Edmund Spenser, “Mutabilitie Cantos”, from The Faerie Queene

TWO CANTOS
OF
MVTABILITIE:

Which, both for Forme and Matter, appeare to be
parcell of some following Booke of the
FAERIE QUEENE,

('.)

VNDER THE LEGEND
OF
Constancie.

Neuer before imprinted.

Cant. VI.

Proud Change (not pleas'd, in mortall things,
beneath the Moone, to raigne)
Pretends, as well of Gods, as Men,
to be the Soueraine.

W Hat man that sees the euer-whirling wheele
Of Change, the which all mortall things doth sway,
But that therby doth find, & plainly feele,
How MVTABILITY in them doth play
Her cruel sports, to many mens decay?
Which that to all may better yet appeare,
I will rehearse that whylome I heard say,
How she at first her selfe began to reare,
Gainst all the Gods, and th'empire sought from
them to beare.

But first, here falleth fittest to vnfold
Her antique race and linage ancient,
As I haue found it registred of old,
In Faery Land mongst records permanent:

She was, to weet, a daughter by descent
Of those old Titans, that did whylome striue
VVith Saturnes sonne for heauens regiment.
Whom, though high Ioue of kingdome did depriue,
Yet many of their stemme long after did surviue.

And many of them, afterwards obtain'd
Great power of Ioue, and high authority;
As Hecaté, in whose almighty hand,
He plac't all rule and principality,
To be by her disposed diuersly,
To Gods, and men, as she them list diuide:
And drad Bellona, that doth sound on hie
Warres and allarums vnto Nations wide,
That makes both heauen & earth to tremble at her
pride.

So likewise did this Titanesse aspire,
Rule and dominion to her selfe to gaine;
That as a Goddesse, men might her admire,
And heauenly honours yield, as to them twaine.
At first, on earth she sought it to obtaine;
Where she such prooufe and sad examples shewed
Of her great power, to many ones great paine,
That not men onely (whom she soone subdewed) 
But eke all other creatures, her bad dooings rewed.

For, she the face of earthly things so changed, 
That all which Nature had establisht first 
In good estate, and in meet order ranged, 
She did pervert, and all their statutes burst: 
And all the worlds faire frame (which none yet
Of Gods or men to alter or misguide)
She alter'd quite, and made them all accurst
That God had blest; and did at first prouide
In that still happy state for euer to abide.

Ne shee the lawes of Nature onely brake, 
But eke of Iustice, and of Policie;
And wrong of right, and bad of good did make, 
And death for life exchanged foolishlie: 
Since which, all liuing wights haue learn'd to die, 
And all this world is woxen daily worse.
Of pittious worke of MVTABILITIE!
By which, we all are subiect to that curse, 
And death in stead of life haue sucked from our
Nurse.

And now, when all the earth she thus had brought 
To her behest, and thralled to her might, 
She gan to cast in her ambitious thought, 
T'attempt the empire of the heauens hight, 
And Ioue himselfe to shoulder from his right.
And first, she past the region of the ayre, 
And of the fire, whose substance thin and slight, 
Made no resistance, ne could her contraire, 
But ready passage to her pleasure did prepaire.

Thence, to the Circle of the Moone she clambe, 
Where Cynthia raignes in euerlasting glory, 
To whose bright shining palace straight she came, 
All fairely deckt with heauens goodly story: 
Whose siluer gates (by which there sate an hory 
Old aged Sire, with hower-glasse in hand, 
Hight Tyme) she entred, were he liefe or sory: 
Ne staide till she the highest stage had scand, 
VVhere Cynthia did sit, that neuer still did stand.

Her sitting on an Iuory throne shee found,

Drawne of two steeds, th'one black, the other
Environd with tenne thousand starres around, 
That duly her attended day and night; 
And by her side, there ran her Page, that hight 
Vesper, whom we the Euening-starre intend: That with his Torche, still twinkling like twylight, Her lightened all the way where she should wend, And ioy to weary wandring trauailers did lend:

That when the hardy Titanesse beheld 
The goodly building of her Palace bright, 
Made of the heauens substance, and vp-held 
With thousand Crystall pillors of huge hight, 
Shee gan to burne in her ambitious spright, 
And t'envie her that in such glorie raigned. 
Eftsoones she cast by force and tortious might, 
Her to displace; and to her selfe to haue gained 
The kingdome of the Night, and waters by her 
wained.

Boldly she bid the Goddesse downe descend, 
And let her selfe into that Ivory throne; 
For, shee her selfe more worthy thereof wend, 
And better able it to guide alone: 
Whether to men, whose fall she did bemone, 
Or vnto Gods, whose state she did maligne, 
Or to th'infernall Powers, her need giue lone 
Of her faire light, and bounty most benigne, 
Her selfe of all that rule shee deemed most 
condigne.

But shee that had to her that soueraigne seat 
By highest Ioue assign'd, therein to beare 
Nights burning lamp, regarded not her threat, 
Ne yielded ought for fauour or for feare; 
But with sterne countenaunce and disdainfull 
cheare, 
Bending her horned browes, did put her back: 
And boldly blaming her for comming there, 
Bade her attonce from heauens coast to pack, 
Or at her perill bide the wrathfull Thunders wrack.

Yet nathemore the Giantesse forbare: 
But boldly preacing-on, raught forth her hand 
To pluck her downe perforce from off her chaire;
And there-with lifting vp her golden wand,
Threatned to strike her if she did with-stand.
Whereat the starres, which round about her blazed,
And eke the Moones bright wagon, still did stand,
All beeing with so bold attempt amazed,
And on her vncoouth habit and sterne looke still
gazed.

