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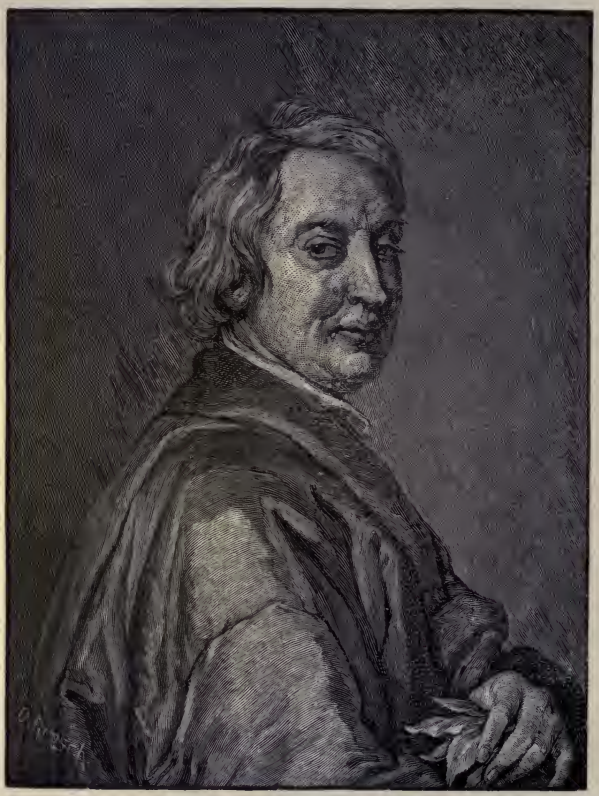

JOHN DRYDEN

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EDITED

WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION

BY

WILLIAM TENNEY BREWSTER, A.M.

TUTOR IN RHETORIC AND ENGLISH COMPOSITION IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

THE text of this edition is that of the Folio of 1700, published two months before Dryden's death. The only liberties that have been taken in reprinting it are the modernization of the spelling of common words, and the retaining of vowels now silent in pronunciation, which are represented in the Folio by apostrophes. The notes at the bottom of the pages are merely explanatory of difficult passages in the text. Whenever fuller information has been necessary, as with regard to the proper names and the large number of astrological references, it has been given as a whole in the appendix. The appendix also contains selections from Chaucer and Dryden to which it is hoped the ambitious student will refer. The introduction presents the chief points of Dryden's life and of his characteristic method and manner in the poem.

For many kind suggestions during the progress of the work I have been indebted to Professor James W. Bright of Johns Hopkins University.

W. T. B.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
February 10, 1897.

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INTRODUCTION

I. Dryden's Life and Character

John Dryden was born August 9, 1631. His father, Erasmus Dryden, was the third son of a baronet of Northamptonshire, who had opposed Charles the First; his mother, Mary Pickering, came from a family of the gentry of northern England, of whom the chief member, Sir Gilbert Pickering, Dryden's mother's cousin, was a stanch Cromwellian. The youth's training was, therefore, puritanical. Of that early period, however, we know little except that he attended school in Westminster, and was sent thence, at the age of nineteen, to Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he probably did not remain after April, 1655, but with an income of forty pounds, left him by the death of his father the year before, went to London to do literary work. Certain it is that by the middle of 1657 he was resident in the metropolis. His first production there was his "Heroic Stanzas," commemoratory of the death of Oliver Cromwell, in 1658.

Charles II. was restored to the throne of England in 1660. Dryden immediately became a royalist, and the same year wrote "Astræa Redux" (justice returned), in honour of the return of the exile. From this time on his literary work began in earnest: between 1663 and 1681 he produced twenty plays, comedies and tragedies; in 1667 he published his well-known "Annus Mirabilis" (the wonderful year), commemorating the defeat of the Dutch on the sea and the great fire of London of the previous year; and

he further wrote his "Essay on Dramatic Poesy," which appeared in 1668, and was, up to that time, the best discourse on the drama that had been written in England. In 1670 he was appointed poet-laureate and historiographer-royal, at a salary of two hundred pounds a year. His income from all sources is said to have been at this date probably above seven hundred pounds, the equivalent of three times that amount to-day. Altogether he was a successful man, and the foremost author of his time.

In 1681 begins the new period of Dryden's life and literary work. Possibly the beating which he received one night in 1679 at the hands of ruffians, in the employ of his enemy, the Earl of Rochester, may have diverted his interest from the drama to a means of revenging himself upon his various opponents. At all events Dryden for a while left the writing of plays, and in "Absalom and Achitophel," of which the first part was published in November, 1681, began the most famous series of stinging political satires which English literature possesses. Within a year he had followed up this poem with "The Medal," "Mac-Flecknoe," and the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel." Furthermore, he glorified his Protestant belief in his "Religio Laici, or A Layman's Faith." But on the succession, in 1685, of James II., who was a Roman Catholic, Dryden adopted the creed of his new master, and a year later wrote an elaborate poem, "The Hind and the Panther," in support of Catholicism.

The revolution of 1688, which drove James from England, left Dryden without state support; for he would not change his creed, and he refused to take service under the new government. In his need he turned once more to the drama, and in 1690 brought out what is, on the whole, his masterpiece, "Don Sebastian." Altogether Dryden produced five plays between 1690 and 1694, at which date he gave up writing for the stage. For some two years back he had been interested in translation, and had taken part in a

version of the satires of Juvenal and Persius. From 1694 to 1697 he devoted himself almost wholly to the translation of Virgil; from this work he gained about twelve hundred pounds, enough to put him in easier circumstances. In 1697, also, he wrote his most famous ode, "Alexander's Feast." One year later he began the last work of his life, his "Fables," or adaptations from Chaucer and Boccaccio. The volume, "Fables Ancient and Modern, translated into Verse from Homer, Ovid, Boccaccio, and Chaucer; with Original Poems," appeared in March, 1700. The poet, who had been for some time suffering from gout, died the first of May, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the Poets' Corner, not far from the grave of Chaucer.

Dryden's personal appearance can be judged from the reproduction, in the front of this volume, of his portrait by Kneller. He was short, stout, and somewhat rubicund in complexion. As regards his character, one is impressed by his broad sympathy and his robust tolerance—the most lovable and the most striking traits of his nature. These characteristics explain Dryden's identification with successive parties and creeds. He was no sycophant, but his impressionable and tolerant mind allowed him to sympathize heartily with the public in its passing opinions and prejudices, and to give them a permanent literary expression. If he assumed the habit of the Restoration in the licentiousness of much of his dramatic work, he as surely, with his great common-sense, raised criticism above the narrow rule-bound level of his time, enabled Englishmen to appreciate the forgotten beauty of Chaucer, and received the maligning of his critics and enemies and, toward the end of his life, the rabid attacks of Jeremy Collier against the English stage, not only without bitterness, but with a due sense of their justice.

Dryden is the great man of letters of the last third of the seventeenth century. Milton died in 1674, almost forgotten; and Pope was only twelve years old at the time

of Dryden's death. In literary history, then, Dryden is the great connecting link between Elizabethan literature and Milton on the one hand, and the literature of the Queen Anne period on the other. From this point of view, too, he stands for the institution and development of a readable modern English prose, and for the introduction of a new and more rigidly regulated style of poetry than that of Shakspere and Milton. He was the foremost dramatist of his time, the greatest satiric poet, the critic of the broadest and clearest vision and most catholic taste, the skilful reteller of delightful narrative poems, and the maker of a splendid ode.

II. The Story of Palamon and Arcite

It is with Dryden as a reteller of tales, especially of Chaucer's "The Knightes Tale," that we have here to do. Dryden's versions were from their first appearance among the most popular of his works: the reading public of England had never before had given it such a variety of excellent translations; and if the tales are to-day comparatively not so well-known as during the eighteenth century, the reason is to be found in the existence of newer translations and, as with Chaucer, of better means of access to the originals. Dryden's work still remains of a very high order. His catholicity of taste enabled him to choose really happy stories, and, once given his material, his skill in retelling a story in vigorous language was unsurpassed.

The volume of "Fables" contained translations of several such well-known poems from Ovid's "Metamorphoses" as "Pygmalion and his Statue," several tales from Boccaccio, the first book of the "Iliad," and, scattered among these in no particular order, modernizations of Chaucer—"Palamon and Arcite" (The Knightes Tale), "The Cock and the Fox" (The Nonne Preestes Tale), "The Flower and the Leaf" (Chaucer's poem of the same

title), "The Wife of Bath's Tale," and "The Character of the Good Parson" (from the "Prologue")—surely a great variety of good stories and sketches. Dryden's endeavour was, he says, "to choose such fables, both ancient and modern, as contain in each of them some instructive moral." A modern reader, however, is inclined to look at the selections as interesting tales, and not to trouble himself about the obvious morals which they contain. Dryden's method of translating was a very free rendering. He retold these poems for the sake of interesting the public, and he wrote rapidly. Of his method of transcribing Chaucer, a poet for whom he had the greatest admiration,[1] he says: "I have not tied myself to a literal translation, but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther in some places; and have added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language."

"Palamon and Arcite" is the longest of the "Fables," as of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," and in both collections it is, in point of order, first. The story was an old one, even before Chaucer took it up: he had got it from the "Teseide" of the Italian poet, Boccaccio, and from the Latin poet, Statius, from whose "Thebais" Boccaccio had drawn his plot. Each poet had made additions of his own. Chaucer put the tale into the mouth of the noblest of his pilgrims, his knight, to whom, from his social position, was given the honour of telling the first story for the amusement of the pilgrims on their way to Canterbury. This explanation is necessary, since Dryden has kept the knight's point of view and his allusions to the company, but has not,

[1] One should read Dryden's *Preface* to see the unusual appreciation which he showed for the older poet. See the selections in APPENDIX, II.

except in the title, given us any notion of who the speaker is. In both tales the speaker is a well-born knight, and the subjects of his tale are those which we should expect to find coursing through the mind of one whose occupation was war and tournaments, and whose life was lived at courts and among high-born ladies. It would be interesting to see how far the two poets make the knight speak in character, but the subject cannot be here pursued, since we are concerned with the tale and not with the supposed narrator of it.

In point of construction, the tale, as told by both poets, is excellent; as a piece of narrative it leaves little to be desired. Each event bears on the central action of the story, that is, on the quarrel between the Theban knights —their duel, the tourney, and the victory of Arcite, the reconciliation, the death of Arcite, and the marriage of Palamon to Emily. The only possible exceptions to this assertion are the opening scenes at the sack of Thebes, which are necessary to start the story properly and make it plausible, and the descriptions, which give the tale a tone of grandeur. The actors and their actions are kept moving steadily before us without obscurity or confusion. In these respects the treatments of Chaucer and Dryden are practically identical.

In general, too, the characters are similar. What differences arise will be considered later as springing from the diverse ways which the two poets have of saying the same thing. In each poem the characters are noble, to the manner born. Of all the actors the two young knights are the most interesting and individual. Arcite is the more ready of the two, has the quicker wit, is the bolder; he is the "tiger." He is generous, gentle, courteous, and in their bitter rivalry never takes advantage of his friend. The latter is slower and more ponderous in his movements; he is, throughout, the "lion." He is not so sharp-witted as Arcite, as is shown in the scene where he first sees

Emily and fails to recognize her as a mortal. Theseus is remarkable in both poems as a consistently royal person; he never forgets the dignity of his position, not before Thebes, or in the forest, or in the trying scenes that follow the accident to Arcite. Once only, at the death of Arcite, does he fail to maintain his lordly bearing; then his old father, Ægeus, has to comfort him. The other characters, even Emily, are more commonplace and conventional creatures, though often, as in the case of Emetrius and Lycurgus, sketched with much detail and magnificence. The populace are naturally, from the knight's point of view, a "rude, promiscuous crowd," "clowns with cudgels in their hands," though it should be added that Dryden here displays contempt that is not Chaucer's. The women in general appear as weak, emotional creatures, who faint by the wayside, and lament that Arcite should die when he "had gold enough and Emily." In both poems, then, we find characters depicted on broad lines, in classes, and in conformity with conventional types.

This similar handling of the structure and characterization of the story in the two versions is obvious to the modern reader. There is, however, a broader and more essential likeness—the epic quality which, from the time of Statius down to the period of our modern analysis and introspection, has made the tale one of the continually delightful stories of the world. Both Chaucer and Dryden were quick to see the literary value of the tale, and Chaucer put it in the mouth of his pilgrim best fitted to tell it. It deals with large figures and glorious pageantry, with courtly women and heroical men; and it deals with these things in a complete way; it gives a reader all that he could desire to learn or need to know about the fortune and character of the heroes. There is an abundance of colour, of manly fighting, of generous rivalry, and of constant and romantic love—all that makes a story interesting, in any age, to lovers of romance. To the reader of Chaucer's time the

world of chivalry was near at hand; but to the reader of the eighteenth century, in the midst of an alien age, the tale of brotherhood, courtesy, knightly deeds, and deathless love was still moving; even to us it still retains its freshness and beauty, and the poetic imagination allows us as little to doubt its seriousness and plausibility as the religious imagination allows us to doubt the giants and steep cliffs of Bunyan's vision. The favorite form of reading is in all ages likely to be, not the presentation of a problem of life, but a romantic story, and of all the stories that appeared from Chaucer and Malory down to "Robinson Crusoe" none is better for grandeur and completeness of treatment than this. Both our poets recognized the fitness of the story for a great popular narrative and its literary excellence, and by treating it as the times demanded, each in his own manner, made of it two great poems, similar in form, character, and purpose.

III. Dryden's Style Compared with Chaucer's

A study of the differences in the treatment of the same story as told by the two poets will prove suggestive. One must admit at once that the comparison results almost wholly in Chaucer's favour; he is, from our modern point of view, altogether the greater poet. This method, however, is the best for showing the characteristics of Dryden's work. The differences are those of detail, but taken together they constitute the great difference in effect between the two poems.

To begin with what is most external, "Palamon and Arcite" contains 161 lines more than "The Knightes Tale." Superficially, Dryden divided his version differently: he has three books of very unequal length; Chaucer has four books of about the same length. The fact that, in point of unity, Dryden's division can hardly be deemed so good as Chaucer's need not be elaborated here. Dryden

naturally, in translating freely, used more words and broke the poem where he chose.

Underlying Dryden's expansion, however, there is a graver difference than the mere breaking of the chapters and the adding of words. The 161 lines mean, on the whole, a weakening of the original. "The Knightes Tale" is compactly written; every word tells. Dryden's expansion would have been well enough had he given us more ideas. Now, if we analyze this expansion we shall find that it is mostly padding, and often bombast, that it occurs chiefly in the emotional speeches, and grows, on the whole, more common in the latter parts of the poem. Perhaps the most glaring example of the difference of manner is the death speech of Arcite: Dryden has swelled 33 lines of natural lamentation and farewell, ending with the simple plea,

"Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man,"

into 58 lines of moralizing and such sententious posing as

"This I may say, I only grieve to die
Because I lose my charming Emily" (III., 782).

Perhaps the best instance is Arcite's address to May:

"May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,
Welcome be thou, wel faire fresshe May,
I hope that I som grene gete may." [1]

Out of this simple, hearty lyric passage Dryden has constructed the following posture:

"For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries wear,
If not the first, the fairest of the year:
For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers:
When thy short reign is past, the feverish sun
The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.

[1] The passage with its context is to be found on pages 103, 104. Here it is sufficient to note that *wel* means "very," and that in the last line the order of words is not that of modern English.

So may thy tender blossoms fear no blight,
Nor goats with venomed teeth thy tendrils bite,
As thou shalt guide my wandering steps to find
The fragrant greens I seek, my brows to bind" (II., 53).

The weakening of effect in such passages comes chiefly from the fact that Arcite's words are not, in Dryden, natural to the situation; no normal man in his proper mind could think in such terms. We must, however, bear in mind that such lines were in accordance with the taste of Dryden's time.

In the simple narrative and descriptive passages, too, as well as in the speeches, we find that Dryden has, to our modern taste once more, weakened Chaucer. Thus Dryden flattens Chaucer's powerful line,

"The smyler with the knyf under the cloke,"

into

"Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer,
Soft, smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown" (II., 564).

Another instance of weakening through expansion is in the description of Emetrius. Chaucer has specifically:

"Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.
His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge."

Dryden thus:

"His age in nature's youthful prime appeared,
And just began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound" (III., 82).

Such passages are perhaps extreme examples of the difference between the two poems in point of vigour. They illustrate, of course, differences in arrangement and syntax, which need not be touched upon here; and they serve to show one great difference which is almost constant

throughout the poem—dissimilarity in poetic effect. Dryden's manner impresses us as far less natural and spontaneous than Chaucer's; he is artificial and conventional. For example, out of Chaucer's simple "smyler," he has constructed a personified "Hypocrisy." He speaks vaguely of "youthful prime." In general, we shall find between "The Knightes Tale" and "Palamon and Arcite" a great difference in poetical effect arising from the large amount of metaphor and simile and personification, not of Chaucerian origin, in Dryden's poem.

One other cause which probably contributes to the marked difference in poetical effect should be touched on—the verse-form. The measure of "The Knightes Tale" is a verse of five feet, or usually ten syllables, arranged in rimed couplets. These couplets Chaucer, while using very correct rimes, treated freely. His sentence or clause, though nearly always ending at the end of a line, is by no means coincident with his couplet, and indeed a paragraph break often divides the two verses. Of such freedom there is only one instance in "Palamon and Arcite" (II., 308). The point is that Dryden's thought, although arranged for the most part in the same sort of verse, breaks oftener into couplets, and hence seems more rigid. Moreover, we find in "Palamon and Arcite" no less than 67 triplets, that is, 201 lines, or about nine per cent. of the whole number of verses. There are also many Alexandrines, or verses of six feet (twelve syllables), broken by a pause at the end of the third foot. Neither the five-foot triplet nor the Alexandrine is very common in English; hence their use seems artificial. Dryden, of course, employs them when the idea will not settle into a couplet. The following is an example:

> "This done, he marched away with warlike sound,
> And to his Athens turned with laurels crowned,
> Where happy long he lived, much loved, and more renowned" (I., 162).

The fact that Dryden did not hesitate now and then to pad out a thought to make it fill the measure tends to add to the strained effect which his poem, in comparison with "The Knightes Tale," produces.

The main differences which have been stated are, in different ways, the partial cause of one great difference which remains to be mentioned—the lack of humour in Dryden's poem. Humour is rarely the result of artifice, and in "The Knightes Tale" its quality is marvellous and its fund unfailing. The freshness of Chaucer's ideas, the delicacy of his expression, and his sly manner (with a touch of the man of the world) are the qualities which make a reader continually smile as he peruses the poem. Of this effect there is hardly a trace in "Palamon and Arcite." Where Dryden could take a saying bodily from Chaucer he has done so, as in the case of his inferior

"For women, to the brave an easy prey,
Still follow Fortune where she leads the way" (III., 691),

for Chaucer's

"For wommen, as to speken in comune,
They folwen al the favour of fortune."

But of the manner of Chaucer, of his constant and enlivening humour, Dryden has nothing.

A word may be added about certain other points of dissimilarity, which have little to do with the general effect of the poems. Dryden has frequently cast aside certain ideas of Chaucer, and added bodily ideas of his own. For example, Dryden has omitted from his description of the temple of Mars the following striking figure:

"A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet,
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet."

On the other hand, he has deliberately introduced the

following couplet, which Scott calls "a political sarcasm of the Tory poet":

"Laughed all the powers who favour tyranny,
And all the standing army of the sky" (III., 665).

From an earlier poet, Thomas Carew, he took the following lines:

"Of such a goddess no time leaves record,
Who burned the temple where she was adored" (II., 115).

Such examples merely go to show the freedom of Dryden's methods in retelling the tales. They point to the conclusion that we can hardly judge Dryden as if he were a mere translator; he must be judged on the intrinsic merits and defects of his poem as an original work.

IV. The Merits of Dryden's Treatment of the Story

We have seen that Dryden, taking a narrative poem of Chaucer, and keeping the same situations and characters, retold it at greater length, in a somewhat weakened form, with less simplicity and humour, and more artificiality and conventionality than the original; that he has, in other words, written a poem of considerably less charm than his original. What, then, are the merits of "Palamon and Arcite" which make it the great poem that it undoubtedly is? Setting aside the elements common to both poems, the plot, the characters, and the like, we shall find our answer in the fact that we listen to a great poet telling a story in his own way. Dryden was obviously bound to the manner of his own time,—that he could not escape,—and he was retelling Chaucer's tale for the amusement of his own contemporaries. This fact alone is sufficient explanation for the differences which we have discussed. Now, what of "Palamon and Arcite" itself? What are the merits which arise from Dryden's peculiar treatment?

The chief characteristic is undoubtedly vigour. In spite of the weakening which goes with added length, Dryden never lets the story lag. It moves straight from start to finish. It is not, however, equally strong at all points. Possibly the most glowing part of the poem is the narrative of the tourney, a passage which Scott thought better than Chaucer's account. Lines 574–658 of Book III. certainly present a very vivid picture. The closing lines of the passage are admirable:

" The sound of trumpets to the voice replied,
And round the royal lists the heralds cried,
' Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride! ' "

These and the opening three lines of the passage are excellent examples of how skilful and effective the unnatural triplet became in Dryden's hands. They are much better indications of Dryden's real strength than the emotional speeches and prayers, which, as we have seen, the poet generally weakened. Other good examples of his vigour occur in the narrative of the march against Creon, and in his descriptions of the temples, in those parts especially where he freed himself from his figures of speech and his excessive personification of crimes and misdemeanors and misfortunes. The lines,

" There saw I Mars his ides, the Capitol,
The seer in vain foretelling Caesar's fall;
The last triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who lost the world for love " (II., 604),

are—saving the rimes—as compactly and powerfully written as would be possible.

