

EDMUND SPENSER'S POETRY



SELECTED AND EDITED BY
HUGH MACLEAN AND ANNE LAKE PRESCOTT

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

THIRD EDITION

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

EDMUND SPENSER'S
POETRY

AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS
CRITICISM

THIRD EDITION

Selected and Edited by

HUGH MACLEAN

LATE OF
STATE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW YORK AT ALBANY

ANNE LAKE PRESCOTT

BARNARD COLLEGE,
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

W • W • NORTON & COMPANY • New York • London

Copyright © 1993, 1982, 1968 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America

The text of this book is composed in Electra
with the display set in Bernhard Modern
Composition by PennSet Inc.
Manufacturing by Courier
Book design by Antonina Krass

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Spenser, Edmund, 1552?-1599.
[Selections. 1993]

Edmund Spenser's poetry : authoritative texts, criticism /
selected and edited by Hugh Maclean and Anne Lake Prescott.
— 3rd ed.

p. cm. — (A Norton critical edition)

I. Maclean, Hugh, 1919- . II. Prescott, Anne Lake, 1936- .
III. Title.

PR2352.M3 1993

821'.3 — dc20

92-15409

ISBN 0-393-96299-7

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110
W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., Castle House, 75/76 Wells Street,
London W1T 3QT

4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Preface to the Third Edition

Spenser tells quest stories in a way that incorporates the reader, in his or her own quest for understanding, into the fiction's fabric of meaning. His poetry conveys the sense that the protean nature of language itself is always at issue when it is used for mighty purposes. In his work there is proof that self-reflexiveness in poetry need not be the old sterile matter of Narcissus in deathly love with his own image; that in tiny, intense, even joking details of wit the highest seriousness can reside; that allusiveness can be deployed with great originality.

—John Hollander

When the Second Edition of *Edmund Spenser's Poetry* appeared in 1982, it was already clear that something in the nature of a revolution in Spenser studies was taking place, and that new methods of reading texts, often deriving from the critical practice of such postmoderns as Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan—together with other influential captains of literary theory—were challenging earlier assumptions about Spenser's poetry. This revolution has in the last decade or so become an information explosion of enormous and bewildering variety. Regularly stimulated by cool and/or acid critical pronouncements like those of Catherine Belsey ("criticism can no longer be isolated from other areas of knowledge"), or Terry Eagleton, who trashes "a sterile critical formalism, piously swaddled with eternal verities," all of the critical developments touched upon in the Preface to the Second Edition have flowered in profusion. Over the last ten or twelve years, Spenser scholarship has been especially receptive to a new historicism that emphasizes the intertextuality of literary texts and cultural, economic, and political developments at large and the relation of political power to that of the poet. It has also been particularly receptive to a feminist criticism in which the politics of the body is central and potentially controlling. These accents sound also in a decided revival of interest in the pastoral genre, notably its interplay with epic (as in Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*).

Still, "traditional" scholarship of the highest quality holds its ground. Recent work on *Complaints*, for example, reflects an emerging sense that careful re-examination of primary sources may lead to biographical studies more firmly founded than those we know. New attention to Spenser's Ireland and to the poet's prose *View* (not to mention Kilcolman Castle) is relevant too. Solidly professional editorial work flourishes. William Oram and an international group of young scholars have collaborated on a splendid new edition of Spenser's shorter poems. The first complete English translation of Boiardo has recently appeared in an edition distinctly user-friendly for Spenser scholars. Since 1989 other students of Spenser's poetry, "tra-

ditional" in methodology and outlook, have produced exciting new studies of feminine patronage in Spenser's time, Tudor royal iconography, *mimesis* in Sidney and Spenser, astrological symbolism in *The Shepheardes Calender*—to choose just four books from the extensive list of such works published in very recent years.

