

855 Unto the blessed Cytherea's shrine
 (I mean Queen Venus, worthy and benign).
 And at her hour he then walked forth apace
 Out to the lists wherein her temple was,

860 And down he knelt in manner to revere,
 And from a full heart spoke as you shall hear.
 "Fairest of fair, O lady mine, Venus,
 If thou wilt help, thus do I make my vow,
 To boast of knightly skill I care not now,

865 Nor do I ask tomorrow's victory,
 Nor any such renown, nor vain glory
 Of prize of arms, blown before lord and churl,
 But I would have possession of one girl,
 Of Emily, and die in thy service;

870 Find thou the manner how, and in what wise.
 For I care not, unless it better be,
 Whether I vanquish them or they do me,
 So I may have my lady in my arms.

875 For though Mars is the god of war's alarms,
 Thy power is so great in Heaven above,
 That, if it be thy will, I'll have my love.
 In thy fane will I worship always, so
 That on thine altar, where'er I ride or go,
 I will lay sacrifice and thy fires feed.

880 And if thou wilt not so, O lady, cede,
 I pray thee, that tomorrow, with a spear,
 Arcita bear me through the heart, just here.
 For I'll care naught, when I have lost my life,
 That Arcita may win her for his wife.

885 This the effect and end of all my prayer,
 Give me my love, thou blissful lady fair."
 Now when he'd finished all the orison,
 His sacrifice he made, this Palamon,
 Right piously, with all the circumstance,
 Albert I tell not now his observance.

890 But at the last the form of Venus shook
 And gave a sign, and thereupon he took
 This as acceptance of his prayer that day.
 For though the augury showed some delay

was; and he knelt down in a reverent manner, and with a full heart,
 spoke as you shall hear.

"Fairest of fair, O lady mine, Venus, if you will help me, I make
 this vow. I have no interest now in boasting of knightly skill, nor do
 I ask for victory tomorrow, nor for fame or glory; but I would ask
 for one girl, Emily, as my wife, and die serving you; you decide how
 and in what way. For I don't care if I defeat them or they defeat me
 as long as I may have my lady in my arms. For though Mars is the
 god of war's call to arms, your power is so great in Heaven above
 that, if it is your will, I'll win my love. I will always worship in your
 temple, so wherever I ride or go I shall sacrifice and keep the fires
 burning on your altar. And if you will not, O Venus, grant me my
 wish, I pray thee that tomorrow Arcita runs me through the heart
 with a spear. For I will not care, when I've lost my life, that Arcita
 wins Emily for his wife. This is the end of all my prayer. Give me
 my love, thou fair blissful lady."

When Palamon had finished his prayer, he made his sacrifices
 quite devoutly with great detail, although I'll not tell about his
 ceremony now. But at the end, the statue of Venus shook and gave
 a sign, and he took this as acceptance of his prayer that day. For
 though the omen showed some delay, he was still certain his request
 was granted; so with a glad heart he soon made his way home.

Yet he knew well that granted was his boon;
And with glad heart he got him home right soon.

Three hours unequal after Palamon
To Venus' temple at the lists had gone,

895 Up rose the sun and up rose Emily
And to Diana's temple did she hie.

Her maidens led she thither, and with them
They carefully took fire and each emblem,
And incense, robes, and the remainder all
Of things for sacrifice ceremonial.

900 Her bright hair was unbound, but combed withal;
She wore of green oak leaves a coronal
Upon her lovely head. Then she began
Two fires upon the altar stone to fan.

905 When kindled was the fire, with sober face
Unto Diana spoke she in that place.

"Chaste goddess, well indeed thou knowest that I
Desire to be a virgin all my life,
Nor ever wish to be man's love or wife.

910 I am, thou know'st, yet of thy company,
A maid, who loves the hunt and ventry,
And to go rambling in the greenwood wild,
And not to be a wife and be with child.

915 I do not crave the company of man.
Now help me, lady, since thou may'st and can,
By the three beings who are one in thee.

For Palamon, who bears such love to me,
And for Arcita, loving me so sore,
This grace I pray thee, without one thing more,

920 To send down love and peace between those two,
And turn their hearts away from me: so do
That all their furious love and their desire,

925 And all their ceaseless torment and their fire
Be quenched or turned into another place;
And if it be thou wilt not show this grace,
Or if my destiny be moulded so

That I must needs have one of these same two,
Then send me him that most desires me."