Dryden's power is also shown in single lines, as in such sounding verses as

" Cheered with the promise of a glorious day " (I., 212),
" And glared like angry lions as they passed " (I., 356),
" The lengthened night gave length of misery " (I., 506),

where one feels that the idea could scarcely have been better put. In his use of the Alexandrine, too, we note his skill, as, for example,

> " Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the place " (II., 575),

and

> " Then grasped the hand he held, and sighed his soul away " (III., 837),

which are distinctly better than would have been the usual five-foot verses, though in these two instances the effect is largely due to alliteration. Best of all are the lines where Dryden had good sense and feeling enough to allow Chaucer's line to stand nearly unaltered:

> " That fields are full of eyes and woods have ears " (II., 72),
> " To make a virtue of necessity " (III., 1079),

and even that much admired pun,

> " Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily " (III., 190).

One couplet,

> " Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,
> And Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury " (II., 148),

though less familiar than Shakspere's

> " At lovers' perjuries, they say, Jove laughs,"

has, according to the compiler of " Familiar Quotations," become a stock phrase in our language.

Other qualities are less striking. Humour, in the relative absence of which we have seen one of the differences between the two poems, is sometimes to be found, and of Dryden's own. For example, speaking of the wisdom of

Ægeus, he says, independently of Chaucer, and as if with a shrug of the shoulders,

> "With words like these the crowd was satisfied;
> And so they would have been, had Theseus died" (III., 885).

Nor are we sure that the lines which have been taken as indicating absurdity on Dryden's part,

> "Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
> For wanting nourishment, he wanted tears" (I., 524),

are to be regarded as altogether serious. Dignity, too, is a quality which we find in many passages, even in the very inappropriate dying speech of Arcite. In spite of its fustian, one feels, after the moralizing farewell to Emily, a good deal of reserve in the knight's commendation of Palamon to his lady (III., 817-829). The subject, however, is hardly worth pursuing; one speedily falls into a discussion of qualities common to both poets, and here Chaucer's superiority is evident.

Possibly in the foregoing discussion there has been implied an unevenness in Dryden's treatment of the story. The fact demands a word. Setting aside any thought of Chaucer, a student feels on reading "Palamon and Arcite" that Dryden is far from being equally good in all ways. Vigorous and dignified as is the poem at its best, there are many places which fall far below the general average of felicity. Such passages, and they are not infrequent, as

> "The prince I mentioned, full of high renown,
> In this array drew near the Athenian town;
> When, in his pomp and utmost of his pride
> Marching, he chanced to cast his eye aside," etc. (I., 37),

are careless, and the verses,

> "For this advantage age from youth has won,
> As not to be outridden, though outrun" (III., 381),

are positively obscure, the worst couplet in the poem. These citations go to show that Dryden probably wrote with a good deal of haste; it was just a year after he contracted to furnish the "Fables" that the volume appeared, with its twelve thousand verses. The conclusion is supported by the large number of free rimes in the poem: in Dryden's time *war* was often made to rime with words like *care*, and *joined* rimed with *trined* represents a usual pronunciation; but *love, move, Palamon, sun, alone* and the like, which we find over and over again, are surely to be regarded as indicative of haste or carelessness. Such instances, however, by force of contrast, emphasize the power of Dryden at his best.

In sum, we find "Palamon and Arcite" to be an excellent story of one of the greatest of English story-tellers, retold by a modern poet, with many changes and weakenings, to be sure, and often carelessly, but also with a freedom, vigour, and life which make it a grand original poem, and we find its author possessed of an appreciation of his master which no man of his time equalled or in any way approached. Dryden gave his people what they would not have cared to get in any other way, for they regarded Chaucer's verse as uncouth and barbarous. That Dryden recognized Chaucer's merit, and changed his original only so far as was necessary to suit contemporary ways of thinking, showed him to be above his contemporaries; and that he produced, out of the recasting, poems in themselves really excellent is a striking proof of his greatness.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

"Palamon and Arcite," or any one of the translations from Chaucer, is, though part of the last work of Dryden's life, the best point from which a young student may begin the study of the poet. Much of Dryden's best work, especially his satires, are so full of allusions to contemporary events as to need a very full commentary for the complete understanding of them. No reader, of course, can avoid being at once impressed by the vigour of "Absalom and Achitophel" or "MacFlecknoe," but really to understand them in all details requires considerable study. In "Palamon and Arcite," the chief difficulty lies in the meaning of particular sentences and words, not in the allusions; and the poem can consequently be read with comparative ease. Again, a story like that of the two Theban knights and Emily is likely to interest the young student more than any other part of Dryden's work.

The method of treating "Palamon and Arcite" need not, in the opinion of the editor, differ from that employed for any of the books prescribed for "reading." He suggests that the pupil should first read the poem somewhat rapidly in three or four lessons, the corresponding recitations being devoted to the explanation and discussion of the text; that in a second reading, occupying about twice as many lessons, he should be taken over the same ground with great attention to detail; and that, in connection with a third reading and with the usual composition writing, his attention should be called to the structure of the narrative and to the main points of Dryden's style. Read-

ing aloud should be encouraged; to do this readily a student need only bear in mind that Dryden elided vowels very freely and that his verse has five accents, the rhythm of which is usually the safest guide for the shortening or lengthening of a word in pronunciation. Pupils who are somewhat mature or have for any reason more time than is usual for their English work will, it is to be hoped, be encouraged to read parts or all of Chaucer's story. A few hours of additional instruction will give a clever boy or girl a sufficiently accurate idea of the pronunciation and enough insight into Chaucer's peculiarities to make the "Canterbury Tales" at least no longer a sealed book for him. All necessary information can be found in Morris and Skeat's edition of "The Knightes Tale" (Clarendon Press). A student wishing a third version of the story, from the dramatic point of view, would do well to glance at John Fletcher's "The Two Noble Kinsmen," a play in which Shakspere may have had a hand.

For further study of Dryden the following works may be cited. As regards his life, the best short account is that of Leslie Stephen, in the "Dictionary of National Biography." Somewhat longer are the memoirs prefixed to Christie's "The Poetical Works of John Dryden" (Globe Edition), and to his "Select Poems by Dryden" (Clarendon Press). The standard life is that of Sir Walter Scott, occupying the first volume of his edition of Dryden's complete works. Saintsbury's "Dryden" (English Men of Letters Series) is also valuable.

As to Dryden's works, the best, and in fact the only complete editions are Scott's and Saintsbury's revision of Scott's (1882). Christie's Globe Edition of the poems is a convenient volume, is probably the most accurate modern text, and has many valuable notes. That, with Malone's "The Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works of John Dryden" (1800), and Congreve's six-volume edition of "The Dramatic Works of John Dryden" (1717), consti-

tutes about the only other method of conveniently getting together all the works of the poet. A small edition of the selected "Essays of John Dryden" has been made by C. D. Yonge.

The most interesting essays on Dryden are, in order of time, that of Johnson in "Lives of the Poets," that of Macaulay, that of Lowell, and that of J. Churton Collins in "Essays and Studies." For Dryden and Chaucer, see Lounsbury's "Chaucer in Literary History," in "Studies in Chaucer," Vol. III. As regards Dryden's place in literary history a student is referred, for various points of view, to Taine's "History of English Literature," Vol. III., T. S. Perry's "English Literature in the Eighteenth Century," Edmund Gosse's "History of Eighteenth Century Literature," Beljame's "Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre," and to Ward's "English Poets," Vol. II. An account of the pronunciation of rime words in Dryden's time is to be found in W. E. Mead's "The Versification of Pope in its Relation to the Seventeenth Century."

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Dryden's Life.	Contemporary Literary and Political History.
1631. Dryden born, August 9th.	1631. Donne and Drayton died.
	1633. George Herbert died.
	1634. Milton's Comus acted.
	1637. Ben Jonson and Dekker died.
	1642. Opening of the civil war between Charles I. and Parliament. Newton born.
	1644. Milton's Areopagitica.
	1649. Execution of Charles I.
1650. Entered Trinity College, Cambridge.	1650. Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest. Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living.
	1653. Walton's The Complete Angler. The Protectorate under Cromwell instituted.
1654. Dryden took his bachelor's degree, January. Erasmus Dryden died.	
1655. Dryden left Cambridge, April (?).	
1657. Dryden took up residence in London.	
1658. Heroic Stanzas on Oliver Cromwell.	1658. Cromwell died.
1660. Astræa Redux.	1660. Restoration of Charles II. Pepys's Diary begun.
	1661. Defoe born.
1663. The Wild Gallant, and The Rival Ladies. Dryden married, December, to Lady Elizabeth Howard.	1663. Butler's Hudibras (Part i.).
1664. The Indian Queen.	1664. Hudibras (Part ii.). Naval war with Holland.
1665. The Indian Emperor (published 1667).	1665. The Plague Year in London.
	1666. The Great Fire of London. Victories over the Dutch. Shirley, last of the Elizabethan dramatists, died.
1667. Annus Mirabilis. Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen (acted). Sir Martin Mar-all. The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island (with Davenant. Published 1668). Essay on Dramatic Poesy.	1667. Paradise Lost. Cowley and Jeremy Taylor died. Swift born.
1668. An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer. Ladies à la Mode.	1668. Davenant died.
1669. Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr.	1669. End of Pepys's Diary.
1670. Dryden made Poet-laureate and Historiographer-royal. The Conquest of Granada (published 1672).	1670. Congreve born.
	1671. Milton's Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes. Buckingham s The Rehearsal.
1672. Marriage à la Mode. The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery.	1672. Steele born. Addison born.
1673. Amboyna.	
1674. The State of Innocence.	1674. Milton died.
1675. Aurungzebe, or the Great Mogul.	
1678. All for Love, or the World Well Lost. Œdipus (with Lee). The Kind Keeper, or Limberham.	1678. Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (Part i.).

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—*Concluded*

Dryden's Life.	Contemporary Literary and Political History.
1679. Troilus and Cressida. Rochester's attack on Dryden.	
1681. The Spanish Friar. Absalom and Achitophel.	1681. Indictment of Shaftesbury.
1682. The Medal. MacFlecknoe. Absalom and Achitophel (Part ii.). Religio Laici, or a Layman's Faith. The Duke of Guise (with Lee).	
1684. Poetical Miscellanies (Part i.).	1684. Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress (Part ii.).
1685. Poetical Miscellanies (Part ii.). Albion and Albanius. Threnodia Augustalis. Dryden became a Roman Catholic.	1685. Death of Charles II. Accession of James II. Insurrection of Monmouth.
1687. The Hind and the Panther.	
1688. Britannia Rediviva.	1688. James II. deposed. Accession of William III. Bunyan died. Alexander Pope born.
	1689. Richardson born. Shadwell made Poet-laureate.
1690. Don Sebastian. Amphitryon.	
1691. King Arthur, or the British Worthy.	
1692. Cleomenes, King of Sparta. Eleonora. Translations of Juvenal and Persius.	
1693. Essay on Satire. Poetical Miscellanies (Part iii.).	
1694. Poetical Miscellanies (Part iv.). Love Triumphant, or Nature Will Prevail (his last play).	
1697. Alexander's Feast. Translation of Virgil (begun 1694).	
	1698. Collier's A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage.
	1699. Addison's Latin Poems.
1700. Fables. Dryden died, May 1st.	

PALAMON AND ARCITE

OR

THE KNIGHT'S TALE

FROM CHAUCER

IN THREE BOOKS

PALAMON AND ARCITE

OR THE KNIGHT'S TALE

BOOK I

In days of old there lived, of mighty fame,
A valiant prince, and Theseus was his name;
A chief who more in feats of arms excelled,
The rising nor the setting sun beheld.
Of Athens he was lord; much land he won,
And added foreign countries to his crown.
In Scythia with the warrior queen he strove,
Whom first by force he conquered, then by love;
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
With whom her sister, fair Emilia, came.
With honour to his home let Theseus ride,
With Love to friend, and Fortune for his guide,
And his victorious army at his side.
I pass their warlike pomp, their proud array,
Their shouts, their songs, their welcome on the way;
But, were it not too long, I would recite
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
Betwixt the hardy queen and hero knight;
The town besieged, and how much blood it cost
The female army and the Athenian host;

7. *Warrior queen,* Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons.

19. *The town besieged.* Uniformity of construction would require "the siege of the town," or "how the town was besieged."

The spousals of Hippolyta the queen;
What tilts and turneys at the feast were seen;
The storm at their return, the ladies' fear:
But these and other things I must forbear.
The field is spacious I design to sow,
With oxen far unfit to draw the plough:
The remnant of my tale is of a length
To tire your patience, and to waste my strength;
And trivial accidents shall be forborne,
That others may have time to take their turn,
As was at first enjoined us by mine host,
That he whose tale is best, and pleases most,
Should win his supper at our common cost.
And therefore where I left, I will pursue
This ancient story, whether false or true,
In hope it may be mended with a new.
The prince I mentioned, full of high renown,
In this array drew near the Athenian town;
When, in his pomp and utmost of his pride
Marching, he chanced to cast his eye aside,
And saw a quire of mourning dames, who lay
By two and two across the common way:
At his approach they raised a rueful cry,
And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high,
Creeping and crying, till they seized at last
His courser's bridle and his feet embraced.

24. *I*, the knight, the chief in rank of the pilgrims to Canterbury.

29. *Accidents*, happenings, occurrences. *Forborne*. Compare *forbear*, line 24.

31. *Mine host*, the proprietor of the Tabard in Southwark, who accompanied the pilgrims to Canterbury and was general director of their story-telling.

36. *Mended with a new*, made better by a story to follow.

39. *Utmost*, highest degree of. Chaucer has "In his moste pryde" (*K. T.*, 37).

41. *Quire*, choir ; a body of people, usually (but not here) singers. *Cf.* II., 313.

46. *Embraced, i.e.*, as suppliants.

"Tell me," said Theseus, "what and whence you are,
And why this funeral pageant you prepare?
Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
To meet my triumph in ill-omened weeds?
Or envy you my praise, and would destroy
With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy?
Or are you injured, and demand relief?
Name your request, and I will ease your grief."
The most in years of all the mourning train
Began; but sounded first away for pain;
Then, scarce recovered, spoke: "Nor envy we
Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory;
'Tis thine, O king, the afflicted to redress,
And fame has filled the world with thy success:
We wretched women sue for that alone,
Which of thy goodness is refused to none;
Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,
If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief;
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
But held the rank of sovereign queen before;
Till, thanks to giddy Chance, which never bears
That mortal bliss should last for length of years,
She cast us headlong from our high estate,
And here in hope of thy return we wait,
And long have waited in the temple nigh,
Built to the gracious goddess Clemency.
But reverence thou the power whose name it bears,
Relieve the oppressed, and wipe the widows' tears.
I, wretched I, have other fortune seen,
The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen:
At Thebes he fell; cursed be the fatal day!
And all the rest thou seest in this array

50. *Weeds*, garments of mourning ; originally, simply garments.
51. *Or*, an archaic or poetic use for "either."
56. *Sounded*, an old form of "swooned."

To make their moan, their lords in battle lost
Before that town besieged by our confederate host.
But Creon, old and impious, who commands
The Theban city, and usurps the lands,
Denies the rites of funeral fires to those
Whose breathless bodies yet he calls his foes.
Unburned, unburied, on a heap they lie;
Such is their fate, and such his tyranny;
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,
But with their lifeless limbs his hounds are fed."
At this she shrieked aloud; the mournful train
Echoed her grief, and grovelling on the plain,
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Besought his pity to her helpless kind.
  The prince was touched, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He sighed; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, so fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty steed he flew,
And raising one by one the suppliant crew,
To comfort each, full solemnly he swore,
That, by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And whate'er else to chivalry belongs,
He would not cease, till he revenged their wrongs;
That Greece should see performed what he declared,
And cruel Creon find his just reward.
He said no more, but shunning all delay
Rode on, nor entered Athens on his way;
But left his sister and his queen behind,
And waved his royal banner in the wind,

79. *To make their moan.* In our modern form of the construction we should omit the *to* of the infinitive, *e.g.*, Thou seest them make their moan.

92. *Kind*, race, kindred. *Cf.* II., 319, 324.

94. *As*, as if.

98. *Crew*, company, assemblage, not necessarily of seamen.

Where in an argent field the God of War
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car;
Red was his sword, and shield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead seemed to glow with fire;
Even the ground glittered where the standard flew,
And the green grass was dyed to sanguine hue.
High on his pointed lance his pennon bore
His Cretan fight, the conquered Minotaur:
The soldiers shout around with generous rage,
And in that victory their own presage.
He praised their ardour, inly pleased to see
His host the flower of Grecian chivalry.
All day he marched, and all the ensuing night,
And saw the city with returning light.
The process of the war I need not tell,
How Theseus conquered, and how Creon fell;
Or after, how by storm the walls were won,
Or how the victor sacked and burned the town;
How to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of their lords in battle slain;
And with what ancient rites they were interred;
All these to fitter time shall be deferred:
I spare the widows' tears, their woful cries,
And howling at their husbands' obsequies;

109. *Argent field, i.e.*, the surface of his banner was white, the argent of heraldry. *God of War*, Mars.

115. *His pennon bore*, etc. "The poet here introduces a distinction well-known in heraldry. The banner [line 108] was a square flag, which only barons of great lineage and power had a right to display. The pennon was a forked streamer borne by a knight: Theseus carried both to the field, each bearing a separate device."—Scott.

116. *Cretan fight.* Theseus's famous fight with the Minotaur in the labyrinth of Minos, in Crete, is referred to.

117. *Generous*, spirited, courageous. *Cf.* III., 443. *Rage*, eagerness, excitement, madness. For construction, *cf.* II., 188.

132. *Howling.* Dryden follows Chaucer in his frequent use of the word. Palamon, for example, "howleth" at the death of Arcite

How Theseus at these funerals did assist,
And with what gifts the mourning dames dismissed.
Thus when the victor chief had Creon slain,
And conquered Thebes, he pitched upon the plain
His mighty camp, and when the day returned,
The country wasted and the hamlets burned,
And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without control to strip and spoil the dead.
There, in a heap of slain, among the rest
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load oppressed
Of slaughtered foes, whom first to death they sent,
The trophies of their strength, a bloody monument.
Both fair, and both of royal blood they seemed,
Whom kinsmen to the crown the heralds deemed;
That day in equal arms they fought for fame;
Their swords, their shields, their surcoats were the same.
Close by each other laid they pressed the ground,
Their manly bosoms pierced with many a grisly wound;
Nor well alive nor wholly dead they were,
But some faint signs of feeble life appear:
The wandering breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulse, and hardly heaved the heart.
These two were sisters' sons; and Arcite one,
Much famed in fields, with valiant Palamon.
From these their costly arms the spoilers rent,
And softly both conveyed to Theseus' tent:

(*K. T.*, 1959. But compare *P. and A.*, III., 848). The word cannot be regarded, as in modern times, as undignified.

133. *Did assist*, was present at as a spectator.

138. *Wasted, burned. He* (I., 136) is the subject.

139. *To rapine bred*, trained or accustomed to plunder and spoil the dead after a battle.

143. *Whom*, the foes. *They*, the youthful knights.

146. *Whom.* The antecedent is *they* of the preceding line.

147. *In equal arms*, in similar armour, here, rather than with equal prowess, as in II., 198.

148. *Surcoats*, loose garments worn by knights over their armour.

158. *Softly*, gently.

Whom, known of Creon's line, and cured with care,
He to his city sent as prisoners of the war;
Hopeless of ransom, and condemned to lie
In durance, doomed a lingering death to die.
  This done, he marched away with warlike sound,
And to his Athens turned with laurels crowned,
Where happy long he lived, much loved, and more renowned.
But in a tower, and never to be loosed,
The woful captive kinsmen are enclosed.
  Thus year by year they pass, and day by day,
Till once ('twas on the morn of cheerful May)
The young Emilia, fairer to be seen
Than the fair lily on the flowery green,
More fresh than May herself in blossoms new
(For with the rosy colour strove her hue),
Waked, as her custom was, before the day,
To do the observance due to sprightly May;
For sprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their sluggard sleep;
Each gentle breast with kindly warmth she moves;
Inspires new flames, revives extinguished loves.
In this remembrance, Emily e'er day
Arose, and dressed herself in rich array;
Fresh as the month, and as the morning fair;
Adown her shoulders fell her length of hair;
A ribband did the braided tresses bind,
The rest was loose, and wantoned in the wind:
Aurora had but newly chased the night,
And purpled o'er the sky with blushing light,
When to the garden-walk she took her way,
To sport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honour of the May.

159. *Known of Creon's line*, known to be related to Creon.
178. *Gentle*, well-born, refined.

At every turn she made a little stand,
And thrust among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the rose; and every rose she drew,
She shook the stalk, and brushed away the dew;
Then party-coloured flowers of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head;
This done, she sung and carolled out so clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear;
Even wondering Philomel forgot to sing,
And learned from her to welcome in the spring.
The tower, of which before was mention made,
Within whose keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and strong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall;
The garden was enclosed within the square,
Where young Emilia took the morning air.
It happened Palamon, the prisoner knight,
Restless for woe, arose before the light,
And with his jailer's leave desired to breathe
An air more wholesome than the damps beneath.
This granted, to the tower he took his way,
Cheered with the promise of a glorious day;
Then cast a languishing regard around,
And saw with hateful eyes the temples crowned
With golden spires, and all the hostile ground.
He sighed, and turned his eyes, because he knew
'Twas but a larger jail he had in view;

202. *Keep*, the strongest and securest part of a castle, generally the highest tower, often containing the rooms of the lord of the castle.

203. *Withal*, also, in addition.

204. "This may mean that the tower and the palace had a party wall in common, or that the tower was part of the outer wall of the palace."—Saintsbury. Chaucer merely says that the tower "was evene Ioynant [closely joined] to the gardin-wal" (*K. T.*, 202).

208. *For*, on account of, because of.