Accordingly, we have made every effort to preserve a sense of balance and proportion in our selection of texts and criticism for this Third Edition, as well as in the revised (or newly provided) Editors' Notes. We have sought neither to turn away from traditional approaches nor uncritically to embrace the new sense of context, the "hermeneutics of suspicion," that has so evidently deepened and expanded understanding of Spenser's mind and art in our time, but principally to recognize incisive and lucid scholarship. In this connection we acknowledge a continuing debt to *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (1990E in our apparatus), so thoughtfully designed to supply the different needs of Spenser scholars, teachers in English studies, and all students or general readers of Spenser's poetry. If the character and content of this Third Edition have been shaped in some important ways by the continuing torrent of newly oriented books and articles, our editorial perceptions have also been regularly steadied by *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, brought forth after many years of devoted labor.

New selections from *The Faerie Queene* include the ninth canto of Book II ("Alma's castle"), not simply to enlarge the range of symbolically central locations or moments available here to students and scholars, but to respond to recent critical attention to bodies masculine, feminine, and politic. Book VI, in earlier editions rather abruptly cut off at x.30, now flows uninterrupted on to its desperate concluding scene: *the Blatant Beast at terrific large*, the narrator's world brought low by "wicked fate" or "guilt of men." The addition of these cantos (in conjunction with shorter poems retained or newly included in this edition) enables the reader to assess the range and shifting emphases of pastoral elements in the Spenserian canon. To assure these inclusions, given space restrictions, we have felt obliged to abandon IV.x (the Temple of Venus). But we retain the Proem to Book IV so that readers may continue to compare the varied emphases of Spenser's "introductions" to all six books of *The Faerie Queene*.

Major additions to the shorter poems include *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe*, newly recognized for its indications of the poet's struggle to come to terms with the teasing ambiguities of a patronage system that is part and parcel of the great queen's court and to meet the larger challenge of that court's power-system to moral and aesthetic integrity. Colin Clout's doubts and frustrations echo in the pastoral world of Book VI of *The Faerie Queene*. *Amoretti* is here complete (together with *Epithalamion*), annotated to reflect the most recent critical commentary on a sonnet sequence that rewrites Petrarchan tradition; its inclusion will enable readers to recognize the particular elements of Spenser's distinction in this kind, with special relevance to the sonnets of Sidney and Shakespeare. Finally, in the selections from *The Shepheardes Calender* we thought it best to replace the "June" eclogue with ["Morall"] "Februarie," an especially instructive and taking poem in recent years for a wide variety of critics and scholars. To make way for these substantial additions we have dropped, not without pain, *Fowre*

Hymnes from this edition. It is our hope that readers who find special profit and delight in the later stages of *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* will explore and savor these four moving poems.

Texts of the poems are based on those of the early editions of Spenser's poetry: selections from *The Faerie Queene* on the 1596 text, shorter poems on the texts of the first editions. The editors' aim is to deliver a text that closely follows the substantive form of the early edition in question, that reproduces the spelling and (essentially) the punctuation of that edition, and that introduces only those elements of modernization that seem required to render the text easily accessible to modern readers. Unfamiliar words are glossed in the margins. The Textual Notes provide a list of (chiefly substantive) variants among the early editions of *The Faerie Queene* and the shorter poems.

Not quite as in earlier editions of *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*, an "Editors' Note" accompanies each poem or group of poems. In some ways these continue to serve a principally introductory purpose, dealing with the circumstances of composition, genre, structure, versification; in our edition, however, we have endeavored also to give readers some sense of the range of criticism that has in recent years significantly deepened understanding of Spenser's poetry. Editors' Notes to poems that appeared also in earlier editions have been revised and rewritten. New Editors' Notes are provided for *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* and for *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*. Footnotes in the Third Edition have been thoroughly updated and revised, with a view to directing readers' attention to the best in recent criticism. In Editors' Notes and footnotes, full bibliographical data are provided only for books and articles published before 1973 (which are not included in our Selected Bibliography). The 1989 edition of the shorter poems, ed. Oram et al., cited in full in the Selected Bibliography, is referred to in footnotes and headnotes as "Yale." For work published in and after 1973, author's name and publication date must serve, with fuller bibliographical data reserved for the Selected Bibliography.