Three hours after Palamon had gone to visit the temple of Venus at the tournament field, the sun rose and Emily got up and hurried to Diana's temple. She led her maidens there and with them they carefully took fire, emblems, incense, robes, and all they needed to conduct a ceremonial sacrifice. Her bright hair was unbound, but combed; she wore a crown of green oak leaves upon her lovely head. Then she began to fan two fires upon the altar. When the fire was lit, Emily spoke with a solemn face to Diana.

"Chaste goddess, you well know that I desire to be a virgin all my life and never wish to be a man's love or wife. As you know, I am, like you, a maid who loves the hunt and the chase, and to go rambling wild in the forest, and not to be a wife and mother. I don't crave the company of man. Help me, lady, since you may and can, by the three beings who are one in thee. For Palamon and Arcita, both who love me greatly, this favor I beg you without one thing more: send down love and peace between the two and turn their hearts away from me, so that their great passion and desire and all their endless torment be extinguished or turned elsewhere. But if you will not show this favor, or if it is my destiny that I must have one of the two, then send me the one who desires me most."

- 930 The fires blazed high upon the altar there,
While Emily was saying thus her prayer,
But suddenly she saw a sight most quaint,
For there, before her eyes, one fire went faint,
Then blazed again; and after that, anon,
The other fire was quenched, and so was gone.
935 And as it died it made a whistling sound,
As do wet branches burning on the ground,
And from the brands' ends there ran out, anon,
What looked like drops of blood, and many a one;
At which so much aghast was Emily
940 That she was near dazed, and began to cry,
For she knew naught of what it signified;
But only out of terror thus she cried
And wept, till it was pitiful to hear.
But thereupon Diana did appear,
945 With bow in hand, like any right huntress,
And said "My daughter, leave this heaviness.
Among the high gods it has been affirmed,
And by eternal written word confirmed,
That you shall be the wife of one of those
950 Who bear for you so many cares and woes;
But unto which of them I may not tell.
I can no longer tarry, so farewell."
And forth she went in mystic vanishing;
At which this Emily astonished was,
955 And said she then: "Ah, what means this, alas!
I put myself in thy protection here,
Diana, and at thy disposal dear."
And home she wended, then, the nearest way.
This is the purport; there's no more to say.
960 At the next hour of Mars, and following this,
Arcita to the temple walked, that is
Devoted to fierce Mars, to sacrifice
With all the ceremonies, pagan-wise.
With sobered heart and high devotion, on
965 This wise, right thus he said his orison.
"O mighty god that in the regions hold
In every realm and every land

The fires blazed high upon the altar while Emily was saying her prayer, but suddenly she saw a strange sight, for there before her eyes one fire went faint, then blazed again; and after that, instantly, the other fire went out and was gone. And as it died it made a whistling sound as wet branches do when they burn on the ground, and from the ends of the branches there suddenly ran out what looked like many drops of blood. At this sight, Emily was so terrified that she was dazed and began to cry, for she did not know what it all meant. Only out of terror she cried and wept until it was pitiful to hear. But then Diana appeared with a bow in her hand like any real huntress and said: "My daughter, leave this heaviness. Among the gods it has been decreed, and by eternal written word confirmed, that you shall be the wife of one of those who bear for you so many cares and sorrows. But to which of them you will be wed I may not tell. I can no longer stay, so farewell." And forth she went in mystic vanishing; at which Emily was astonished, and then she said, "Ah, what does all this mean, alas! Nevertheless, I put myself in your protection here, Diana, and I am at your disposal." Then home she went, the nearest way. This is the meaning; there's no more to say.

One hour after this, Arcita walked to the temple devoted to fierce Mars, to sacrifice with all the pagan ceremonies. In this manner with sobered heart and high devotion, he said his prayer.

"Oh mighty god who presides over battles, accept from me my pious sacrifice. If my youth may deserve it, and my strength serve

The reins of battle in thy guiding hand,
And givest fortune as thou dost devise,
970 Accept of me my pious sacrifice.

