

## *Cant. II.*

*Blandamour winnes false Florimell,  
Paridell for her striues,  
They are accorded: Agape  
doth lengthen her sonnes liues.*

[1]

**F**irebrand of hell first tynd in Phlegeton,  
By thousand furies, and from thence out throwen  
Into this world, to worke confusion,  
And set it all on fire by force vnknown,  
Is wicked discord, whose small sparkes once blowen  
None but a God or godlike man can slake;  
Such as was Orpheus, that when strife was growen  
Amongst those famous ympes of Greece, did take  
His siluer Harpe in hand, and shortly friends them make.

[2]

Or such as that celestiall Psalmist was,  
That when the wicked feend his Lord tormented,  
With heauenly notes, that did all other pas,  
The outrage of his furious fit relented.  
Such Musicke is wise words with time concented,  
To moderate stiffe minds, disposd to striue:  
Such as that prudent Romane well inuented,  
What time his people into partes did riue,  
Them reconcyld againe, and to their homes did driue.

[3]

Such vs'd wise *Glauce* to that wrathfull knight,  
To calme the tempest of his troubled thought:  
Yet *Blandamour* with termes of foule despight,  
And *Paridell* her scornd, and set at nought,  
As old and crooked and not good for ought.  
Both they vnwise, and warelesse of the euill,  
That by themselues vnto themselues is wrought,  
Through that false witch, and that foule aged dreuill,  
The one a feend, the other an incarnate deuill.

[4]

With whom as they thus rode accompanide,  
They were encountred of a lustie Knight,

That had a goodly Ladie by his side,  
To whom he made great dalliance and delight.  
It was to weete the bold Sir *Ferraugh* hight,  
He that from *Braggadocchio* whilome reft  
The snowy *Florimell*, whose beautie bright  
Made him seeme happie for so glorious theft;  
Yet was it in due triall but a wandring weft.

[5]

Which when as *Blandamour*, whose fancie light  
Was alwaies flitting as the wauering wind,  
After each beautie, that appeared in sight,  
Beheld, eft soones it prickt his wanton mind  
With sting of lust, that reasons eye did blind,  
That to Sir *Paridell* these words he sent;  
Sir knight why ride ye dumpish thus behind,  
Since so good fortune doth to you present  
So fayre a spoyle, to make you ioyous meriment?

[6]

But *Paridell* that had too late a tryall  
Of the bad issue of his counsell vaine,  
List not to hearke, but made this faire denyall;  
Last turne was mine, well proued to my paine,  
This now be yours, God send you better gaine.  
Whose scoffed words he taking halfe in scorne,  
Fiercely forth prickt his steed as in disdain,  
Against that Knight, ere he him well could torne  
By meanes whereof he hath him lightly ouerborne.

[7]

Who with the sudden stroke astonisht sore,  
Vpon the ground a while in slomber lay;  
The whiles his loue away the other bore,  
And shewing her, did *Paridell* vpbray;  
Lo sluggish Knight the victors happie pray:  
So fortune friends the bold: whom *Paridell*  
Seeing so faire indeede, as he did say,  
His hart with secret enuie gan to swell,  
And inly grudge at him, that he had sped so well.

[8]

Nathlesse proud man himselfe the other deemed,

Hauing so peerelesse paragon ygot:  
For sure the fayrest *Florimell* him seemed,  
To him was fallen for his happie lot,  
Whose like aliue on earth he weened not:  
Therefore he her did court, did serue, did wooe,  
With humblest suit that he imagine mot,  
And all things did deuse, and all things dooe,  
That might her loue prepare, and liking win theretoo.

[9]

She in regard thereof him recompenst  
With golden words, and goodly countenance,  
And such fond fauours sparingly dispenst:  
Sometimes him blessing with alight eye-glance,  
And coy lookes tempring with loose dalliance;  
Sometimes estranging him in sterner wise,  
That hauing cast him in a foolish trance,  
He seemed brought to bed in Paradise,  
And prou'd himselfe most foole, in what he seem'd most wise.

[10]

So great a mistresse of her art she was,  
And perfectly practiz'd in womans craft,  
That though therein himselfe he thought to pas,  
And by his false allurements wylie draft,  
Had thousand women of their loue beraft,  
Yet now he was surpriz'd: for that false spright,  
Which that same witch had in this forme engraft,  
Was so expert in euery subtile slight,  
That it could ouerreach the wisest earthly wight.

