

Cant. IX.

*Calidore hostes with Meliboe
And loues fayre Pastorell;
Coridon enuies him, yet he
for ill rewards him well.*

[1]

Now turne againe my teme thou iolly swayne,
Backe to the furrow which I lately left;
I lately left a furrow, one or twayne
Vnplough'd, the which my coulter hath not cleft:
Yet seem'd the soyle both fayre and frutefull eft,
As I it past, that were too great a shame,
That so rich frute should be from vs bereft;
Besides the great dishonour and defame,
Which should befall to *Calidores* immortall name.

[2]

Great trauell hath the gentle *Calidore*
And toyle endured, sith I left him last
Sewing the *Blatant beast*, which I forbore
To finish then, for other present hast.
Full many pathes and perils he hath past,
Through hils, through dales, through forests, & through plaines
In that same quest which fortune on him cast,
Which he atchieued to his owne great gaines,
Reaping eternall glorie of his restlesse paines.

[3]

So sharply he the Monster did pursew,
That day nor night he suffred him to rest,
Ne rested he himselfe but natures dew,
For dread of daunger, not to be redrest,
If he for slouth forslackt so famous quest.
Him first from court he to the citties coursed,
And from the citties to the townes him prest,
And from the townes into the cuntry forsed,
And from the country back to priuate farmes he scorsed.

[4]

From thence into the open fields he fled,
Whereas the Heardes were keeping of their neat,

And shepherds singing to their flockes, that fed,
Layes of sweete loue and youthes delightfull heat:
Him thether eke for all his fearefull threat
He followed fast, and chaced him so nie,
That to the folds, where sheepe at night doe seat,
And to the litle cots, where shepherds lie
In winters wrathfull time, he forced him to flie.

[5]

There on a day as he pursew'd the chace,
He chaunst to spy a sort of sheheard groomes,
Playing on pypes, and caroling apace,
The whyles their beasts there in the budded broomes
Beside them fed, and nipt the tender bloomes:
For other worldly wealth they cared nought.
To whom Sir *Calidore* yet sweating comes,
And them to tell him courteously besought,
If such a beast they saw, which he had thether brought.

[6]

They answer'd him, that no such beast they saw,
Nor any wicked feend, that mote offend
Their happie flockes, nor daunger to them draw:
But if that such there were (as none they kend)
They prayd high God them farre from them to send.
Then one of them him seeing so to sweat,
After his rusticke wise, that well he weend,
Offred him drinke, to quench his thirstie heat,
And if he hungry were, him offred eke to eat.

[7]

The knight was nothing nice, where was no need,
And tooke their gentle offer: so adowne
They prayd him sit, and gaue him for to feed
Such homely what, as serues the simple clowne,
That doth despise the dainties of the towne.
Tho hauing fed his fill, he there besyde
Saw a faire damzell, which did weare a crowne
Of sundry flowres, with silken ribbands tyde.
Yclad in home-made greene that her owne hands had dyde.

[8]

Vpon a litle hillocke she was placed

Higher then all the rest, and round about
Enuiron'd with a girland, goodly graced,
Of louely lasses, and them all without
The lustie shepheard swaynes sate in a rout,
The which did pype and sing her praynes dew,
And oft reioyce, and oft for wonder shout,
As if some miracle of heauenly hew
Were downe to them descended in that earthly vew.

[9]

And soothly sure she was full fayre of face,
And perfectly well shapt in euery lim,
Which she did more augment with modest grace,
And comely carriage of her count'nance trim,
That all the rest like lesser lamps did dim:
Who her admiring as some heauenly wight,
Did for their soueraine goddesses her esteeme,
And caroling her name both day and night,
The fayrest *Pastorella* her by name did hight.

[10]

Ne was there heard, ne was there shepherds swayne
But her did honour, and eke many a one
Burnt in her loue, and with sweet pleasing payne
Full many a night for her did sigh and grone:
But most of all the shepheard *Coridon*
For her did languish, and his deare life spend;
Yet neither she for him, nor other none
Did care a whit, ne any liking lend:
Though meane her lot, yet higher did her mind ascend.

[11]

Her whyles Sir *Calidore* there vewed well,
And markt her rare demeanure, which him seemed
So farre the meane of shepherds to excell,
As that he in his mind her worthy deemed,
To be a Princes Paragone esteemed,
He was vnwares surprisd in subtile bands
Of the blynd boy, ne thence could be redeemed
By any skill out of his cruell hands,
Caught like the bird, which gazing still on others stands.

