from farre he has espide,
 His chearefull whistle merrily doth sound,
 And Nereus crownes with cups;² his mates him
 pledg° around. *toast*

32
 280 Such joy made Una, when her knight she found;
 And eke th'enchauter joyous seemd no lesse,
 Then the glad marchant, that does vew from ground
 His ship farre come from watrie wildemesse,
 He hurles out vowes, and Neptune oft doth blesse:
 285 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 journey as she went.

33
 They had not ridden farre, when they might see
 290 One pricking° towards them with hastie heat, *galloping*
 Full strongly armd, and on a courser free,
 That through his fiercenesse fomed all with sweat,
 And the sharpe yron° did for anger eat, *bit*
 When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed° side; *chafed*

295 His looke was sterne, and seemèd still to threat
 Cruell revenge, which he in hart did hyde,
 And on his shield Sans loy in bloudie lines was dyde.

34
 When nigh he drew unto this gentle payre
 And saw the Red-crosse, which the knight did beare,
 300 He burnt in fire, and gan eftsoones prepare
 Himselfe to battell with his couchèd speare.
 Loth was that other, and did faint through feare,
 To taste th'untryed dint of deadly steele;
 But yet his Lady did so well him cheare,
 305 That hope of new good hap he gan to feele;
 So bent his speare, and spurnd his horse with yron heele.

35
 But that proud Paynim° forward came so fierce, *pagan*
 And full of wrath, that with his sharp-head speare
 Through vainely crossèd shield³ he quite did pierce,
 310 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,
 315 And from his gorèd wound a well of bloud did gush.

36
 Dismounting lightly from his loftie steed,
 He to him lept, in mind to reave° his life, *take*
 And proudly said, Lo there the worthie meed° *recompense*
 Of him, that slew Sans foy with bloudie knife;
 320 Henceforth his ghost freed from repining strife,
 In peace may passen over Lethè⁴ lake,
 When morning altars purgd with enemies life,
 The blacke infernall Furies⁵ doen aslake:° *appease*
 Life from Sansfoy thou tookst, Sansloy shall from thee
 take.

¹ *Orions hound* Sirius, the dog star, brightest star in the constellation Canis Major. The ancient Egyptians, who observed the star shining for most of the summer months, believed its rays caused the extreme heat, hence the "dog days" of summer.

² *Nereus ... cups* He toasts Nereus, a sea god.

³ *vainely ... shield* "Vainely" bearing the mere image of a cross and not accompanied by true faith, the shield does not offer Archimago protection.

⁴ *Lethè* River in Hades whose waters bring forgetfulness.

⁵ *Furies* Three terrible winged goddesses who punish those who commit unavenged crimes.

37

325 Therewith in haste his helmet gan unlace,
 Till Una cride, O hold that heavie hand,
 Deare Sir, what ever that thou be in place:
 Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquisht stand
 Now at thy mercy: Mercie not withstand:
 330 For he is one the truest knight alive,
 Though conquered now he lie on lowly land,
 And whilest him fortune favourd, faire did thrive
 In bloudie field: therefore of life him not deprive.

38

Her piteous words might not abate his rage,
 335 But rudely rending up his helmet, would
 Have slaine him straight: but when he sees his age,
 And hoarie head of Archimago old,
 His hastie hand he doth amazèd hold,
 And halfe ashamèd, wondred at the sight:
 340 For the old man well knew he, though untold,¹
 In charmes and magicke to have wondrous might,
 Ne ever wont in field, ne in round lists² to fight.

39

And said, Why Archimago, lucklesse syre,
 What doe I see? what hard mishap is this,
 345 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
 350 The cloud of death did sit. Which doen away,
 He left him lying so, ne would no lenger stay.

40

But to the virgin comes, who all this while
 Amasèd stands, her selfe so mockt to see
 By him, who has the guerdon^o of his guile, *recompense*
 355 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^o garment catching hold, *pure*
 360 Her from her Palfrey pluckt, her visage to behold.

¹ *though untold* I.e., without being told.

² *round lists* Arenas in which tournaments were held.