If so it be that my youth may deserve,
And that my strength be worthy found to serve
Have pity, now, upon my pains that smart.
I'm young, and little skilled, as knowest thou,
975 With love more hurt and much more broken now
Than ever living creature was, I'm sure;

For she who makes me all this woe endure,
Whether I float or sink cares not at all,
Now, lord, have pity on my sorrows sore;
980 Give me the victory; I ask no more."

With ended prayer of Arcita the young,
The rings that on the temple door were hung,
And even the doors themselves, rattled so fast
That this Arcita found himself aghast.

985 The fires blazed high upon the altar bright,
Until the entire temple shone with light;
And a sweet odour rose up from the ground;
And Arcita whirled then his arm around,
And yet more incense on the fire he cast,
990 And did still further rites; and at the last
The armour of God Mars began to ring,
And with that sound there came a murmuring,

Low and uncertain, saying: "Victory!"
For which he gave Mars honour and glory;
995 And thus in joy and hope, which all might dare,
Arcita to his lodging then did fare,
Fain of the fight as fowl is of the sun.

But thereupon such quarrelling was begun,
From this same granting, in the heaven above,
1000 Twixt lovely Venus, goddess of all love,
And Mars, the iron god omnipotent,

That Jove toiled hard to make a settlement;
Until the sallow Saturn, calm and cold,
Who had so many happenings known of old,
1005 Found from his full experience the art
To satisfy each party and each part.

you, have pity now, upon my pains. I'm young, and little skilled, as you know, and more hurt and more broken than any living creature from love. She for whom I suffer all this pain doesn't care whether I float or sink. Now, lord, have pity on my painful sorrows; give me the victory, I ask no more."

With the prayer of Arcita ended, the rings on the temple door, and even the doors themselves, rattled so fast that Arcita was amazed. The fires blazed high upon the altar, until the entire temple shone with light and a sweet odor rose up from the ground. Arcita whirled his arm around and threw more incense on the fire and did still further rites; with this, the armor of God Mars began to ring, and with the sound came a murmuring, low and uncertain, saying: "Victory!" for which Arcita did thank Mars, and, in joy and hope, Arcita to his lodging then did go, as eager for the fight as the cock is for the sun. But in the heaven above, such quarrelling had begun between lovely Venus, goddess of all love, and Mars, the iron god war, that Jove worked hard to reach a settlement. Zeus was not successful until Saturn found, from his experience, the art to satisfy each party. For it is true that age has an advantage; experience and wisdom come with age. Thus Saturn, though not in his nature so to do, devised a plan to quiet all the strife.

For true it is, age has great advantage;
Experience and wisdom come with age;
Thus Saturn, though it scarcely did befit
His nature so to do, devised a plan

To quiet all the strife.
Now will I cease to speak of gods above,
Of Mars and Venus, goddess of all love,
And tell you now, as plainly as I can,

1015 The great result, for which I first began.

A herald on a scaffold cried out "Ho!"
Till all the people's noise was stilled; and so
When he observed that all were fallen still,
He then proclaimed the mighty ruler's will.

1020 "The duke our lord, full wise and full discreet,
Holds that it were but wanton waste to meet
And fight, these gentle folk, all in the guise
Of mortal battle in this enterprise.

Wherefore, in order that no man may die,
1025 He does his earlier purpose modify.

No man, therefore, on pain of loss of life,
Shall any arrow, pole-axe, or short knife
Send into lists in any wise, or bring;
Nor any shortened sword, for point-thrusting,

1030 Shall a man draw, or bear it by his side.
Nor shall a knight against opponent ride,
Save one full course, with any sharp-ground spear;
Unhorsed, a man may thrust with any gear.

And he that's overcome, should this occur,
1035 Shall not be slain, but brought to barrier,
Whereof there shall be one on either side;
Let him be forced to go there and abide.

And if by chance the leader there must go,
Of either side, or slay his equal foe,
1040 No longer, then, shall tourneying endure.

God speed you; go forth now, and lay on sure.
With long sword and with maces fight your fill.
Go now your ways; this is the lord dukes will."

1045 The voices of the people rent the skies;
Such was the uproar of their merry cries:

Now I will tell you no more of the gods above, and instead I'll tell
you of the results of which I had begun speaking.