Meane-while, the lower World, which nothing knew
Of all that chaunced here, was darkned quite;
And eke the heauens, and all the heauenly crew
Of happy wights, now vnpuvraide of light,
Were much afraid, and wondred at that sight;
Fearing least Chaos broken had his chaine,
And brought againe on them eternall night:
But chiefly Mercury, that next doth raigne,
Ran forth in haste, unto the king of Gods to plaine.

All ran together with a great out-cry,
To Ioues faire Palace, fixt in heauens hight;
And beating at his gates full earnestly,
Gan call to him aloud with all their might,
To know what meant that suddaine lack of light.
The father of the Gods when this he heard,
Was troubled much at their so strange affright,
Doubting least Typhon were againe vprear'd,
Or other his old foes, that once him sorely fear'd.

Eftsoones the sonne of Maia forth he sent
Downe to the Circle of the Moone, to knowe
The cause of this so strange astonishment,
And why shee did her wonted course forslowe;
And if that any were on earth belowe
That did with charmes or Magick her molest,
Him to attache, and downe to hell to throwe:
But, if from heauen it were, then to arrest
The Author, and him bring before his presence prest.

The wingd-foot God, so fast his plumes did beat,
That soone he came where-as the Titanesse
Was striuing with faire Cynthia for her seat:
At whose strange sight, and haughty hardinesse,
He wondred much, and feared her no lesse.
Yet laying feare aside to doe his charge,

At last, he bade her (with bold stedfastnesse)
Ceasse to molest the Moone to walke at large,
Or come before high Ioue, her dooings to discharge.

And there-with-all, he on her shoulder laid
His snaky-wreathed Mace, whose awfull power
Doth make both Gods and hellish fiends affraid:
Where-at the Titanesse did sternely lower,
And stoutly answer'd, that in euill hower
He from his Ioue such message to her brought,
To bid her leaue faire Cynthias siluer bower;
Sith shee his Ioue and him esteemed nought,
No more then Cynthia's selfe; but all their kingdoms sought.

The Heauens Herald staid not to reply,
But past away, his doings to relate
Vnto his Lord; who now in th'highest sky,
VVas placed in his principall Estate,
VVith all the Gods about him congregate:
To whom when Hermes had his message told,
It did them all exceedingly amate,
Saue Ioue; who, changing nought his count'nance bold,
Did vnto them at length these speeches wise vnfold;

Harken to mee awhile yee heauenly Powers;
Ye may remember since th'Earths cursed seed
Sought to assaile the heauens eternall towers,
And to vs all exceeding feare did breed:
But how we then defeated all their deed,
Yee all doe knowe, and them destroied quite;
Yet not so quite, but that there did succeed
An off-spring of their bloud, which did alite
Vpon the fruitfull earth, which doth vs yet despite.

Of that bad seed is this bold woman bred,
That now with bold presumption doth aspire
To thrust faire Phoebe from her siluer bed,
And eke our selues from heauens high Empire,
If that her might were match to her desire:
Wherefore, it now behoues vs to advise
What way is best to driuue her to retire;
Whether by open force, or counsell wise,
Edmund Spenser, “Mutabilitie Cantos”,

Areed ye sonnes of God, as best ye can devise.

So having said, he ceast; and with his brow
(His black eye-brow, whose doomefull dreaded
beck
Is wont to wield the world vnto his vow,
And even the highest Powers of heauen to check)
Made signe to them in their degrees to speake:
Who straight gan cast their counsell graue and wise.

Meane-while, th’Earths daughter, thogh she nought did reck
Of Hermes message; yet gan now advise,
What course were best to take in this hot bold emprize.

Eftsoones she thus resolv’d; that whil’st the Gods
(After returne of Hermes Embassie)
Were troubled, and amongst themselues at ods,
Before they could new counsels re-allie,
To set vpon them in that extasie;
And take what fortune time and place would lend:
So, forth she rose, and through the purest sky
To Ioues high Palace straight cast to ascend,
To prosecute her plot: Good on-set boads good end.

Shee there arriving, boldly in did pass;
Where all the Gods she found in counsell close,
All quite vnarm’d, as then their manner was.
At sight of her they suddaine all arose,
In great amaze, ne wist what way to chose.
But loue, all fearlesse, fore’t them to aby;
And in his soueraine throne, gan straight dispose
Himselfe more full of grace and Maiestie,
That mote encheare his friends, & foes mote terrifie.

That, when the haughty Titanesse beheld,
All were she fraught with pride and impudence,
Yet with the sight thereof was almost queld;
And inly quaking, seem’d as reft of sense,
And voyd of speech in that drad audience;
Vntill that loue himselfe, her selfe bespoke:
Speake thou fraile woman, speake with confidence,

Whence art thou, and what doost thou here now make?
What idle errand hast thou, earths mansion to forsake?

Shee, halfe confused with his great commaund,
Yet gathering spirit of her natures pride,
Him boldly answer’d thus to his demaund:
I am a daughter, by the mothers side,
Of her that is Grand-mother magnifie
Of all the Gods, great Earth, great Chaos child:
But by the fathers (be it not enviend)
I greater am in bloud (whereon I build)
Then all the Gods, though wrongfully from heauen exil’d.