[12]

So stood he still long gazing thereupon,
Ne any will had thence to moue away,
Although his quest were farre afore him gon;
But after he had fed, yet did he stay,
And sate there still, vntill the flying day
Was farre forth spent, discoursing diuersly
Of sundry things, as fell to worke delay;
And euermore his speach he did apply
To th'heards, but meant them to the damzels fantazy.

[13]

By this the moystie night approaching fast,
Her deawy humour gan on th'earth to shed,
That warn'd the shepheards to their homes to hast
Their tender flocks, now being fully fed,
For feare of wetting them before their bed;
Then came to them a good old aged syre,
Whose siluer lockes bedeckt his beard and hed,
With shepheards hooke in hand, and fit attyre,
That wild the damzell rise; the day did now expyre.

[14]

He was to weet by common voice esteemed
The father of the fayrest *Pastorell*,
And of her selfe in very deede so deemed;
Yet was not so, but as old stories tell
Found her by fortune, which to him befell,
In th'open fields an Infant left alone,
And taking vp brought home, and nursed well
As his owne chyld; for other he had none,
That she in tract of time accompted was his owne.

[15]

She at his bidding meekely did arise,
And streight vnto her litle flocke did fare:
Then all the rest about her rose likewise,
And each his sundrie sheepe with seuerall care
Gathered together, and them homeward bare:
Whylest euerie one with helping hands did striue
Amongst themselues, and did their labours share,
To helpe faire *Pastorella*, home to driue
Her fleecie flocke; but *Coridon* most helpe did giue.

[16]

But *Meliboee* (so hight that good old man)
Now seeing *Calidore* left all alone,
And night arriued hard at hand, began
Him to inuite vnto his simple home;
Which though it were a cottage clad with lome,
And all things therein meane, yet better so
To lodge, then in the saluage fields to rome.
The knight full gladly soone agreed thereto,
Being his harts owne wish, and home with him did go.

[17]

There he was welcom'd of that honest syre,
And of his aged Beldame homely well;
Who him besought himselfe to disattyre,
And rest himselfe, till supper time befell.
By which home came the fayrest *Pastorell*,
After her flocke she in their fold had tyde,
And supper readie dight, they to it fell
With small adoe, and nature satisfyde,
The which doth litle craue contented to abyde.

[18]

Tho when they had their hunger slaked well,
And the fayre mayd the table ta'ne away,
The gentle knight, as he that did excell
In courtesie, and well could doe and say,
For so great kindnesse as he found that day,
Gan greatly thanke his host and his good wife;
And drawing thence his speach another way,
Gan highly to commend the happie life,
Which Shepheards lead, without debate or bitter strife.

[19]

How much (sayd he) more happie is the state,
In which ye father here doe dwell at ease,
Leading a life so free and fortunate,
From all the tempests of these worldly seas,
Which tosse the rest in daungerous disease?
Where warres, and wreckes, and wicked enmitie
Doe them afflict, which no man can appease,
That certes I your happinesse enuie,
And wish my lot were plast in such felicitie.

[20]

Surely my sonne (then answer'd he againe)
If happie, then it is in this intent,
That hauing small, yet doe I not complaine
Of want, ne wish for more it to augment,
But doe my selfe, with that I haue, content;
So taught of nature, which doth litle need
Of forreine helps to lifes due nourishment:
The fields my food, my flocke my rayment breed;
No better doe I weare, no better doe I feed.

[21]

Therefore I doe not any one enuy,
Nor am enuyde of any one therefore;
They that haue much, feare much to loose thereby,
And store of cares doth follow riches store.
The litle that I haue, growes dayly more
Without my care, but onely to attend it;
My lambes doe euery yeare increase their score,
And my flockes father daily doth amend it.
What haue I, but to praise th'Almighty, that doth send it?

[22]

To them, that list, the worlds gay shows I leaue,
And to great ones such follies doe forgiue,
Which oft through pride do their owne perill weaue,
And through ambition downe themselues doe driue
To sad decay, that might contented liue.
Me no such cares nor combrous thoughts offend,
Ne once my minds vnmoued quiet griue,
But all the night in siluer sleepe I spend,
And all the day, to what I list, I doe attend.

[23]

Sometimes I hunt the Fox, the vowed foe
Vnto my Lambes, and him dislodge away;
Sometime the fawne I practise from the Doe,
Or from the Goat her kidde how to conuay;
Another while I baytes and nets display,
The birds to catch, or fishes to beguyle:
And when I wearie am, I downe doe lay
My limbes in euery shade, to rest from toyle,
And drinke of euery brooke, when thirst my throte doth boyle.

