

From Spenser's Faerie Queene

(Book I, Canto XI)



FAC. DE LETRAS

PORTO

— 1923 —

LIII

And in his first encounter, gaping wyde,
 He thought attonce him to have swallowd quight,
 And rusht upon him with outragious pryde;
 Who him rencountring fierce, as hauke in flight,
 Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon bright,
 Taking advantage of his open jaw,
 Ran through his mouth with so importune might,
 That deepe emperst his darksom hollow maw,
 And, back retyrd, his life blood forth with all did draw.

LIV

So downe he fell, and forth his life did breath,
 That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift;
 So downe he fell, that th' earth him underneath
 Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift;
 So downe he fell, as an huge rocky cliff,
 Whose false foundation waves have washt away,
 With dreadfull poyse is from the maynelland rift,
 And, rolling down, great Neptune doth dismay;
 So downe he fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay.

LV

The knight him selfe even trembled at his fall,
 So huge and horrible a masse it seemd;
 And his deare Lady, that beheld it all,
 Durst not approch for dread which she misdeemd;
 But yet at last, whenas the direfull feend
 She saw not stirre, off-shaking vaine affright
 She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end:
 Then God she prayd, and thankt her faithfull knight,
 That had atchieved so great a conquest by his might.

THE FAERIE QUEENE

BOOK I, CANTO XI

The knight with that old Dragon fights
Two days incessantly:
The third him overthrowes, and gayns
Most glorious victory.

I

High time now gan it wex for Una fayre,
To thinke of those her captive parents deare,
And their forwasted kingdom to repayre:
Whereto whenas they now approched neare,
With hartie wordes her knight she gan to cheare,
And in her modest maner thus bespake:
«Deare knight, as deare as ever knight was deare,
That all these sorrowes suffer for my sake,
High heven behold the tedious toyle ye for me take!

II

«Now are we come unto my native soyle,
And to the place where all our perilles dwell;
Here hauntes that feend, and does his dayly spoyle;
Therefore henceforth bee at your keeping well,
And ever ready for your foeman fell.
The sparke of noble corage now awake,
And strive your excellent selfe to excell:
That shall ye evermore renowmed make
Above all knights on earth, that batteill undertake.»

III

And pointing forth, «Lo! yonder is,» (said she)
«The brasen towre, in which my parents deare

For dread of that huge feend emprisond be;
 Wohm I from far see on the walles appeare,
 Whose sight my feeble soule doth greatly cheare:
 And on the top of all I do espye
 The watchman wayting tydings glad to heare;
 That, O my Parents! might I happily
 Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery!>

IV

With that they heard a roaring hideous sownd,
 That all the ayre with terror filled wyde,
 And seemd uneth to shake the stedfast ground.
 Eftsoones that dreadful dragon they espyde,
 Where stretcht he lay upon the sunny side
 Of a great hill, himselfe like a great hill.
 But all so soone as he from far descryde
 Those glistring armes, that heven with light did fill,
 He rousd himselfe full blyth, and hastned them untill.

V

Then badd the knight his Lady yede aloof,
 And to an hill herselfe withdraw asyde,
 From whence she might behold that battailles proof,
 And eke be safe from daunger far descryde:
 She him obeyd, and turned a little wyde.
 Now, O thou sacred Muse! most learned dame,
 Fayre ympe of Phœbus and his aged bryde,
 The nourse of time and everlasting fame,
 That walike andes ennoblest with inmortall name,

VI

O gently come into my feeble brest;
 Come gently, but not with that mightie rage,
 Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest infest,
 And hartes of great heröes doest enrage,
 That nought their kindled corage may aswage:
 Soone as thy dreadfull trompe begins to sownd,

The god of warre with his fiers equipage
 Thou doest awake, sleepe never he so sownd;
 And scared nations doest with horror sterne astownd.

VII

Fayre goddesse, lay that furious fitt asyde,
 Till I of warres and bloody Mars doe sing,
 And Bryton fieldes with Sarazin blood bedyde,
 Twixt that great Faery Queene and Paynim King,
 That with their horror heven and earth did ring,
 A worke of labour long, and endlesse prayse:
 But now a while lett downe that haughtie string,
 And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
 That I this man of God his godly armes may blaze.