41

But her fierce servant full of kingly awe
 And high disdain, whenas his sovaine Dame
 So rudely handled by her foe he sawe,
 With gaping jawes full greedy at him came,
 365 And ramping^o on his shield, did weene^o *charging / hope*
 the same
 Have reft away with his sharpe rending clawes:
 But he was stout, and lust did now inflame
 His corage more, that from his griping pawes
 He hath his shield redeem'd, and fourth his sword he
 drawes.

42

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

43

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne maid
 380 From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will?
 Her faithfull gard remov'd, her hope dismayd,
 Her selfe a yeilded pray to save or spill.^o *ruin*
 He now Lord of the field, his pride to fill,
 With foule reproches, and disdainfull spight
 385 Her vildly^o entertaines, and will or nill,³ *vilely*
 Beares her away upon his courser light:^o *quick*
 Her prayers nought prevaile, his rage is more of might.

44

And all the way, with great lamenting paine,
 And piteous plaints she filleth his dull^o eares, *deaf*
 390 That stony hart could riven have in twaine,
 And all the way she wets with flowing teares:
 But he enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares.
 Her servile beast⁴ yet would not leave her so,

³ *will or nill* Expression meaning willingly or not; i.e., whether she will or won't.

⁴ *Her ... beast* I.e., her palfrey.

395 But followes her farre off, ne ought he feares,
To be partaker of her wandring woe,
More mild in beastly kind,^o then that her beastly
foe. *nature*

CANTO 4

*To sinfull house of Pride, Duessa
Guides the faithfull knight,
Where brothers death to wreak^o Sansjoy
Doth challenge him to fight. *avenge**

1
Y^oung knight, what ever that dost armes professe,
And through long labours huntest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
In choice, and change of thy deare lovèd Dame,
5 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^o *example*
plainly prove.

2
10 Who after that he had faire Una lorne,^o *deserted*
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
15 A goodly building, bravely garnishèd,
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 traveilèd.

3
20 Great troupes of people traveild thitherward
Both day and night, of each degree and place,
But few returnèd, having scapèd hard,^o *with difficulty*
With balefull^o beggerie, or foule disgrace, *miserable*
Which ever after in most wretched case,
Like loathsome lazars,^o by the hedges lay. *lepers*
25 Thither Duessa bad him bend his pace:
For she is wearie of the toilesome way,
And also nigh consumèd is the lingring day.

4
A stately Pallace built of squarèd bricke,
Which cunningly was without mortar laid,
30 Whose wals were high, but nothing strong, nor thick,
And golden foile¹ all over them displaid,
That purest skye with brightnesse they dismaid:
High lifted up were many loftie towres,
And goodly galleries farre over laid,
35 Full of faire windowes, and delightfull bowres;
And on the top a Diall^o told the timely *clock, timepiece*
howres.

5
It was a goodly heape^o for to behould, *edifice*
And spake the praises of the workmans wit;
But full great pittie, that so faire a mould
40 Did on so weake foundation ever sit:
For on a sandie hill, that still did flit,^o *shift*
And fall away, it mounted was full hie,
That every breath of heaven shakèd it:
And all the hinder parts, that few could spie,
45 Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

6
Arrivèd there they passèd in forth right;
For still to all the gates stood open wide,
Yet charge of them was to a Porter hight^o *designated*
Cald Maluenù, who entrance none denide:
50 Thence to the hall, which was on every side
With rich array and costly arras dight:^o *decorated*
Infinite sorts of people did abide
There waiting long, to win the wishèd sight
Of her, that was the Lady of that Pallace bright.

7
55 By them they passe, all gazing on them round,
And to the Presence² mount; whose glorious vew
Their frayle amazèd senses did confound:
In living Princes court none ever knew
Such endlesse riches, and so sumptuous shew;
60 Ne Persia selfe, the nourse^o of pompous pride *nurse*
Like ever saw. And there a noble crew

¹ *golden foile* Thin layer of gold.

² *Presence* Presence-chamber, where members of the royalty receive guests.

Of Lordes and Ladies stood on every side
Which with their presence faire, the place much beautifide.