[24]

The time was once, in my first prime of yeares,
When pride of youth forth pricked my desire,
That I disdain'd amongst mine equall peares
To follow sheepe, and shepherds base attire:
For further fortune then I would inquire.
And leauing home, to roiall court I sought;
Where I did sell my selfe for yearely hire,
And in the Princes gardin daily wrought:
There I beheld such vainenesse, as I neuer thought.

[25]

With sight whereof soone cloyd, and long deluded
With idle hopes, which them doe entertaine,
After I had ten yeares my selfe excluded
From natiue home, and spent my youth in vaine,
I gan my follies to my selfe to plaine,
And this sweet peace, whose lacke did then appeare.
Tho backe returning to my sheepe againe,
I from thenceforth haue learn'd to loue more deare
This lowly quiet life, which I inherite here.

[26]

Whylest thus he talkt, the knight with greedy eare
Hong still vpon his melting mouth attent;
Whose sensefull words empierst his hart so neare,
That he was rapt with double rauishment,
Both of his speach that wrought him great content,
And also of the obiect of his vew,
On which his hungry eye was alwayes bent;
That twixt his pleasing tongue, and her faire hew,
He lost himselfe, and like one halfe entraunced grew.

[27]

Yet to occasion meanes, to worke his mind,
And to insinuate his harts desire,
He thus replyde; Now surely syre, I find,
That all this worlds gay showes, which we admire,
Be but vaine shadowes to this safe retyre
Of life, which here in lowlinesse ye lead,
Fearelesse of foes, or fortunes wrackfull yre,
Which tosseth states, and vnder foot doth tread
The mightie ones, affrayd of euery chaunges dread.

[28]

That euen I which daily doe behold
The glorie of the great, mongst whom I won,
And now haue prou'd, what happinesse ye hold
In this small plot of your dominion,
Now loath great Lordship and ambition;
And wish th'heauens so much had graced mee,
As graunt me liue in like condition;
Or that my fortunes might transposed bee
From pitch of higher place, vnto this low degree.

[29]

In vaine (said then old *Meliboe*) doe men
The heauens of their fortunes fault accuse,
Sith they know best, what is the best for them:
For they to each such fortune doe diffuse,
As they doe know each can most aptly vse.
For not that, which men couet most, is best,
Nor that thing worst, which men do most refuse;
But fittest is, that all contented rest
With that they hold: each hath his fortune in his brest.

[30]

It is the mynd, that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch or happie, rich or poore:
For some, that hath abundance at his will,
Hath not enough, but wants in greatest store;
And other, that hath litle, askes no more,
But in that litle is both rich and wise.
For wisdom is most riches; fooles therefore
They are, which fortunes doe by vowes deuize,
Sith each vnto himselfe his life may fortunize.

[31]

Since then in each mans self (said *Calidore*)
It is, to fashion his owne lyfes estate,
Giue leaue awhyle, good father, in this shore
To rest my barcke, which hath bene beaten late
With stormes of fortune and tempestuous fate,
In seas of troubles and of toylesome paine,
That whether quite from them for to retrate
I shall resolute, or backe to turne againe,
I may here with your selfe some small repose obtaine.

[32]

Not that the burden of so bold a guest
Shall chargefull be, or chaunge to you at all;
For your meane food shall be my daily feast,
And this your cabin both my bowre and hall.
Besides for recompence hereof, I shall
You well reward, and golden guerdon giue,
That may perhaps you better much withall,
And in this quiet make you safer liue.
So forth he drew much gold, and toward him it driue.

[33]

But the good man, nought tempted with the offer
Of his rich mould, did thrust it farre away,
And thus bespake; Sir knight, your bounteous proffer
Be farre fro me, to whom ye ill display
That mucky masse, the cause of mens decay,
That mote empaire my peace with daungers dread.
But if ye algates couet to assay
This simple sort of life, that shepherds lead,
Be it your owne: our rudenesse to your selfe ahead.

[34]

So there that night Sir *Calidore* did dwell,
And long while after, whilst him list remaine,
Dayly beholding the faire *Pastorell*,
And feeding on the bayt of his owne bane.
During which time he did her entertaine
With all kind courtesies, he could inuent;
And euery day, her companie to gaine,
When to the field she went, he with her went:
So for to quench his fire, he did it more augment.

[35]

But she that neuer had acquainted beene
With such queint vsage, fit for Queenes and Kings,
Ne euer had such knightly seruice seene,
But being bred vnder base shepherds wings,
Had euer learn'd to loue the lowly things,
Did litle whit regard his courteous guize,
But cared more for *Colins* carolings
Then all that he could doe, or euer deuize:
His layes, his loues, his lookes she did them all despize.