[11]

Yet he to her did dayly seruice more,  
And dayly more deceiued was thereby;  
Yet *Paridell* him enuied therefore,  
As seeming plast in sole felicity:  
So blind is lust, false colours to descry.  
But *Ate* soone discovering his desire,  
And finding now fit opportunity  
To stirre vp strife, twixt loue and spight and ire,  
Did priuily put coles vnto his secret fire.

[12]

By sundry meanes thereto she prickt him forth,  
Now with remembrance of those spightfull speaches,  
Now with opinion of his owne more worth,  
Now with recounting of like former breaches  
Made in their friendship, as that Hag him teaches:  
And euer when his passion is allayd,  
She it reuiues and new occasion reaches:  
That on a time as they together way'd,  
He made him open chalenge, and thus boldly sayd.

[13]

Too boastfull *Blandamour*, too long I beare  
The open wrongs, thou doest me day by day,  
Well know'st thou, when we friendship first did sweare,  
The couenant was, that euer y spoyle or pray  
Should equally be shard betwixt vs tway:  
Where is my part then of this Ladie bright,  
Whom to thy selfe thou takest quite away?  
Render therefore therein to me my right,  
Or answere for thy wrong, as shall fall out in fight.

[14]

Exceeding wroth thereat was *Blandamour*,  
And gan this bitter answere to him make;  
Too foolish *Paridell*, that fayrest floure  
Wouldst gather faine, and yet no paines wouldst take:  
But not so easie will I her forsake;  
This hand her wonne, this hand shall her defend.  
With that they gan their shiuering speares to shake,  
And deadly points at eithers breast to bend,  
Forgetfull each to haue bene euer others frend.

[15]

Their fire Steedes with so vntamed forse  
Did beare them both to fell auenges end,  
That both their speares with pitillesse remorse,  
Through shield and mayle, and haberieon did wend,  
And in their flesh a griesly passage rend,  
That with the furie of their owne affret,  
Each other horse and man to ground did send;  
Where lying still a while, both did forget  
The perilous present stownd, in which their liues were set.

[16]

As when two warlike Brigandines at sea,  
With murderous weapons arm'd to cruel fight,  
Doe meete together on the watry lea,  
They stemme ech other with so fell despight,  
That with the shooke of their owne heedlesse might,  
Their wooden ribs are shaken nigh a sonder;  
They which from shore behold the dreadfull sight  
Of flashing fire, and heare the ordenance thonder,  
Do greatly stand amaz'd at such vnwonted wonder.

[17]

At length they both vpstart in amaze;  
As men awaked rashly out of dreame,  
And round about themselues a while did gaze,  
Till seeing her, that *Florimell* did seme,  
In doubt to whom she victorie should deeme,  
Therewith their dulled sprights they edgd a new,  
And drawing both their swords with rage extreme,  
Like two mad mastiffes each on other flew,  
And shields did share, & mailes did rash, and helmes did hew.

[18]

So furiously each other did assayle,  
As if their soules they would attonce haue rent  
Out of their brests, that streames of bloud did rayle  
Adowne, as if their springs of life were spent;  
That all the ground with purple bloud was sprent,  
And all their armours staynd with bloudie gore,  
Yet scarcely once to breath would they relent,  
So mortall was their malice and so sore,  
Become of fayned friendship which they vow'd afore.

[19]

And that which is for Ladies most besitting,  
To stint all strife, and foster friendly peace,  
Was from those Dames so farre and so vnfitting,  
As that in stead of praying them surcease,  
They did much more their cruelty encrease;  
Bidding them fight for honour of their loue,  
And rather die then Ladies cause release.  
With which vaine termes so much they did them moue,  
That both resolu'd the last extremities to proue.

[20]

There they I weene would fight vntill this day,  
Had not a Squire, euen he the Squire of Dames,  
By great aduenture trauelled that way;  
Who seeing both bent to so bloody games,  
And both of old well knowing by their names,  
Drew nigh, to weete the cause of their debate:  
And first laide on those Ladies thousand blames,  
That did not fseke t'appease their deadly hate,  
But gazed on their harmes, not pittying their estate.

[21]

And then those Knights he humbly did beseech,  
To stay their hands, till he a while had spoken:  
Who lookt a little vp at that his speech,  
Yet would not let their battell so be broken,  
Both greedie fiers on other to be wroken.  
Yet he to them so earnestly did call,  
And them coniu'r'd by some well knowen token,  
That they at last their wrothfull hands let fall,  
Content to heare him speake, and glad to rest withall.