For, Titan (as ye all acknowledge must)
Was Saturnes elder brother by birth-right;
Both, sonnes of Vranus: but by vniust
And guilefull meanes, through Corybantes slight,
The younger thrust the elder from his right:
Since which, thou Ioue, iniuriously hast held
The Heauens rule from Titans sonnes by might;
And them to hellish dungeons downe hast feld:
Witnesse ye Heauens the truth of all that I haue teld.

Whil’st she thus spake, the Gods that gaue good care
To her bold words, and marked well her grace,
Beeing of stature tall as any there
Of all the Gods, and beautifull of face,
As any of the Goddesses in place,
Stood all astonied, like a sort of Steeres;
Mongst whom, some beast of strange & forraine race,
Vnwares is chaunc’t, far straying from his peeres:
So did their ghastly gaze bewray their hidden feares.

Till hauing pauz’d awhile, Ioue thus bespake;
VVill neuer mortall thoughts ceasse to aspire,
In this bold sort, to Heauen claime to make,
And touch celestiall seates with earthly mire?
I would haue thought, that bold Procrustes hire,
Or Typhons fall, or proud Ixions paine,
Edmund Spenser, “Mutabilitie Cantos”, 5

Or great Prometheus, tasting of our ire,
Would haue suffiz’d, the rest for to restraine;
And warn’d all men by their example to refraine:

But now, this off-scum of that cursed fry,
Dare to renew the like bold enterprize,
And chalenge th’heritage of this our skie;
Whom what should hinder, but that we likewise
Should handle as the rest of her allies,
And thunder-driue to hell? With that, he shooke
His Nectar-deawed locks, with which the skyes
And all the world beneath for terror quooke,
And eft his burning levin-brond in hand he tooke.

But, when he looked on her louely face,
In which, faire beames of beauty did appeare,
That could the greatest wrath soone turne to grace
(Such sway doth beauty euin in Heauen beare)
He staide his hand: and hauing chang’d his cheare,
He thus againe in milder wise began;
But ah! if Gods should striue with flesh yfere,
Then shortly should the progeny of Man
Be rooted out, if Ioue should doe still what he can:

But thee faire Titans child, I rather weene,
Through some vaine errour or inducement light,
To see that mortall eyes haue neuer seene;
Or through ensample of thy sisters might,
Bellona; whose great glory thou doost spight,
Since thou hast seene her dreadfull power belowe,
Mongst wretched men (dismaide with her affright)
To bandie Crownes, and Kingdomes to bestowe:
And sure thy worth, no lesse then hers doth seem
to showe.

But wote thou this, thou hardy Titanesse,
That not the worth of any liuing wight
May challenge ought in Heauens interesse;
Much lesse the Title of old Titans Right:
For, we by Conquest of our soueraine might,
And by eternall doome of Fates decree,
Haue wonne the Empire of the Heauens bright;
Which to our selues we hold, and to whom wee
Shall worthy deeme partakers of our blisse to bee.

Then ceasse thy idle claime thou foolish gerle,
And seeke by grace and goodnesse to obtaine
That place from which by folly Titan fell;
There-to thou maist perhaps, if so thou faine
Haue Ioue thy gratious Lord and Soueraigne.
So, hauing said, she thus to him replide;
Ceasse Saturnes sonne, to seeke by proffers vaine
Of idle hopes t’allure mee to thy side,
For to betray my Right, before I haue it tride.

But thee, ô Ioue, no equall Iudge I deeme
Of my desert, or of my dewfull Right;
That in thine owne behalfe maist partiall seeme:
But to the highest him, that is behight
Father of Gods and men by equall might;
To weet, the God of Nature, I appeale.
There-at Ioue wexed wroth, and in his spright
Did inly grudge, yet did it well conceale;
And bade Dan Phoebus Scribe her Appellation
seale.

Eftsoones the time and place appointed were,
Where all, both heauenly Powers, & earthly
wights,
Before great Natures presence should appeare,
For triall of their Titles and best Rights:
That was, to weet, vpon the highest hights
Of Arlo-hill (Who knowes not Arlo-hill?)
That is the highest head (in all mens sights)
Of my old father Mole, whom Shepheards quill
Renowmed hath with hymnes fit for a rurall skill.

And, were it not ill fitting for this file,
To sing of hilles & woods, mongst warres &
Knights,
I would abate the sternenesse of my stile,
Mongst these sterne stounds to mingle soft
delights;
And tell how Arlo through Dianaes spights
(Beeing of old the best and fairest Hill
That was in all this holy-Islands hights)
Was made the most vnpleasant, and most ill.
Meane while, ô Clio, lend Calliope thy quill.

Whylome, when IRELAND florished in fame
Of wealths and goodnesse, far aboue the rest
Of all that beare the British Islands name,
The Gods then vs'd (for pleasure and for rest)
Oft to resort there-to, when seem'd them best:
But none of all there-in more pleasure found,
Then Cynthia; that is soueraine Queene profest
Of woods and forrests, which therein abound,
Sprinkled with wholsom waters, more the[m] most
on ground.

But mongst them all, as fittest for her game,
Either for chace of beasts with hound or boawe,
Or for to shroude in shade from Phoebus flame,
Or bathe in fountains that doe freshly flowe,
Or from high hilles, or from the dales belowe,
She chose this Arlo; where shee did resort
With all her Nymphes enrange on a rowe,
With whom the woody Gods did oft consort:
For, with the Nymphes, the Satyres loue to play &
sport.

Amongst the which, there was a Nymph that hight
   Molanna; daughter of old father Mole,
   And sister vnto Mulla, faire and bright:
   Vnto whose bed false Bregog whylome stole,
   That Shepheard Colin dearely did condole,
   And made her lucklesse loues well knowne to be.
   But this Molanna, were she not so shole,
   Were no lesse faire and beautifull then shee:
   Yet as she is, a fairer flood may no man see.