VIII

By this the dreadful Beast drew nigh to hand,
 Halfe flying and halfe footing in his haste,
 That with his largenesse measured much land,
 And made wide shadow under his huge waste,
 As mountaine doth the valley overcaste.
 Approching nigh, he reared high afore
 His body monstrous, horrible, and vaste,
 Which, to increase his wondrous greatnes more,
 Was swoln with wrath and poyson, and with bloody gore.

IX

And over all with brasen scales was armd,
 Like plated cote of steele, so couched neare
 That nought mote perce; ne might his corse bee harmd
 With dint of swerd, nor push of pointed speare:
 Which as an eagle, seeing pray appeare,
 His aery plumes doth rouze, full rudcly dight,
 So shaked he, that horror was to heare:
 For as the clashing of an armor brighth,
 Such noyse his rouzed scales did send unto the knight.

X

His flaggy winges, when forth he did display,
 Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wynd
 Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
 And eke the pennes, that did his pineons bynd,
 Were like mayne-yardes with flying canvas lynd,
 With which whenas him list the ayre to beat,
 And there by force unwonted passage fynd,
 The cloudes before him fledd for terror great,
 And all the hevens stood still, amazed with his threat.

XI

His huge long tayle, wovound up in hundred foldes,
 Does overspred his long bras-scaly back,
 Whose wreathed boughtes when ever he unfolds,
 And thicke entangled knots adown does slack,
 Bespotted as with shieldes of red and blacke,
 It sweepeth all the land behind him farre,
 And of three furlongs does but litle lacke;
 And at the point two stinges in fixed arre,
 Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steele exceeden farre.

XII

But stinges and sharpest steele did far exceed
 The sharpnesse of his cruel rending clawes:
 Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed,
 What ever thing does touch his ravenous pawes,
 Or what within his reach he ever drawes,
 But his most hideous head my tongue to tell
 Does tremble; for his deepe devouring jawes
 Wyde gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell,
 Through which into his darke abysses all ravin fell.

XIII

And, that more wondrous was, in either jaw
 Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged were,

In which yett trickling blood and gobbets raw
 Of late devoured bodies did appeare,
 That sight thereof bredd cold congealed feare:
 Which to increase, and all atonce to kill,
 A cloud of smothering smoke and sulphure seare
 Out of his stinking gorge forth steemed still,
 That all the ayre about with smoke and stench did fill.

XIV

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shieldes,
 Did burne with wrath, and sparkled living fyre;
 As two broad beacons, sett in open fieldes,
 Send forth their flames far off to every shyre,
 And warning give that enimies conspyre
 With fire and sword the region to invade:
 So flam'd his eyne with rage and rancorous yre;
 But far within, as in a hollow glade,
 Those glaring lampes were sett that made a dreadfull shade

XV

So dreadfully he towardes him did pas,
 Forelifting up a-loft his speckled brest,
 And often bounding on the brused gras,
 As for great joyance of his newcome guest.
 Eftsoones he gan advaunce his haughty crest,
 As chauffed bore his bristles doth upreare;
 And shoke his scales to battaile ready drest,
 That made the Redcrosse Knight nigh quake for feare,
 As bidding bold defyaunce to his foeman neare.

XVI

The knight gan fayrely couch his steady speare,
 And fiersely ran at him with rigorous might:
 The pointed steele, arriving rudely there,
 His harder hyde would nether perce nor bight,
 But, glauncing by, foorth passed forward right,
 Yet sore amoved with so puissaunt push,

The wrathfull beast about him turned light,
 And him so rudely, passing by, did brush
 With his long tayle, that horse and man to ground did rush.

XVII

Both horse and man up lightly rose againe,
 And fresh encounter towards him address;
 But th' ydle stroke yet backe recoyld in vaine,
 And found no place his deadly point to rest.
 Exceeding rage enflam'd the furious beast,
 To be avenged of so great despight;
 For never felt his imperceable brest
 So wondrous force from hand of living wight;
 Yet had he prov'd the powre of many a puissant knight.

XVIII

Then, with his waving wings displayed wyde,
 Himselfe up high he lifted from the ground,
 And with strong flight did forcibly divide
 The yielding ayre, which nigh too feeble found
 Her flitting parts, and element unsound,
 To beare so great a weight: he, cutting way
 With his broad sayles, about him soared round;
 At last, low stouping with unweldy sway,
 Snatcht up both horse and man, to beare them quite away.