Then looked below, and from the castle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleasing sight:
The garden, which before he had not seen,
In spring's new livery clad of white and green,
Fresh flowers in wide parterres, and shady walks between.
This viewed, but not enjoyed, with arms across
He stood, reflecting on his country's loss;
Himself an object of the public scorn,
And often wished he never had been born.
At last (for so his destiny required),
With walking giddy, and with thinking tired,
He through a little window cast his sight,
Though thick of bars, that gave a scanty light;
But even that glimmering served him to descry
The inevitable charms of Emily.

Scarce had he seen, but, seized with sudden smart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart;
Struck blind with overpowering light he stood,
Then started back amazed, and cried aloud.

Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haste,
To help his friend, and in his arms embraced;
And asked him why he looked so deadly wan,
And whence, and how, his change of cheer began?
Or who had done the offence? "But if," said he,
"Your grief alone is hard captivity,
For love of Heaven with patience undergo
A cureless ill, since Fate will have it so:

222. *Parterres,* flower beds ornamentally arranged, with walks between.

223. *Across,* folded.

224. *His country's loss,* the ruin or destruction of his country.

230. *Thick of bars,* crowded with bars.

232. *Inevitable,* unavoidable, *i.e.*, in their effects.

240. *Cheer,* countenance.

242. Your grief is merely because of your hard captivity.

So stood our horoscope in chains to lie,
And Saturn in the dungeon of the sky,
Or other baleful aspect, ruled our birth,
When all the friendly stars were under earth;
Whate'er betides, by Destiny 'tis done;
And better bear like men than vainly seek to shun."
"Nor of my bonds," said Palamon again,
"Nor of unhappy planets I complain;
But when my mortal anguish caused my cry,
That moment I was hurt through either eye;
Pierced with a random shaft, I faint away,
And perish with insensible decay:
A glance of some new goddess gave the wound,
Whom, like Actæon, unaware I found.
Look how she walks along yon shady space!
Not Juno moves with more majestic grace,
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
If thou art Venus (for thy charms confess
That face was formed in heaven, nor art thou less,
Disguised in habit, undisguised in shape),
O help us captives from our chains to scape!
But if our doom be passed in bonds to lie
For life, and in a loathsome dungeon die,
Then be thy wrath appeased with our disgrace,
And show compassion to the Theban race,
Oppressed by tyrant power!"—While yet he spoke,
Arcite on Emily had fixed his look;
The fatal dart a ready passage found
And deep within his heart infixed the wound:
So that if Palamon were wounded sore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he or more:

245. *Horoscope.* For this word and the astrological references in lines 246–52, see Appendix, III.
261. *Cyprian queen*, Venus.
262. *Confess*, reveal, prove.
266. *Doom*, sentence, judgment.

Then from his inmost soul he sighed, and said,
" The beauty I behold has struck me dead:
Unknowingly she strikes, and kills by chance;
Poison is in her eyes, and death in every glance.
Oh, I must ask; nor ask alone, but move
Her mind to mercy, or must die for love."
Thus Arcite; and thus Palamon replies
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes):
" Speak'st thou in earnest, or in jesting vein? "
" Jesting," said Arcite, " suits but ill with pain."
" It suits far worse," said Palamon again,
And bent his brows, " with men who honour weigh,
Their faith to break, their friendship to betray;
But worst with thee, of noble lineage born,
My kinsman, and in arms my brother sworn.
Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
That one should be the common good of both;
One soul should both inspire, and neither prove
His fellow's hindrance in pursuit of love?
To this before the gods we gave our hands,
And nothing but our death can break the bands.
This binds thee, then, to farther my design,
As I am bound by vow to farther thine;
Nor canst, nor dar'st thou, traitor, on the plain
Appeach my honour, or thy own maintain,
Since thou art of my council, and the friend
Whose faith I trust, and on whose care depend.
And would'st thou court my lady's love, which I
Much rather than release, would choose to die?
But thou, false Arcite, never shalt obtain
Thy bad pretence; I told thee first my pain:

280. *Ask*, ask for mercy.
299. *Plain*, field of battle, lists.
300. *Appeach*, impeach, asperse.
301. *Of my council*, in my confidence, secrets.
306. *Thy bad pretence*, the object of thy bad pretensions, *i.e.*, Emily's hand.

For first my love began e'er thine was born;
Thou as my council, and my brother sworn,
Art bound to assist my eldership of right,
Or justly to be deemed a perjured knight."
Thus Palamon; but Arcite with disdain
In haughty language thus replied again:
" Forsworn thyself: the traitor's odious name
I first return, and then disprove thy claim.
If love be passion, and that passion nursed
With strong desires, I loved the lady first.
Canst thou pretend desire, whom zeal inflamed
To worship, and a power celestial named?
Thine was devotion to the blest above,
I saw the woman, and desired her love;
First owned my passion, and to thee commend
The important secret, as my chosen friend.
Suppose (which yet I grant not) thy desire
A moment elder than my rival fire;
Can chance of seeing first thy title prove?
And know'st thou not, no law is made for love?
Law is to things which to free choice relate;
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;
Laws are not positive; love's power we see
Is Nature's sanction, and her first decree.
Each day we break the bond of human laws
For love, and vindicate the common cause.
Laws for defence of civil rights are placed,
Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waste:
Maids, widows, wives without distinction fall;
The sweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.

309. *Eldership of right*, priority of claim.

315–320. Arcite maintains, with some justice (*cf.* I., 262) and much sophistry, that Palamon loves Emily as a goddess, worshipfully, while he himself loves her as a mortal. Compare his recantation, III., 800–829.

332. *Vindicate the common cause*, uphold the common principle that love is all powerful.

If then the laws of friendship I transgress,
I keep the greater, while I break the less;
And both are mad alike, since neither can possess;
Both hopeless to be ransomed, never more
To see the sun, but as he passes o'er.
Like Æsop's hounds contending for the bone:
Each pleaded right, and would be lord alone;
The fruitless fight continued all the day;
A cur came by and snatched the prize away.
As courtiers therefore justle for a grant,
And when they break their friendship, plead their want,
So thou, if Fortune will thy suit advance,
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance:
For I must love, and am resolved to try
My fate, or failing in the adventure die."
Great was their strife, which hourly was renewed,
Till each with mortal hate his rival viewed:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand;
But when they met, they made a surly stand,
And glared like angry lions as they passed,
And wished that every look might be their last.
It chanced at length, Pirithous came to attend
This worthy Theseus, his familiar friend:
Their love in early infancy began,
And rose as childhood ripened into man,
Companions of the war, and loved so well,
That when one died, as ancient stories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.
But to pursue my tale: to welcome home
His warlike brother is Pirithous come:
Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long since,
And honoured by this young Thessalian prince.
Theseus, to gratify his friend and guest,
Who made our Arcite's freedom his request,

346. *Justle*, jostle, strive. *Grant, i.e.*, of privilege; a boon.
351. *Adventure*, trial, venture. *Cf.* I., 399.

Restored to liberty the captive knight,
But on these hard conditions I recite:
That if hereafter Arcite should be found
Within the compass of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head should pay the forfeit of the offence.
To this Pirithous for his friend agreed,
And on his promise was the prisoner freed.
Unpleased and pensive hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life must pay.
Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchase, and repents too late?
"What have I gained," he said, "in prison pent,
If I but change my bonds for banishment?
And banished from her sight, I suffer more
In freedom than I felt in bonds before;
Forced from her presence, and condemned to live,
Unwelcome freedom, and unthanked reprieve:
Heaven is not but where Emily abides,
And where she's absent, all is hell besides.
Next to my day of birth, was that accursed
Which bound my friendship to Pirithous first:
Had I not known that prince, I still had been
In bondage, and had still Emilia seen:
For though I never can her grace deserve,
'Tis recompense enough to see and serve.
O Palamon, my kinsman and my friend,
How much more happy fates thy love attend!
Thine is the adventure, thine the victory,
Well has thy fortune turned the dice for thee:

382. *Finds his dear purchase*, finds what he has obtained (liberty) bought at a dear price (banishment from Emily). Compare, for construction, *unthanked reprieve* (388).

399. *Adventure*, luck, chance, opportunity (of winning Emily). Chaucer is clearer: "Thyn is the victorie of this aventure" [happening] (*K. T.*, 377).

Thou on that angel's face may'st feed thy eyes,
In prison, no; but blissful paradise!
Thou daily seest that sun of beauty shine,
And lov'st at least in love's extremest line.
I mourn in absence, love's eternal night;
And who can tell but since thou hast her sight,
And art a comely, young, and valiant knight,
Fortune (a various power) may cease to frown,
And by some ways unknown thy wishes crown?
But I, the most forlorn of human kind,
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find;
But doomed to drag my loathsome life in care,
For my reward, must end it in despair.
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates
That governs all, and heaven that all creates,
Nor art, nor Nature's hand can ease my grief;
Nothing but death, the wretch's last relief:
Then farewell youth, and all the joys that dwell
With youth and life, and life itself, farewell!
"But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
Of Fortune, Fate, or Providence complain?
God gives us what he knows our wants require,
And better things than those which we desire:
Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
But, watched by robbers, for their wealth are slain;
Some pray from prison to be freed; and come,
When guilty of their vows, to fall at home;
Murdered by those they trusted with their life,
A favoured servant, or a bosom wife.
Such dear-bought blessings happen every day,
Because we know not for what things to pray.

404. *Extremest line.* This simply means that Palamon can at least see Emily.

412. *Care*, trouble, sorrow. *Cf.* I., 474.

427. *Guilty of their vows.* If, as most editors think, this is a Latinism, "voti reus" (*Æneid*, V., 237), the phrase means "bound by their vows."

Like drunken sots about the streets we roam:
Well knows the sot he has a certain home,
Yet knows not how to find the uncertain place,
And blunders on, and staggers every pace.
Thus all seek happiness; but few can find,
For far the greater part of men are blind.
This is my case, who thought our utmost good
Was in one word of freedom understood:
The fatal blessing came: from prison free,
I starve abroad, and lose the sight of Emily."
Thus Arcite; but if Arcite thus deplore
His sufferings, Palamon yet suffers more.
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He swells with wrath; he makes outrageous moan;
He frets, he fumes, he stares, he stamps the ground;
The hollow tower with clamours rings around:
With briny tears he bathed his fettered feet,
And dropped all o'er with agony of sweat.
"Alas!" he cried, "I, wretch, in prison pine,
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine:
Thou liv'st at large, thou draw'st thy native air,
Pleased with thy freedom, proud of my despair:
Thou mayst, since thou hast youth and courage joined,
A sweet behaviour and a solid mind,
Assemble ours, and all the Theban race,
To vindicate on Athens thy disgrace.
And after, by some treaty made, possess
Fair Emily, the pledge of lasting peace.
So thine shall be the beauteous prize, while I
Must languish in despair, in prison die.

441. *Starve*, perish, not necessarily, as in our modern sense, of hunger.
445. *Outrageous*, passing even the limits of rage or madness.
449. *Dropped*, was bedropped, covered with drops.
457. *Vindicate*, revenge. *Cf.* I., 332.
459. *Lasting peace, i.e.*, between Athens and Thebes.

Thus all the advantage of the strife is thine,
Thy portion double joys, and double sorrows mine."
The rage of jealousy then fired his soul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal:
Now cold despair, succeeding in her stead,
To livid paleness turns the glowing red.
His blood, scarce liquid, creeps within his veins,
Like water which the freezing wind constrains.
Then thus he said: " Eternal Deities,
Who rule the world with absolute decrees,
And write whatever time shall bring to pass
With pens of adamant on plates of brass;
What is the race of human kind your care
Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are?
He with the rest is liable to pain,
And like the sheep, his brother-beast, is slain.
Cold, hunger, prisons, ills without a cure,
All these he must, and guiltless oft, endure;
Or does your justice, power, or prescience fail,
When the good suffer and the bad prevail?
What worse to wretched virtue could befall,
If Fate or giddy Fortune governed all?
Nay, worse than other beasts is our estate:
Them, to pursue their pleasures, you create;
We, bound by harder laws, must curb our will,
And your commands, not our desires, fulfil:
Then, when the creature is unjustly slain,
Yet, after death at least, he feels no pain;
But man, in life surcharged with woe before,
Not freed when dead, is doomed to suffer more.
A serpent shoots his sting at unaware;
An ambushed thief forelays a traveller;

474. *What*, in what.

492. *At unaware*, a now obsolete adverbial phrase meaning simply unawares.

493. *Forelays*, waylays.

The man lies murdered, while the thief and snake,
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
This let divines decide; but well I know,
Just or unjust, I have my share of woe:
Through Saturn seated in a luckless place,
And Juno's wrath that persecutes my race;
Or Mars and Venus in a quartil move
My pangs of jealousy for Arcite's love."
Let Palamon oppressed in bondage mourn,
While to his exiled rival we return.
By this the sun, declining from his height,
The day had shortened to prolong the night:
The lengthened night gave length of misery,
Both to the captive lover and the free:
For Palamon in endless prison mourns,
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns;
The banished never hopes his love to see,
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty.
'Tis hard to say who suffers greater pains;
One sees his love, but cannot break his chains;
One free, and all his motions uncontrolled,
Beholds whate'er he would but what he would behold.
Judge as you please, for I will haste to tell
What fortune to the banished knight befel.
When Arcite was to Thebes returned again,
The loss of her he loved renewed his pain;
What could be worse than never more to see
His life, his soul, his charming Emily?
He raved with all the madness of despair,
He roared, he beat his breast, he tore his hair.

495. *Thrids*, threads.

498. For the astrological allusion here and in line 500, see Appendix, III.

499. For the allusion see Appendix, IV., under *Cadmus*.

518. Here begins the second part of *The Knightes Tale*.

Dry sorrow in his stupid eyes appears,
For wanting nourishment, he wanted tears:
His eyeballs in their hollow sockets sink,
Bereft of sleep; he loathes his meat and drink;
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale spectre of a murdered man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of sapless boxen leaves;
In solitary groves he makes his moan,
Walks early out, and ever is alone;
Nor, mixed in mirth, in youthful pleasure shares,
But sighs when songs and instruments he hears.
His spirits are so low, his voice is drowned;
He hears as from afar, or in a swound,
Like the deaf murmurs of a distant sound:
Uncombed his locks, and squalid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay desire;
But full of useful mopings, which presage
The loss of reason and conclude in rage.
This when he had endured a year or more,
Now wholly changed from what he was before,
It happened once, that, slumbering as he lay,
He dreamt (his dream began at break of day)
That Hermes o'er his head in air appeared,
And with soft words his drooping spirits cheered;
His hat, adorned with wings, disclosed the god,
And in his hand he bore the sleep-compelling rod;
Such as he seemed, when, at his sire's command,
On Argus' head he laid the snaky wand.

531. *Boxen*, of the box-tree; a rather rare adjective, though formed in the same way as "golden" and such common forms.

540. *Trim*, dress, ornament.

542. *Rage*, madness.

550. *Sleep-compelling rod*, the caduceus of Mercury or Hermes was a staff, with two snakes coiled about it, and surmounted by two wings.

"Arise," he said, "to conquering Athens go;
There Fate appoints an end of all thy woe."
The fright awakened Arcite with a start,
Against his bosom bounced his heaving heart;
But soon he said, with scarce recovered breath,
"And thither will I go to meet my death,
Sure to be slain; but death is my desire,
Since in Emilia's sight I shall expire."
By chance he spied a mirror while he spoke,
And gazing there beheld his altered look;
Wondering, he saw his features and his hue
So much were changed, that scarce himself he knew.
A sudden thought then starting in his mind,
"Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
The world may search in vain with all their eyes,
But never penetrate through this disguise.
Thanks to the change which grief and sickness give,
In low estate I may securely live,
And see, unknown, my mistress day by day."
He said, and clothed himself in coarse array,
A labouring hind in show; then forth he went,
And to the Athenian towers his journey bent:
One squire attended in the same disguise,
Made conscious of his master's enterprise.
Arrived at Athens, soon he came to court,
Unknown, unquestioned in that thick resort;
Proffering for hire his service at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.
So fair befel him, that for little gain
He served at first Emilia's chamberlain;

572. *Said*, spoke.

573. *Hind*, servant, or possibly, rustic. *In show*, in appearance.

578. *Thick*, crowded. *Cf.* I., 230.

582. *Chamberlain*, the officer in charge of the apartments of a noble or king.

And, watchful all advantages to spy,
Was still at hand, and in his master's eye;
And, as his bones were big, and sinews strong,
Refused no toil that could to slaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And used his noble hands the wood to hew.
He passed a year at least attending thus
On Emily, and called Philostratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much esteemed, so well beloved as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courtesy was blown:
All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace;
That, exercised within a higher sphere,
His virtues more conspicuous might appear.
Thus by the general voice was Arcite praised,
And by great Theseus to high favour raised;
Among his menial servants first enrolled,
And largely entertained with sums of gold:
Besides what secretly from Thebes was sent,
Of his own income and his annual rent.
This well employed, he purchased friends and fame,
But cautiously concealed from whence it came.
Thus for three years he lived with large increase,
In arms of honour, and esteem in peace;
To Theseus' person he was ever near,
And Theseus for his virtues held him dear.

584. *Still*, ever, always.
587. *Engines*, contrivances, devices.
593. *Condition*, disposition, character.
602. *Largely entertained*, maintained or paid in a liberal manner.

BOOK II

While Arcite lives in bliss, the story turns
Where hopeless Palamon in prison mourns.
For six long years immured, the captive knight
Had dragged his chains, and scarcely seen the light:
Lost liberty and love at once he bore;
His prison pained him much, his passion more:
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wishes to be free from love.
But when the sixth revolving year was run,
And May within the Twins received the sun,
Were it by Chance, or forceful Destiny,
Which forms in causes first whate'er shall be,
Assisted by a friend one moonless night,
This Palamon from prison took his flight:
A pleasant beverage he prepared before
Of wine and honey mixed, with added store
Of opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who swallowed unaware the sleepy draught,
And snored secure till morn, his senses bound
In slumber, and in long oblivion drowned.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert e'er the rising sun.
A thick spread forest near the city lay;
To this with lengthened strides he took his way
(For far he could fly, and feared the day);

10. *The Twins.* See Appendix, III.
12. Which first creates the causes by which all things happen.
18. *Sleepy draught*, draught causing sleep, a frequent idiom in Elizabethan poetry.
22. *Next*, nearest.

Safe from pursuit, he meant to shun the light,
Till the brown shadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.
When to his country come, his next design
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theseus, till he lost his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.
Thus while his thoughts the lingering day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our style;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the snare.
The morning lark, the messenger of day,
Saluted in her song the morning gray;
And soon the sun arose with beams so bright,
That all the horizon laughed to see the joyous sight.
He with his tepid rays the rose renews,
And licks the dropping leaves, and dries the dews;
When Arcite left his bed, resolved to pay
Observance to the month of merry May:
Forth on his fiery steed betimes he rode,
That scarcely prints the turf on which he trod;
At ease he seemed, and, prancing o'er the plains,
Turned only to the grove his horse's reins,
The grove I named before; and, lighting there,
A woodbind garland sought to crown his hair;
Then turned his face against the rising day,
And raised his voice to welcome in the May:
"For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries wear,
If not the first, the fairest of the year:
For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers:

34. *Style*, pen (Latin, *stylus*).
35. *Care*, trouble, misfortune.
42. *Dropping leaves*, leaves which drop moisture. *Cf.* I., 449.
51. *Against*, toward, to greet.

When thy short reign is past, the feverish sun
The sultry tropic fears, and moves more slowly on.
So may thy tender blossoms fear no blight,
Nor goats with venomed teeth thy tendrils bite,
As thou shalt guide my wandering feet to find
The fragrant greens I seek, my brows to bind."
His vows addressed, within the grove he strayed,
Till Fate, or Fortune, near the place conveyed
His steps where secret Palamon was laid.
Full little thought of him the gentle knight,
Who, flying death, had there concealed his flight,
In brakes and brambles hid, and shunning mortal sight;
And less he knew him for his hated foe,
But feared him as a man he did not know.
But as it has been said of ancient years,
That fields are full of eyes and woods have ears;
For this the wise are ever on their guard,
For unforeseen, they say, is unprepared.
Uncautious Arcite thought himself alone,
And less than all suspected Palamon,
Who, listening, heard him, while he searched the grove,
And loudly sung his roundelay of love:
But on the sudden stopped, and silent stood,
As lovers often muse, and change their mood;
Now high as heaven, and then as low as hell,
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well;
For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And seldom shall we see a Friday clear.

58. *The sultry tropic*, the tropic of Cancer, near which, in June, at the time of the summer solstice, the sun apparently moves more slowly than at other seasons.

59. *So . . . as*, in the same manner—in the manner that. *Cf.* II., 154.

65. *Secret*, hidden.

73. *For*, against.

83. *Cheer*, countenance. *Cf.* I., 240.

84. *Friday*, Frigga's day, is a translation of the Latin *Veneris dies*, Venus's day (in French, *Vendredi*).

Thus Arcite having sung, with altered hue
Sunk on the ground, and from his bosom drew
A desperate sigh, accusing Heaven and Fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate:
" Cursed be the day when first I did appear!
Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Lest it pollute the month, and poison all the year.
Still will the jealous queen pursue our race?
Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was:
Yet ceases not her hate; for all who come
From Cadmus are involved in Cadmus' doom.
I suffer for my blood: unjust decree,
That punishes another's crime on me.
In mean estate I serve my mortal foe,
The man who caused my country's overthrow.
This is not all; for Juno, to my shame,
Has forced me to forsake my former name;
Arcite I was, Philostratus I am.
That side of heaven is all my enemy:
Mars ruined Thebes; his mother ruined me.
Of all the royal race remains but one
Beside myself, the unhappy Palamon,
Whom Theseus holds in bonds and will not free;
Without a crime, except his kin to me.
Yet these, and all the rest, I could endure;
But love's a malady without a cure:
Fierce Love has pierced me with his fiery dart,
He fries within, and hisses at my heart.
Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate pursue;
I suffer for the rest, I die for you.