[22]

First he desir'd their cause of strife to see:  
They said, it was for loue of *Florimell*,  
Ah gentle knights (quoth he) how may that bee,  
And she so farre astray, as none can tell,  
Fond Squire, full angry then sayd *Paridell*,  
Seest not the Ladie there before thy face?  
He looked backe, and her aduizing well,  
Weend as he said, by that her outward grace,  
That fayrest *Florimell* was present there in place.

[23]

Glad man was he to see that ioyous sight,  
For none aliue but ioy'd in *Florimell*,  
And lowly to her lowting thus behight;  
Fayrest of faire, that fairenesse doest excell,  
This happie day I haue to greete you well,  
In which you safe I see, whom thousand late,  
Misdoubted lost through mischiefe that befell;  
Long may you liue in health and happie state,  
She litle answer'd him, but lightly did aggrate.

[24]

Then turning to those Knights, he gan a new;  
And you Sir *Blandamour* and *Paridell*,  
That for this Ladie present in your vew,  
Haue rays'd this cruell warre and outrage fell,  
Certes me seemes bene not aduised well,  
But rather ought in friendship for her sake  
To ioyne your force, their forces to repell,  
That seeke perforce her from you both to take,  
And of your gotten spoyle their owne triumph to make.

[25]

Thereat Sir *Blandamour* with countenance sterne,  
All full of wrath, thus fiercely him bespake;  
A read thou Squire, that I the man may learne,  
That dare fro me thinke *Florimell* to take.  
Not one (quoth he) but many doe partake  
Herein, as thus. It lately so befell,  
That *Satyran* a girdle did vptake,  
Well knowne to appertaine to *Florimell*,  
Which for her sake he wore, as him beseemed well.

[26]

But when as she her selfe was lost and gone,  
Full many knights, that loued her like deare,  
Thereat did greatly grudge, that he alone  
That lost faire Ladies ornament should weare,  
And gan therefore close spight to him to beare:  
Which he to shun, and stop vile enuies sting,  
Hath lately caus'd to be proclaim'd each where  
A solemne feast, with publike turneyng,  
To which all knights with them their Ladies are to bring.

[27]

And of them all she that is fayrest found,  
Shall haue that golden girdle for reward,  
And of those Knights who is most stout on ground,  
Shall to that fairest Ladie be prefard.  
Since therefore she her selfe is now your ward,  
To you that ornament of hers pertaines,  
Against all those, that chalenge it to gard,  
And saue her honour with your ventrous paines;  
That shall you win more glory, then ye here find gaines.

[28]

When they the reason of his words had hard,  
They gan abate the rancour of their rage,  
And with their honours and their loues regard,  
The furious flames of malice to asswage.  
Tho each to other did his faith engage,  
Like faithfull friends thenceforth to ioyne in one  
With all their force, and battell strong to wage  
Gainst all those knights, as their professed fone,  
That challeng'd ought in *Florimell*, saue they alone.

[29]

So well accorded forth they rode together  
In friendly sort, that lasted but a while;  
And of all old dislikes they made faire weather,  
Yet all was forg'd and spred with golden foyle,  
That vnder it hidde hate and hollow guyle.  
Ne certes can that friendship long endure,  
How euer gay and goodly be the style,  
That doth ill cause or euill end enure:  
For vertue is the band, that bindeth harts most sure.

[30]

Thus as they marched all in close disguise,  
Of fayned loue, they chaunst to ouertake  
Two knights, that lincked rode in louely wise,  
As if they secret counsels did partake;  
And each not farre behinde him had his make,  
To weete, two Ladies of most goodly hew,  
That twixt themselues did gentle purpose make,  
Vnmindfull both of that discordfull crew,  
The which with speedie pace did after them pursew.

[31]

Who as they now approched nigh at hand,  
Deeming them doughtie as they did apeare,  
They sent that Squire afore, to vnderstand,  
What mote they be: who viewing them more neare  
Returned readie newes, that those same weare  
Two of the prowest Knights in Faery lond;  
And those two Ladies their two louers deare,  
Couragious *Cambell*, and stout *Triamond*,  
With *Canacee* and *Cambine* linckt in louely bond.



[32]

Whylome as antique stories tellen vs,  
Those two were foes the fellonest on ground,  
And battell made the dreddest daungerous,  
That euer shrilling trumpet did resound;  
Though now their acts be no where to be found,  
As that renowned Poet them compyled,  
With warlike numbers and Heroicke sound,  
Dan *Chaucer*, well of English vndefyled.  
On Fames eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled.