   For, first, she springs out of two marble Rocks,
   On which, a groue of Oakes high mounted growes,
   That as a girllond seemes to deck the locks
   Of som faire Bride, brought forth with pompous
   showes
   Out of her bowre, that many flowers strowes:
   So, through the flowry Dales she tumbling downe,
   Through many woods, and shady coverts flowes
   (That on each side her siluer channell crowne)
   Till to the Plaine she come, whose Valleyes shee
doth drowne.

   In her sweet streames, Diana vsed oft
   (After her sweatie chace and toilesome play)
   To bathe her selfe; and after, on the soft
   And downy grasse, her dainty limbes to lay
   In couert shade, where none behold her may:

For, much she hated sight of liuing eye.
Foolish God Faunus, though full many a day
He saw her clad, yet longed foolishly
To see her naked mongst her Nymphes in priuity.

No way he found to compasse his desire,
But to corrupt Molanna, this her maid,
Her to discouer for some secret hire:
So, her with flattering words he first assaid;
And after, pleasing gifts for her purvaid,
Queene-apples, and red Cherries from the tree,
VVith which he her allured and betrayd,
To tell what time he might her Lady see
When she her selfe did bathe, that he might secret

There-to hee promist, if shee would him pleasure
With this small boone, to quit her with a better;
To weet, that where-as she had out of measure
Long lov'd the Fanchin, who by nought did set her,
That he would vndertake, for this to get her
To be his Loue, and of him liked well:
Besides all which, he vow'd to be her debter
For many moe good turns then he would tell;
The least of which, this little pleasure should
excell.

The simple maid did yield to him anone;
And eft him placed where he close might view
That neuer any saw, saue onely one;
VVho, for his hire to so foole-hardy dew,
Was of his hounds devour'd in Hunters hew.
Tho, as her manner was on sunny day,
Diana, with her Nymphes about her, drew
To this sweet spring; where, doffing her array,
She bath'd her louely limbes, for Ioue a likely pray.

There Faunus saw that pleased much his eye,
And made his hart to tickle in his brest,
That for great ioy of some-what he did spy,
He could him not containe in silent rest;
But breaking forth in laughter, loud profest
His foolish thought. O foolish Faune indeed,
That couldst not hold thy selfe so hidden blest,
But wouldest needs thine owne conceit areed.
Babblers vnworthy been of so diuine a meed.
Edmund Spenser, “Mutabilitie Cantos”,

The Goddesse, all abashed with that noise,  
In haste forth started from the guilty brooke;  
And running straight where-as she heard his voice,  
Enclos'd the bush about, and there him tooke,  
Like darred Larke; not daring vp to looke  
On her whose sight before so much he sought.  
Thence, forth they drew him by the homes, & shooke  
Nigh all to pieces, that they left him nought;  
And then into the open light they forth him brought.

Like as an huswife, that with busie care  
Thinks of her Dairie to make wondrous gaine,  
Finding where-as some wicked beast vnware  
That breakes into her Dayr'house, there doth draine  
Her creaming pannes, and frustrate all her paine;  
Hath in some snare or gin set close behind,  
Entrapped him, and caught into her traine,  
Then thinkes what punishment were best assign'd,  
And thousand deathes deuiseth in her vengefull mind:

So did Diana and her maydens all  
Vse silly Faunus, now within their baile:  
They mocke and scorne him, and him foule miscall;  
Some by the nose him pluckt, some by the taile,  
And by his goatish beard some did him haile:  
Yet he (poore soule) with patience all did beare;  
For, nought against their wils might countervaile:  
Ne ought he said what euer he did heare;  
But hanging downe his head, did like a Mome appeare.

At length, when they had flouted him their fill,  
They gan to cast what penaunce him to giue.  
Some would haue gelt him, but that same would spill  
The Wood-gods breed, which must for euer liue:  
Others would through the rier him haue drieue,  
And ducked deepe: but that seem'd penaunce light;  
But most agreed and did this sentence giue,  
Him in Deares skin to clad; & in that plight,

To hunt him with their hounds, him selfe saue how hee might.

But Cynthia's selfe, more angry then the rest,  
Thought not enough, to punish him in sport,  
And of her shame to make a gamesome iest;  
But gan examine him in straighter sort,  
Which of her Nymphes, or other close consort,  
Him thither brought, and her to him betraid?  
He, much affeard, to her confessed short,  
That 'twas Molanna which her so bewraid.  
Then all attonce their hands vpon Molanna laid.

But him (according as they had decreed)  
With a Deeres-skin they couered, and then chast  
With all their hounds that after him did speed;  
But he more speedy, from them fled more fast  
Then any Deere: so sore him dread aghast.  
They after follow'd all with shrill out-cry,  
Shouting as they the heauens would haue brast:  
That all the woods and dales where he did flie,  
Did ring againe, and loud reeccho to the skie.

So they him follow'd till they weary were;  
When, back returning to Molann' againe,  
They, by commaund'ment of Diana, there  
Her whelm'd with stones. Yet Faunus (for her paine)  
Of her beloued Fanchin did obtaine,  
That her he would receiue vnto his bed.  
So now her waues passe through a pleasant Plaine,  
Till with the Fanchin she her selfe doe wed,  
And (both combin'd) themselues in one faire riuer spred.