92. *Jealous queen.* Juno, on account of her son, Mars, was a traditional enemy of the Thebans. Appendix, IV., *Cadmus.*

93. *The Theban city was,* an imitation of Virgil's famous phrase, *fuit Ilium, Æneid,* II., 325.

95. *Cadmus' doom.* See Appendix, IV., *Actæon* and *Cadmus.*

113. *My fate pursue,* prosecute the fate of my race.

114. *The rest,* the rest of my race.

Of such a goddess no time leaves record,
Who burned the temple where she was adored:
And let it burn, I never will complain,
Pleased with my sufferings, if you knew my pain."
At this a sickly qualm his heart assailed,
His ears ring inward, and his senses failed.
No word missed Palamon of all he spoke;
But soon to deadly pale he changed his look:
He trembled every limb, and felt a smart,
As if cold steel had glided through his heart;
Nor longer stayed, but starting from his place,
Discovered stood, and showed his hostile face:
"False traitor, Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
Bound by thy sacred oath to seek my good,
Now art thou found forsworn for Emily,
And dar'st attempt her love, for whom I die.
So hast thou cheated Theseus with a wile,
Against thy vow, returning to beguile
Under a borrowed name: as false to me,
So false thou art to him who set thee free.
But rest assured, that either thou shalt die,
Or else renounce thy claim in Emily;
For though unarmed I am, and, freed by chance,
Am here without my sword or pointed lance,
Hope not, base man, unquestioned hence to go,
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe."
Arcite, who heard his tale and knew the man,
His sword unsheathed, and fiercely thus began:
"Now, by the gods who govern heaven above,
Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
That word had been thy last; or in this grove
This hand should force thee to renounce thy love;
The surety which I gave thee I defy:
Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,
And Jove but laughs at lovers' perjury.

141. *Knew*, recognized.

Know, I will serve the fair in thy despite;
But, since thou art my kinsman and a knight,
Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove
Our arms shall plead the titles of our love:
And Heaven so help my right, as I alone
Will come, and keep the cause and quarrel both unknown,
With arms of proof, both for myself and thee;
Choose thou the best, and leave the worst to me.
And, that at better ease thou mayst abide,
Bedding and clothes I will this night provide,
And needful sustenance, that thou mayst be
A conquest better won, and worthy me."
His promise Palamon accepts; but prayed
To keep it better than the first he made.
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn;
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn.
Oh Love! thou sternly dost thy power maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign;
Tyrants and thou all fellowship disdain.
This was in Arcite proved and Palamon:
Both in despair, yet each would love alone.
Arcite returned, and, as in honour tied,
His foe with bedding and with food supplied;
Then, e'er the day, two suits of armour sought,
Which, borne before him, on his steed he brought:
Both were of shining steel, and wrought so pure
As might the strokes of two such arms endure.
Now, at the time, and in the appointed place,
The challenger and challenged, face to face,
Approach; each other from afar they knew,
And from afar their hatred changed their hue.

150. *In thy despite*, stronger than "in spite of thee." *Cf.* II., 361, where the word means "to their own disadvantage."

156. *Arms of proof*, armour of tried quality.

165. *To pawn*, as a pledge.

So stands the Thracian herdsman with his spear,
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,
And hears him rustling in the wood, and sees
His course, at distance, by the bending trees:
And thinks, Here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he must fall in fight, or I:
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
A generous chillness seizes every part,
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.
Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;
None greets, for none the greeting will return;
But in dumb surliness each armed with care
His foe professed, as brother of the war;
Then both, no moment lost, at once advance
Against each other, armed with sword and lance:
They lash, they foin, they pass, they strive to bore
Their corselets, and the thinnest parts explore.
Thus two long hours in equal arms they stood,
And wounded, wound, till both were bathed in blood;
And not a foot of ground had either got,
As if the world depended on the spot.
Fell Arcite like an angry tiger fared,
And like a lion Palamon appeared:
Or as two boars whom love to battle draws,
With rising bristles and with frothy jaws;
Their adverse breasts with tusks oblique they wound;
With grunts and groans the forest rings around.

182. *Hopes*, expects.

188. *Generous*, noble-spirited, courageous. Possibly the phrase *generous chillness* means the coolness of courage, an order allowed in Shaksperian idiom.

191. *None*, neither.

196. *Foin*, thrust.

198. *In equal arms*, with equal prowess.

202. *Fell*, savage. *Fared*, behaved, bore himself; possibly, as in its oldest sense, almost like our colloquial "came on."

206. *Adverse*, opposed to each other.

So fought the knights, and fighting must abide,
Till Fate an umpire sends their difference to decide.
The power that ministers to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what heaven foresees,
Called Providence, or Chance, or fatal sway,
Comes with resistless force, and finds, or makes, her way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united power
One moment can retard the appointed hour;
And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,
Which happened not in centuries of years:
For sure, whate'er we mortals hate or love
Or hope or fear depends on powers above:
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foresight necessitate the will.
In Theseus this appears, whose youthful joy
Was beasts of chase in forests to destroy;
This gentle knight, inspired by jolly May,
Forsook his easy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds pursued his way.
Beside him rode Hippolyta the queen,
And Emily, attired in lively green,
With horns and hounds and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh:
And, as he followed Mars before, so now
He serves the goddess of the silver bow.
The way that Theseus took was to the wood,
Where the two knights in cruel battle stood:
The laund on which they fought, the appointed place
In which the uncoupled hounds began the chase.
Thither forth-right he rode to rouse the prey,
That, shaded by the fern, in harbour lay,

221. *Necessitate*, force, compel.
232. *The goddess of the silver bow*, Diana. See Appendix, IV.
235. *Laund*, glade, not lawn.
237. *Forth-right*, straight.

And thence dislodged, was wont to leave the wood
For open fields, and cross the crystal flood;
Approached, and looking underneath the sun,
He saw proud Arcite and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow;
Like lightning flamed their falchions to and fro,
And shot a dreadful gleam; so strong they strook,
There seemed less force required to fell an oak.
He gazed with wonder on their equal might,
Looked eager on, but knew not either knight.
Resolved to learn, he spurred his fiery steed
With goring rowels to provoke his speed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So soon he was betwixt them on the place;
And, with his sword unsheathed, on pain of life
Commands both combatants to cease their strife;
Then with imperious tone pursues his threat:
"What are you? why in arms together met?
How dares your pride presume against my laws,
As in a listed field to fight your cause,
Unasked the royal grant; no marshal by,
As knightly rites require, nor judge to try?"
Then Palamon, with scarce recovered breath,
Thus hasty spoke: "We both deserve the death,
And both would die; for look the world around,
A pair so wretched is not to be found.
Our life's a load; encumbered with the charge,
We long to set the imprisoned soul at large.
Now, as thou art a sovereign judge, decree
The rightful doom of death to him and me;
Let neither find thy grace, for grace is cruelty.
Me first, oh, kill me first, and cure my woe!
Then sheath the sword of justice on my foe;

245. *Strook*, obsolete preterit of "strike."
265. *Charge*, weight.

Or kill him first, for when his name is heard,
He foremost will receive his due reward.
Arcite of Thebes is he, thy mortal foe,
On whom thy grace did liberty bestow;
But first contracted, that, if ever found
By day or night upon the Athenian ground,
His head should pay the forfeit; see returned
The perjured knight, his oath and honour scorned:
For this is he, who, with a borrowed name
And proffered service, to thy palace came,
Now called Philostratus; retained by thee,
A traitor trusted, and in high degree,
Aspiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.
My part remains; from Thebes my birth I own,
And call myself the unhappy Palamon.
Think me not like that man; since no disgrace
Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.
Know me for what I am: I broke thy chain,
Nor promised I thy prisoner to remain:
The love of liberty with life is given,
And life itself the inferior gift of heaven.
Thus without crime I fled; but farther know,
I, with this Arcite, am thy mortal foe:
Then give me death, since I thy life pursue;
For safeguard of thyself, death is my due.
More wouldst thou know? I love bright Emily,
And for her sake and in her sight will die:
But kill my rival too, for he no less
Deserves; and I thy righteous doom will bless,
Assured that what I lose he never shall possess."
To this replied the stern Athenian prince,
And sourly smiled: "In owning your offence
You judge yourself, and I but keep record
In place of law, while you pronounce the word.
Take your desert, the death you have decreed;
I seal your doom, and ratify the deed:

By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die."
He said; dumb sorrow seized the standers-by.
The queen, above the rest, by nature good
(The pattern formed of perfect womanhood),
For tender pity wept: when she began,
Through the bright quire the infectious virtue ran.
All dropped their tears, even the contended maid;
And thus among themselves they softly said:
" What eyes can suffer this unworthy sight!
Two youths of royal blood, renowned in fight,
The mastership of heaven in face and mind,
And lovers, far beyond their faithless kind:
See their wide streaming wounds; they neither came
From pride of empire nor desire of fame:
Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applause;
But love for love alone, that crowns the lover's cause."
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,
Such pity wrought in every lady's mind,
They left their steeds, and prostrate on the place,
From the fierce king implored the offenders' grace.
He paused a while, stood silent in his mood
(For yet his rage was boiling in his blood);
But soon his tender mind the impression felt.
(As softest metals are not slow to melt
And pity soonest runs in gentle minds.)
Then reasons with himself; and first he finds
His passion cast a mist before his sense,
And either made or magnified the offence.
Offence! Of what? To whom? Who judged the cause?
The prisoner freed himself by Nature's laws;
Born free, he sought his right; the man he freed
Was perjured, but his love excused the deed:
Thus pondering, he looked under with his eyes,
And saw the women's tears, and heard their cries,

318. *Mastership*, masterpiece.
320. *They*, the wounds.
338. *He* (2d), Theseus.
340. *Under*, down.

Which moved compassion more; he shook his head,
And softly sighing to himself he said:
" Curse on the unpardoning prince, whom tears can draw
To no remorse, who rules by lion's law;
And, deaf to prayers, by no submission bowed,
Rends all alike, the penitent and proud! "
At this with look serene he raised his head;
Reason resumed her place, and passion fled.
Then thus aloud he spoke: " The power of Love,
In earth, and seas, and air, and heaven above,
Rules, unresisted, with an awful nod,
By daily miracles declared a god;
He blinds the wise, gives eyesight to the blind;
And moulds and stamps anew the lover's mind.
Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
Freed from my fetters, and in safety gone,
What hindered either in their native soil
At ease to reap the harvest of their toil?
But Love, their lord, did otherwise ordain,
And brought them, in their own despite again,
To suffer death deserved; for well they know
'Tis in my power, and I their deadly foe.
The proverb holds, that to be wise and love,
Is hardly granted to the gods above.
See how the madmen bleed! behold the gains
With which their master, Love, rewards their pains!
For seven long years, on duty every day,
Lo! their obedience, and their monarch's pay!
Yet, as in duty bound, they serve him on;
And, ask the fools, they think it wisely done;
Nor ease nor wealth nor life itself regard;
For 'tis their maxim, love is love's reward.
This is not all: the fair, for whom they strove,
Nor knew before, nor could suspect their love,
Nor thought, when she beheld the fight from far,
Her beauty was the occasion of the war.

But sure a general doom on man is passed,
And all are fools and lovers, first or last:
This, both by others and myself, I know,
For I have served their sovereign long ago;
Oft have been caught within the winding train
Of female snares, and felt the lover's pain,
And learned how far the god can human hearts constrain.
To this remembrance, and the prayers of those
Who for the offending warriors interpose,
I give their forfeit lives, on this accord,
To do me homage as their sovereign lord;
And as my vassals, to their utmost might,
Assist my person and assert my right."
This freely sworn, the knights their grace obtained;
Then thus the king his secret thought explained:
"If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,
Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,
Then either of you knights may well deserve
A princess born; and such is she you serve:
For Emily is sister to the crown,
And but too well to both her beauty known.
But should you combat till you both were dead,
Two lovers cannot share a single bed.
As, therefore, both are equal in degree,
The lot of both be left to destiny.
Now hear the award, and happy may it prove
To her, and him who best deserves her love.
Depart from hence in peace, and free as air,
Search the wide world, and where you please repair;
But on the day when this returning sun
To the same point through every sign has run,
Then each of you his hundred knights shall bring
In royal lists, to fight before the king;

387. *Accord*, agreement.

408. *Every sign*, all of the twelve signs of the zodiac; a year.

410. *In*, into. *Royal lists*, the enclosure provided by the king for the combat.

And then the knight, whom Fate or happy Chance
Shall with his friends to victory advance,
And grace his arms so far in equal fight,
From out the bars to force his opposite,
Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
The prize of valour and of love shall gain;
The vanquished party shall their claim release,
And the long jars conclude in lasting peace.
The charge be mine to adorn the chosen ground,
The theatre of war, for champions so renowned;
And take the patron's place of either knight,
With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
And Heaven of me so judge as I shall judge aright.
If both are satisfied with this accord,
Swear by the laws of knighthood on my sword."
  Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And ravished Arcite seems to touch the sky.
The whole assembled troop was pleased as well,
Extolled the award, and on their knees they fell
To bless the gracious king. The knights, with leave
Departing from the place, his last commands receive;
On Emily with equal ardour look,
And from her eyes their inspiration took.
From thence to Thebes' old walls pursue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.
  It might be deemed, on our historian's part,
Or too much negligence, or want of art,
If he forgot the vast magnificence
Of royal Theseus, and his large expense.
He first enclosed for lists a level ground,
The whole circumference a mile around;

414. *Bars*, barriers.

415. *Recreant*, yielding, the technical adjective for a cowardly knight.

436. Here begins the third part of *The Knightes Tale*, obviously the proper place for the break.

The form was circular; and all without
A trench was sunk, to moat the place about.
Within, an amphitheatre appeared,
Raised in degrees, to sixty paces reared:
That when a man was placed in one degree,
Height was allowed for him above to see.
  Eastward was built a gate of marble white;
The like adorned the western opposite.
A nobler object than this fabric was
Rome never saw, nor of so vast a space:
For, rich with spoils of many a conquered land,
All arts and artists Theseus could command,
Who sold for hire, or wrought for better fame;
The master-painters and the carvers came.
So rose within the compass of the year
An age's work, a glorious theatre.
Then o'er its eastern gate was raised above
A temple, sacred to the Queen of Love;
An altar stood below; on either hand
A priest with roses crowned, who held a myrtle wand.
  The dome of Mars was on the gate opposed,
And on the north a turret was enclosed
Within the wall, of alabaster white
And crimson coral, for the Queen of Night,
Who takes in sylvan sports her chaste delight.
  Within these oratories might you see
Rich carvings, portraitures, and imagery;
Where every figure to the life expressed
The godhead's power to whom it was addressed.
In Venus' temple on the sides were seen
The broken slumbers of enamoured men;

445. *Degrees*, steps.
459. *Queen of Love*, Venus.
462. *Dome*, building, temple.
465. *The Queen of Night*, Diana.
467. *Oratories*, small chapels set apart for prayer.

Prayers that even spoke, and pity seemed to call,
And issuing sighs that smoked along the wall;
Complaints and hot desires, the lover's hell,
And scalding tears that wore a channel where they fell;
And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties
Of love's assurance, and a train of lies,
That, made in lust, conclude in perjuries;
Beauty, and Youth, and Wealth, and Luxury,
And sprightly Hope, and short-enduring Joy,
And Sorceries, to raise the infernal powers,
And Sigils framed in planetary hours;
Expense, and After-thought, and idle Care,
And Doubts of motley hue, and dark Despair;
Suspicions, and fantastical Surmise,
And Jealousy suffused, with jaundice in her eyes,
Discolouring all she viewed, in tawny dressed,
Down-looked, and with a cuckow on her fist.
Opposed to her, on the other side advance
The costly feast, the carol, and the dance,
Minstrels and music, poetry and play,
And balls by night, and tournaments by day.
All these were painted on the wall, and more;
With acts and monuments of times before,
And others added by prophetic doom,
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:
For there the Idalian mount, and Citheron,
The court of Venus, was in colours drawn;
Before the palace gate, in careless dress
And loose array, sat portress Idleness;
There, by the fount, Narcissus pined alone;
There Samson was, with wiser Solomon,
And all the mighty names by love undone.

478. *Of love's assurance*, of love's guaranteeing.
483. *Sigils*, seals stamped with signs of the planets.
487. *Suffused*, suffused with colour.
489. *Down-looked*, with eyes moodily cast down. *Cuckow.* The cuckoo was a type of deception. *On her fist. Cf.* III., 88.

Medea's charms were there; Circean feasts,
With bowls that turned enamoured youths to beasts.
Here might be seen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,
And prowess to the power of love submit;
The spreading snare for all mankind is laid,
And lovers all betray, and are betrayed.
The goddess' self some noble hand had wrought;
Smiling she seemed, and full of pleasing thought;
From ocean as she first began to rise,
And smoothed the ruffled seas, and cleared the skies;
She trod the brine, all bare below the breast,
And the green waves but ill concealed the rest:
A lute she held; and on her head was seen
A wreath of roses red and myrtles green;
Her turtles fanned the buxom air above;
And by his mother stood an infant Love,
With wings unfledged; his eyes were banded o'er,
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore,
Supplied with arrows bright and keen, a deadly store.
But in the dome of mighty Mars the red
With different figures all the sides were spread;
This temple, less in form, with equal grace,
Was imitative of the first in Thrace;
For that cold region was the loved abode
And sovereign mansion of the warrior god.
The landscape was a forest wide and bare,
Where neither beast nor human kind repair;
The fowl that scent afar the borders fly,
And shun the bitter blast, and wheel about the sky.
A cake of scurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly stubs, instead of trees, are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deformed and old,
Headless the most, and hideous to behold;

519. *Turtles*, turtle-doves. *Buxom*, yielding, pliant.
534. *Scurf*, thin scales of skin, or scabs.
536. *Knares*, knots, twists.

A rattling tempest through the branches went,
That stripped them bare, and one sole way they bent.
Heaven froze above severe, the clouds congeal,
And through the crystal vault appeared the standing hail.
Such was the face without: a mountain stood
Threatening from high, and overlooked the wood:
Beneath the lowering brow, and on a bent,
The temple stood of Mars armipotent;
The frame of burnished steel, that cast a glare
From far, and seemed to thaw the freezing air.
A straight long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls, and horror over head;
Thence issued such a blast and hollow roar
As threatened from the hinge to heave the door;
In through that door a northern light there shone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none.
The gate was adamant; eternal frame!
Which, hewed by Mars himself, from Indian quarries came,
The labour of a god; and all along
Tough iron plates were clenched to make it strong.
A tun about was every pillar there;
A polished mirror shone not half so clear.
There saw I how the secret felon wrought,
And treason labouring in the traitor's thought,
And midwife Time the ripened plot to murder brought.
There the red Anger dared the pallid Fear;
Next stood Hypocrisy, with holy leer,
Soft, smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown;

541. *Standing.* It should be borne in mind that these things are all representations by painting or sculpture.
542. *Face*, appearance.
544. *Bent*, a slope, a declivity.
545. *Armipotent*, strong in martial arms.
549. *Blind*, without access of light.
558. *Tun*, a huge cask.

The assassinating wife, the household fiend;
And, far the blackest there, the traitor-friend.
On the other side there stood Destruction bare,
Unpunished Rapine, and a waste of war;
Contest with sharpened knives in cloisters drawn,
And all with blood bespread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul disgrace,
And bawling infamy, in language base;
Till sense was lost in sound, and silence fled the place.
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,
The gore congealed was clottered in his hair;
With eyes half closed and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim as when he breathed his sullen soul away.
In midst of all the dome, Misfortune sate,
And gloomy Discontent, and fell Debate,
And Madness laughing in his ireful mood;
And armed Complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murdered corpse, in covert laid,
And violent death in thousand shapes displayed;
The city to the soldier's rage resigned;
Successless wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forced on rocky shores,
And the rash hunter strangled by the boars:
The new-born babe by nurses overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All ills of Mars his nature, flame and steel:
The gasping charioteer beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruined house that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls:
The whole division that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in steel for gains

577. *Clottered*, clotted.
583. *On*, of, against.
590. *Overlaid*, smothered by lying upon.
592. *Mars his nature*, Mars's. By Dryden and his contemporaries the possessive with the apostrophe was erroneously supposed to be a syncopation of the noun with "his."

Were there: the butcher, armourer, and smith,
Who forges sharpened falchions, or the scythe.
The scarlet conquest on a tower was placed,
With shouts and soldiers' acclamations graced:
A pointed sword hung threatening o'er his head,
Sustained but by a slender twine of thread.
There saw I Mars his ides, the Capitol,
The seer in vain foretelling Cæsar's fall;
The last triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Antony, who lost the world for love.
These, and a thousand more, the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted e'er the men were born,
All copied from the heavens, and ruling force
Of the red star, in his revolving course.
The form of Mars high on a chariot stood,
All sheathed in arms, and gruffly looked the god;
Two geomantic figures were displayed
Above his head, a warrior and a maid,
One when direct, and one when retrograde.
Tired with deformities of death, I haste
To the third temple of Diana chaste.
A sylvan scene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the sides, and on the midst a lawn;
The silver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Pursued the flying deer, the woods with horns resound:
Calisto there stood manifest of shame,
And, turned a bear, the northern star became:

600. *Scarlet conquest*, blood-stained trophy (thing conquered). Since Chaucer, however, personifies the word conquest, we may take *conquest* in the sense of "conquistor" (conqueror), and thus account for *his* in line 602.

611. *The red star*, the planet Mars.

614. *Geomantic figures*, see Appendix, III.

621. *Cynthia*, Diana.

623. *Manifest of shame*, convicted, detected of shame, a Latinism.