8

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

9

Exceeding shone, like Phoebus fairest childe,¹
That did presume his fathers firie wayne,^o *chariot*
75 And flaming mouthes of steedes unwonted^o *unusually*
wilde
Through highest heaven with weaker hand to rayne;
Proud of such glory and advancement vaine,
While flashing beames do daze his feeble eyen,
He leaves the welkin^o way most beaten plaine, *heavenly*
80 And rapt with whirling wheelles, inflames the skyen,
With fire not made to burne, but fairely for to shyne.

10

So proud she shynèd in her Princely state,
Looking to heaven; for earth she did disdayne,
And sitting high; for lowly she did hate:
85 Lo underneath her scornfull feete, was layne
A dreadfull Dragon with an hideous trayne,^o *tail*
And in her hand she held a mirrhour bright,
Wherein her face she often vewèd fayne,^o *gladly*
And in her selfe-lov'd semblance tooke delight;
90 For she was wondrous faire, as any living wight.

11

Of griesly Pluto she the daughter was,
And sad Proserpina the Queene of hell;
Yet did she thinke her pearelesse worth to pas
That parentage, with pride so did she swell,

¹ *Phoebus ... childe* Phaeton, son of Apollo, tried to drive his father's chariot (by which the sun was pulled across the sky), but he lost control of the horses and was hurled down by Jove.

95 And thundring Jove, that high in heaven doth dwell,
And wield the world, she claymèd for her syre,
Or if that any else did Jove excell:
For to the highest she did still aspyre,
Or if ought higher were then that, did it desyre.

12

100 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
105 Upon the scepter, which she now did hold:
Ne ruld her Realmes with lawes, but
pollicie,^o *political cunning*
And strong advizement of six wisards old,
That with their counsels bad her kingdome did uphold.

13

Soone as the Elfin knight in presence came,
110 And false Duessa seeming Lady faire,
A gentle Husher,^o Vanitie by name *usher*
Made rowme, and passage for them did prepare:
So goodly brought them to the lowest staire
Of her high throne, where they on humble knee
115 Making obeysance, did the cause declare,
Why they were come, her royall state to see,
To prove^o the wide report of her great Majestee. *confirm*

14

With loftie eyes, halfe loth to looke so low,
She thankèd them in her disdainfull wise,^o *fashion*
120 Ne other grace vouchsafed them to show
Of Princesse worthy, scarce them bad arise.
Her Lordes and Ladies all this while devise^o *prepare*
Themselves to setten forth to straungers sight:
Some frounce^o their curlèd haire in courtly guise, *frizz*
125 Some prancke^o their ruffes, and others trimly dight *pleat*
Their gay attire: each others greater pride does spight.

15

Goodly they all that knight do entertaine,
Right glad with him to have increast their crew:
But to Duess' each one himselfe did paine
130 All kindnesse and faire courtesie to shew;

For in that court whylome^o her well they knew: *previously*
 Yet the stout Faerie mongst the middest^o crowd *central*
 Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly vew,
 And that great Princesse too exceeding prowld,
 135 That to strange knight no better countenance allowd.

16
 Sudein upriseth from her stately place
 The royall Dame, and for her coche doth call:
 All hurtlen^o forth, and she with Princely pace, *rush*
 As faire Aurora in her purple^o pall,^o *crimson / robe*
 140 Out of the East the dawning day doth call:
 So forth she comes: her brightnesse brode^o doth *abroad*
 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.

17
 145 So forth she comes, and to her coche does clyme,
 Adornèd all with gold, and girlonds gay,
 That seemd as fresh as Flora in her prime,
 And strove to match, in royall rich array,
 Great Junoes golden chaire, the which they say
 150 The Gods stand gazing on, when she does ride
 To Joves high house through heavens bras-pavèd way
 Drawne of faire Pecoocks, that excell in pride,
 And full of Argus eyes¹ their tailes dispredden wide.

18
 But this was drawne of six unequall beasts,²
 155 On which her six sage Counsellours did ryde,
 Taught to obey their bestiall beheasts,
 With like conditions to their kinds^o applyde: *natures*
 Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde,
 Was sluggish Idlenesse the nourse of sin;
 160 Upon a slouthfull Asse he chose to ryde,

¹ *full of Argus eyes* The monster Argus, who had one hundred eyes, was sent by Juno to watch Io, who was loved by Juno's husband, Jove. When Argus was killed, Juno placed his eyes in the tail-feathers of a peacock.