Nath'lesse, Diana, full of indignation,  
Thence-forth abandond her delicious brooke;  
In whose sweet streame, before that bad occasion,  
So much delight to bathe her limbes she tooke:  
Ne onely her, but also quite forsooke  
All those faire forrests about Arlo hid,  
And all that Mountaine, which doth over-looke  
The richest champian that may else be rid,  
And the faire Shure, in which are thousand 
Salmons bred.
Them all, and all that she so deare did way,
Thence-forth she left; and parting from the place,
There-on an heauy haplesse curse did lay,
To weet, that Wolues, where she was wont to space,
Should harbour'd be, and all those Woods deface,
And Thieues should rob and spoile that Coast around.
Since which, those Woods, and all that goodly Chase,
Doth to this day with Wolues and Thieues abound:
Which too-too true that lands in-dwellers since haue fou[n]d.

Cant. VII.

Pealing, from Ioue, to Natur's Bar,
bold Alteration pleades
Large Euidence: but Nature soone
her righteous Doome arades.

A H! whither doost thou now thou greater Muse
Me from these woods & pleasing forrests bring?
And my fraile spirit (that dooth oft refuse
This too high flight, vnfit for her weake wing)
Lift vp aloft, to tell of heauens King
(Thy soueraine Sire) his fortunate successe,
And victory, in bigger noates to sing,
Which he obtain'd against that Titanesse,
That him of heauens Empire sought to dispossesse.

Yet sith I needs must follow thy behest,
Doe thou my weaker wit with skill inspire,
Fit for this turne ; and in my sable brest
Kindle fresh sparks of that immortall fire,
Which learned minds inflameth with desire
Of heauenly things: for, who but thou alone,
That art yborne of heauen and heauenly Sire,
Can tell things doen in heauen so long ygone:
So farre past memory of man that may be knowne.

Now, at the time that was before agreed,
The Gods assembled all on Arlo hill;
As well those that are sprung of heauenly seed,
As those that all the other world doe fill,
And rule both sea and land vnto their will:
Onely th'inferrnall Powers might not appeare;
Aswell for horror of their count'naunce ill,
As for th'vnruley fiends which they did feare;
Yet Pluto and Proserpina were present there.

And thither also came all other creatures,
What-ever life or motion doe retaine,
According to their sundry kinds of features;
That Arlo scarsly could them all containe;
So full they filled euerly hill and Plaine:
And had not Natures Sergeant (that is Order)
Them well disposed by his busie paine,
And raunged farre abroad in euery border,
They would haue caused much confusion and disorder.

Then forth issewed (great goddesse) great dame Nature,
With goodly port and gracious Maiesty;
Being far greater and more tall of stature
Then any of the gods or Powers on hie:
Yet certes by her face and physnomy,
Whether she man or woman inly were,
That could not any creature well descry:
For, with a veile that wimpled euery where,
Her head and face was hid, that mote to none appeare

That some doe say was so by skill deuized,
To hide the terror of her vncouth hew,
From mortall eyes that should be sore agrized;
For that her face did like a Lion shew,
That eye of wight could not indure to view:
But others tell that it so beautious was,
And round about such beames of splendor threw,
That it the Sunne a thousand times did pass,
Ne could be seene, but like an image in a glass.

That well may seemen true: for, well I weene
That this same day, when she on Arlo sat,
Her garment was so bright and wondrous sheene,
That my fraile wit cannot deuize to what
I to compare, nor finde like stuffe to that,
As those three sacred Saints, though else most wise,
Yet on mount Thabor quite their wits forgat,
When they their glorious Lord in strange disguise
Transfigur'd sawe; his garments so did daze their eyes.

In a fayre Plaine vpon an equall Hill,
She placed was in a pauilion;
Not such as Craftes-men by their idle skill
Are wont for Princes states to fashion:
But th'earth her self of her owne motion,
Out of her fruitfull bosome made to growe
Most dainty trees; that, shooting vp anon,
Did seeme to bow their bloosming heads full lowe,
For homage vnto her, and like a throne did shew.

So hard it is for any liuing wight,
All her array and vestiments to tell,
That old Dan Geffrey (in whose gentle spright
The pure well head of Poesie did dwell)
In his Foules parley durst not with it mel,
But it transferd to Alane, who he thought
Had in his Plaint of kindes describ'd it well:
Which who will read set forth so as it ought,
Go seek he out that Alane where he may be sought.

And all the earth far vnderneath her feet
Was dight with flowres, that voluntary grew
Out of the ground, and sent forth odours sweet;
Tenne thousand mores of sundry sent and hew,
That might delight the smell, or please the view:
The which, the Nymphes, from all the brooks thereby
Had gathered, which they at her foot-stoole threw;
That richer seem'd then any tapestry,
That Princes bowres adorne with painted imagery.

And Mole himselfe, to honour her the more,
Did deck himself in freshest faire attire,
And his high head, that seemeth alwayes hore
With hardned frosts of former winters ire,
He with an Oaken girlond now did tire,
As if the loue of some new Nymph late scene,
Had in him kindled youthfull fresh desire,
And made him change his gray attire to greene;

Ah gentle Mole! such ioyance hath thee well beseene.

Was neuer so great ioyance since the day,
That all the gods whylome assembled were,
On Hæmus hill in their diuine array,
To celebrate the solemne bridall cheare,
Twixt Peleus, and dame Thetis pointed there;
Where Phoebus self, that god of Poets hight,
They say did sing the spousall hymne full cleere,
That all the gods were rauisht with delight
Of his celestiall song, & Musicks wondrous might.