Her son was next, and, by peculiar grace,
In the cold circle held the second place;
The stag Actæon in the stream had spied
The naked huntress, and for seeing died;
His hounds, unknowing of his change, pursue
The chase, and their mistaken master slew.
Peneian Daphne, too, was there to see,
Apollo's love before, and now his tree.
The adjoining fane the assembled Greeks expressed,
And hunting of the Calydonian beast;
Œnides' valour, and his envied prize;
The fatal power of Atalanta's eyes;
Diana's vengeance on the victor shown,
The murderess mother, and consuming son;
The Volscian queen extended on the plain,
The treason punished, and the traitor slain.
The rest were various huntings, well designed,
And savage beasts destroyed, of every kind.
The graceful goddess was arrayed in green;
About her feet were little beagles seen,
That watched with upward eyes the motions of their queen.
Her legs were buskined, and the left before,
In act to shoot; a silver bow she bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a wexing moon, that soon would wane,
And, drinking borrowed light, be filled again;
With downcast eyes, as seeming to survey
The dark dominions, her alternate sway.

626. *Cold circle, i.e.*, of the north, the Arctic circle. See Appendix, IV., *Calisto*.

630. *Mistaken*, whom the hounds had mistaken.

635. *Envied prize*, the head and hide of the boar. See Appendix, IV., *Atalanta* and *Œnides*.

639. *The Volscian queen*, Camilla.

649. *Wexing*, waxing, growing.

652. *The dark dominions*, Hades, the *alternate sway* or realm over which Diana, as Proserpina or Hecate, ruled alternately with the sky.

Before her stood a woman in her throes,
And called Lucina's aid, her burden to disclose.
All these the painter drew with such command,
That Nature snatched the pencil from his hand,
Ashamed and angry that his art could feign,
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theseus beheld the fanes of every god,
And thought his mighty cost was well bestowed.
So princes now their poets should regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.
The theatre thus raised, the lists enclosed,
And all with vast magnificence disposed,
We leave the monarch pleased, and haste to bring
The knights to combat, and their arms to sing.

654. *Lucina*, Diana.
658. *Mend*, improve upon, add to, surpass.
661-662. These lines are introduced by Dryden.

BOOK III

The day approached when Fortune should decide
The important enterprise, and give the bride;
For now the rivals round the world had sought,
And each his number, well appointed, brought.
The nations far and near contend in choice,
And send the flower of war by public voice;
That after or before were never known
Such chiefs, as each an army seemed alone:
Beside the champions, all of high degree,
Who knighthood loved, and deeds of chivalry,
Thronged to the lists, and envied to behold
The names of others, not their own, enrolled.
Nor seems it strange; for every noble knight,
Who loves the fair, and is endued with might,
In such a quarrel would be proud to fight.
There breathes not scarce a man on British ground
(An isle for love and arms of old renowned)
But would have sold his life to purchase fame,
To Palamon or Arcite sent his name;
And had the land selected of the best,
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the rest.
A hundred knights with Palamon there came,
Approved in fight, and men of mighty name;
Their arms were several, as their nations were,
But furnished all alike with sword and spear.

16–19. The idea is clear, though the syntax is difficult.

20, 21. And if England had selected her best men, half of the men in the tourney would have come from England and the world at large would have provided the rest. The idea is Dryden's, not Chaucer's.

24. *Several*, of various kinds.

Some wore coat armour, imitating scale,
And next their skins were stubborn shirts of mail;
Some wore a breastplate and a light juppon,
Their horses clothed with rich caparison;
Some for defence would leathern bucklers use
Of folded hides, and others shields of Pruce.
One hung a pole-axe at his saddle-bow,
And one a heavy mace to stun the foe;
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With jambeux armed, and double plates of steel;
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a sleeve embroidered by his love.
With Palamon above the rest in place,
Lycurgus came, the surly king of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face:
The balls of his broad eyes rolled in his head,
And glared betwixt a yellow and a red;
He looked a lion with a gloomy stare,
And o'er his eyebrows hung his matted hair;
Big-boned and large of limbs, with sinews strong,
Broad-shouldered, and his arms were round and long.
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian use of old)
Were yoked to draw his car of burnished gold.
Upright he stood, and bore aloft his shield,
Conspicuous from afar, and overlooked the field.
His surcoat was a bear-skin on his back;
His hair hung long behind, and glossy raven-black.
His ample forehead bore a coronet,
With sparkling diamonds and with rubies set.
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, snowy fair,
And tall as stags, ran loose, and coursed around his chair,
A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear;

28. *Juppon*, a short, tight-fitting coat.
31. *Pruce*, Prussia.
35. *Jambeux*, leg-armour (from the French).
57. *Pards*, leopards.

With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the same their necks surround.
Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.
To match this monarch, with strong Arcite came
Emetrius, king of Inde, a mighty name!
On a bay courser, goodly to behold,
The trappings of his horse embossed with barbarous gold.
Not Mars bestrode a steed with greater grace;
His surcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorned with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His saddle was of gold, with emeralds set;
His shoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and sparkling as the fire;
His amber-coloured locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and shone against the sun.
His nose was aquiline, his eyes were blue,
Ruddy his lips, and fresh and fair his hue;
Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,
Whose dusk set off the whiteness of the skin.
His awful presence did the crowd surprise,
Nor durst the rash spectator meet his eyes;
Eyes that confessed him born for kingly sway,
So fierce, they flashed intolerable day.
His age in nature's youthful prime appeared,
And just began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he spoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a silver sound;
A laurel wreathed his temples, fresh and green,
And myrtle sprigs, the marks of love, were mixed between.

67. *Cloth of Thrace.* Chaucer has "cloth of Tars," *i.e.*, Tarsus, in Syria (*K. T.*, 1302), a kind of silk.

68. *Orient*, lustrous, pellucid.

82. *Prime*, first period, hence the most perfect. Chaucer says more specifically, "Of five and twenty yeer his age I caste [reckon]" (*K. T.*, 1314).

Upon his fist he bore, for his delight,
An eagle well reclaimed, and lily white.
His hundred knights attend him to the war,
All armed for battle; save their heads were bare.
Words and devices blazed on every shield,
And pleasing was the terror of the field.
For kings, and dukes, and barons you might see,
Like sparkling stars, though different in degree,
All for the increase of arms, and love of chivalry.
Before the king tame leopards led the way,
And troops of lions innocently play.
So Bacchus through the conquered Indies rode,
And beasts in gambols frisked before their honest god.
In this array, the war of either side
Through Athens passed with military pride.
At prime they entered on the Sunday morn;
Rich tapestry spread the streets, and flowers the pots adorn.
The town was all a jubilee of feasts;
So Theseus willed in honour of his guests;
Himself with open arms the kings embraced,
Then all the rest in their degrees were graced.
No harbinger was needful for the night,
For every house was proud to lodge a knight.
I pass the royal treat, nor must relate
The gifts bestowed, nor how the champions sate;

89. *Reclaimed*, tamed.

90. *His*, possibly Arcite's, not Emetrius's.

96. *Increase of arms*, the encouragement of warlike games.

100. *Honest*, in the sense of the Latin *honestus*, noble, splendid.

101. *War*, forces, army.

103. *Prime*, the first quarter of the day, reckoned from sunrise to sunset, and varying with the different seasons.

104. *Pots*. The first edition reads *pots*, later editions, *posts*, on the supposition that the former was a misprint for the latter. *Pots*, however, makes as good sense as *posts*.

109. *Harbinger*, a messenger who goes before a king or noble to obtain lodgings.

Who first, who last, or how the knights addressed
Their vows, or who was the fairest at the feast;
Whose voice, whose graceful dance did most surprise;
Soft amorous sighs, and silent love of eyes.
The rivals call my Muse another way,
To sing their vigils for the ensuing day.
'Twas ebbing darkness, past the noon of night,
And Phosphor, on the confines of the light,
Promised the sun; e'er day began to spring,
The tuneful lark already stretched her wing,
And flickering on her nest, made short essays to sing,
When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took to the royal lists his early way,
To Venus at her fane, in her own house, to pray.
There, falling on his knees before her shrine,
He thus implored with prayers her power divine:
" Creator Venus, genial power of love,
The bliss of men below, and gods above!
Beneath the sliding sun thou runn'st thy race,
Dost fairest shine, and best become thy place.
For thee the winds their eastern blasts forbear,
Thy month reveals the spring, and opens all the year.
Thee, Goddess, thee the storms of winter fly;
Earth smiles with flowers renewing, laughs the sky,
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.
For thee the lion loathes the taste of blood,
And roaring hunts his female through the wood;
For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
And tempt the stream, and snuff their absent loves.
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleasant, good, or fair;
All nature is thy province, life thy care;
Thou mad'st the world, and dost the world repair.

124. *Preventing*, going before, anticipating.
129. *Genial*, productive of life, creating.
131. Venus was supposed to occupy the third, the sun the fourth, or the next in order, of the crystalline spheres. *Cf.* l. 168.

Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron,
Increase of Jove, companion of the sun,
If e'er Adonis touched thy tender heart,
Have pity, Goddess, for thou know'st the smart!
Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
To vent my sorrow would be some relief;
Light sufferings give us leisure to complain;
We groan, but cannot speak, in greater pain.
O Goddess, tell thyself what I would say!
Thou know'st it, and I feel too much to pray.
So grant my suit, as I enforce my might,
In love to be thy champion and thy knight,
A servant to thy sex, a slave to thee,
A foe professed to barren chastity;
Nor ask I fame or honour of the field,
Nor choose I more to vanquish than to yield:
In my divine Emilia make me blest,
Let fate or partial chance dispose the rest:
Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
Possession, more than conquest, is my care.
Mars is the warrior's god; in him it lies
On whom he favours to confer the prize;
With smiling aspect you serenely move
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
The Fates but only spin the coarser clue,
The finest of the wool is left for you.
Spare me but one small portion of the twine,
And let the Sisters cut below your line:

145. *Gladder*, a noun.

146. *Increase*, offspring.

168. *Fifth orb.* According to the Ptolemaic system, which Chaucer followed, the chief heavenly bodies were placed each in a separate sphere, encircling the sphere of the earth. That of Venus, however, was the third sphere.

172. *The Sisters*, the three Fates.

Cut below your line. Cut of the thread of my life, no part which is devoted to you.

The rest among the rubbish may they sweep,
Or add it to the yarn of some old miser's heap.
But if you this ambitious prayer deny
(A wish, I grant, beyond mortality),
Then let me sink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
And, I once dead, let him possess her charms."
Thus ended he; then, with observance due,
The sacred incense on her altar threw:
The curling smoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious Goddess gave the sign,
Her statue shook, and trembled all the shrine:
Pleased Palamon the tardy omen took;
For, since the flames pursued the trailing smoke,
He knew his boon was granted, but the day
To distance driven, and joy adjourned with long delay.
Now morn with rosy light had streaked the sky,
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily;
Addressed her early steps to Cynthia's fane,
In state attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the vests that holy rites require,
Incense, and odorous gums, and covered fire.
The plenteous horns with pleasant mead they crown,
Nor wanted aught besides in honour of the Moon.
Now, while the temple smoked with hallowed steam,
They wash the virgin in a living stream;
The secret ceremonies I conceal,
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful, to reveal:
But such they were as pagan use required,
Performed by women when the men retired,
Whose eyes profane their chaste mysterious rites
Might turn to scandal or obscene delights.

187, 188. The day of the fulfilment of his hopes was postponed for a long time.

193. *Vests*, vestments.

196. *The Moon*, Diana.

200. *Uncouth*, unknown, secret.

Well-meaners think no harm; but for the rest,
Things sacred they pervert, and silence is the best.
Her shining hair, uncombed, was loosely spread,
A crown of mastless oak adorned her head:
When to the shrine approached, the spotless maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid
(The rites were such as were observed of old,
By Statius in his Theban story told),
Then kneeling with her hands across her breast,
Thus lowly she preferred her chaste request:
"O Goddess, haunter of the woodland green,
To whom both heaven and earth the seas are seen;
Queen of the nether skies, where half the year
Thy silver beams descend, and light the gloomy sphere;
Goddess of maids, and conscious of our hearts,
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts
Which Niobe's devoted issue felt,
When hissing through the skies the feathered deaths were dealt:
As I desire to live a virgin life,
Nor know the name of mother or of wife.
Thy votress from my tender years I am,
And love, like thee, the woods and sylvan game.
Like death, thou know'st, I loathe the nuptial state,
And man, the tyrant of our sex, I hate,
A lowly servant, but a lofty mate;
Where love is duty on the female side,
On theirs mere sensual gust, and sought with surly pride.
Now by thy triple shape, as thou art seen
In heaven, earth, hell, and everywhere a queen,

208. *Mastless*, bearing no acorns.

217. *Queen of the nether skies.* *Cf.* II., 652.

229. *Servant*, the technical term in Chaucer's time for lover. *Serve* and *servant* are nearly always used in this sense in *Palamon and Arcite*.

Lofty, proud, haughty. 231. *Gust*, taste, appetite.

233. *In heaven*, as the moon; on earth, as the huntress; in hell, as Proserpina or Hecate.

Grant this my first desire; let discord cease,
And make betwixt the rivals lasting peace:
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
The flame, and turn it on some other love.
Or if my frowning stars have so decreed,
That one must be rejected, one succeed,
Make him my lord within whose faithful breast
Is fixed my image, and who loves me best.
But, oh! even that avert! I choose it not,
But take it as the least unhappy lot.
A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;
Oh, let me still that spotless name retain!
Frequent the forests, thy chaste will obey,
And only make the beasts of chase my prey!"
The flames ascend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameless maid addressed her prayer.
When lo! the burning fire that shone so bright
Flew off, all sudden, with extinguished light,
And left one altar dark, a little space,
Which turned self-kindled, and renewed the blaze;
That other victor-flame a moment stood,
Then fell, and lifeless left the extinguished wood;
For ever lost, the irrevocable light
Forsook the blackening coals, and sunk to night:
At either end it whistled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, so dropped the dew,
Infected as it fell with sweat of sanguine hue.
The maid from that ill omen turned her eyes,
And with loud shrieks and clamours rent the skies;
Nor knew what signified the boding sign,
But found the powers displeased, and feared the wrath divine.
Then shook the sacred shrine, and sudden light
Sprung through the vaulted roof, and made the temple bright,
The Power, behold! the Power in glory shone,
By her bent bow and her keen arrows known;

The rest, a huntress issuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel spear she stood.
Then gracious thus began: "Dismiss thy fear,
And Heaven's unchanged decrees attentive hear:
More powerful gods have torn thee from my side,
Unwilling to resign, and doomed a bride;
The two contending knights are weighed above;
One Mars protects, and one the Queen of Love:
But which the man is in the Thunderer's breast,
This he pronounced, 'Tis he who loves thee best.'
The fire that, once extinct, revived again
Foreshows the love allotted to remain.
Farewell!" she said, and vanished from the place;
The sheaf of arrows shook, and rattled in the case.
Aghast at this, the royal virgin stood,
Disclaimed, and now no more a sister of the wood:
But to the parting goddess thus she prayed:
"Propitious still, be present to my aid,
Nor quite abandon your once favoured maid."
Then sighing she returned; but smiled betwixt,
With hopes, and fears, and joys with sorrows mixed.
The next returning planetary hour
Of Mars, who shared the heptarchy of power,
His steps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
To adore with pagan rites the power armipotent:

269. Aside from the symbol of the bent bow and keen arrows, Diana appeared merely "a huntress issuing from the wood."

277. *Thunderer*, Jupiter.

284. *A sister of the wood*. *Cf.* 244–247 above.

288. *Betwixt*, "between times," now and then.

290. *The next returning planetary hour of Mars*, by the rotation of the "heptarchy of power" (291), *i.e.*, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon; the time has been figured out to be three hours after sunrise on Monday. For a full explanation see Skeat, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, V. p. 86.

Considering Arcite's speech in I., 315–320, one would think that Arcite would have paid observance to Venus, Palamon to Mars.

Then prostrate, low before his altar lay,
And raised his manly voice, and thus began to pray:
"Strong God of Arms, whose iron sceptre sways
The freezing North, and Hyperborean seas,
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's wintry coast,
Where stand thy steeds, and thou art honoured most:
There most, but everywhere thy power is known,
The fortune of the fight is all thy own:
Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung
From out thy chariot, withers even the strong;
And disarray and shameful rout ensue,
And force is added to the fainting crew.
Acknowledged as thou art, accept my prayer!
If aught I have achieved deserve thy care,
If to my utmost power with sword and shield
I dared the death, unknowing how to yield,
And falling in my rank, still kept the field;
Then let my arms prevail, by thee sustained,
That Emily by conquest may be gained.
Have pity on my pains; nor those unknown
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own.
Venus, the public care of all above,
Thy stubborn heart has softened into love:
By those dear pleasures, aid my arms in fight,
And make me conquer in my patron's right:
For I am young, a novice in the trade,
The fool of love, unpractised to persuade,
And want the soothing arts that catch the fair,
But, caught myself, lie struggling in the snare;
And she I love or laughs at all my pain,
Or knows her worth too well, and pays me with disdain.
For sure I am, unless I win in arms,
To stand excluded from Emilia's charms:
Nor can my strength avail, unless, by thee
Endued with force, I gain the victory;

Then for the fire which warmed thy generous heart,
Pity thy subject's pains and equal smart.
So be the morrow's sweat and labour mine,
The palm and honour of the conquest thine:
Then shall the war, and stern debate, and strife
Immortal be the business of my life;
And in thy fane, the dusty spoils among,
High on the burnished roof, my banner shall be hung,
Ranked with my champions' bucklers; and below,
With arms reversed, the achievements of my foe;
And while these limbs the vital spirit feeds,
While day to night, and night to day succeeds,
Thy smoking altar shall be fat with food
Of incense and the grateful steam of blood;
Burnt-offerings morn and evening shall be thine,
And fires eternal in thy temple shine.
This bush of yellow beard, this length of hair,
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,
Guiltless of steel, and from the razor free,
Shall fall, a plenteous crop, reserved for thee.
So may my arms with victory be blest,
I ask no more; let Fate dispose the rest."

The champion ceased; there followed in the close
A hollow groan; a murmuring wind arose;
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring sound, and harshly rung:
The bolted gates flew open at the blast,
The storm rushed in, and Arcite stood aghast:
The flames were blown aside, yet shone they bright,
Fanned by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.

Then from the ground a scent began to rise,
Sweet smelling as accepted sacrifice:

329. *For*, in the name of. *Generous*. Compare the other instances of the word, II., 188 ; III., 437.

338. *Achievements*, armorial bearings.

351. *Close*, the enclosed space.

This omen pleased, and, as the flames aspire,
With odorous incense Arcite heaps the fire:
Nor wanted hymns to Mars or heathen charms:
At length the nodding statue clashed his arms,
And with a sullen sound and feeble cry,
Half sunk and half pronounced the word of Victory.
For this, with soul devout, he thanked the God,
And, of success secure, returned to his abode.
These vows, thus granted, raised a strife above
Betwixt the God of War and Queen of Love.
She, granting first, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.
Jove was for Venus; but he feared his wife,
And seemed unwilling to decide the strife;
Till Saturn from his leaden throne arose,
And found a way the difference to compose:
Though sparing of his grace, to mischief bent,
He seldom does a good with good intent.
Wayward, but wise; by long experience taught,
To please both parties, for ill ends, he sought;
For this advantage age from youth has won,
As not to be outridden, though outrun.
By fortune he was now to Venus trined,
And with stern Mars in Capricorn was joined:
Of him disposing in his own abode,
He soothed the Goddess, while he gulled the God:
"Cease, daughter, to complain; and stint the strife;
Thy Palamon shall have his promised wife:
And Mars, the lord of conquest, in the fight
With palm and laurel shall adorn his knight.

366. *Half sunk*, half suppressed.

375. *Leaden*. Lead was the planetary metal of Saturn.

382. Chaucer is much clearer: "Men may the olde at-renne [outrun], and noght at-rede [surpass in counsel]" (*K. T.*, 1591).

383. *Trined*. For the astrological reference in this line and lines 384, 385, 395, 396, 400, 404, and 412, see Appendix, III.

387. *Stint*, restrain within definite limits, stop.

Wide is my course, nor turn I to my place
Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.
Man feels me, when I press the etherial plains;
My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.
Mine is the shipwreck in a watery sign;
And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.
Cold shivering agues, melancholy care,
And bitter blasting winds, and poisoned air,
Are mine, and wilful death, resulting from despair.
The throttling quinsy 'tis my star appoints,
And rheumatisms I send to rack the joints:
When churls rebel against their native prince,
I arm their hands, and furnish the pretence;
And housing in the lion's hateful sign,
Bought senates and deserting troops are mine.
Mine is the privy poisoning; I command
Unkindly seasons and ungrateful land.
By me kings' palaces are pushed to ground,
And miners crushed beneath their mines are found.
'Twas I slew Samson, when the pillared hall
Fell down, and crushed the many with the fall.
My looking is the sire of pestilence,
That sweeps at once the people and the prince.
Now weep no more, but trust thy grandsire's art;
Mars shall be pleased, and thou perform thy part.
'Tis ill, though different your complexions are,
The family of Heaven for men should war."
The expedient pleased, where neither lost his right;
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.

402. "This line, containing a political allusion, is Dryden's exclusively. In Chaucer's time, the 'churls' rebellion' excited the dreadful remembrance of the insurrection of Jack Straw in England, and that in France called the Jacquerie, both recent events."—Scott.

416. *Complexions*, temperaments; of these there were supposed to be four: the choleric, the sanguine, the phlegmatic, and the melancholic.