² *six unequall beasts* Lucifer, the personification of Pride, worst of the Seven Deadly Sins, leads her counselors, who personify the other six. They ride symbolically relevant animals.

Arayd in habit blacke, and amis³ thin,
 Like to an holy Monck, the service to begin.

19
 And in his hand his Portesse^o still he bare, *prayer book*
 That much was worne, but therein little red,
 165 For of devotion he had little care,
 Still drown'd 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,
 170 When such an one had guiding of the way,
 That knew not, whether right he went, or else astray.

20
 From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne,^o *remove*
 And greatly shunnèd manly exercise,
 From every worke he chalengèd^o *claimed*
 essoyne,^o *exemption*
 175 For contemplation sake: yet otherwise,
 His life he led in lawlesse riotise;^o *riot*
 By which he grew to grievous malady;
 For in his lustlesse limbs through evill guise
 A shaking fever raignd continually:
 180 Such one was Idlenesse, first of this company.

21
 And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
 Deformèd creature, on a filthie swyne,
 His belly was up-blowne with luxury,^o *indulgence*
 And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne,
 185 And like a Crane⁴ his necke was long and fyne,
 With which he swallowd up excessive feast,
 For want whereof poore people oft did pyne;
 And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
 He spuèd^o up his gorge, that^o all did *vomited / so that*
 him deteate.

22
 190 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,

³ *amis* I.e., amice, priestly vestment.

⁴ *Crane* Symbol of gluttony; it was thought the crane's long neck gave it increased pleasure in swallowing.

From under which fast trickled downe the sweat:
 Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat,
 195 And in his hand did beare a bouzing^o can, *drinking*
 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.

23
 Unfit he was for any worldly thing,
 200 And eke unhable once to stirre or go,
 Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
 Whose mind in meat and drinke was drownèd so,
 That from his friend he seldome knew his fo:
 Full of diseases was his carcas blew,
 205 And a dry dropsie¹ through his flesh did flow:
 Which by misdiet daily greater grew:
 Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.

24
 And next to him rode lustfull Lechery,
 Upon a bearded Goat, whose rugged haire,
 210 And whally^o eyes (the signe of gelosy,) *glaring*
 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 lovèd deare,
 215 When fairer faces were bid standen by:^o *away*
 O who does know the bent of womens fantasy?

25
 In a greene gowne he clothèd was full faire,
 Which underneath did hide his filthinesse,
 And in his hand a burning hart he bare,
 220 Full of vaine follies, and new fanglenesse:
 For he was false, and fraught with ficklenesse,
 And learnèd had to love with secret lookes,
 And well could daunce, and sing with
 ruefulness,^o *dejection*
 And fortunes tell, and read in loving^o bookes, *erotic*
 225 And thousand other wayes, to bait his fleshly hookes.

26
 Inconstant man, that lovèd all he saw,
 And lusted after all, that he did love,
 Ne would his looser life be tide to law,
 But joyd weake wemens hearts to tempt, and prove^o *test*
 230 If from their loyall loves he might then move;
 Which lewdnesse fild him with reprochfull paine
 Of that fowle evill, which all men reprove,
 That rots the marrow, and consumes the braine:²
 Such one was Lecherie, the third of all this traine.

27
 235 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;^o *counted*
 240 For of his wicked pelfe^o his God he made,
 And unto hell him selfe for money sold;
 Accursèd usurie was all his trade,
 And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide.

28
 His life was nigh unto deaths doore yplast,
 245 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;^o *obtain*
 Yet chylde ne kinsman living had he none
 250 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.

29
 Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffise,
 Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store,^o *plenty*
 255 Whose need had end, but no end covetise,^o *covetousness*
 Whose wealth was want, whose plenty made him pore,
 Who had enough, yet wishèd ever more;
 A vile disease, and eke in foote and hand
 A grievous gout tormented him full sore,
 260 That well he could not touch, nor go, nor stand:
 Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this faire band.

¹ *dropsie* I.e., dropsy, disease in which fluid accumulates in the bodily tissue and causes bloating.

² *that fowle ... braine* I.e., syphilis.