This great Grandmother of all creatures bred
Great Nature, euer young yet full of eld,
Still moueing, yet unmoued from her sted;
Vnseene of any, yet of all beheld;
Thus sitting in her throne as I haue teld,
Before her came dame Mutabilitie;
And being lowe before her presence feld,
With meek obaysance and humilitie,
Thus gan her plaintif Plea, with words to amplifie;

To thee ô greatest goddesse, onely great,
An humble suppliant loe, I lowely fly
Seeking for Right, which I of thee entreat;
Who Right to all dost deale indifferently,
Damning all Wrong and tortious Iniurie,
Which any of thy creatures doe to other
(Oppressing them with power, vnequally)
Sith of them all thou art the equall mother,
And knittest each to each, as brother vnto brother.

To thee therefore of this same loue I plaine,
And of his fellow gods that faine to be,
That challenge to themselues the whole worlds raign;
Of which, the greatest part is due to me,
And heauen it selfe by heritage in Fee:
For, heauen and earth I both alike do deeme,
Sith heauen and earth are both alike to thee;
And, gods no more then men thou dost esteeme:
For, euen the gods to thee, as men to gods do seeme.

Then weigh, ô soueraigne goddesse, by what right
These gods do claime the worlds whole souerainty;
And that is onely dew vnto thy might
Arograte to themselues ambitiously:
As for the gods owne principality,
Which loue vsurpes vniustly; that to be
My heritage, loue's self cannot deny,
From my great Grandsire Titan, vnto mee,
Deriv'd by dew descent; as is well knoen to thee.

Yet mauger loue, and all his gods beside,
I doe possesse the worlds most regiment;
As, if ye please it into parts diuide,
And every parts inholders to conuent,
Shall to your eyes appeare incontinent.
And first, the Earth (great mother of vs all)
That only seems vnmov'd and permanent,
Yet is she chang'd in part, and eke in generall.

For, all that from her springs, and is ybredde,
How-euer faire it flourish for a time,
Yet see we soone decay; and, being dead
To turne again vnto their earthly slime:
Yet, out of their decay and mortall crime,
We daily see new creatures to arize;
And of their Winter spring another Prime,
Vnlike in forme, and chang'd by strange disguise:
So turne they still about, and change in restless wise.

As for her tenants; that is, man and beasts,
The beasts we daily see massacred dy,
As thralls and vassalls vnto mens beheasts:
And men themselues doe change continually,
From youth to eld, from wealth to pouerty,
From good to bad, from bad to worst of all.
Ne doe their bodies only flit and fly:
But eke their minds (which they immortall call)
Still change and vary thoughts, as new occasions fall.

Ne is the water in more constant case;
Whether those same on high, or these belowe.
For, th'Ocean moueth stil, from place to place;
And euery Riuer still doth ebbe and flowe:
Ne any Lake, that seems most still and slowe,
But all, that are of others bredd, doth slay;
And, with their death, his cruell life dooth feed;
Nought leauing, but their barren ashes, without seed

Thus, all these fower (the which the ground-work bee
Of all the world, and of all liuing wights)
To thousand sorts of Change we subiect see:
Yet are they chang'd (by other wondrous slight)
Into themselves, and lose their natuie mights;
The Fire to Aire, and th'Ayre to Water sheere,
And Water into Earth : yet Water fights
With Fire, and Aire with Earth approaching neere:
Yet all are in one body, and as one appeare.

So, in them all raignes Mutabilitie;
How-euer these, that Gods themselves do call,
Of them doe claime the rule and souerainty:
As, Vesta, of the fire æthereall;
Vulcan, of this, with vs so usuall;
Ops, of the earth; and luno of the Ayre;
Neptune, of Seas; and Nymphes, of Riuers all.
For, all those Riuers to me subiect are:
And all the rest, which they vsurp, be all my share.

Which to approuen true, as I haue told,
Vouchsafe, ô goddesse, to thy presence call
The rest which doe the world in being hold:
As, times and seasons of the yeare that fall:
Of all the which, demand in generall,
Or iudge thy selfe, by verdit of thine eye,
Whether to me they are not subiect all.
Nature did yeeld thereto; and by-and-by,
Bade Order call them all, before her Maiesty.

So, forth issew'd the Seasons of the yeare;
First, lusty Spring, all dight in leaues of flowres
That freshly budded and new bloomses did beare
(In which a thousand birds had built their bowres
That sweetly sung, to call forth Paramours):
And in his hand a iauelin he did beare,
And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures)
A guilt engrauen morion he did weare;
That as some did him loue, so others did him feare.

Then came the iolly Sommer, being dight
In a thin silken cassock coloured greene,
That was vnlyned all, to be more light:
And on his head a girlond well beseene
He wore, from which as he had chauffed been
The sweat did drop; and in his hand he bore
A boawe and shaftes, as he in forrest greene
Had hunted late the Libbard or the Bore,
And now would bathe his limbes, with labor
heated sore.

Then came the Autumnne all in yellow clad,
As though he ioyed in his plentious store,
Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad
That he had banisht hunger, which to-fore
Had by the belly oft him pinched sore.
Vpon his head a wreath that was enrold
With eares of corne, of euery sort he bore:
And in his hand a sickle he did holde,
To reape the ripened fruits the which the earth had yold.

Lastly, came Winter cloathed all in frize,
Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill,
Whil'st on his hoary beard his breath did freese;
And the dull drops that from his purpled bill
As from a limbeck did adown distill.
In his right hand a tipped staffe he held,
With which his feeble steps he stayed still:
For, he was faint with cold, and weak with eld;
That scarse his loosed limbes he hable was to weld.