To select critical materials for this Third Edition has been a difficult task, not least in that we have felt constrained to delete a number of valuable essays included in the Second Edition. We deeply regret all these deletions; given the quality and penetration of so many books and articles published since 1982, space restrictions have forced our hand. Still, of the twenty-five critical interpretations included in this edition, nine survive from the 1982 edition: two brief selections from Roche, one each from Frye, Hamilton, Heninger, Heatt, Tonkin, MacCaffrey, and Martz. Of selections newly added, one (Woolf) was published in 1948, five others (Cheney, Allen, Nelson, Giamatti, Bond) prior to 1977. Eight of the remaining nine selections have been published since 1980; one (Miller) makes its first appearance in print in the Third Edition. Two authors (Berger, Alpers), represented in the 1982 edition by earlier work, reappear with recent essays on pastoral. We believe that the critical materials included in the Third Edition make up a full and fair sampling of the way we live now, in Spenser studies.

All the selections from Early Critical Views in the 1982 edition are represented again in the Third Edition. "E.K." now appears, however,

properly in bed with the *Calender*, and Camden's brief but moving account of Spenser's last years, death, and burial will alert modern readers to the respect and love generally accorded to the man who "surpassed all the English poets of former times." Virginia Woolf's essay on *The Faerie Queene* scarcely suggests the feminist perspective remarked by Fox (1990) in Woolf's notes on Spenser; all the same, the essay is a perceptive response to an initial challenge: how to read Spenser? Helgerson's remarkable essay, on much more than its title appears to promise, and the following essay by Montrose in the context of "a newer historical orientation" together provide another kind of introduction, to larger patterns in Spenser's thoughtful art. Other couplings match Hamilton's comparison of Spenser and Dante with Judith Anderson's exemplary presentment of the "Chaucerian Connection"; Martz and Prescott on *Amoretti*; Miller's Lacanian piece on Colin's vision atop Mount Acidale and Tonkin's quietly authoritative essay on the same scene. We retain the grouping of critical opinions on the House of Busyrane, with Padelford and Lewis bowing out in favor of Susanne Wofford. MacCaffrey keeps company with Berger and Alpers to provide materials for explorative discussion of the pastoral mode. A quartet of lively scholars makes up our "mini-casebook" on *Muiopotmos*. Donald Cheney's essay on the *Mutabilitie Cantos* as "a stylistic tour de force" [and much more] seems to us the most thoughtfully persuasive among a number of penetrating analyses of the *Cantos*. Bart Giamatti's moving chapter on pageantry reminds modern readers of an essential element, sometimes overlooked or neglected, in Spenser's poetry. And William Nelson fittingly concludes these critical speculations with his delightful essay on the playfulness of Spenser—too often silenced by the deathwatch beetle of solemnity. The enlarged Selected Bibliography provides a list of especially rewarding books and articles published since 1973.

The editors gratefully acknowledge their continuing debt to Edwin Greenlaw, Charles G. Osgood, Frederick S. Padelford, and Ray Heffner, editors of *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition* (*Variorum* in our apparatus; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1932–49). Particular thanks are due to the Director of Libraries and her staff at the University Library of the State University of New York at Albany: without their kindly assistance and provision of working space in the University Library, the publication of this Third Edition would at the very least have been long delayed. We also thank Michael Mallik, Elizabeth Lukacs, Claudine Conan, John Mason, and Kathy Thornton, who took time from their studies at Columbia, Barnard, or SUNY-Albany to track down materials in various libraries or to assist in proofreading. Antonia Prescott also helped us with these activities, and to her we give thanks. Robert Clark, on the teaching staff at Barnard, helped bring order to the Selected Bibliography.

We owe special thanks to five scholars whose thoughtful suggestions have significantly contributed to the cast and character of the Third Edition: Elizabeth A. Bieman, A. Leigh DeNeef, Richard Helgerson, Clark Hulse, and Susanne Woods. We wish also to thank A. Kent Heatt for aid and comfort throughout the assembling of this Third Edition, and, for advice, suggestion, or merely a friendly and knowledgeable ear, Ward Allen, Judith Anderson, Jean Brink, Patrick Cullen, Duk-ae Chung, Heather Dubrow,

Margaret Hannay, and Carol Kaske. Finally, we are deeply grateful to our editor, Carol Bemis, for her steady wisdom, encouraging presence, and patient control throughout the development of this third and most challenging edition of *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*.