30
 And next to him malicious Envie rode,
 Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw^o *chew*
 Betweene his cankred^o teeth a venemous tode, *infected*
 265 That all the poison ran about his chaw;^o *jaw*
 But inwardly he chawèd his owne maw^o *guts*
 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,
 270 But when he heard of harme, he wexèd wondrous glad.

31
 All in a kirtle^o of discolourd^o say¹ *tunic / multicolored*
 He clothed was, ypainted full of eyes;
 And in his bosome secretly there lay
 An hatefull Snake, the which his taile uptyes
 275 In many folds, and mortall sting implies.
 Still as he rode, he gnasht his teeth, to see
 Those heapes of gold with griple^o *grasping*
 Covetyse,^o *avarice*
 And grudget^o at the great felicitie
 Of proud Lucifera, and his owne companie.

32
 280 He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds,
 And him no lesse, that any like did use,^o *perform*
 And who with gracious bread the hungry feeds,
 His almes for want of faith he doth accuse;²
 So every good to bad he doth abuse:^o *misrepresent*
 285 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 fite in row did sitt.

33
 And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath,
 290 Upon a Lion, loth for to be led;
 And in his hand a burning brond^o he hath, *sword*
 The which he brandisheth about his hed;
 His eyes did hurle forth sparkles fiery red,
 And starèd sterne on all, that him beheld,

295 As ashes pale of hew and seeming ded;
 And on his dagger still his hand he held,
 Trembling through hasty rage, when choler^o *anger*
 in him sweld.

34
 His ruffin^o raiment all was staid with blood, *disordered*
 Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent,
 300 Through unadvizèd rashnesse woxen^o *grewe*
 wood;^o *mad*
 For of his hands he had no government,^o *control*
 Ne car'd for bloud in his avengement:
 But when the furious fit was overpast,
 His cruell facts^o he often would repent, *deeds*
 305 Yet wilfull man he never would forecast,^o *foresee*
 How many mischieves should ensue his heedlesse hast.

35
 Full many mischiefes follow cruell Wrath;
 Abhorred bloudshed, and tumultuous strife,
 Unmanly murder, and unthrifty^o scath,^o *wasteful / damage*
 310 Bitter despight,^o with rancours rusty knife, *contempt*
 And fretting griefe the enemy of life;
 All these, and many evils moe haunt ire,
 The swelling Splene,³ and Frenzy raging rife,
 The shaking Palsey, and Saint Fraunces fire:⁴
 315 Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly
 tire.^o *procession*

36
 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.
 320 Huge routs^o of people did about them band, *crowds*
 Showting for joy, and still^o before their way *always*
 A foggy mist had covered all the land;
 And underneath their feet, all scattered lay
 Dead sculs & bones of men, whose life had gone astray.

¹ *say* Fine cloth, usually made of a mixture of silk and wool.

² *His almes ... accuse* Envy accuses those who give to the poor of doing so in an attempt to hide their lack of faith.

³ *Splene* I.e., spleen, ill-humor or violent temper.

⁴ *Saint Fraunces fire* Erysipelas; also known as wildfire or St. Anthony's fire, an inflammatory disease of the skin which produces a red rash.

37

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

38

So having solacèd themselves a space
 335 With pleasaunce of the breathing^o fields yfed *fragrant*
 They backe returned to the Princely Place;
 Whereas^o an errant knight in armes yclod, *where*
 And heathnish shield, wherein with letters red
 Was writ Sans joy, they new arrivèd find:
 340 Enflam'd with fury and fiers hardy-hed,^o *hardihood*
 He seemd in hart to harbour thoughts unkind,
 And nourish bloody vengeance in his bitter mind.

39

Who when the shamèd shield of slaine Sans foy
 He spide with that same Faery champions page,
 345 Bewraying him, that did of late destroy
 His eldest brother, burning all with rage
 He to him leapt, and that same envious^o *envied*
 gage^o *token*
 Of victors glory from him snatcht away:
 But th'Elfin knight, which ought^o that *owned*
 warlike^o wage,^o *of war / spoil*
 350 Disdained to loose the meed^o he wonne in fray, *prize*
 And him rencountring fierce, reskewd^o the *rescued*
 noble pray.