These, marching softly, thus in order went,
And after them, the Monthes all riding came;
First, sturdy March with brows full sternly bent,
And armed strongly, rode vpon a Ram,
The same which ouer Hellespontus swam:
Yet in his hand a spade he also hent,
And in a bag all sorts of seeds ysame,
Which on the earth he strowed as he went,
And fild her womb with fruitfull hope of
nourishment.

Next came fresh Aprill full of lustyhed,
And wanton as a Kid whose horne new buds:
Vpon a Bull he rode, the same which led
Europa floting through th'Argolick fluds:
His hornes were gilden all with golden studs
And garnished with garlonds goodly dight
Of all the fairest flowres and freshest buds
Which th'earth brings forth, and wet he seem'd in sight
With waues, through which he waded for his loues delight.

Then came faire May, the fayrest mayd on ground,
Deckt all with dainties of her seasons pryde,
And throwing flowres out of her lap around:
Vpon two brethrens shoulders she did ride,
The twinnes of Leda; which on eyther side
Supported her like to their soueraine Queene.
Lord! how all creatures laught, when her they spide,
And leapt and daunc't as they had rauisht beene!
And Cupid selfe about her fluttred all in greene.

And after her, came iolly Iune, arrayd
All in greene leaues, as he a Player were;
Yet in his time, he wrought as well as playd,
That by his plough-yrons mote right well appeare:
Vpon a Crab he rode, that him did beare
With crooked crawling steps an vncoouth pase,
And backward yode, as Bargemen wont to fare
Bending their force contrary to their face,
Like that vngracious crew which faines demurest grace.

Then came hot Iuly boyling like to fire,
That all his garments he had cast away:
Vpon a Lyon raging yet with ire
He boldly rode and made him to obay:
It was the beast that whylome did forray
The Nemaean forrest, till th'Amphytrionide
Him slew, and with his hide did him array;
Behinde his back a sithe, and by his side
Vnder his belt he bore a sickle circling wide.

The sixt was August, being rich arrayd
In garment all of gold downe to the ground:
Yet rode he not, but led a louely Mayd
Forth by the lilly hand, the which was crownd
With eares of corne, and full her hand was found;
That was the righteous Virgin, which of old
Liv'd here on earth, and plenty made abound;
But, after Wrong was lov'd and Iustice solde,
She left th'vnrighteous world and was to heauen extold.

Next him, September marched eke on foote;
Yet was he heauy laden with the spoyle
Of haruests riches, which he made his boot,
And him enricht with bounty of the soyle:
In his one hand, as fit for haruests toyle,
He held a knife-hook; and in th'other hand
A paire of waights, with which he did assoyle
Both more and lesse, where it in doubt did stand,
And equall gaue to each as justice duly scann'd.

Then came October full of merry glee:
For, yet his noule was totty of the must,
Which he was treading in the wine-fats see,
And of the ioyous oyle, whose gentle gust
Made him so frollick and so full of lust:
Vpon a dreadfull Scorpion he did ride,
The same which by Dianaes doom vnjust
Slew great Orion: and eke by his side
He had his ploughing share, and coulter ready tyde.

Next was Nouember, he full grosse and fat,
As fed with lard, and that right well might seeme;
For, he had been a fatting hogs of late,
That yet his browes with sweat, did reek and steem,
And yet the season was full sharp and breem,
In planting eke he took no small delight:
Whereon he rode, not easie was to deeme;
For it a dreadfull Centaure was in sight,
The seed of Saturne, and faire Nais, Chiron hight,

And after him, came next the chill December:
Yet he through merry feasting which he made,
And great bonfires, did not the cold remember;
His Sauiours birth his mind so much did glad:
Vpon a shaggy-bearded Goat he rode,
The same wherewith Dan Ioue in tender yeares,
They say, was nourisht by th'I[o]ean mayd;
And in his hand a broad deepe boawle he beares;
Of which, he freely drinks an health to all his peers.

Then came old January, wrapped well
In many weeds to keep the cold away;
Yet did he quake and quiver like to quell,
And blow his nails to warm them if he may:
For, they were numb'd with holding all the day
An hatchet keen, with which he felled wood,
And from the trees did lop the needless spray:
Upon an huge great Earth-pot steane he stood;
From whose wide mouth, there flowed forth the Romane floud.

And lastly, came cold February, sitting
In an old wagon, for he could not ride;
Drawne of two fishers for the season fitting,
Which through the flood before did softly slyde
And swim away: yet had he by his side
His plough and harness to till the ground,
And tooles to prune the trees, before the pride
Of hasting Prime did make them burgein round:
So past the twelve Months forth, & their dew places found.

And after these, there came the Day, and Night,
Riding together both with equall pace,
Th'e one on a Palfrey blacke, the other white;
But Night had couered her vncomely face
With a blacke veile, and held in hand a mace,
On top whereof the moon and stars were pight,
And sleep and darkness round about did trace:
But Day did bear, upon his scepters hight,
The goodly Sun, encompast all with beames bright.

Then came the Howres, faire daughters of high loue,
And timely Night, the which were all endewed
With wondrous beauty fit to kindle loue;
But they were Virgins all, and loue eschewed,
That might forslack the charge to them foreswewed
By mighty loue; who did them Porters make
Of heauens gate (whence all the gods issued)
Which they did dayly watch, and nightly wake
By euen turnes, ne euer did their charge forsake.