It remains only to recall and honor the insight, quality, and grace, over a very long term of years, of a great editor; and to remember with affection and gratitude a scholar whose extraordinary learning, intellectual generosity, and charm brought more than one generation of students to a deeper understanding of our poet. We dedicate this Third Edition to the memory of John Benedict and of William Nelson.

HUGH MACLEAN
ANNE LAKE PRESCOTT

Contents

Preface to the Third Edition

ix

The Texts of the Poems

The Faerie Queene	xvii
A Letter of the Authors	1
Book I	5
<i>From</i> Book II	162
Book III	231
<i>From</i> Book IV	401
<i>From</i> Book V	403
<i>From</i> Book VI	413
Two Cantos of <i>Mutabilitie</i>	461
Editors' Note	491
<i>From</i> The Shepheardes Calender	500
To His Booke	500
["E.K."] • [Dedicatory Epistle to <i>The Shepheardes Calender</i>]	501
Januarye	506
Februarie	509
Aprill	517
October	524
November	530
December	537
[Envoy]	542
Editors' Note	542
Muiopotmos: or The Fate of the Butterflie	546
Editors' Note	557
Colin Clouts Come Home Againe	560
Editors' Note	582
Amoretti and Epithalamion	587
Amoretti	587
[Anacreontics]	623

Epithalamion	626
Editors' Note	637
Prothalamion	643
Editors' Note	648
Textual Notes	650

Criticism

EARLY CRITICAL VIEWS

William Camden • [The Death of Spenser]	661
John Hughes • [Remarks on <i>The Faerie Queene</i> and <i>The Shepheardes Calender</i>]	661
Samuel Taylor Coleridge • [Spenser's Art]	668

TWENTIETH-CENTURY CRITICISM

Virginia Woolf • The Faery Queen	672
Richard Helgerson • [The New Poet Presents Himself]	675
Louis Adrian Montrose • [The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text]	686
A. Bartlett Giamatti • Pageant, Show, and Verse	695
Thomas P. Roche, Jr. • [The Elizabethan Idea of Allegory]	705
Northrop Frye • The Structure of Imagery in <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	707
A. C. Hamilton • [The Cosmic Image: Spenser and Dante]	716
Judith H. Anderson • "A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine": The Chaucerian Connection	726
S. K. Heninger, Jr. • [Orgoglio]	732
Readings of the House of Busyrane	741
Thomas P. Roche, Jr.: [Love, Lust, and Sexuality]	741
A. Kent Hieatt: [Sexual Adventurism]	743
Susanne Lindgren Wofford: [The Bold Reader in the House of Busyrane]	746
Humphrey Tonkin • [Pastorella and the Graces]	752
David Lee Miller • Spenser and the Gaze of Glory	756
Donald Cheney • The Titaness Put Down	764
Views of Pastoral	769
Isabel MacCaffrey: [The Shepheardes Calender]	769
Harry Berger, Jr.: ["The Paradise Principle": Approaches to <i>The Shepheardes Calender</i>]	778
Paul Alpers: [Spenser's Domain of Lyric]	787

Muiopotmos: A Mini-Casebook	796
D. C. Allen: [The Butterfly-Soul]	796
Ronald B. Bond: [The Workings of Envy]	798
Robert A. Brinkley: [The Politics of Metamorphosis]	800
Andrew D. Weiner: [Butterflies, Men, and the Narrator in <i>Muiopotmos</i>]	802
Amoretti	804
Louis Martz: [Amoretti]	804
Anne Lake Prescott: [Allegorical Deer and <i>Amoretti</i> 67]	809
William Nelson • [Hobgoblin and Apollo's Garland]	813
A Chronology of Spenser's Life	823
Selected Bibliography	825

A Letter of the Authors

EXPOUNDING HIS WHOLE INTENTION IN THE COURSE OF THIS WORKE: WHICH FOR THAT IT GIVETH GREAT LIGHT TO THE READER, FOR THE BETTER UNDERSTANDING IS HEREUNTO ANNEXED.¹

To the Right noble, and Valorous, Sir Walter Raleigh knight, Lo. Wardein of the Stanneryes, and her Majesties liefetenaunt of the County of Cornewayll.