40

Therewith they gan to hurtlen^o greedily, *rush*
 Redoubted battaile ready to darrayne,^o *engage*
 And clash their shields, and shake their swords on hy,
 355 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,
 360 In equall lists they should the morrow next it fight.

41

Ah dearest Dame, (quoth then the Paynim bold,)
 Pardon the errour of enragèd wight,
 Whom great griefe made forget the raines to hold
 Of reasons rule, to see this recreant^o knight, *faint-hearted*
 365 No knight, but treachour^o full of false despight *traitor*
 And shamefull treason, who through guile hath slayn
 The prowest knight, that ever field did fight,
 Even stout Sans foy (O who can then refrayn?)
 Whose shield he beares renverst, the more to heape
 disdayn.¹

42

370 And to augment the glorie of his guile,
 His dearest love the faire Fidessa loe^o *look*
 Is there possessèd of^p the traytour vile, *by*
 Who reapes the harvest sowen by his foe,
 Sowen in bloody field, and bought with woe:
 375 That brothers hand shall dearely well requight
 So be,² O Queene, you equall favour showe.
 Him litle answerd th'angry Elfin knight;
 He never meant with words, but swords to plead his
 right.

43

But threw his gauntlet as a sacred pledge,
 380 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 enemy.
 That night they pas in joy and jollity,
 Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall;
 385 For Steward was excessive Gluttonie,
 That of his plenty poured forth to all:
 Which doen, the Chamberlain Slowth did to rest
 them call.

44

Now whenas darkesome night had all displayd
 Her coleblacke curtein over brightest skye,

¹ *Whose ... disdayn* Carrying a shield upside down was considered a great insult.

² *So be* If.

390 The warlike youtnes on dayntie couches layd,
 Did chace away sweet sleepe from sluggish eye,
 To muse on meanes of hopèd victory.
 But whenas Morpheus had with leaden mace
 Arrested¹ all that courtly company,
 395 Up-rose Duessa from her resting place,
 And to the Paynims lodging comes with silent pace.

45
 Whom broad awake she finds, in troublous fit,
 Forecasting, how his foe he might annoy,^o *harm*
 And him amoves^o with speaches seeming fit: *arouses*
 400 Ah deare Sans joy, next dearest to Sans foy,
 Cause of my new grieffe, 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;
 405 Lo his Fidessa to thy secret faith I flye.

46
 With gentle wordes he can^o her fairely greet, *did*
 And bad^o say on the secret of her hart. *bade*
 Then sighing soft, I learne that litle sweet
 Oft tempred is (quoth she) with muchell^o *much*
 smart:^o *pain*
 410 For since my brest was launcht with lovely^o dart *of love*
 Of deare Sans foy, I never joyèd howre,
 But in eternall woes my weaker^o hart *too weak*
 Have wasted, loving him with all my powre,
 And for his sake have felt full many an heavie
 stowre.^o *turmoil*

47
 415 At last when perils all I weenèd past,
 And hop'd to reape the crop of all my care,
 Into new woes unweeting I was cast,
 By this false faytor,^o who unworthy ware *imposter*
 His worthy shield, whom he with guilefull snare
 420 Entrappèd slew, and brought to shamefull grave.
 Me silly^o maid away with him he bare, *helpless*
 And ever since hath kept in darksome cave,
 For that I would not yeeld, that to Sans-foy I gave.

¹ *Arrested* I.e., put to sleep.

48
 But since faire Sunne hath sperst^o that lowring *dispersed*
 clowd,
 425 And to my loathèd 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^o his love. *belongs*
 430 Let not his love, let not his restlesse spright^o *spirit*
 Be unreveng'd, that calles to you above
 From wandring Stygian shores,² where it doth endlesse
 move.

49
 Thereto said he, Faire Dame be nought dismayd
 For sorrowes past; their grieffe is with them gone:
 435 Ne yet of present perill be affraid;
 For needlesse feare did never vantage none,
 And helplesse hap it booteth not to mone.^o *bemoan*
 Dead is Sans-foy, his vitall^o paines are past, *living*
 Though greevèd ghost for vengeance deepe do grone:
 440 He lives, that shall him pay his dewties^o last, *rites*
 And guiltie Elfin bloud shall sacrifice in hast.