[33]

But wicked Time that all good thoughts doth waste,  
And workes of noblest wits to nought out weare,  
That famous moniment hath quite defaste,  
And robd the world of threasure endlesse deare,  
The which mote haue enriched all vs heare.  
O cursed Eld the cankerworme of writs,  
How may these rimes, so rude as doth appeare,  
Hope to endure, sith workes of heauenly wits  
Are quite deuourd, and brought to nought by little bits?

[34]

Then pardon, O most sacred happie spirit,  
That I thy labours lost may thus reuiue,  
And steale from thee the meede of thy due merit,  
That none durst euer whilest thou wast aliuie,  
And being dead in vaine yet many striue:  
Ne dare I like, but through infusion sweete  
Of thine owne spirit, which doth in me surviue,  
I follow here the footing of thy feete,  
That with thy meaning so I may the rather meete.

[35]

*Cambelloes* sister was fayre *Canacee*,  
That was the learnedst Ladie in her dayes,  
Well seene in euerie science that mote bee,  
And euery secret worke of natures wayes,  
In wittie riddles, and in wise soothsayes,  
In power of herbes, and tunes of beasts and burds;  
And, that augmented all her other prayse,  
She modest was in all her deedes and words,  
And wondrous chast of life, yet lou'd of Knights & Lords.

[36]

Full many Lords, and many Knights her loued,  
Yet she to none of them her liking lent,  
Ne euer was with fond affection moued,  
But rul'd her thoughts with goodly gouernement,  
For dread of blame and honours blemishment;  
And eke vnto her lookes a law she made,  
That none of them once out of order went,  
But like to warie Centonels well stayd,  
Still watcht on euery side, of secret foes affrayd.

[37]

So much die more as she refusd to loue,  
So much the more she loued was and sought,  
That oftentimes vnquiet strife did moue  
Amongst her louers, and great quarrels wrought,  
That oft for her in bloudie armes they fought.  
Which whenas *Cambell*, that was stout and wise,  
Perceiu'd would breede great mischiefe, he bethought  
How to preuent the perill that mote rise,  
And turne both him and her to honour in this wise.

[37]

One day, when all that troupe of warlike wooers  
Assembled were, to weet whose she should bee,  
All mightie men and dreadfull derring doers,  
(The harder it to make them well agree)  
Amongst them all this end he did decree;  
That of them all, which loue to her did make,  
They by consent should chose the stoutest three,  
That with himselfe should combat for her sake,  
And of them all the victour should his sister take.

[39]

Bold was the chalenge, as himselfe was bold,  
And courage full of haughtie hardiment,  
Approued oft in perils manifold,  
Which he atchieu'd to his great ornament:  
But yet his sisters skill vnto him lent  
Most confidence and hope of happie speed,  
Conceiued by a ring, which she him sent,  
That mongst the manie vertues, which we reed,  
Had power to staunch al wounds, that mortally did bleed.

[40]

Well was that rings great vertue knowen to all,  
That dread thereof, and his redoubted might  
Did all that youthly rout so much appall,  
That none of them durst vndertake the fight;  
More wise they weend to make of loue delight,  
Then life to hazard for faire Ladies looke,  
And yet vncertaine by such outward sight,  
Though for her sake they all that perill tooke,  
Whether she would them loue, or in her liking brooke.

[41]

Amongst those knights there were three brethren bold,  
Three bolder brethren neuer were yborne,  
Borne of one mother in one happie mold,  
Borne at one burden in one happie morne,  
Thrise happie mother, and thrise happie morne,  
That bore three such, three such not to be fond;  
Her name was *Agape* whose children werne  
All three as one, the first hight *Priamond*,  
The second *Dyamond*, the youngest *Triamond*.

[42]

Stout *Priamond*, but not so strong to strike,  
Strong *Diamond*, but not so stout a knight,  
But *Triamond* was stout and strong alike:  
On horsebacke vsed *Triamond* to fight,  
And *Priamond* on foote had more delight,  
But horse and foote knew *Diamond* to wield:  
With curtaxe vsed *Diamond* to smite,  
And *Triamond* to handle speare and shield,  
But speare and curtaxe both vsd *Priamond* in field.

[43]

These three did loue each other dearely well,  
And with so firme affection were allyde,  
As if but one soule in them all did dwell,  
Which did her powre into three parts diuylde;  
Like three faire branches budding farre and wide,  
That from one roote deriu'd their vitall sap:  
And like that roote that doth her life diuide,  
Their mother was, and had full blessed hap,  
These three so noble babes to bring forth at one clap.