419. Arcite was to win in the fight, but Palamon to win Emily.

The management they left to Chronos' care.
Now turn we to the effect, and sing the war.
In Athens, all was pleasure, mirth, and play,
All proper to the spring, and sprightly May:
Which every soul inspired with such delight,
'Twas justing all the day, and love at night.
Heaven smiled, and gladded was the heart of man;
And Venus had the world, as when it first began.
At length in sleep their bodies they compose,
And dreamt the future fight, and early rose.
Now scarce the dawning day began to spring,
As at a signal given, the streets with clamours ring:
At once the crowd arose; confused and high,
Even from the heaven was heard a shouting cry,
For Mars was early up, and roused the sky.
The gods came downward to behold the wars,
Sharpening their sights, and leaning from their stars.
The neighing of the generous horse was heard,
For battle by the busy groom prepared:
Rustling of harness, rattling of the shield,
Clattering of armour, furbished for the field.
Crowds to the castle mounted up the street,
Battering the pavement with their coursers' feet:
The greedy sight might there devour the gold
Of glittering arms, too dazzling to behold:
And polished steel that cast the view aside,
And crested morions, with their plumy pride.
Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,
In gaudy liveries march, and quaint attires.

420. *Chronos.* The spelling of the Folio for Cronos.
421. *The effect*, the result of this deliberation.
422. Here begins *pars quarta* of *The Knightes Tale.*
437. *Generous*, spirited, courageous. *Cf.* II., 188.
439. *Harness*, men's armour.
446. *Morions*, open helmets.
447. *Retinue*, pronounced *retĭnus.*

One laced the helm, another held the lance;
A third the shining buckler did advance.
The courser pawed the ground with restless feet,
And snorting foamed, and champed the golden bit.
The smiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands, and hammers at their side,
And nails for loosened spears and thongs for shields provide.
The yeomen guard the streets, in seemly bands;
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their hands.
The trumpets, next the gate, in order placed,
Attend the sign to sound the martial blast:
The palace-yard is filled with floating tides,
And the last comers bear the former to the sides.
The throng is in the midst; the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few.
In knots they stand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aspect, earnest in their talk;
Factious, and favouring this or t'other side,
As their strong fancies and weak reason guide;
Their wagers back their wishes; numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold:
So vigorous are his eyes, such rays they cast,
So prominent his eagle's beak is placed.
But most their looks on the black monarch bend;
His rising muscles and his brawn commend;
His double-biting axe, and beamy spear,
Each asking a gigantic force to rear.
All spoke as partial favour moved the mind;
And, safe themselves, at others' cost divined.
Waked by the cries, the Athenian chief arose,
The knightly forms of combat to dispose;
And passing through the obsequious guards, he sate
Conspicuous on a throne, sublime in state;

450. *Advance*, possibly "raise," as often in Shakspere.
474. *Beamy*, like a wooden beam.

There, for the two contending knights he sent;
Armed cap-a-pe, with reverence low they bent;
He smiled on both, and with superior look
Alike their offered adoration took.
The people press on every side to see
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.
Then signing to the heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty stand.
Silence is thrice enjoined; then thus aloud
The king-at-arms bespeaks the knights and listening crowd:
" Our sovereign lord has pondered in his mind
The means to spare the blood of gentle kind;
And of his grace and inborn clemency
He modifies his first severe decree,
The keener edge of battle to rebate,
The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
He wills not death should terminate their strife,
And wounds, if wounds ensue, be short of life;
But issues, e'er the fight, his dread command,
That slings afar, and poniards hand to hand,
Be banished from the field; that none shall dare
With shortened sword to stab in closer war;
But in fair combat fight with manly strength,
Nor push with biting point, but strike at length.
The turney is allowed but one career
Of the tough ash, with the sharp-grinded spear;
But knights unhorsed may rise from off the plain,
And fight on foot their honour to regain;
Nor, if at mischief taken, on the ground
Be slain, but prisoners to the pillar bound,

483. *Cap-a-pe*, cap-a-pie, from head to foot.
491. *King-at-arms*, the chief heraldic officer.
493. *Gentle kind*, well-born people.
496. *Rebate*, blunt, dull.
499. *Short of life*, not mortal.
505. *At length*, at a distance.
510. *At mischief*, at disadvantage.

At either barrier placed; nor (captives made)
Be freed, or armed anew the fight invade.
The chief of either side, bereft of life
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the strife.
Thus dooms the lord: now, valiant knights and young,
Fight each his fill, with swords and maces long."
The herald ends; the vaulted firmament
With loud acclaims and vast applause is rent:
Heaven guard a prince so gracious and so good,
So just, and yet so provident of blood!
This was the general cry. The trumpets sound,
And warlike symphony is heard around.
The marching troops through Athens take their way,
The great earl-marshal orders their array.
The fair from high the passing pomp behold;
A rain of flowers is from the windows rolled.
The casements are with golden tissue spread,
And horses' hoofs, for earth, on silken tapestry tread.
The king goes midmost, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and close his either side.
Next after these there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cause and the reward of strife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marshalled in degree.
Thus through the southern gate they take their way,
And at the list arrived e'er prime of day.
There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,
And wheeling east and west, before their many ride.

516. *Dooms*, decrees.

521. *Provident*, prudent, economical.

525. *Earl-marshal*, the officer in charge of the arranging and marshalling of ceremonials, in England.

531. *Close*, are close to.

537. *Prime*. *Cf.* III., 103.

539. *Many*, crowd, multitude; probably to be taken in the sense of the obselete "meiny," household, retinue. *Cf.* III., 411.

The Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,
And after him the queen and Emily:
Next these, the kindred of the crown are graced
With nearer seats, and lords by ladies placed.
Scarce were they seated, when with clamours loud
In rushed at once a rude promiscuous crowd:
The guards, and then each other, overbear,
And in a moment throng the spacious theatre.
Now changed the jarring noise to whispers low,
As winds, forsaking seas, more softly blow,
When at the western gate, on which the car
Is placed aloft that bears the God of War,
Proud Arcite, entering armed before his train,
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and displayed abroad
The bloody colours of his patron god.
  At that self moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the rising Sun;
Waved by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and shares the people's eyes.
From east to west, look all the world around,
Two troops so matched were never to be found;
Such bodies built for strength, of equal age,
In stature sized; so proud an equipage:
The nicest eye could no distinction make,
Where lay the advantage, or what side to take.
  Thus ranged, the herald for the last proclaims
A silence, while they answered to their names:
For so the king decreed, to shun with care
The fraud of musters false, the common bane of war.
The tale was just, and then the gates were closed;
And chief to chief, and troop to troop opposed.

549. This seems to mean merely that wind is less violent on land than on sea.
556. *Self*, selfsame.
563. *Sized*, rated, ranked (equally). *Equipage*, furnishing.
566. *For the last*, for the last time.

The heralds last retired, and loudly cried:
"The fortune of the field be fairly tried!"
At this the challenger, with fierce defy,
His trumpet sounds; the challenged makes reply;
With clangour rings the field, resounds the vaulted sky.
Their vizors closed, their lances in the rest,
Or at the helmet pointed, or the crest,
They vanish from the barrier, speed the race,
And spurring see decrease the middle space.
A cloud of smoke envelopes either host,
And all at once the combatants are lost:
Darkling they join adverse, and shock unseen,
Coursers with coursers justling, men with men:
As labouring in eclipse, a while they stay,
Till the next blast of wind restores the day.
They look anew: the beauteous form of fight
Is changed, and war appears a grisly sight.
Two troops in fair array one moment showed,
The next, a field with fallen bodies strewed:
Not half the number in their seats are found;
But men and steeds lie grovelling on the ground.
The points of spears are stuck within the shield,
The steeds without their riders scour the field.
The knights, unhorsed, on foot renew the fight;
The glittering falchions cast a gleaming light;
Hauberks and helms are hewed with many a wound;
Out spins the streaming blood, and dyes the ground.
The mighty maces with such haste descend,
They break the bones, and make the solid armour bend.
This thrusts amid the throng with furious force;
Down goes, at once, the horseman and the horse:

574. Scott quotes the following seven lines in *Ivanhoe*, at the beginning of Chapter VIII., which tells the story of the tournament.

583. *Darkling*, in the dark.

585. *As labouring in eclipse*, as if toiling in darkness, gloom, as when the sun is eclipsed.

597. *Hauberks*, long coats of chain-armour.

That courser stumbles on the fallen steed,
And, floundering, throws the rider o'er his head.
One rolls along, a football to his foes;
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
This halting, this disabled with his wound,
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,
Where by the king's award he must abide;
There goes a captive led on t'other side.
By fits they cease, and leaning on the lance,
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.
  Full oft the rivals met, and neither spared
His utmost force, and each forgot to ward:
The head of this was to the saddle bent,
That other backward to the crupper sent:
Both were by turns unhorsed; the jealous blows
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they close.
So deep their falchions bite, that every stroke
Pierced to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and took.
Borne far asunder by the tides of men,
Like adamant and steel they met again.
  So when a tiger sucks the bullock's blood,
A famished lion, issuing from the wood,
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.
Each claims possession, neither will obey,
But both their paws are fastened on the prey;
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they strive,
The swains come armed between, and both to distance drive.
  At length, as fate foredoomed, and all things tend
By course of time to their appointed end;
So when the sun to west was far declined,
And both afresh in mortal battle joined,
The strong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:
For, turning short, he struck with all his might
Full on the helmet of the unwary knight.

635. *Overlaid*, hard pressed *Cf.* II., 590. 636. *He*, Emetrius.

Deep was the wound; he staggered with the blow,
And turned him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with such force he struck, he felled him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.
But Arcite's men, who now prevailed in fight,
Twice ten at once surround the single knight:
O'erpowered at length, they force him to the ground,
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.
  Who now laments but Palamon, compelled
No more to try the fortune of the field,
And, worse than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conquest, and renounce the prize!
  The royal judge on his tribunal placed,
Who had beheld the fight from first to last,
Bade cease the war; pronouncing from on high,
Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.
The sound of trumpets to the voice replied,
And round the royal lists the heralds cried:
"Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride!"
  The people rend the skies with vast applause;
All own the chief, when Fortune owns the cause.
Arcite is owned even by the gods above,
And conquering Mars insults the Queen of Love.
So laughed he when the rightful Titan failed,
And Jove's usurping arms in heaven prevailed.
Laughed all the powers who favour tyranny,
And all the standing army of the sky.
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,
And, weeping, on the lists distilled her tears;
Her will refused, which grieves a woman most,
And, in her champion foiled, the cause of Love is lost.
Till Saturn said: "Fair daughter, now be still:
The blustering fool has satisfied his will;

638. *He*, Palamon. 672. *Blustering fool*, Mars.

His boon is given; his knight has gained the day,
But lost the prize; the arrears are yet to pay.
Thy hour is come, and mine the care shall be
To please thy knight, and set thy promise free."
Now while the heralds run the lists around,
And Arcite! Arcite! heaven and earth resound;
A miracle (nor less it could be called)
Their joy with unexpected sorrow palled.
The victor knight had laid his helm aside,
Part for his ease, the greater part for pride;
Bareheaded, popularly low he bowed,
And paid the salutations of the crowd.
Then spurring at full speed, ran endlong on
Where Theseus sat on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward cast his eye,
Where, next the queen, was placed his Emily;
Then passing, to the saddle-bow he bent;
A sweet regard the gracious virgin lent
(For women, to the brave an easy prey,
Still follow Fortune where she leads the way);
Just then from earth sprung out a flashing fire,
By Pluto sent, at Saturn's bad desire:
The startling steed was seized with sudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pummel cast the knight;
Forward he flew, and pitching on his head,
He quivered with his feet, and lay for dead.
Black was his countenance in a little space,
For all the blood was gathered in his face.
Help was at hand: they reared him from the ground,
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanced a vein, and watched returning breath;
It came, but clogged with symptoms of his death.
The saddle-bow the noble parts had pressed,
All bruised and mortified his manly breast.

685. *Endlong*, lengthwise of the lists.

Him still entranced, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed conveyed.
At length he waked; and, with a feeble cry,
The word he first pronounced was Emily.
Meantime the king, though inwardly he mourned,
In pomp triumphant to the town returned,
Attended by the chiefs who fought the field
(Now friendly mixed, and in one troop compelled),
Composed his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladded all the warrior train,
Though most were sorely wounded, none were slain.
The surgeons soon despoiled them of their arms,
And some with salves they cure, and some with charms;
Foment the bruises, and the pains assuage,
And heal their inward hurts with sovereign draughts of sage.
The king in person visits all around,
Comforts the sick, congratulates the sound;
Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the rest,
And holds for thrice three days a royal feast.
None was disgraced; for falling is no shame,
And cowardice alone is loss of fame.
The venturous knight is from the saddle thrown,
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own;
If crowds and palms the conquering side adorn,
The victor under better stars was born:
The brave man seeks not popular applause,
Nor, overpowered with arms, deserts his cause;
Unshamed, though foiled, he does the best he can:
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.
Thus Theseus smiled on all with equal grace,
And each was set according to his place;
With ease were reconciled the differing parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.

707. *Entranced*, in a swoon.
721. *Foment*, apply heat to in order to assuage pain.

At length they took their leave, the time expired,
Well pleased, and to their several homes retired.
Meanwhile, the health of Arcite still impairs;
From bad proceeds to worse, and mocks the leeches' cares:
Swollen is his breast; his inward pains increase;
All means are used, and all without success.
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts, and there remains in spite of art;
Nor breathing veins nor cupping will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail.
The mould of nature's fabric is destroyed,
Her vessels discomposed, her virtue void:
The bellows of his lungs begins to swell;
All out of frame is every secret cell,
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.
Those breathing organs, thus within oppressed,
With venom soon distend the sinews of his breast.
Nought profits him to save abandoned life,
Nor vomit's upward aid, nor downward laxative.
The midmost region battered and destroyed,
When nature cannot work, the effect of art is void:
For physic can but mend our crazy state,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doomed to die in all his pride,
Must leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gained hardly, against right, and unenjoyed.
When 'twas declared all hope of life was past,
Conscience, that of all physic works the last,
Caused him to send for Emily in haste.
With her, at his desire, came Palamon;
Then, on his pillow raised, he thus begun:

749. *Breathing veins*, letting blood, opening a vein.

751. *Mould of nature's fabric*, the shape of nature's fabrication or making.

766. *Against right*. *Cf.* 800–829, and the quarrel between Palamon and Arcite in the tower (Book I.).

"No language can express the smallest part
Of what I feel, and suffer in my heart,
For you, whom best I love and value most,
But to your service I bequeath my ghost;
Which, from this mortal body when untied,
Unseen, unheard, shall hover at your side;
Nor fright you waking, nor your sleep offend,
But wait officious, and your steps attend.
How I have loved,—excuse my faltering tongue,
My spirit's feeble, and my pains are strong:
This I may say, I only grieve to die,
Because I lose my charming Emily.
To die, when Heaven had put you in my power!
Fate could not choose a more malicious hour.
What greater curse could envious Fortune give,
Than just to die when I began to live!
Vain men! how vanishing a bliss we crave,
Now warm in love, now withering in the grave!
Never, oh never more to see the sun!
Still dark, in a damp vault, and still alone!
This fate is common; but I lose my breath
Near bliss, and yet not blessed, before my death.
Farewell! but take me dying in your arms;
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:
This hand I cannot but in death resign;
Ah, could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
I feel my end approach, and thus embraced
Am pleased to die; but hear me speak my last:
Ah, my sweet foe! for you, and you alone,
I broke my faith with injured Palamon.
But love the sense of right and wrong confounds;
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.
And much I doubt, should Heaven my life prolong,
I should return to justify my wrong;

779. *Officious*, ready to serve, not, as now, meddlesome.
804. *Doubt*, fear.

For, while my former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of power to sin.
With mortal hatred I pursued his life,
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the strife;
Nor I, but as I loved; yet all combined,
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind,
And his concurrent flame that blew my fire;
For still our kindred souls had one desire.
He had a moment's right in point of time;
Had I seen first, then his had been the crime.
Fate made it mine, and justified his right;
Nor holds this earth a more deserving knight
For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
Truth, honour, all that is comprised in good;
So help me Heaven, in all the world is none
So worthy to be loved as Palamon.
He loves you too, with such a holy fire,
As will not, cannot, but with life expire:
Our vowed affections both have often tried,
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.
Then, by my love's inviolable band,
By my long suffering and my short command,
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
Have pity on the faithful Palamon."
  This was his last; for Death came on amain,
And exercised below his iron reign;
Then upward to the seat of life he goes;
Sense fled before him, what he touched he froze:
Yet could he not his closing eyes withdraw,
Though less and less of Emily he saw;
So, speechless, for a little space he lay;
Then grasped the hand he held, and sighed his soul away.
  But whither went his soul, let such relate
Who search the secrets of the future state:

831. *Below*, in the feet of Arcite.
834. *He*, Arcite.

Divines can say but what themselves believe;
Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative;
For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,
And faith itself be lost in certainty.
To live uprightly, then, is sure the best;
To save ourselves, and not to damn the rest.
The soul of Arcite went where heathens go,
Who better live than we, though less they know.
  In Palamon a manly grief appears;
Silent he wept, ashamed to show his tears.
Emilia shrieked but once; and then, oppressed
With sorrow, sunk upon her lover's breast:
Till Theseus in his arms conveyed with care,
Far from so sad a sight, the swooning fair.
'Twere loss of time her sorrow to relate;
Ill bears the sex a youthful lover's fate,
When just approaching to the nuptial state:
But, like a low-hung cloud, it rains so fast,
That all at once it falls, and cannot last.
The face of things is changed, and Athens now,
That laughed so late, becomes the scene of woe:
Matrons and maids, both sexes, every state,
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate.
Not greater grief in falling Troy was seen
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.
Old men with dust deformed their hoary hair;
The women beat their breasts, their cheeks they tear.
"Why wouldst thou go," with one consent they cry,
"When thou hadst gold enough, and Emily?"
  Theseus himself, who should have cheered the grief
Of others, wanted now the same relief:

841. *Demonstrative*, conclusive.

842–847. The moralizing is wholly Dryden's.

864. *But Hector was not then.* These things happened before the time of Hector. *Cf.* II., 609.

Old Ægeus only could revive his son,
Who various changes of the world had known,
And strange vicissitudes of human fate,
Still altering, never in a steady state:
Good after ill and, after pain, delight,
Alternate, like the scenes of day and night.
Since every man who lives is born to die,
And none can boast sincere felicity,
With equal mind, what happens, let us bear,
Nor joy, nor grieve too much, for things beyond our care.
Like pilgrims to the appointed place we tend;
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
Even kings but play, and when their part is done,
Some other, worse or better, mount the throne.
With words like these the crowd was satisfied;
And so they would have been, had Theseus died.
But he, their king, was labouring in his mind
A fitting place for funeral pomps to find,
Which were in honour of the dead designed.
And, after long debate, at last he found
(As Love itself had marked the spot of ground)
That grove for ever green, that conscious laund,
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand;
That, where he fed his amorous desires
With soft complaints, and felt his hottest fires,
There other flames might waste his earthly part,
And burn his limbs, where love had burned his heart.
This once resolved, the peasants were enjoined
Sere wood, and firs, and doddered oaks to find.
With sounding axes to the grove they go,
Fell, split, and lay the fuel in a row,

874. *Still*, ever, always.

878. *Sincere*, pure, unmixed, in the Latin sense of the word.

892. *Conscious laund*, the open glade conscious of the honour bestowed on it. *Cf.* II., 235.

899. *Sere*, dried. *Doddered*, shattered, decayed.

Vulcanian food: a bier is next prepared,
On which the lifeless body should be reared,
Covered with cloth of gold; on which was laid
The corpse of Arcite, in like robes arrayed.
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head
A wreath of laurel, mixed with myrtle, spread.
A sword, keen-edged, within his right he held,
The warlike emblem of the conquered field.
Bare was his manly visage on the bier;
Menaced his countenance, even in death severe.
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight,
To lie in solemn state, a public sight:
Groans, cries, and howlings fill the crowded place,
And unaffected sorrow sat on every face.
Sad Palamon above the rest appears,
In sable garments, dewed with gushing tears;
His auburn locks on either shoulder flowed,
Which to the funeral of his friend he vowed;
But Emily, as chief, was next his side,
A virgin-widow, and a mourning bride.
And, that the princely obsequies might be
Performed according to his high degree,
The steed that bore him living to the fight
Was trapped with polished steel, all shining bright,
And covered with the achievements of the knight.
The riders rode abreast, and one his shield,
His lance of cornel-wood another held;
The third his bow, and, glorious to behold,
The costly quiver, all of burnished gold.
The noblest of the Grecians next appear,
And weeping, on their shoulders bore the bier;
With sober pace they marched, and often stayed,
And through the master-street the corpse conveyed.

902. *Vulcanian food*, food for fire.
926. *Achievements*. *Cf.* III., 344.

The houses to their tops with black were spread,
And even the pavements were with mourning hid.
The right side of the pall old Ægeus kept,
And on the left the royal Theseus wept;
Each bore a golden bowl, of work divine,
With honey filled, and milk, and mixed with ruddy wine.
Then Palamon, the kinsman of the slain,
And after him appeared the illustrious train.
To grace the pomp came Emily the bright,
With covered fire, the funeral pile to light.
With high devotion was the service made,
And all the rites of pagan honour paid:
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
With vigour drawn, must send the shaft below.
The bottom was full twenty fathom broad,
With crackling straw beneath in due proportion strewed.
The fabric seemed a wood of rising green,
With sulphur and bitumen cast between,
To feed the flames; the trees were unctuous fir,
And mountain-ash, the mother of the spear;
The mourner-yew and builder-oak were there,
The beech, the swimming alder, and the plane,
Hard box, and linden of a softer grain,
And laurels, which the gods for conquering chiefs ordain.
How they were ranked shall rest untold by me,
With nameless nymphs that lived in every tree;
Nor how the Dryads and the woodland train,
Disherited, ran howling o'er the plain;
Nor how the birds to foreign seats repaired,
Or beasts that bolted out and saw the forest bared:
Nor how the ground, now cleared, with ghastly fright

955. *Mourner-yew.* The yew tree, like the willow, has long been regarded as an emblem of mourning.