50
 O but I feare the fickle^o freakes^o *unpredictable | whims*
 (quoth shee)
 Of fortune false, and oddes^o of armes in field. *advantages*
 Why dame (quoth he) what oddes can ever bee,
 445 Where both do fight alike, to win or yield?
 Yea but (quoth she) he beares a charmèd shield,
 And eke enchanted armes, that none can perce,
 Ne none can wound the man, that does them wield.
 Chamd or enchanted (answerd he then ferce)^o *fiercely*
 450 I no whit reck,^o ne you the like need to *care*
 reherce.^o *recount*

51
 But faire Fidessa, sithens fortunes guile,
 Or enimies powre hath now captivèd you,
 Returne from whence ye came, and rest a while

² *Stygian shores* Shores of the river Styx, across which (according to classical mythology) all souls had to travel to reach Hades. Those who were not given a proper funeral were condemned to wander the banks of the river for one hundred years.

455 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 ever yet I be, my secrete aid
 Shall follow you. So passing forth she him obaid.

CANTO 5: SUMMARY

The Redcrosse knight and Sans joy commence battle. Sans joy, enraged by the sight of his brother Sans foy's bloody shield (which Duessa has hung from a tree), nearly kills the Redcrosse knight, but he recovers and is about to deal a fatal blow when Sans joy suddenly vanishes in an enchanted dark cloud summoned by Duessa. The Redcrosse knight, bewildered, is nevertheless celebrated as the victor of the fight. He is taken back to the castle to have his wounds tended to. When darkness falls, Duessa leaves to meet Night, the queen of darkness, and enlists her help in avenging Sans foy and Sans joy (who are grandsons of Night). Night and Duessa retrieve Sans joy from where he lies hidden. They bring him to Hades, the underworld, where they seek out Aesculapius, a celebrated and immortal physician whom Jove has condemned to Hades as punishment for bringing Hippolytus, a wrongly murdered boy, back to life. The two treacherous women convince Aesculapius to heal Sans joy. Meanwhile, Redcrosse's companion, the dwarf, discovers Lucifera's dungeon of pride, in which the bodies of the proud lie in heaps, and reports his discovery to the knight. The two flee in the night, and Duessa returns to find them gone.

CANTO 6: SUMMARY

Sans loy attempts to seduce Una; when she refuses his advances he resolves to rape her. Her cries of terror bring to her rescue a group of fauns and satyrs (mythological woodland creatures who are men from the waist up, goats from the waist down). The fauns and satyrs rescue Una and take her to their forest dwelling. Although Una tries to teach them true religion, they assume her to be a goddess and begin to worship her. Eventually she is discovered by Satyrane,

a virtuous knight who was born of a human mother and a satyr father. At her request, he helps her to escape the idolatrous fauns and satyrs. After having fled the forest, Una and the knight meet a pilgrim on the road. They ask him for news of the Redcrosse knight, and the pilgrim (who is really Archimago in disguise) tells them he has seen that knight killed in combat by a pagan knight. Una and Satyrane seek out the pagan, who remains at a nearby fountain washing his wounds. The Satyrane begins to fight the pagan, who is actually Sans loy. Una flees in terror and is pursued by Archimago, still disguised as a pilgrim.

CANTO 7: SUMMARY

Duessa leaves the House of Pride to find Redcrosse, seeing him by a stream divested of his armor. The nymph who resides in the fountain is out of favor with Diana, and thus the water of her fountain leaves the drinker faint and enfeebled. The Redcrosse drinks from the stream and is left defenseless and unarmored when a giant appears from the nearby woods. The giant, child of a mortal woman and the Greek god of the winds, carries an oak tree as his weapon. Redcrosse attempts to stand against the giant but is so weak he can barely hold his blade. He dodges the giant's first attack and the giant goes to strike again, but Duessa calls him by his name—Orgoglio—and asks him to hold his blow. Orgoglio does, picking up Redcrosse and carrying him to his dungeon; he takes Duessa as his queen and gives her a great seven-headed serpent as a mount.