A herald on a scaffold cried out, "Ho!" to quiet all the people's
noise; and when he observed that all were fallen still, he pro-
claimed the mighty Theseus' will. "The duke our lord, both wise
and prudent, holds that it would be a foolish waste to have all these
gentlemen to meet and to fight a mortal battle in this enterprise.
Therefore, in order that no man may die, Theseus does modify his
earlier purpose. No man, therefore, on pain of loss of life, shall
carry any arrow, pole-axe, or short knife into this tournament. Nor
shall he use the point of a shortened sword for point-thrusting, nor
shall he draw or bear it by his side. Nor shall a knight ride against
an opponent, except for one full course, with any sharp spear; a
man knocked from his horse may thrust with any gear, but he that's
overcome, should this occur, shall not be slain, but brought to the
barriers, of which there is one on either side of the field, and there
he shall remain until the battle is over. And if by chance the leader
must go there, the tournament shall end. God speed you; go forth
now and battle well. With long sword and maces fight your fill. Go
now your ways, for this is the lord dukes' will."

The voices of the people ripped the skies with an uproar from
their merry cries; "Now God save such a lord, who is so good that

"Now God save such a lord, who is so good
He will not have destruction of men's blood!"
Arcita and the hundred of his party
With banner red is entering anon;

1050 And in that self-same moment, Palamon
Is under Venus, eastward in that place,
With banner white, and resolute of face.

In all the world, searching it up and down,
So equal were they all, from heel to crown,

1055 There were no two such bands in any way.
For there was no man wise enough to say
How either had of other advantage

In high repute, or in estate, or age,
So even were they chosen, as I guess.

1060 Then were the gates closed, and the cry rang loud:
"Now do your devoir, all you young knights proud!"

The heralds cease their spurring up and down;
Now ring the trumpets as the charge is blown;
And there's no more to say, for east and west

1065 Two hundred spears are firmly laid in rest;
And the sharp spurs are thrust, now, into side.
Now see men who can joust and who can ride!
Now shivered are the shafts on bucklers thick;

1070 One feels through very breast-bone the spear's prick;
Lances are flung full twenty feet in height;

Out flash the swords like silver burnished bright.
Helmets are hewed, the lacings ripped and shred;
Out bursts the blood, gushing in stern streams red.

1075 With mighty maces bones are crushed in joust.
One through the thickest throng begins to thrust.
There strong steeds stumble now, and down goes all.

One rolls beneath their feet as rolls a ball.
One flails about with club, being overthrown,
Another, on a mailed horse, rides him down.

1080 One through the body's hurt, and haled, for aid,
Spite of his struggles, to the barricade,
As compact was, and there he must abide.

At times Duke Theseus orders them to rest,
To eat a bit and drink what each likes best.

he will not have destruction of men's blood!" With this Arcita and one hundred of his party entered the field with a red banner, and in that same moment, Palamon under Venus's protection entered the field from the East, with a white banner and a firm face. In all the world, searching it up and down, so equal were they that there were no two bands in any other place. There was no man wise enough to say how either had any advantage over the other. In high repute or in estate or age, they were very evenly chosen, as I guess.

After they rode in, the gates were closed and a cry rang out: "Now, you young knights, do your duty and make yourselves proud." With this, the heralds stop their riding up and down and the trumpets blow the signal for the charge. Both East and West, spears are laid in place, the horses are spurred forward, and thus the jousting begins. Shafts are broken on thick shields, and breasts are pricked by spears; lances are flung high in the air and swords flash in the sun. Helmets are cut in shreds as blood gushes out in red streams. In jousts, maces crush the bones. One knight thrusts through the thickest part of the fight.

Horses stumble and some fall down, carrying their riders with them. One fallen rider rolls like a ball beneath the feet of the horses. One fallen rider stands his ground and flails about with his club while a foe on a horse runs into him. One badly injured knight is carried to the barricade, where he has to remain.