[44]

Their mother was a Fay, and had the skill  
Of secret things, and all the powres of nature,  
Which she by art could vse vnto her will,  
And to her seruice bind each liuing creature:  
Through secret vnderstanding of their feature.  
Thereto she was right faire, when so her face  
She list discouer, and of goodly stature;  
But she as Feyes are wont, in priuie place  
Did spend her dayes, and lov'd in forests wyld to space.

[45]

There on a day a noble youthly knight  
Seeking aduentures in the saluage wood,  
Did by great fortune get of her the sight;  
As she sate carelesse by a cristall flood,  
Combing her golden lockes, as seemd her good:  
And vnawares vpon her laying hold,  
That stroue in vaine him long to haue withstood,  
Oppressed her, and there (as it is told)  
Got these three louely babes, that prov'd three champions bold.

[46]

Which she with her long fostred in that wood,  
Till that to ripenesse of mans state they grew:  
Then shewing forth signes of their fathers blood,  
They loued armes, and knighthood did ensew,  
Seeking aduentures, where they anie knew.  
Which when their mother saw, she gan to dout  
Their safetie, least by searching daungers new,  
And rash prouoking perils all about,  
Their days mote be abridged through their corage stout

[47]

Therefore desirous th'end of all their dayes  
To know, and them t'enlarge with long extent,  
By wondrous skill, and many hidden wayes,  
To the three fatall sisters house she went,  
Farre vnder ground from tract of liuing went,  
Downe in the bottome of the deepe *Abyssse*,  
Where *Demogorgon* in dull darknesse pent,  
Farre from the view of Gods and heauens blis,  
The hideous *Chaos* keepes, their dreadfull dwelling is.

[48]

There she them found, all sitting round about  
The direfull distaffe standing in the mid,  
And with vnwearied fingers drawing out  
The lines of life, from liuing knowledge hid.  
Sad *Clotho* held the rocke, the whiles the thrid  
By griesly *Lachesis* was spun with paine,  
That cruell *Atropos* eftsoones vndid,  
With cursed knife cutting the twist in twaine:  
Most wretched men, whose dayes depend on thrids so vaine.

[49]

She them saluting, there by them sate still,  
Beholding how the thrids of life they span:  
And when at last she had beheld her fill,  
Trembling in heart, and looking pale and wan,  
Her cause of comming she to tell began.  
To whom fierce *Atropos*, Bold Fay, that durst  
Come see the secret of the life of man,  
Well worthie thou to be of *Ioue* accurst,  
And eke thy childrens thrids to be a sunder burst.

[50]

Whereat she sore affrayd, yet her besought  
To graunt her boone, and rigour to abate,  
That she might see her childrens thrids forth brought,  
And know the measure of their vtmost date,  
To them ordained by eternall fate.  
Which *Clotho* graunting, shewed her the same:  
That when she saw, it did her much amate,  
To see their thrids so thin, as spiders frame,  
And eke so short, that seemd their ends out shortly came

[51]

She then began them humbly to intreate,  
To draw them longer out, and better twine,  
That so their liues might be prolonged late.  
But *Lachesis* thereat gan to repine,  
And sayd, fond dame that deem'st of things diuine  
As of humane, that they may altred bee,  
And chaung'd at pleasure for those impes of thine.  
Not so; for what the Fates do once decree,  
Not all the gods can change, nor *Ioue* him self can free.

[52]

Then since (quoth she) the terme of each mans life  
For nought may lessened nor enlarged bee,  
Graunt this, that when ye shred with fatall knife  
His line, which is the eldest of the three,  
Which is of them the shortest, as I see,  
Eftsoones his life may passe into the next;  
And when the next shall likewise ended bee,  
That both their liues may likewise be annex  
Vnto the third, that his may so be trebly wext.

[53]

They graunted it; and then that carefull Fay  
Departed thence with full contented mynd;  
And comming home, in warlike fresh aray  
Them found all three according to their kynd.  
But vnto them what destinie was assynd,  
Or how their liues were eekt, she did not tell;  
But euermore, when she fit time could fynd,  
She warned them to tend their safeties well,  
And loue each other deare, what euer them befell.

[54]

So did they surely during all their dayes,  
And neuer discord did amongst them fall;  
Which much augmented all their other praise.  
And now t'increase affection naturall,  
In loue of *Canacee* they ioyned all:  
Vpon which ground this same great battell grew,  
Great matter growing of beginning small;  
The which for length I will not here pursew,  
But rather will reserue it for a Canto new.

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