XIX

Long he them bore above the subject plaine,
 So far as ewghen bow a shaft may send,
 Till struggling strong did him at last constraine
 To let them downe before his flightes end:
 As hagarde hauke, presuming to contend
 With hardy fowle, above his hable might,
 His wearie pounces all in vaine doth spend
 To trusse the pray too heavy for his flight;
 Which, comming down to ground, does free it selfe by fight.

XX

He so disseized of his gryping grosse,
 The knight his thrillant speare againe assayd
 In his bras-plated body to embosse,
 And three mens strength unto the stroake he layd;
 Wherewith the stiffe beame quaked, as affrayd,
 And glauncing from his scaly necke did glyde
 Close under his left wing, then broad displayd:
 The percing steele there wrought a wound full wyde,
 That with the uncouth smart the monster lowdly cryde.

XXI

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore
 When wintry storme his wrathful wreck does threat;
 The rolling billowes beate the ragged shore,
 As they the earth would shoulder from her seat;
 And greedy gulfe does gape, as he would eat
 His neighbour element in his revenge:
 Then gin the blustering brethren boldly threat
 To move the world from off his stedfast henge,
 And boystrous battaile make, each other to avenge.

XXII

The steely head stuck fast still in his flesh,
 Till with his cruell clawes he snatcht the wood,
 And quite a sunder broke. Forth flowed fresh
 A gushing river of blacke gory blood,
 That drowned all the land whereon he stood:
 The streame thereof would drive a watermill.
 Trebly augmented was his furious mood
 With bitter sence of his deepe rooted ill,
 That flames of fire he threw forth from his large nosethril.

XXIII

His hideous tayle then hurled he about,
 And therewith all enwrapt the nimble thyes

Of his froth-fomy steed, whose courage stout
 Striving to loose the knott that fast him tyes,
 Himselfe in streighter bandes too rash implyes,
 That to the ground he is perforce constaynd
 To throw ryder; who can quickly ryse
 From off the earth, with durty blood distaynd,
 For that reprochfull fall right fowly he disdaynd.

XXIV

And fercely tooke his trenchand blade in hand,
 With which he stroke so furious and so fell,
 That nothing seemd the puissaunce could withstand:
 Upon his crest the hardned yron fell;
 But his more hardned crest was armd so well,
 That deeper dint therein it would not make;
 Yet so extremely did the buffe him quell,
 That from thenceforth he shund the like to take,
 But, when he saw them come, he did them still forsake.

XXV

The knight was wroth to see his stroke beguyld,
 And smot againe with more outrageous might;
 But backe againe the sparcling steele recoyld,
 And left not any marke where it did light,
 As if in adamant rocke it had beene pight.
 The beast, impatient of his smarting wound,
 And of so fierce and forcible despight,
 Thought with his winges to style above the ground;
 But his late wounded wing unserviceable found.

XXVI

Then, full of griefe and anguish vehement,
 He lowdly brayd, that like was never heard;
 And from his wide devouring oven sent
 A flake of fire, that, flashing in his beard,
 Him all amazd, and almost made afeard:
 The scorching flame sore swunged all his face,

And through his armour all his body seard,
 That he could not endure so cruell cace,
 But thought his armes to leave, and helmet to unlace.

.

It fortun'd (as fayre it then befell,)
 Behynd his backe, unweeting, where he stood,
 Of auncient time there was a springing well,
 From which fast trickled forth a silver flood,
 Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good.
 Whylome, before that cursed dragon got
 That happy land, and all with innocent blood
 Defyld those sacred waves, it rightly hot
 The Well of Life, ne yet his vertues had forgot.

XXX

For unto life the dead it could restore,
 And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away;
 Those that with sicknesse were infected sore
 It could recure; and aged long decay
 Renew, as one were borne that very day.
 Both Silo this, and Jordan, did excell,
 And th' English Bath, and eke the German Spau;
 Ne can Cephise, nor Hebrus, match this well:
 Into the same the knight back overthrowen fell.

XXXI

Now gan the golden Phœbus for to steepe
 His fierie face in billowes of the west,
 And his faint steedes watred in ocean deepe,
 Whiles from their journall labours they did rest,
 When that infernall monster, having kest
 Hts wearie foe into that living well,
 Gan high advaunce his broad discoloured brest
 Above his wonted pitch, with countenance fell,
 And clapt his yron wings, as victor he did dwell.