At times during the day, Theseus orders the combatants to take a break and get something to eat and drink. And many times that

- 1085 And many times that day those Thebans two
Met in the fight and wrought each other woe;
Unhorsed each has the other on that day.
No tigress in the vale of Galgophey,
Whose little whelp is stolen in the light,
Is cruel to the hunter as Arcite
- 1090 For jealousy is cruel to Palamon;
Nor in Belmarie, when the hunt is on
Is there a lion, wild for want of food,
That of his prey desires so much the blood
As Palamon the death of Arcite there.
Their jealous blows fall on their helmets fair;
Out leaps the blood and makes their two sides red.
But sometime comes the end of every deed;
And ere the sun had sunk to rest in gold,
The mighty King Emeireus did hold
1100 This Palamon, as he fought with Arcita,
And made his sword deep in the flesh to bite;
And by the force of twenty men he's made,
Unyielded, to withdraw to barricade.
And, trying hard to rescue Palamon,
1105 The mighty King Lycurgus is borne down;
And King Emeireus, for all his strength,
Is hurled out of the saddle a sword's length,
So hits out Palamon once more, or ere
(But all for naught) he's brought to barrier.
1110 His hardy heart may now avail him naught;
He must abide there now, being fairly caught
By force of arms, as by provision known.
Who sorrows now but woeful Palamon,
1115 Who may no more advance into the fight?
And when Duke Theseus had seen this sight,
Unto the warriors fighting, every one,
He cried out: "Hold! No more! For it is done!
Now will I prove true judge, of no party.
1120 Theban Arcita shall have Emily,
Who, by his fortune, has her fairly won."
But now, what can fair Venus do above?
What says she now? What does this queen of love

day, Arcita and Palamon fought and knocked each other from their horses. There is no tigress in all of Galgophey, whose cub has been stolen, who is crueler to the hunter than is Arcita to Palamon. Nor in all of Belmarie is there a starved, crazed lion more desirous of blood than Palamon does desire the death of Arcita. The jealous blows of these two fall on each other's helmet causing blood to flow on both sides.

But, in time, comes the end of every action and before the sun sank that night, King Emeireus attacked Palamon as he fought with Arcita. After wounding Palamon, Emeireus and twenty others forced the struggling Palamon toward the barricade. As they did so, King Lycurgus tried to come to Palamon's aid, but it's all for naught, for Lycurgus is knocked down and Palamon is forced to the barricade. When Duke Theseus saw that Palamon had been forced from the battle, he cried out: "Hold! The fight is done. Now I judge that Arcita shall have Emily, whom he has fairly won."

But now, what shall fair Venus far above do? What does she say now? What is this Queen of Love to do—only weep, when her will

But weep so fast, for thwarting of her will,
Her tears upon the lists begin to spill.

1125 She said: "Now am I shamed and over-flung."

But Saturn said: "My daughter, hold your tongue.
Mars has his will, his knight has all his boon,
And, by my head, you shall be eased, and soon."

1130 The heralds that did loudly yell and cry,
Were at their best for joy of Arcita.

But hear me further while I tell you—ah!—
The miracle that happened there anon.

1135 This fierce Arcita doffs his helmet soon,
And mounted on a horse, to show his face,
He spurs from end to end of that great place,

Looking aloft to gaze on Emily;
And she cast down on him a friendly eye
(For women, generally speaking, go

1140 Wherever Fortune may her favor show);
And she was fair to see, and held his heart.

But from the ground infernal furies start,
From Pluto sent, at instance of Saturn,
Whereat his horse, for fear, began to turn
And leap aside, all suddenly falling there;

1145 And Arcita before he could beware
Was pitched upon the ground, upon his head,
And lay there, moving not, as he were dead,
So ran the surging blood into his face.

1150 Anon they carried him from out that place,
With heavy hearts, to Theseus' palace.
There was his harness cut away, each lace,
And swiftly was he laid upon a bed,
For he was yet alive and some words said,

1155 Crying and calling after Emily.

Swells now Arcita's breast until the sore
Increases near his heart yet more and more.
The clotted blood, in spite of all leech-craft,
Rots in his bulk, and there it must be left,

1160 Since no device of skillful blood-letting,
Nor drink of herbs, can help him in this thing.

is so thwarted? She said: "I have been shamed and overruled."

But Saturn said: "My daughter, hold your tongue. Mars has had his way and his knight has won what he desired, but you shall soon have yours."

Then the trumpets blew and the heralds shouted for Arcita's joy. But listen further as I tell—ah—the miracle that happened then. The fierce Arcita removes his helmet, and mounted on his horse he rides about the field looking up to gaze on Emily. And she cast a friendly eye on him. (For women are generally attracted to those whom fortune favors.) And with her beauty, she held Arcita's heart.