Sir knowing how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed, and this booke of mine, which I have entituled the Faery Queene, being a continued Allegory, or darke conceit, I have thought good aswell for avoyding of gealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof, (being so by you commanded,) to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes or by-accidents² therein occasioned. The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion³ a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: Which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible⁴ and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profite of the ensample: I chose the historye of king Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of envy, and suspition of present time.⁵ In which I have followed all the antique Poets historicall, first Homere, who in the Persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governour and a vertuous man, the one in his *Ilias*, and the other in his *Odysseis*: then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Aeneas: after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando: and lately Tasso dissevered them againe, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in Philosophy call Ethice, or vertues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo: The other named Politice in his Godfredo.⁶ By ensample of which excellent Poets, I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle

1. This "Letter" was appended to the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* (Books I–III) and dropped from the 1596 edition. Such epistolary commentaries were commonly employed by Renaissance poets to explain or defend their purpose and method; cf. Tasso's account of the allegory in his epic poem *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and Sir John Harington's preface to his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1591), not to mention the "Epistle" and "Argument" prefixed to *The Shepheardes Calender*.

2. Side issues, secondary concerns.

3. I.e., to represent (in a secondary sense, to train or educate).

4. Acceptable, deserving of approval.

5. I.e., not subject to malicious interpretation in terms of contemporary political bias or prejudice.

6. Lodovico Ariosto (1474–1533) was author of the epic romance *Orlando Furioso*, first published in complete form in 1532; Torquato Tasso (1544–95) published his chivalric romance *Rinaldo* in 1562 and the epic *Gerusalemme Liberata* (centered on the heroic figure of Count Godfredo) in 1581.

hath devised,⁷ the which is the purpose of these first twelve bookes: which if I finde to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encoraged, to frame the other part of polliticke vertues in his person, after that hee came to be king. To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then thus clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall devises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfide with the use of these dayes, seeing all things accounted by their showes, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one in the exquisite depth of his judgement, formed a Commune welth such as it should be, but the other in the person of Cyrus and the Persians fashioned a gouvernement such as might best be: So much more profitable and gracious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule.⁸ So have I laboured to doe in the person of Arthure: whome I conceive after his long education by Timon, to whom he was by Merlin delivered to be brought up, so soone as he was borne of the Lady Igrayne, to have seene in a dream or vision the Faery Queen, with whose excellent beauty ravished, he awaking resolved to seeke her out, and so being by Merlin armed, and by Timon thoroughly instructed, he went to seeke her forth in Faerye land. In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land. And yet in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow⁹ her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautifull Lady, this latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belpheobe, fashioning her name according to your owne excellent concept of Cynthia,¹ (Phoebe and Cynthia being both names of Diana.) So in the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular, which vertue for that (according to Aristotle and the rest)² it is the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deedes of Arthure applyable to that vertue, which I write of in that booke. But of the xii. other vertues, I make xii. other knights the patrones, for the more variety of the history: Of which these three bookes contain three, The first of the knight of the Redcrosse, in whome I expresse Holynes: The seconde of Sir Guyon, in whome I sette forth Temperaunce: The third of Britomartis a Lady knight, in whome I picture Chastity. But because the beginning of the whole worke seemeth abrupte and as depending upon other antecedents, it needs that ye know

7. Aristotle does not actually distinguish twelve moral virtues in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but medieval and early sixteenth-century commentators, following Aquinas, had so divided them; Spenser's friend Lodowick Bryskett speaks of twelve virtues in his *Discourse of Civill Life*. DeNeeff 1990E proposes that since "devise" could then mean "divide," Spenser may refer to Aristotle's division between private and public.

8. This distinction between Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Plato's *Republic* recalls Sidney's praise of the poet (who "coupleth the generall notion with the particuler example") at the expense of the philosopher, whose "woordish description . . . dooth neyther strike, pierce, nor possesse the sight of the soule so much as that other dooth."