XXXII

Which when his pensive lady sawe from farre,
 Great woe and sorrow did her soule assay,
 As weening that the sad end of the warre,
 And gan to highest God entirely pray
 That feared chauce from her to turne away:
 With folded hands, and knees full lowly bent,
 All night shee watcht, ne once adowne would lay
 Her dainty limbs in her sad dreriment,
 But praying still did wake, and waking did lament.

XXXIII

The morrow next gan earely to appeare,
 That Titan rose to runne his daily race;
 But earely, ere the morrow next gan reare
 Out of the sea faire Titans deawy face,
 Up rose the gentle virgin from her place,
 And looked all about, if she might spy
 Her loved knight to move his manly pace:
 For she had great doubt of his safety,
 Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.

XXXIV

At last she saw where he upstarted brave
 Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay:
 As eagle, fresh out of the ocean wave,
 Where he hath lefte his plumes all hory gray,
 And deckt himselfe with fethers youthly gay,
 Like eyas hauke up mounts unto the skies,
 His newly-budded pincons to assay,
 And marveiles at himselfe stil as he flies:
 So, new this new-borne knight to battell new did rise.

XXXV

Whom when the damned feend so fresh did spy
 No wonder if he wondred at the sight,

And doubted whether his late enemy
 It were, or other new supplied knight,
 He now, to prove his late-renewed might.
 High brandishing his bright deaw-burning blade,
 Upon his crested scalp so sore did smite,
 That to the scull a yawning wound it made:
 The deadly dint his dulled sences all dismayd.

.....

The cruell wound enraged him so sore,
 That loud he yelled for exceeding paine;
 As hundred ramping lions seemd to rore,
 Whom ravenous hunger did thereto constraine,
 Then gan he trosse aloft his stretched traine,
 And therewith scourge the buxome aire so sore,
 That to his force to yelden it was faine;
 Ne ought his sturdy strokes might stand afore,
 That high trees overthrew, and rocks in peeces tore.

XXXVIII

The same advauncing high above his head,
 With sharpe intended sting so rude him smott,
 That to the earth him drove, as stricken dead;
 Ne living wight would have him life behott:
 The mortall sting his angry needle shott
 Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder seasd,
 Where fast it stucke, ne would thereout be gott:
 The grieffe thereof him wondrous sore diseasd,
 Ne might his rancling paine with patience be appeasd.

XXXIX

But yet, more mindfull of his honour deare
 Then of the grievous smart which him did wring,
 From loathed soile he can him lightly reare,
 And strove to loose the far infixd sting:
 Which when in vaine he tryde with struggeling,
 Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he hefte,
 And strooke so strongly, that the knotty string

Of his huge taile he quite a sonder clefte;
Five joints thereof he hewd, and but the stump him lefte.

XL

Hart cannot thinke what outrage and what cries,
With fowle enfoldred smoake and flashing fire,
The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the skies,
That all was covered with darknesse dire:
Then, fraught with rancour and engorged yre,
He cast at once him to avenge for all,
And, gathering up himselfe out of the mire
With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall
Upon his sunne-bright shield, and grypt it fast withall.

XLI

Much was the man encombred with his hold,
In feare to lose his weapon in his paw,
Ne wist yett how his talaunts to unfold;
Nor harder was from Cerberus greedy jaw
To plucke a bone, then from his cruell claw
To reave by strength the griped gage away:
Thrise he assayd it from his foote to draw,
And thrise in vaine to draw it did assay;
It booted nought to thinke to robbe him of his pray.

XLII

Tho, when he saw no power might prevaile,
His trusty sword he cald to his last aid,
Wherewith he fiersly did his foe assaile,
And double blowes about him stoutly laid,
That glauncing fire out of the yron plaid,
As sparkles from the andvile use to fly,
When heavy hammers on the wedge are swaid;
Therewith at last he forst him to unty
One of his grasping feete, him to defend thereby.

XLIII

The other foote, fast fixed on his shield,
 Whenas no strength nor stroks mote him constraine
 To loose, ne yet the warlike pledge to yield,
 He smott thereat with all his might and maine,
 That nought so wondrous puissaunce might sustaine:
 Upon the joint the lucky steele did light,
 And made such way that hewde it quite in twaine;
 The paw yett missed not his minisht might,
 But hong still on the shield, as it at first was pight.