[36]

Which *Calidore* perceiuing, thought it best
To chaunge the manner of his loftie looke;
And doffing his bright armes, himselfe addrest
In shepherds weed, and in his hand he tooke,
In stead of steelehead speare, a shepherds hooke,
That who had seene him then, would haue bethought
On *Phrygian Paris* by *Plexippus* brooke,
When he the loue of fayre *Benone* sought,
What time the golden apple was vnto him brought.

[37]

So being clad, vnto the fields he went
With the faire *Pastorella* euery day,
And kept her sheepe with diligent attent,
Watching to driue the rauenous Wolfe away,
The whylest at pleasure she mote sport and play;
And euery euening helping them to fold:
And otherwhiles for need, he did assay
In his strong hand their rugged teats to hold,
And out of them to presse the milke: loue so much could.

[38]

Which seeing *Coridon*, who her likewise
Long time had lou'd, and hop'd her loue to gaine,
He much was troubled at that straungers guize,
And many gealous thoughts conceiu'd in vaine,
That this of all his labour and long paine
Should reap the haruest, ere it ripened were,
That made him scoule, and pout, and oft complaine
Of *Pastorell* to all the shepherds there,
That she did loue a stranger swayne then him more dere.

[39]

And euer when he came in companie,
Where *Calidore* was present, he would loure,
And byte his lip, and euen for gealousie
Was readie oft his owne hart to deuoure,
Impatient of any paramoure:
Who on the other side did seeme so farre
From malicing, or grudging his good houre,
That all he could, he graced him with her,
Ne euer shewed signe of rancour or of iarre.

[40]

And oft, when *Coridon* vnto her brought
Or litle sparrowes, stolen from their nest,
Or wanton squirrels, in the woods farre sought,
Or other daintie thing for her addrest,
He would commend his guift, and make the best.
Yet she no whit his presents did regard,
Ne him could find to fancie in her brest:
This newcome shepheard had his market mard.
Old loue is litle worth when new is more prefard.

[41]

One day when as the shepheard swaynes together
Were met, to make their sports and merrie glee,
As they are wont in faire sunshynie weather,
The whiles their flockes in shadowes shrouded bee,
They fell to daunce: then did they all agree,
That *Colin clout* should pipe as one most fit;
And *Calidore* should lead the ring, as hee
That most in *Pastorellaes* grace did sit.
Thereat frown'd *Coridon*, and his lip closely bit.

[42]

But *Calidore* of courteous inclination
Tooke *Coridon*, and set him in his place,
That he should lead the daunce, as was his fashion;
For *Coridon* could daunce, and trimly trace.
And when as *Pastorella*, him to grace,
Her flowry garlond tooke from her owne head,
And plast on his, he did it soone displace,
And did it put on *Coridons* in stead:
Then *Coridon* woxe frolicke, that earst seemed dead.

[43]

Another time, when as they did dispose
To practise games, and maisteries to try,
They for their Iudge did *Pastorella* chose;
A garland was the meed of victory.
There *Coridon* forth stepping openly,
Did chalenge *Calidore* to wrestling game:
For he through long and perfect industry,
Therein well practisd was, and in the same
Thought sure t'auenge his grudge, & worke his foe great shame.

[44]

But *Calidore* he greatly did mistake;
For he was strong and mightily stiffe pight,
That with one fall his necke he almost brake,
And had he not vpon him fallen light,
His dearest ioynt he sure had broken quight.
Then was the oaken crowne by *Pastorell*
Giuē to *Calidore*, as his due right;
But he, that did in courtesie excell,
Gauē it to *Coridon*, and said he wonne it well.

[45]

Thus did the gentle knight himselfe abeare
Amongst that rusticke rout in all his deeds,
That euen they, the which his riuals were,
Could not maligne him, but commend him needs:
For courtesie amongst the rudest breeds:
Good will and fauour. So it surely wrought
With this faire Mayd, and in her mynde the seeds
Of perfect loue did sow, that last forth brought
The fruite of ioy and blisse, though long time dearely bought.

[46]

Thus *Calidore* continu'd there long time,
To winne the loue of the faire *Pastorell*;
Which hauing got, he vsed without crime
Or blamefull blot, but menaged so well,
That he of all the rest, which there did well,
Was fauoured, and to her grace commended.
But what straunge fortunes vnto him befell,
Ere he attain'd the point by him intended,
Shall more conueniently in other place be ended.

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