9. I.e., portray.

1. Raleigh's fragmentary poem *Cynthia* celebrated Queen Elizabeth.

2. I.e., notably, Cicero's *De inventione*, the *Somnium Scipionis* of Macrobius, and (among later commentators on the virtues) the pseudo-Senecan *Formula honestae vitae* written by Martin of Braga in the sixth century.

the occasion of these three knights severall adventures. For the Methode of a Poet historical is not such, as of an Historiographer.³ For an Historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions, but a Poet thrusteth into the middest, even where it most concerneth him, and there recouring to the thinges forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing Analysis of all. The beginning therefore of my history, if it were to be told by an Historiographer, should be the twelfth booke, which is the last, where I devise that the Faery Queene kept her Annuall feaste xii. dayes, upon which xii. severall dayes, the occasions of the xii. severall adventures hapned, which being undertaken by xii. severall knights, are in these xii books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented him selfe a tall clownishe⁴ younge man, who falling before the Queen of Faeries desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse: which was that hee might have the atchievement of any adventure, which during that feaste should happen, that being graunted, he rested him on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place. Soone after entred a faire Ladye in mourning weedes, riding on a white Asse, with a dwarfe behind her leading a warlike steed, that bore the Armes of a knight, and his speare in the dwarfes hand. Shee falling before the Queene of Faeries, complayned⁵ that her father and mother an ancient King and Queene, had bene by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brasen Castle, who thence suffred them not to yssew: and therefore besought the Faery Queene to assygne her some one of her knights to take on him that explot. Presently that clownish person upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering, and the Lady much gainesaying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the Lady told him that unlesse that armour which she brought, would serve him (that is the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul v. Ephes.)⁶ that he could not succeed in that enterprise, which being forthwith put upon him with dewe furnitures⁷ thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the Lady. And eftsoones⁸ taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that straunge Courser, he went forth with her on that adventure: where beginneth the first booke, vz.

A gentle knight was pricking on the playne. &c.

The second day ther came in a Palmer bearing an Infant with bloody hands, whose Parents he complained to have bene slayn by an Enchaunteresse called Acrasia: and therefore craved of the Faery Queene, to appoint him some knight, to performe that adventure, which being assigned to Sir Guyon, he presently went forth with that same Palmer: which is the be-

3. I.e., the method employed by an epic poet is not that of the historian.

4. I.e., of rustic appearance (appropriate to the man brought up in "ploughmans state," I.x.66). Wall 1986 and 1987 deduces from an astronomical reference in II.ii.46 that Gloriana holds her twelve-day feast at Christmastide, traditional time for mumming plays about St. George and, in Arthurian literature, for new marvels.

5. Lamented.

6. Cf. the note on I.i.1.

7. Suitable equipment.

8. Forthwith.

ginning of the second booke and the whole subject thereof. The third day there came in, a Groome who complained before the Faery Queene, that a vile Enchaunter called Busirane had in hand a most faire Lady called Amoretta, whom he kept in most grievous torment, because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body. Whereupon Sir Scudamour the lover of that Lady presently tooke on him that adventure. But being unable to performe it by reason of the hard Enchauntments, after long sorrow, in the end met with Britomartis, who succoured him, and reskewed his love.

But by occasion hereof, many other adventures are intermedled, but rather as Accidents, then intendments.⁹ As the love of Britomart, the overthrow of Marinell, the misery of Florimell, the vertuousnes of Belpheobe, the lasciviousnes of Hellenora, and many the like.

Thus much Sir, I have briefly overronne to direct your understanding to the wel-head¹ of the History, that from thence gathering the whole intention of the conceit, ye may as in a handfull gripe al the discourse, which otherwise may happily² seeme tedious and confused. So humbly craving the continuance of your honorable favour towards me, and th'eternall establishment of your happines, I humbly take leave.

23. January. 1589.³

Yours most humbly affectionate.

Ed. Spenser.