XLIV

For griefe thereof and divelish despight,
 From his infernall founnace forth he threw
 Huge flames, that dimmed all the hevens light,
 Enrold in duskish smoke and brimstone blew;
 As burning Aetna from hys boyling stew
 Doth belch out flames, and rockes in peeces broke,
 And ragged ribs of mountaines molten new,
 Enwrapt in coleblacke cloudes and filthy smoke,
 That al the land with stench, and heven with horror choke.

XLV

The heate whereof, and harmefull pestilence,
 So sore him noyd, that forst him to retire
 A little backward for his best defence,
 To save his body from the scorching fire,
 Which he from hellish entrailles did expire.
 It chaunst, (Eternall God that chaunce did guide)
 As he recoiled backward, in the mire
 His nigh foreweried feeble feet did slide,
 And downe he fell, with dread of shame sore terrifide.

XLVI

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
 Loaden with fruit and apples rosy redd,

As they in pure vermillion had been dide,
 Whereof great vertues over all were redd;
 For happy life to all which thereon fedd,
 And life eke everlasting did befall:
 Great God it planted in that blessed stedd
 With his Almighty hand, and did it call
 The Tree of Life, the crime of our first fathers fall.

XLVII

In all the world like was not to be fownd,
 Save in that soile, where all good things did grow,
 And freely sprong out of the fruitfull grownd,
 As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
 Till that diedd dragon all did overthrow.
 Another like faire tree eke grew thereby
 Whereof whoso did eat, eftsoones did know
 Both good and ill: O mournfull memory!
 That tree through one mans fault hath doen us all to dy.

XLVIII

From that first tree forth flowd, as from a well,
 A trickling streame of balme, most souveraine
 And dainty deare, which on the ground still fell,
 And overflowed all the fertile plaine,
 As it had deawed bene with timely raine:
 Life and long health that gracious ointment gave,
 And deadly wounds could heale, and reare againe
 The sencelesse corse appointed for the grave.
 Into that same he fell, which did from death him save.

XLIX

For nigh thereto the ever damned beast
 Durst not approach, for he was deadly made,
 And al that life preserved did detest;
 Yet he it oft adventur'd to invade,
 By this the drouping day-light gan to fade,
 And yield his rowme to sad succeeding night,

Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
 The face of earth, and wayes of living wight,
 And high her burning torch set up in heaven bright.

L

When gentle Una saw the second fall
 Of her deare knight, who, weary of long fight
 And faint through losse of blood, moov'd not at all,
 But lay, as in a dreame of deepe delight,
 Besmeard with pretious balme, whose vertuous might
 Did heale his woundes, and scorching heat alay,
 Againe she stricken was with sore affright,
 And for his safetie gan devoutly pray,
 And watch the noyous night, and wait for joyous day.

LI

The joyous day gan early to appeare;
 And fayre Aurora from the deawy bed
 Of aged Tithone gan herselfe to reare
 With rosy cheekes, for shame as blushing red:
 Her golden locks for hast were loosely shed
 About her eares, when Una her did marke
 Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred,
 From heven high to chace the chearelesse darke;
 With mery ncte her lowd salutes the mounting larke.

LII

Then freshly up arose the doughty knight,
 All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
 And did himselfe to battaile ready dight;
 Whose early foe awaiting him beside
 To have devourd, so soone as day he spyde,
 When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare,
 As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,
 He woxe dismaid, and gan his fate to feare;
 Nathlesse with wonted rage he him advaunced neare.

LIII

And in his first encounter, gaping wyde,
 He thought attonce him to have swallowd quight,
 And rusht upon him with outragious pryde;
 Who him rencountring fierce, as hauke in flight,
 Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon bright,
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 So downe he fell, that th' earth him underneath
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 So downe he fell, as an huge rocky cliff,
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 With dreadfull poyse is from the maynelland rift,
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The knight him selfe even trembled at his fall,
 So huge and horrible a masse it seemd;
 And his deare Lady, that beheld it all,
 Durst not approch for dread which she misdeemd;
 But yet at last, whenas the direfull feend
 She saw not stirre, off-shaking vaine affright
 She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end:
 Then God she prayd, and thankt her faithfull knight,
 That had atchieved so great a conquest by his might.