956. *Swimming.* Perhaps because the alder grows in damp places.

960. Nor shall I tell of nameless nymphs.

963. *Seats,* abodes.

Beheld the sudden sun, a stranger to the light.
The straw, as first I said, was laid below;
Of chips and sere wood was the second row;
The third of greens, and timber newly felled;
The fourth high stage the fragrant odours held,
And pearls, and precious stones, and rich array;
In midst of which, embalmed, the body lay.
The service sung, the maid, with mourning eyes,
The stubble fired; the smouldering flames arise:
This office done, she sunk upon the ground;
But what she spoke, recovered from her swound,
I want the wit in moving words to dress;
But by themselves the tender sex may guess.
While the devouring fire was burning fast,
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy cast;
And some their shields, and some their lances threw,
And gave the warrior's ghost a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood
Were poured upon the pile of burning wood,
And hissing flames receive, and, hungry, lick the food.
Then thrice the mounted squadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice resound:
"Hail and farewell!" they shouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turned again:
Still, as they turned, they beat their clattering shields;
The women mix their cries, and clamour fills the fields.
The warlike wakes continued all the night,
And funeral games were played at new returning light:
Who naked wrestled best, besmeared with oil,
Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,
I will not tell you, nor would you attend;
But briefly haste to my long story's end.
I pass the rest; the year was fully mourned,
And Palamon long since to Thebes returned:
When, by the Grecians' general consent,
At Athens Theseus held his parliament;

Among the laws that passed, it was decreed,
That conquered Thebes from bondage should be freed;
Reserving homage to the Athenian throne,
To which the sovereign summoned Palamon.
Unknowing of the cause, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and still in black array.

The monarch mounts the throne, and, placed on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily.
So called, she came; the senate rose, and paid
Becoming reverence to the royal maid.
And first, soft whispers through the assembly went;
With silent wonder then they watched the event;
All hushed, the king arose with awful grace;
Deep thought was in his breast, and counsel in his face:
At length he sighed, and, having first prepared
The attentive audience, thus his will declared:

"The cause and spring of motion, from above,
Hung down on earth the golden chain of Love;
Great was the effect, and high was his intent,
When peace among the jarring seeds he sent;
Fire, flood, and earth, and air by this were bound,
And Love, the common link, the new creation crowned.
The chain still holds; for, though the forms decay,
Eternal matter never wears away:
The same first mover certain bounds has placed,
How long those perishable forms shall last;
Nor can they last beyond the time assigned
By that all-seeing and all-making Mind:
Shorten their hours they may, for will is free,
But never pass the appointed destiny.
So men oppressed, when weary of their breath,
Throw off the burden, and suborn their death.

1013. *The event*, the outcome.
1021. *Jarring seeds*, warring elements or atoms.
1033. *Suborn*, procure by secret, underhand means.

Then, since those forms begin, and have their end,
On some unaltered cause they sure depend:
Parts of the whole are we, but God the whole,
Who gives us life, and animating soul.
For nature cannot from a part derive
That being which the whole can only give:
He perfect, stable; but imperfect we,
Subject to change, and different in degree;
Plants, beasts, and man; and, as our organs are,
We more or less of his perfection share.
But, by a long descent, the etherial fire
Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire.
As he withdraws his virtue, so they pass,
And the same matter makes another mass.
This law the omniscient Power was pleased to give,
That every kind should by succession live;
That individuals die, his will ordains;
The propagated species still remains.
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,
Shoots rising up, and spreads by slow degrees;
Three centuries he grows, and three he stays,
Supreme in state, and in three more decays:
So wears the paving pebble in the street,
And towns and towers their fatal periods meet:
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,
Forsaken of their springs, and leave their channels dry.
So man, at first a drop, dilates with heat,
Then, formed, the little heart begins to beat;
Secret he feeds, unknowing, in the cell;
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the shell,
And struggles into breath, and cries for aid;
Then helpless in his mother's lap is laid.
He creeps, he walks, and, issuing into man,
Grudges their life from whence his own began;
Retchless of laws, affects to rule alone,

1068. *Retchless*, reckless.

Anxious to reign, and restless on the throne;
First vegetive, then feels, and reasons last;
Rich of three souls, and lives all three to waste.
Some thus; but thousands more in flower of age,
For few arrive to run the latter stage.
Sunk in the first, in battle some are slain,
And others whelmed beneath the stormy main.
What makes all this but Jupiter the king,
At whose command we perish, and we spring?
Then 'tis our best, since thus ordained to die,
To make a virtue of necessity;
Take what he gives, since to rebel is vain;
The bad grows better, which we will sustain;
And could we choose the time, and choose aright,
'Tis best to die, our honour at the height.
When we have done our ancestors no shame,
But served our friends, and well secured our fame;
Then should we wish our happy life to close,
And leave no more for fortune to dispose;
So should we make our death a glad relief
From future shame, from sickness, and from grief;
Enjoying while we live the present hour,
And dying in our excellence and flower.
Then round our death-bed every friend should run,
And joy us of our conquest early won;
While the malicious world, with envious tears,
Should grudge our happy end, and wish it theirs.
Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,

1071. *Rich of three souls.* There were, according to common belief in Chaucer's time, and even in the seventeenth century, in every man three spirits or souls : the *vegetal*, which dominated the lower functions, of digestion and the like, common to plants and animals ; the *sensitive* or *animal*, which regulated sensation and perception, not found in plants ; and the *rational* or *intellectual*, peculiar to human beings, which controlled volition. One need not stop, however, to pay close attention to Theseus's philosophy. He is merely leading up, by devious ways, to the proposition that Palamon and Emily would be happy if married. *Rich of*, rich in.

Why should we mourn, that he so soon is freed,
Or call untimely, what the gods decreed?
With grief as just, a friend may be deplored,
From a foul prison to free air restored.
Ought he to thank his kinsman or his wife,
Could tears recall him into wretched life?
Their sorrow hurts themselves; on him is lost,
And, worse than both, offends his happy ghost.
What then remains, but after past annoy
To take the good vicissitude of joy;
To thank the gracious gods for what they give,
Possess our souls, and, while we live, to live?
Ordain we then two sorrows to combine,
And in one point the extremes of grief to join;
That thence resulting joy may be renewed,
As jarring notes in harmony conclude.
Then I propose that Palamon shall be
In marriage joined with beauteous Emily;
For which already I have gained the assent
Of my free people in full parliament.
Long love to her has borne the faithful knight,
And well deserved, had Fortune done him right:
'Tis time to mend her fault, since Emily,
By Arcite's death, from former vows is free;
If you, fair sister, ratify the accord,
And take him for your husband and your lord,
'Tis no dishonour to confer your grace
On one descended from a royal race;
And were he less, yet years of service past
From grateful souls exact reward at last.
Pity is heaven's and yours; nor can she find
A throne so soft as in a woman's mind."
He said; she blushed; and as o'erawed by might,

1106. *Vicissitude of joy*, the changes of "past annoy" to joy.

1129 ff. It is interesting to note that the closing situation in Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* is not unlike this.

Seemed to give Theseus what she gave the knight.
Then, turning to the Theban, thus he said:
"Small arguments are needful to persuade
Your temper to comply with my command:"
And speaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.
Smiled Venus, to behold her own true knight
Obtain the conquest, though he lost the fight.
All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day discoloured with domestic strife;
No jealousy, but mutual truth believed,
Secure repose, and kindness undeceived.
Thus heaven, beyond the compass of his thought,
Sent him the blessing he so dearly bought.
So may the Queen of Love long duty bless,
And all true lovers find the same success!

1141. *His*, Palamon's.

APPENDIX

I. Dryden's Dedication

[It seems best for two reasons to remove the *Dedication* from its proper position, before the poem, and print it here : in the first place, as it originally stood, it takes the attention of the modern reader from the poem itself ; and, again, it is much more easily understood if read after the poem. Such difficulties did not, of course, exist with readers of Dryden's time. Then, and in the following century, a writer often gained his living through the patronage of persons of wealth and rank, to whom he dedicated his poems. This practice was brought to perfection by Dryden. The volume of *Fables*, as a whole, he dedicated to James Butler, the second Duke of Ormond ; to the Duchess of Ormond he inscribed, in particular, *Palamon and Arcite*. The present dedication is characteristic : it shows Dryden's skill in versification, and in clever, graceful, and, to our modern taste, obsequious compliment.

Notes to the *Dedication* have not been inserted, except when indispensable to the understanding of particular words and phrases in the text. Students who have been through the poem with care may be trusted to follow the general line of thought of the *Dedication* without great trouble ; that they should follow the allusions in detail does not seem necessary. Teachers who may desire information as to points of detail are referred to the foot-notes of Scott and Christie.

A word, however, about the characters and the situation may be added. The Duchess of Ormond was, says Scott, "Lady Margaret Somerset, second wife of the Duke of Ormond, to whom she was married in 1685." She was a descendant of John of Gaunt by his third wife, and hence was connected, though distantly, with the royal line of the Plantagenets. In the *Dedication*, Dryden, after likening her to Emily and the Duke to Palamon, and displaying her relationship to the founders of the "noblest order" of the Garter, treats, in a highly figurative way, of her voyage to Ireland, whither she went after the revolts of the Irish in favour of the exiled James II. had been subdued ; and out of this event Dryden makes the

theme of his poem. He congratulates her on recovery from sickness, and in the felicity of the hour includes her husband and her physician, Morley. He ends with allusions to her royal descent from the rival houses of York and Lancaster, of the Wars of the Roses, and with a panegyric on her beauty and graciousness.

The Duke of Ormond, her husband, was son of the Earl of Ossory, and on the death of his grandfather in 1688 became duke. His grandfather had been eulogized by Dryden in *Absalom and Achitophel* under the name of Barzillai. Ormond upheld the fame of his grandfather among literary men by becoming the friend of Dryden and by helping Swift to obtain the deanery of St. Patrick's, in Dublin. Politically, Ormond was prominent on the side of William III. in the events following the Revolution of 1688. Especially did he do distinguished service in Ireland,—where he possessed estates,—against the turbulent Irish supporters of James II.]

TO HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF ORMOND

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM OF

PALAMON AND ARCITE FROM CHAUCER

MADAM,

The bard who first adorned our native tongue
Tuned to his British lyre this ancient song;
Which Homer might without a blush rehearse,
And leaves a doubtful palm in Virgil's verse:
He matched their beauties, where they most excel;
Of love sung better, and of arms as well.

Vouchsafe, illustrious Ormond, to behold
What power the charms of beauty had of old;
Nor wonder if such deeds of arms were done,
Inspired by two fair eyes, that sparkled like your own.

If Chaucer by the best idea wrought,
And poets can divine each other's thought,
The fairest nymph before his eyes he set;
And then the fairest was Plantagenet,
Who three contending princes made her prize,
And ruled the rival nations with her eyes;

Who left immortal trophies of her fame,
And to the noblest order gave the name.
  Like her, of equal kindred to the throne,
You keep her conquests, and extend your own:
As when the stars, in their etherial race,
At length have rolled around the liquid space,
At certain periods they resume their place;
From the same point of heaven their course advance,
And move in measures of their former dance;
Thus, after length of ages, she returns,
Restored in you, and the same place adorns;
Or you perform her office in the sphere,
Born of her blood, and make a new Platonic year.
  O true Plantagenet, O race divine
(For beauty still is fatal to the line),
Had Chaucer lived that angel-face to view,
Sure he had drawn his Emily from you;
Or had you lived to judge the doubtful right,
Your noble Palamon had been the knight;
And conquering Theseus from his side had sent
Your generous lord, to guide the Theban government.
  Time shall accomplish that; and I shall see
A Palamon in him, in you an Emily.
  Already have the Fates your path prepared,
And sure presage your future sway declared:
When westward, like the sun, you took your way,
And from benighted Britain bore the day,
Blue Triton gave the signal from the shore,
The ready Nereids heard, and swam before
To smooth the seas; a soft Etesian gale
But just inspired, and gently swelled the sail;
Portunus took his turn, whose ample hand

29. *Platonic year.* A cycle at the end of which the stars and constellations are supposed to return to the same relative position which they held at its beginning.

31. *Fatal,* destined, fated.

Heaved up the lightened keel, and sunk the sand,
And steered the sacred vessel safe to land.
The land, if not restrained, had met your way,
Projected out a neck, and jutted to the sea.
Hibernia, prostrate at your feet, adored
In you the pledge of her expected lord,
Due to her isle; a venerable name;
His father and his grandsire known to fame;
Awed by that house, accustomed to command,
The sturdy kerns in due subjection stand,
Nor hear the reins in any foreign hand.
At your approach, they crowded to the port;
And scarcely landed, you create a court:
As Ormond's harbinger, to you they run;
For Venus is the promise of the Sun.
The waste of civil wars, their towns destroyed,
Pales unhonoured, Ceres unemployed,
Were all forgot; and one triumphant day
Wiped all the tears of three campaigns away.
Blood, rapines, massacres, were cheaply bought,
So mighty recompense your beauty brought.
As when the dove returning bore the mark
Of earth restored to the long-labouring ark,
The relics of mankind, secure of rest,
Oped every window to receive the guest,
And the fair bearer of the message blessed:
So, when you came, with loud repeated cries,
The nation took an omen from your eyes,
And God advanced his rainbow in the skies,
To sign inviolable peace restored;
The saints with solemn shouts proclaimed the new accord.
When at your second coming you appear
(For I foretell that millenary year),

59. *Hear the reins*, heed the control of any foreign hand. *Cf.* "audit currus habenas," Virgil, *Georgics*, I., 514.
65. *Pales*, the goddess of sheep-pastures; *Ceres*, of corn.

The sharpened share shall vex the soil no more,
But earth unbidden shall produce her store;
The land shall laugh, the circling ocean smile,
And heaven's indulgence bless the holy isle.
  Heaven, from all ages, has reserved for you
That happy clime, which venom never knew;
Or if it had been there, your eyes alone
Have power to chase all poison, but their own.
  Now in this interval, which fate has cast
Betwixt your future glories and your past,
This pause of power, 'tis Ireland's hour to mourn;
While England celebrates your safe return,
By which you seem the seasons to command,
And bring our summers back to their forsaken land.
  The vanquished isle our leisure must attend,
Till the fair blessing we vouchsafe to send;
Nor can we spare you long, though often we may lend.
The dove was twice employed abroad, before
The world was dried, and she returned no more.
  Nor dare we trust so soft a messenger,
New from her sickness, to that northern air;
Rest here awhile your lustre to restore,
That they may see you as you shone before;
For yet, the eclipse not wholly past, you wade
Through some remains and dimness of a shade.
  A subject in his prince may claim a right,
Nor suffer him with strength impaired to fight;
Till force returns, his ardour we restrain,
And curb his warlike wish to cross the main.
  Now past the danger, let the learned begin
The inquiry, where disease could enter in;
How those malignant atoms forced their way,
What in the faultless frame they found to make their prey,
Where every element was weighed so well,
That Heaven alone, who mixed the mass, could tell
Which of the four ingredients could rebel;

And where, imprisoned in so sweet a cage,
A soul might well be pleased to pass an age.
  And yet the fine materials made it weak;
Porcelain by being pure is apt to break.
Even to your breast the sickness durst aspire;
And forced from that fair temple to retire,
Profanely set the holy place on fire.
In vain your lord, like young Vespasian, mourned,
When the fierce flames the sanctuary burned;
And I prepared to pay in verses rude
A most detested act of gratitude:
Even this had been your elegy, which now
Is offered for your health, the table of my vow.
  Your angel sure our Morley's mind inspired,
To find the remedy your ill required;
As once the Macedon, by Jove's decree,
Was taught to dream an herb for Ptolemy:
Or Heaven, which had such over-cost bestowed
As scarce it could afford to flesh and blood,
So liked the frame, he would not work anew,
To save the charges of another you.
Or by his middle science did he steer,
And saw some great contingent good appear,
Well worth a miracle to keep you here:
And for that end preserved the precious mould,
Which all the future Ormonds was to hold;
And meditated in his better mind
An heir from you, who may redeem the failing kind.
  Blessed be the power which has at once restored
The hopes of lost succession to your lord;
Joy to the first and last of each degree,

130. *The table of my vow.* A votive tablet (*votiva tabella*) is a commemorative tablet, inscribed in fulfilment of a vow. Dryden means that he had vowed as an elegy to the Duchess, in the event of her death, the poem in which he now celebrates her recovery from sickness.

Virtue to courts, and, what I longed to see,
To you the Graces, and the Muse to me.
O daughter of the Rose, whose cheeks unite
The differing titles of the Red and White;
Who heaven's alternate beauty well display,
The blush of morning, and the milky way;
Whose face is Paradise, but fenced from sin;
For God in either eye has placed a cherubin.
All is your lord's alone; even absent, he
Employs the care of chaste Penelope.
For him you waste in tears your widowed hours,
For him your curious needle paints the flowers:
Such works of old imperial dames were taught;
Such for Ascanius fair Elisa wrought.
The soft recesses of your hours improve
The three fair pledges of your happy love:
All other parts of pious duty done,
You owe your Ormond nothing but a son,
To fill in future times his father's place,
And wear the garter of his mother's race.

II. Selected Passages from Dryden's Preface

[The following passages are chosen from Dryden's *Preface* to give in his own words his opinion of Chaucer. It is to be regretted that the famous bit of criticism cannot be printed entire, or at least all parts which in any way relate to Chaucer. Dryden, after speaking of the general purpose of his critique, and after comparing Homer and Ovid, and Ovid and Chaucer, to the advantage, in the last comparison, of the latter, continues his discussion of the English poet.]

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil: he is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects; as he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off, a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. . . .

Chaucer followed nature everywhere; but was never so bold to go beyond her: and there is a great difference of being *Poeta* and *nimis Poeta,* if we believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommodata;* they who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower, his contemporaries: there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. . . .

. . . He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his *Canterbury Tales* the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation, in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta[1] could not have described their natures better than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales and of their telling are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook are several men, and distinguished from each other, as much as the mincing lady Prioress and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed

[1] An Italian physiognomist.

Wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great-grandames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of monks and friars, and canons, and lady abbesses, and nuns: for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though everything is altered. . . .

I have almost done with Chaucer, when I have answered some objections relating to my present work. I find some people are offended that I have turned these tales into modern English; because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worth reviving. I have often heard the late Earl of Leicester say, that Mr. Cowley himself was of that opinion; who having read him over at my lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. I dare not advance my opinion against the judgment of so great an author; but I think it fair, however, to leave the decision to the public. Mr. Cowley was too modest to set up for a dictator: and being shocked, perhaps, with his old style, never examined into the depth of his good sense. Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished e'er he shines. I deny not, likewise, that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece, but sometimes mingles trivial things with those of greater moment. Sometimes also, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great wits besides Chaucer, whose fault is their excess of conceits, and those ill sorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observed this redundancy in Chaucer (as it is an easy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater), I have not tied myself to a literal

translation; but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, because (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies. Another poet, in another age, may take the same liberty with my writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve correction. . . .

. . . In sum, I seriously protest, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer than myself. I have translated some part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him anywhere for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge that I could have done nothing without him: *Facile est inventis addere* is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater. . . .

I prefer in our countryman, far above all his other stories, the noble poem of *Palamon and Arcite*, which is of the epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the *Ilias* or the *Æneis:* the story is more pleasing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various, and the disposition full as artful; only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up seven years at least; but Aristotle has left undecided the duration of the action; which yet is easily reduced into the compass of a year by a narration of what preceded the return of Palamon to Athens. I had thought, for the honour of our nation, and more particularly for his whose laurel, though unworthy, I have worn after him, that this story was of English growth and Chaucer's own; but I was undeceived by Boccace. . . .

III. Note on the Astrological Terms

The astrological references in *Palamon and Arcite* are rather numerous and are decidedly perplexing. Dryden borrowed from Chaucer, and with some looseness of terminology; for the science, though by no means dead in Dryden's time, had not the great vogue which it had enjoyed for many centuries previous. For the general reader, it is sufficient to say that astrology was the science, or, better, the art, of determining the influence of the planets and the stars on human life and earthly events. The various positions in the sky of the heavenly bodies and their combination with one another were supposed to have direct influence in the ordering of the lives of men. Accordingly, at the birth of a child, the "horoscope" (I., 245) was cast or set up. This was a plan of the positions of the principal planets and constellations, with an analysis of their influences. Thus, Arcite (I., 247) speaks of the evil planets which "ruled our birth."

The student who wishes more exactly to understand the specific astrological references of the text should have in mind the scheme of the astrological system. There are three things to be considered:

1. *The planets and luminaries* which were thought to exercise sway over human life were the Moon, the Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Of these Mars and Saturn chiefly concern us here. Their influence was for different sorts of evil.

2. *The Zodiac* is an imaginary belt in the heavens, sixteen degrees in width, parallel with the ecliptic, or plane of the apparent yearly motion of the sun around the earth, and extending an equal number of degrees on each side of this plane. The Zodiac was made of this width to include the apparent orbits of the other planets, which accordingly always appear within the limits of the belt. This belt was divided into twelve equal parts, each of thirty degrees; these were called the "Signs of the Zodiac," and were Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, and Pisces. The sun entered Aries at the vernal equinox; thence it ran, in its apparent yearly circuit from west to east, along these twelve signs; that is, through each in the course of about thirty days. For example, we learn that "May, within the Twins, received the Sun" (II., 10). It is important to remember that the sun and the planets might, owing to their different rates of motion, appear now in the same sign, now widely separated. (The moon, of course, made the entire circuit thirteen times a year.) The sign in which a particular planet was most powerful was called his "planetary house." Thus, Capricorn (III., 384) was the "house" of Saturn, whereas Mars was less powerful in this sign, his so-called "exaltation."