9. I.e., as matters relatively incidental to a central purpose.

1. Source, spring.

2. By chance.

3. I.e., 1590. In England (until 1753), the official year was reckoned from March 25.

The First Booke of The Faerie Queene

Contayning
The Legende of the Knight of the Red Crosse,
 or
Of Holinesse

1

Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome^o did maske,
 As time her taught, in lowly Shepheards weeds,¹ *formerly*
 Am now enforst a far unfitter taske.
 For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
 And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
 Whose prayes having slept in silence long,
 Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds^o *counsels*
 To blazon broad² amongst her learned throng:
 Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.

2

Helpe then, O holy Virgin chiefe of nine,³
 Thy weaker^o Novice to performe thy will, *too weak*
 Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne^o *chest for records*
 The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
 Of Faerie knights and fairest Tanaquill,⁴
 Whom that most noble Briton Prince⁵ so long
 Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
 That I must rue his undeservéd wrong:
 O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.

3

And thou most dreaded impe⁶ of highest Jove,
 Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
 At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,^o *shoot*

1. On Book I see Brooks-Davies 1990E. Lines 1–4 imitate verses that Servius (fourth century A.D.) says Virgil's first editors removed from the start of the *Aeneid*; medieval and Renaissance manuscripts or editions often quote them. Spenser thus associates his poem with the classical epic and announces his shift from pastoral to heroic poetry. On Virgil's role in Spenser's "idea of the poet," see Neuse 1978; Sessions 1980 shows how the knight's name, George, recalls Virgil's bucolic "Georgics" and thus implies the "labors needed to make an epic hero," labors that "can only be realized with time." Line 5 paraphrases the start of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*; on Book I's allusions to Ariosto see especially P. Alpers, *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton, 1967) and, for a recent study, Wiggins 1991.

2. I.e., to proclaim.

3. Perhaps Clio, muse of history (see I.xi.5 and III.iii.4). In *The Teares of the Muses* 53, Spenser calls her "eldest Sister" of the nine muses, but in the same poem (457–62) he notes how Calliope can "deifie" mortals and their deeds (cf. *The Shepheardes Calender*, "Aprill" 100, "June" 57). Some critics (e.g., Roche 1989) have made a case for Calliope; others have anticipated the tempered preference of Hamilton 1977 for Clio. Revard 1990E thinks the "unnamed Muse" may be either, while for Anderson 1989 she is a composite.

4. Gloriana, i.e., Elizabeth I. The humanist Vives (1492–1540) thought "Caia Tanaquill," whom legend called the wife of the Roman king Tarquinius Priscus, was the very pattern of a noble queen.

5. I.e., Arthur.

6. Child, i.e., Cupid, god of love.

That glorious fire it kindled in his hart,
 Lay now thy deadly Heben^o bow apart,
 And with thy mother milde come to mine ayde:
 Come both, and with you bring triumphant Mart,⁷
 In loves and gentle jollities arrayd,
 After his murderous spoiles and bloody rage allayd.

ebony

4

And with them eke,^o O Goddess heavenly bright,⁸
 Mirrour of grace and Majestie divine,
 Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light
 Like Phoebus lampe throughout the world doth shine,
 Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
 And raise my thoughts too humble and too vile,^o
 To thinke of that true glorious type^o of thine,
 The argument of mine afflicted^o stile:
 The which to heare, vouchsafe, O dearest dred^o a-while.

also

lowly
pattern
humble

Canto I

*The Patron of true Holinesse,
 Foule Errour doth defeate:
 Hypocrisie him to entrappe,
 Doth to his home entreate.*

1

A Gentle Knight was pricking^o on the plaine,
 Y cladd in mightie armes and silver shilde,¹
 Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
 The cruell markes of many a bloody field;
 Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
 His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
 As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
 Full jolly^o knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
 As one for knightly giusts^o and fierce encounters fitt.

riding briskly

gallant
tourneys

2

But on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,
 The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
 For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
 And dead as living² ever him adored:
 Upon his shield the like was also scored,
 For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had:

7. Mars, god of war, and Venus's lover (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.167-89).

8. I.e., Queen Elizabeth.

9. Object of reverence and awe.

1. Cf. Ephesians 6.11-17: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . . Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Redcrosse's armor is that of every Christian. On this scene, see Anderson, pp. 726-32, in this edition.

2. Revelation 1.18: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."