The Dwarf sees this, gathers the now-abandoned armor, and seeks Una. He finds her and brings both news and attempts at comfort, but Una is insensible with grief. The Dwarf tells the whole story of Redcrosse's travels and Una vows to go after him. On her travels, she meets a noble and well-appointed knight who bears a diamond shield; this knight will soon be revealed to be King Arthur. He speaks with Una and hears her grief in her responses. He asks that she share her story, so she explains how the diabolic Dragon has taken over her homeland and enslaved her parents. She tells of Redcrosse and what has befallen him, and Arthur offers his service to help her rescue Redcrosse from Orgoglio.

CANTO 8: SUMMARY

Una, the Dwarf, Arthur, and his Squire arrive at Orgoglio's castle, and the Squire plays a magical hunting horn, calling open the doors and shaking the castle. Orgoglio hears this and comes out, leaving Duessa, to see what has challenged his power. Duessa appears after him, mounted on her terrible beast, with each head crowned and each mouth bloody and spitting fire. The giant challenges Arthur, but Arthur dodges and avoids the thunderous blow of Orgoglio's club. The club strikes so hard it sticks in the ground, so Arthur takes the advantage and cuts off Orgoglio's left arm. Duessa rushes in to attack Arthur, but the Squire stands between her and his lord. Duessa is enraged by such an inferior foe fighting back, and she charms him with her golden cup; her charms rob him of his courage and he is struck down by her mount. Arthur intervenes and strikes off one of the mount's heads, but before he can attack another, he is driven back by the giant. The giant goes to strike Arthur, but his shield's covering falls off and reveals its shining beauty; at the sight of this shield, the giant lowers his club and Duessa's mount is struck blind and dazed. Duessa calls to Orgoglio for help and defense—a call which he heeds. As he turns to attack Arthur, his leg is struck off at the knee and he falls to the ground with dreadful force, whereupon he is decapitated by Arthur. Duessa tries to flee, casting aside her crown and cup, but is captured by the Squire and brought to Arthur. Una thanks Arthur for his great service, reminding him of Redcrosse's suffering and imprisonment. She asks that Duessa not be set free, as she enthralled Redcrosse. Duessa is left with the Squire and the two enter the castle to find Redcrosse. They call through the house until they meet Ignaro, the keeper of the castle and foster-father to Orgoglio. Ignaro speaks without sense and cannot answer Arthur's questions, so they take his keys and begin opening the doors of the castle. They discover great wealth and evidence of the brutal sacrifice of children and Christian martyrs. They arrive at an iron door for which there is no key. Arthur calls to the prisoner—who, we will learn, is Red-

crosse—and, hearing Redcrosse speak of his suffering, tears open the iron door to free him. Redcrosse is released from his shackles and brought into the sun to lay judgment upon Duessa. Una declares that she should be stripped naked and set free. Upon the removal of her rich garments, Duessa's true horrible shape is revealed and she flees to the wilderness.

CANTO 9: SUMMARY (STANZAS 1–20)

Una and Redcrosse prepare to leave Arthur and ask of him his history and lineage. He reveals that he does not know his true lineage, but was raised by Timon and instructed by Merlin. Una asks how he came to be in Faery, and he explains how he was drawn to pursue the Faerie Queene after he saw her in a dream. The two knights exchange gifts: Arthur presents Redcrosse with a diamond box containing a healing liquid, and Redcrosse presents a testament of God. Arthur leaves to continue his pursuit of the Faerie Queene, and Una and Redcrosse return to their quest, departing for Una's homeland. Una travels slowly, wary of Redcrosse's weakened state.

21

So as they traveild, lo they gan espy
 An armèd knight towards them gallop fast,
 That seemèd from some fearèd foe to fly,
 Or other griesly thing, that him agast.
 185 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,^o *burst*
 And with his wingèd heeles did tread the wind,
 As he had beene a fole^o of Pegasus his kind. *foal*

22

190 Nigh as he drew, they might perceive his head
 To be unarmd, and curld uncombèd heares
 Upstaring stiffe, dismayd with uncouth^o dread; *unknown*
 Nor drop of bloud in all his face appeares
 Nor life in limbe: and to increase his feares,
 195 In fowle reproch^o of knighthoods faire degree, *disgrace*
 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.