In Capricorn, Saturn, when "joined," *i.e.*, in conjunction, with Mars, obscured him, "of him disposing in his own abode" (III., 385). The signs, moreover, had each a special significance : three were "watery" (III., 495), Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces ; three were "earthy" (III., 496), Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn ; three fiery, of which Leo (III., 404) was one ; and three airy. Each sign, too, presided over a different part of the human body.

3. *The Houses* (not to be confounded with the "planetary houses" indicated in 2) were twelve imaginary equal divisions of the celestial sphere. They were always plotted from the place of the child's, or "native's," birth, or, if the inquiry concerned some possible action, the place in which things were going to happen. The astrologer imagined twelve great circles, thirty degrees apart, intersecting at the north and south poles of the sphere. The first space of thirty degrees below the horizon on the east was the "first house," the first above the horizon on the west the "seventh house," and so on. Unlike the Signs of the Zodiac and the planets, these houses revolved with the earth. They were designed to show the positions of the planets, but each had its peculiar significance. The first, for example, had to do with the "native's" personal appearance and disposition, the fourth with his inheritance, and so on. Moreover, in certain of these houses, the influence of planets was stronger than in others. Thus, the first, fourth, seventh, and tenth houses were the positions of greatest potency. So Saturn (I., 246) is represented as being, at the birth of Palamon and Arcite, in the "dungeon of the sky," or one of the dark houses ; that is, a house of baleful influence.

It was the combinations of these planets, signs, and houses—of which the variety is almost endless—that were supposed to bring the "native" weal or woe. Thus, a baleful planet like Saturn, rising in a baleful sign, from the first house, for example, would portend most terrific disaster. Even this influence would be strengthened if Saturn were placed at a certain angle, or "aspect" (I., 247), with regard to another planet. Thus, two planets placed at the angle of the "quartil" (I., 500), or ninety degrees, portended evil, and two planets "in a trine" (III., 383), or one hundred and twenty degrees apart, made for good. It is interesting to note that the position of Mars, Venus, and Saturn (III., 383, 384) can be worked out with manuals of astrology to show that Saturn in the "trine" with Venus and obscuring Mars in Capricorn, caused Saturn's influence to be malicious, and made it appropriate that he should gull Mars.

A word is necessary on the "geomantic figures" of II., 614. Geomancy was the science of "divination by spotting," that is, making figures on the ground, originally, and afterwards on paper. It is

hardly necessary fully to explain here how geomantic figures were produced; good accounts are given in the London *Saturday Review* (February 16, 1889), *The Academy* (March 2, 1889), and in Skeat's *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (V., p. 82). The geomantic figures here indicated are called by Chaucer Puella (the "maid") and Rubeus (the "warrior"). They were simply regular arrangements of dots plotted in the painting above the Mars's head. Each figure had its planet, its element, and its sign; and hence its astrological significance. When Mars was moving "direct," that is, moving with the Signs of the Zodiac, Rubeus was the astrologically significant figure; when Mars was "retrograde," that is, moving backward in the signs, Puella, with her special influences, was dominant. Dryden probably had no definite idea in mind, but introduced the image because Chaucer had used it.

IV. Glossary of Proper Names

Actæon (I., 258), a famous mythological huntsman, grandson of Cadmus, who one day came accidentally upon Diana and her nymphs while they were bathing. The angry goddess changed him to a stag, and he was torn to pieces by his own hounds.

Adonis (III., 147), a young hunter whom Venus fell in love with and wooed in vain. To her lasting sorrow he was killed by a boar. Palamon's appeal to Venus in the name of Adonis would naturally be effective.

Æsop (I., 342), the traditional author or compiler of the fables which bear his name. He is represented as a Greek slave of the sixth century, B.C., but in reality probably never existed.

Amazons (I., 17), the legendary race of fighting women. Their country was supposed to be north of the Black Sea, among the Caucasus mountains.

Anthony (II., 607), Marc Anthony, who with Octavius and Lepidus formed the second triumvirate after the death of Julius Cæsar. He slew himself to avoid capture by his successful rival, Octavius.

Apollo (II., 632), the god of the sun and of music, and brother of Diana. In *Palamon and Arcite* he is merely mentioned as the unsuccessful lover of Daphne.

Argus (I., 552), a hundred-eyed giant. Hermes (Mercury) was sent by Jupiter to kill Argus, a task which he performed after putting the giant to sleep with the caduceus.

Atalanta (II., 636), a fleet-footed Grecian maiden. Her prowess in hunting and her beauty were the cause of the quarrel between Meleager and his uncles at the Calydonian boar-hunt, in which the latter were slain. Later, she offered to marry the suitor who would

defeat her in a foot race, on condition that the vanquished should suffer death. Finally Hippomenes, aided by Venus, won the race; but ultimately the marriage, made through "the fatal power of Atalanta's eyes," led them to neglect Venus, and by her they were changed to a lion and a lioness.

Aurora (I., 186), the goddess of dawn.

Bacchus (III., 99), the god of wine. He is usually represented as a youth, smooth-faced and jolly, surrounded by animals, especially panthers. He journeyed through many lands, even to India, teaching the cultivation of the vine.

Cadmus (II., 93), the legendary Phœnician prince who came in search of his sister Europa to Bœotia, there slew the dragon, and built the citadel of Thebes. His slaying of the dragon sacred to Mars, however, involved him and his descendants in the curse of Juno and Mars and "that side of heaven."

Cæsar (II., 605). Caius Julius Cæsar was assassinated on the fifteenth of March ("Mars his ides"), B.C. 44.

Calisto (II., 623), better "Callisto," a nymph of Diana, changed by Juno into a bear, slain by Diana, and by Jupiter set, with her son Arcas, in the constellation of the Bear, in the Arctic circle.

Calydonia (in "Calydonian," II., 634), a country in western Greece. Hither the famous boar was sent by Diana to overrun the lands of Œneus, and was finally killed by Meleager and Atalanta.

Camilla (II., 639), a Latin chieftainess, killed in the wars of Æneas, by Aruns, who was in turn slain by Diana, her patroness.

Capaneus (I., 76), one of the seven heroes who took part in the attack of Polynices against Thebes. He was, while scaling the walls, struck dead by a thunderbolt, because he had defied Jupiter to keep him out of the city.

Capitol (II., 604), the meeting place of the Roman senate. Here Cæsar was assassinated.

Capricorn (III., 390), the tenth sign of the zodiac. See APPENDIX, III.

Chronos (III., 420), better "Cronos." See *Saturn*.

Circe (in the phrase "Circean feasts," II., 505), the enchantress of the *Odyssey*, who, by giving men bowls of drugged wine, changed them to beasts.

Citheron (II., 498; also "Cytheron," III., 145), better "Cithæron," a range of mountains, between Bœotia and Attica, sacred to the gods, of whom Venus was the "gladder." Dryden has probably confounded the spelling with Cythera, one of the Ionian islands sacred to Venus, and also with a city of the same name in Crete.

Creon (I., 81), a famous tyrant of Thebes. He forbade the burning of the dead after the assault of the Seven, and he immured his niece

Antigone, because she refused to obey his mandate, but burned the remains of her brother, Polynices, who perished in the assault.

Cynthia (II., 261). See *Diana.*

Cyprian queen (I., 261). See *Venus.*

Daphne (II., 631), a nymph, daughter of Peneus. She was loved by Apollo, but refused his suit. On his pursuing her, she was changed by Diana into a laurel-tree, which became sacred to Apollo.

Diana (II., 618; "goddess of the silver bow," II., 232; "Queen of Night," II., 465), daughter of Latona and sister of Apollo. She was variously the goddess of the woods, of the night, and of Hades; she was protectress of chastity, patroness of hunting, and presided over childbirth. She is called by various names, as Cynthia and Lucina, and is generally represented as arrayed in hunting dress.

Dryad (III., 961), a wood nymph whose life was bound up in that of a tree.

Ægeus (III., 871), father of Theseus.

Fates ("the Sisters," III., 172), the three goddesses, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who held the distaff, and spun and cut the thread on which the lives of men depended.

Hector (III., 864), the greatest hero and warrior of the Trojans in the Trojan war.

Hermes (I., 547), or Mercury, the messenger of the gods, especially of Jupiter.

Hippolyta (I., 21). The Amazon queen whom Theseus married is usually called Antiope.

Idalian Mount (II., 498), a mountain in Cyprus sacred to Venus. Venus is elsewhere (I., 261) called the "Cyprian queen."

Juno (I., 260), queen of the gods and wife of Jupiter. She is also here (II., 88) represented as the hereditary enemy of the race of Cadmus, because of the offence offered to her son Mars.

Jupiter or *Jove* ("the Thunderer," III., 277), king of the gods.

Love (II., 520), Cupid, Amor, or Eros, god of love and son of Venus. The word "love," however, is often used by Dryden as mere personification.

Lucina (II., 654). See *Diana.*

Mars (II., 104), son of Jupiter and Juno and god of war. He is represented as bloody, blustering, and cruel, as usually presiding over the bloodshed and murder that come from premeditated evil and war, from fire and sword.

Medea (II., 505), daughter of the king of Colchis. When Jason went after the golden fleece, she wrought charms that he might safely steal it, and restored his father, Æson, to youth. Her magic also caused the death of Creusa, the second wife of Jason.

Minotaur (I., 116), the famous half-man, half-bull of Crete, slain

in the labyrinth of Theseus, with the help of Ariadne, Minos's daughter.

Narcissus (II., 502), a beautiful youth who scorned the love of the nymph Echo, and was afterwards made so enamoured of his own reflection in a pool, that he was unable to withdraw himself from it, and died of starvation.

Niobe (III., 221), wife of Amphion, King of Thebes. On account of her beauty she dared compare herself to Latona. The angry goddess thereupon caused her children, Apollo and Diana, to shoot to death Niobe's seven sons and seven daughters, and transformed Niobe herself to a stone.

Œnides (II., 635), Meleager, son of Œneus. At his birth the Fates prophesied that he should live only until a brand then burning on the hearth should consume. This brand, Althea, his "murderous mother," extinguished and carefully preserved, only to set fire to it again when Meleager slew her brothers at the Calydonian boar-hunt.

Parthia (in the phrase "Parthian bow," III., 953), a country east of the Caspian Sea and Asia Minor. The Parthian warriors were famous as bowmen.

Peneus (in "Peneian Daphne," II., 631), a river god, father of Daphne.

Philomel (I., 199), an unhappy girl who was changed to a nightingale.

Phosphor (III., 120), the planet Venus when it appeared as the morning star.

Pirithoüs (I., 358), a Thessalian prince, the sworn bosom friend of Theseus. The latter accompanied Pirithoüs in his attempt to carry off Proserpine, queen of Hades, in which Pirithoüs was torn to pieces by the dog Cerberus.

Pluto (III., 700), son of Saturn and Rhea, the gloomy lord of the lower world and brother of Jupiter and Neptune.

Pruce (III., 31), Prussia, the country which, during the middle ages, separated the Teutonic tribes from the more savage Russians, between whom there was much fighting.

Samson (II., 503). See *Judges* xiii.–xvi. He is represented as a victim of Venus, because he was captured and imprisoned by the Philistines through the wiles of his Philistine wife, Delilah.

Saturn (I., 246), the father of Jupiter, and the oldest of the gods. He was represented as the sire of whatsoever evils spring from accident, as the falling of towers, and from privy malice, as poisoning.

Scythia (I., 7), the ancient name for the unexplored northern parts of Asia and Europe, as Russia and Siberia.

Sisters (III., 172). See *Fates*.

Solomon (II., 503), the great king of Israel. Why he is introduced as a victim of Venus may be explained by 1 *Kings* xi.

Statius (III., 212), a Roman poet who lived between 45 and 96 A.D. He wrote the epic *Thebais*, from which is derived much of the legendary history of Thebes.

Theseus (I., 2), son of Ægeus, and legendary hero of Attica, afterwards king of Athens. He freed the land from robbers, rescued Athens from Minos, slew the Minotaur, subdued the Amazons and the Thebans, was a member of the Argonautic expedition, and did many valorous deeds. He and Hippolyta are represented in *The Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Thrace (II., 527), virtually modern Turkey. The Greeks supposed it a savage, cold country of indefinite boundary, and thought it to be the favorite hunting ground of Mars.

Thunderer (III., 277). See *Jupiter.*

Titan (III., 669), the chief of the primordial deities. He had entrusted his power to his younger brother, Cronos, and on attempting to regain it, was thrust with his race of Titans to Tartarus, by Zeus (Jupiter), son of Cronos.

Triumvirs (II., 606), Octavius, Antonius, and Lepidus, the so-called second triumvirate. Soon after the battle of Philippi, they were rent with internal wars, which ended in the suicide of Antonius and the establishment of Octavius as emperor.

Troy (III., 863), the city of northwestern Asia Minor which, as described in the *Iliad*, underwent the famous ten years' siege by the Greeks.

Twins (II., 10), the constellation or sign Gemini. See APPENDIX, III.

Venus (I., 262), Goddess of love, and daughter of Jupiter.

Volscian queen (II., 639). See *Camilla.*

Vulcan (in the phrase "Vulcanian food," III., 902), husband of Venus, god of fire and the mechanical arts.

V. SELECTIONS FROM THE KNIGHTES TALE

The following passages are specimens of Chaucer's manner. They are introduced to enable a student roughly to make a comparison for himself between the two poets in characteristic passages, and to give him some elementary directions for the reading of Chaucer. It is to be regretted that space does not permit the reproduction of the entire *Knightes Tale*, beside Dryden's version, or at least such famous passages as the descriptions of the temples, of the fight between the two knights, and the tournament.

Chaucer's verse, like most of Dryden's, is pentameter, or verse of

five feet, usually of ten syllables. The accent of each foot is on the second syllable. Thus :

This dúk | of whóm | I má | kë mén | cioún.

Here the strongest accents are in the first and fourth feet. The verses are arranged in rimed couplets.

The matter of pronunciation is too elaborate to be fully treated here. A student should learn to read by ear, and should practise under the special direction of his instructor. He may also read the introduction to Skeat's *Chaucer*, *The Tale of the Man of Lawe*, etc. (Oxford, 1889), pp. ix.–xxii., for a full account of the pronunciation of Chaucer ; and, for a more general account, Skeat's *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, V., p. xxiii. For our purposes he should bear in mind, in general, that Chaucer's vowels usually receive the broadest and most open pronunciation given to them in modern English. In particular, the student should know that final *e* is pronounced like the *a* of *China*, except when elided if the next word begins with a vowel or is one of the common pronouns (as *he*) or auxiliaries (as *have*) beginning with *h*. This *e* is also often elided in the common auxiliaries, such as *were*, *hadde*. *Ed*, *es*, and *en* are also pronounced as distinct syllables, unless the metre demands their omission. Of the consonants the student should bear in mind that *gh* is pronounced like the German *ch*, and that *s* is almost always pronounced as in *soft*.

The following selection will serve as an example of the versification and pronunciation. In this passage, silent vowels are placed in italics, pronounced final *e* is printed with the diæresis, *ë*, and when *i* or *y* and a following vowel are run together in pronunciation, the fact is indicated thus : ⁀. It will be observed that eight verses end with an extra syllable, which is pronounced.

Whylom, | as ol | dë stor | ies tel | len us,
Ther was | a duk | that high | të [1] The | seus;
Of Ath | *e*nes he | was lord | and go | vernour,
And in | his ty | më swich [2] | a con | querour,
That gret | ter was | ther noon [3] | under | the sonnë.
Ful ma | ny⁀a ri | chë con | tree hadd*e* | he wonnë;
That with | his wis | dom and | his chi | valryë [4]
He con | quer*e*d al | the reg | n*e* of Fe | menyë,

[1] *Hightë*, was called.
[2] *Swich*, such.
[3] *Noon*, no one.
[4] *Chivalryë*, knightly exploits.

That why | lom was | y-cle | ped [1] Sci | thia;
And wed | dede | the queen | Ipo | lita,
And broghte | hir hoom | with him | in his | contree
With mu | chel glo | rie and greet | solemp | nitee,[2]
And eek [3] | hir yon | gë sus | ter E | melyë.
And thus | with vic | torie and | with me | lodyë
Lete I | this nob | lë duk | to Ath | enes rydë,
And al | his hoost, | in ar | mes him | bisydë.

With these facts in mind the student may go on to the reading of the following selections. The specially difficult meanings are explained in foot-notes; the general meaning can be gathered from Dryden.

[Emily, while walking in the garden, is seen by Palamon. *The Knightes Tale*, 175–233; *Palamon and Arcite*, I., 168–250.]

This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
Til it fil [4] ones,[5] in a morwe [6] of May,
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe—
For with the rose colour strof hir hewe,[7]
I noot [8] which was the fairer of hem two—
Er it were day, as was hir wone [9] to do,
She was arisen, and al redy dight; [10]
For May wol have no slogardye anight.[11]
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, "Arys, and do thyn observaunce."
This maked Emelye have remembraunce
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse; [12]

[1] *Y-cleped*, called. *Y* is the remains of the prefix of the Anglo-Saxon past-participle *ge*, etymologically the same as the German *ge*, as in *gegangen*.
[2] *Solempnitee*, pomp.
[3] *Eek*, also.
[4] Fell, came to pass.
[5] Once.
[6] Morning.
[7] Strove her hue (complexion).
[8] Know not.
[9] Wont.
[10] Prepared.
[11] At night.
[12] Tell.

Hir yelow heer was broyded [1] in a tresse,
Bihynde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.
And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,[2]
She walketh up and doun, and as hir liste [3]
She gadereth floures, party [4] whyte and rede,
To make a sotil gerland [5] for hir hede,
And as an aungel hevenly she song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
(Ther as the knightes weren in prisoun,
Of which I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Was evene joynant [6] to the gardin-wal,
Ther as [7] this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge.
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed [8] in a chambre on heigh,
In which he al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,
Ther as this fresshe Emelye the shene [9]
Was in hir walk, and romed up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, "alas!"
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,[10]
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre
Of iren greet, and square as any sparre,[11]
He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And ther-with-al he bleynte,[12] and cryde "a!"
As though he stongen [13] were un-to the herte.

[1] Braided. [2] At the rising of the sun. [3] As pleased her.
[4] Partly. [5] A subtle (finely woven) garland.
[6] Closely joining. [7] Where Emily was amusing herself.
[8] Roamed, walked. [9] Beautiful (*schŏn*). [10] Chance.
[11] Wooden bolt. [12] Blenched, drew back. [13] Stung.

And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,[1]
And seyde, "Cosin myn, what eyleth[2] thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why crydestow?[3] who hath thee doon offence?
For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
Our prisoun, for it may non other be;
Fortune hath yeven[4] us this adversitee.
Som wikke[5] aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it[6] sworn;
So stood the heven whan that we were born;
We moste endure it: this is the short and pleyn."

[Arcite rides out into the wood where Palamon lies hidden. *The Knightes Tale*, 630–662 ; *Palamon and Arcite*, II., 33–70.]

Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn,
That litel wiste[7] how ny that was his care,
Til that fortune had broght him in the snare.
The bisy larke, messager of daye,
Saluëth in hir song the morwe graye;
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes[8] dryeth in the greves[9]
The silver dropes, hanging on the leves.
And Arcite, that is in the court roial
With Theseus, his squyer principal,
Is risen, and loketh on the myrie[10] day.
And, for to doon his observaunce to May,
Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,
He on a courser, sterting[11] as the fyr,
Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,[12]
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;

[1] Started up. [2] Aileth. [3] Criedest thou
[4] Given. [5] Wicked. [6] The contrary.
[7] Wist, knew. [8] Beams. [9] Groves.
[10] Merry. [11] Lively, starting. [12] To amuse himself.

And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,
By aventure his wey he gan to holde,
To maken him a gerland of the greves,
Were it of wodebynde [1] or hawethorn-leves,
And loude he song ageyn [2] the sonne shene: [3]
"May,[4] with alle thy flowres and thy grene,
Wel-come be thou, wel [5] faire fresshe May,
I hope that I som grene gete may."
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,[6]
And in a path he rometh up and doun,
Ther as by aventure this Palamoun
Was in a bush, that no man mighte him see,
For sore afered of his deeth was he.
No-thing ne [7] knew he that it was Arcite:
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte.[8]

[Arcite's farewell to Emily. *The Knightes Tale*, 1907–1952; *Palamon and Arcite*, III., 772–839.]

"Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declare o [9] poynt of alle my sorwes smerte [10]
To yow, my lady, that I love most;
But I biquethe the service of my gost
To yow aboven every creature,
Sin that my lyf ne may no lenger dure.[11]
Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,[12]
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departing of our compaignye! [13]
Allas, myn hertes quene! allas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!

[1] Woodbine. [2] Against, in greeting to. [3] Beautiful.
[4] Compare these three lines with Dryden's version.
[5] Very. [6] Started.
[7] A double negative, not equal to an affirmative, but emphatic.
[8] Believed it full little. [9] One. [10] Smarting sorrows (smart).
[11] Last. [12] Grievous (strong) pains. [13] The division of our company.

What is this world? what asketh men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, with-outen any compaignye.
Fare-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye!
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.
I have heer with my cosin Palamon
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,[1]
For love of yow, and for [2] my jelousye.
And Jupiter so wis my soule gye,[3]
To speken of a servant [4] proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely,
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,
Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kindrede,[5]
Fredom, and al that longeth [6] to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow, and wol doon al his lyf.
And if that evere ye shul been a wyf,
Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man."
And with that word his speche faille gan,
For fro his feet up to his brest was come
The cold of deeth, that hadde him overcome.
And yet more-over, in his armes two
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.[7]
Only the intellect, with-outen more,
That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
Gan faillen, when the herte felte deeth,
Dusked his eyen two, and failled breeth.
But on his lady yet caste he his yë;
His laste word was, "mercy, Emelye!"
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,
As I cam nevere, I can nat tellen wher.

[1] Agone, gone by. [2] Because of. [3] So truly guide my soul.
[4] That is, a lover. [5] Kinship. [6] Belongeth. [7] Gone.

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