And after all came Life, and lastly Death;
Death with most grim and griesly visage scene,
Yet is he nought but parting of the breath;
Ne ought to see, but like a shade to weene,
Vnbodied, vnsoul'd, vnheard, vnseeene.
But Life was like a faire young lusty boy,
Such as they faine Dan Cupid to haue beene,
Full of delightfull health and liuely ioy.
Deckt all with flowres, and wings of gold fit to employ.

When these were past, thus gan the Titanesse;
Lo, mighty mother, now be judge and say,
Whether in all thy creatures more or lesse CHANGE doth not raign & beare the greatest sway:
For, who sees not, that Time on all doth pray?
But Times do change and moue continually.
So nothing here long standeth in one stay:
Wherefore, this lower world who can deny
But to be subject still to Mutabilitie?

Then thus gan Ioue; Right true it is, that these
And all things else that vnder heauen dwell
Are chaung'd of Time, who doth them all disseise
Of being: But, who is it (to me tell)
That Time himselfe doth moue and still compell
To keepe his course? Is not that namely wee
Which poure that vertue from our heauenly cell,
That moues them all, and makes them changed be?
So them we gods doe rule, and in them also thee.

To whom, thus Mutability: The things
Which we see not how they are mov'd and swayd,
Ye may attribute to your selues as Kings,
And say they by your secret powre are made:
But what we see not, who shall vs persuade?
But were they so, as ye them faine to be,
Mov'd by your might, and ordred by your ayde;
Yet what if I can proove, that euen yee
Your selues are likewise chang'd, and subject unto mee?

And first, concerning her that is the first,
Euen you faire Cynthia, whom so much ye make
Ioues dearest darling, she was bred and nurst
On Cynthius hill, whence she her name did take:
Then is she mortall borne, how-so ye crake;
Besides, her face and countenance euer day
We changed see, and sundry forms partake,
Now hornd, now roud, now bright, now brown & gray:
So that as changefull as the Moone men vse to say.

Next, Mercury, who though he lesse appeare
To change his hew, and always seeme as one;
Yet, he his course doth altar euery yeare,
And is of late far out of order gone:
So Venus eeke, that goodly Paragone,
Though faire all night, yet is she darke all day;
And Phoebus self, who lightsome is alone,
Yet is he oft eclipsed by the way,
And fills the darkned world with terror and dismay.

Now Mars that valiant man is changed most:
For, he some times so far runs out of square,
That he his way doth seem quite to haue lost,
And cleane without his vsuall sphere to fare;
That euen these Star-gazers stonisht are
At sight thereof, and damne their lying bookes:
So likewise, grim Sir Saturne oft doth spare
His sterne aspect, and calme his crabbed lookes:
So many turning cranks these haue, so many crookes.

But you Dan Ioue, that only constant are,
And King of all the rest, as ye do clame,
Are you not subiected eke to this misfare?
Then let me aske you this withouten blame,
Where were ye borne? some say in Crete by name,
Others in Thebes, and others other-where;
But wheresoeuer they comment the same,
They all consent that ye begotten were,
And borne here in this world, ne other can appeare.

Then are ye mortall borne, and thrall to me,
Vnlesse the kingdome of the sky yee make
Immortall, and vnchangeable to bee;
Besides, that power and vertue which ye spake,
That ye here worke, doth many changes take,
And your owne natures change: for, each of you
That vertue haue, or this, or that to make,
Is checkt and changed from his nature trew,
By others opposition or obliquid view.

Besides, the sundry motions of your Spheares,
So sundry waiws and fashions as clerkes faine,
Some in short space, and some in longer yeares;
What is the same but alteration plaine?
Onely the starrie skie doth still remaine:
Yet do the Starres and Signes therein still moue,
And euen it self is mov'd, as wizards saine.
But all that moueth, doth mutation loue:
Therefore both you and them to me I subiect proue.

Then since within this wide great Vniuerse
Nothing doth firme and permanent appeare,
But all things tost and turned by transuerse:
What then should let, but I aloft should reare
My Trophee, and from all, the triumph beare?
Now iudge then (O thou greatest goddesse trew!)
According as thy selfe doest see and heare,
And vnto me addoom that is my dew;
That is the rule of all, all being rul'd by you.

So having ended, silence long ensewed,
Ne Nature to or fro spake for a space,
But with firme eyes affixt, the ground still viewed.
Meane while, all creatures, looking in her face,
Expecting th'end of this so doubtfull case,
Did hang in long suspence what would ensew,
To whether side should fall the soueraigne place:
At length, she looking vp with chearefull view,
The silence brake, and gaue her doome in speeches few.

I well consider all that ye haue sayd,
And find that all things stedfastnes doe hate
And changed be: yet being rightly wayd
They are not changed from their first estate;
But by their change their being doe dilate:
And turning to themselues at length againe,
Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
Then ouer them Change doth not rule and raigne;
But they raigne ouer change, and doe their states maintaine.
Cease therefore daughter further to aspire,
And thee content thus to be rul'd by me:
For thy decay thou seekst by thy desire;
But time shall come that all shall changed bee,
And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see.
So was the Titaness put downe and whist,
And Ioue confirm'd in his imperiall see.
Then was that whole assembly quite dismist,
And Natur's selfe did vanish, whither no man wist.

The VIII. Canto, vnperfite.

Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,
Of that same time when no more Change shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things firmly stayd
Vpon the pillours of Eternity,
That is contrayr to Mutabilitie:
For, all that moueth, doth in Change delight:
But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
O thou great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight.

FINIS