But from the ground, Pluto, at Saturn's orders, sends a disturbance which causes Arcita's horse to leap; Arcita, caught unaware, was pitched on the ground where he landed on his head and there he lay not moving, as if dead. With blood from his head running on to his face, they carried Arcita from the field to Theseus' palace. There his armor was cut away, and he was placed upon a bed, for he was still alive and calling out for Emily.

As Arcita lay there, his breast swelled up, and in spite of the leeches that were used, the blood clotted by his heart. Since there are no herbs or other devices to remove the blood, it lay there.

- All is so broken in that part of him,
Nature retains no vigour there, nor vim.
The sum of all is, Arcita must die,
And so he sends a word to Emily,
And Palamon, who was his cousin dear;
And then he said to them as you shall hear.
"To you, my lady, whom I love the most;
But I bequeath the service of my ghost
To you above all others, this being sure
Now that my life may here no more endure.
Alas, the woe! Alas, the pain so strong
That I for you have suffered, and so long!
Alas for death! Alas, my Emily!"
Alas, the parting of our company!
Alas, my heart's own queen! Alas, my wife!
My soul's dear lady; ender of my life!
Farewell, my sweet foe! O my Emily!
Oh, take me in your gentle arms, I pray,
For love of God, and hear what I will say."
1180 "I have here, with my cousin Palamon,
Had strife and rancour many a day that's gone,
For love of you and for my jealousy;
May Jove so surely guide my soul for me,
To speak about a lover properly.
1185 In this world, right now, I know of none
So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
Who serves you and will do so all his life.
And if you ever should become a wife,
Forget not Palamon, the noble man."
1190 And with that word his speech to fail began,
For from his feet up to his breast had come
The cold of death, making his body numb.
And furthermore, from his two arms the strength
Was gone out, now, and he was lost, at length.
1195 Only the intellect, and nothing more,
Which dwelt within his heart so sick and sore,
Began to fail now; when the heart felt death,
And his eyes darkened, and he failed of breath.
1200 But on his lady turned he still his eye,

All the natural defenses in that part of him being broken, he loses all his vim and vigor. The sum of it is that Arcita must die, and so he asks both Emily and Palamon to come to him. Then he said as you shall hear: "To you, my lady, whom I love the most, I bequeath the service of my ghost, for it is clear that I shall not live. Alas, the sorrow and pain I have suffered for you. Alas that my death shall now part us. Farewell my sweet foe, my Emily! Take me in your arms and for the love of God, hear what I have to say."

"Between my cousin Palamon and myself there has been much bitterness and jealousy over you. Now may Jove quiet my soul that I may speak about a lover properly. In this world right now I know of no one so worthy to be loved as Palamon. If you ever should become his wife, he will serve you all his life, so when you consider taking a husband, do not forget the noble Palamon."

And with that his speech began to fail for death crept up his body, leaving it numb and cold. And, furthermore, his arms fell limp as he lost his strength. Now the spirit which lived within him began to fail and his eyes darkened and his breathing faltered, but on his lady he turned his eye, and his last word was "Mercy, Emily!" With this, his soul departed his body, to go where I cannot say. Now will I speak of Emily.

And his last word was, "Mercy, Emily!"
His spirit changed its house and went from here.
As I was never there, I cannot say where.
Now will I speak forthwith of Emily.

1205 Shrieked Emily and howled now Palamon,
Till Theseus his sister took, anon,
And bore her, swooning, for the corpse away.
How shall it help, to dwell the livelong day
In telling how she wept both night and morrow?

1210 For in like cases women have such sorrow,
When their good husband from their side must go,
And, for the greater part, they take on so,
Or else they fall into such malady
That, at the last, and certainly, they die.

1215 Infinite were the sorrows and the tears
Of all old folk and folk of tender years
Throughout the town, at death of this Theban;
For him there wept the child and wept the man;
So great a weeping was not, 'tis certain,
When Hector was brought back, but newly slain,
1220 To Troy. Alas, the sorrow that was there!
Tearing of cheeks and rending out of hair.

"Oh why will you be dead," these women cry,
"Who had of gold enough, and Emily?"
1225 No man might comfort then Duke Theseus,
Excepting his old father, Aegeus,
Who knew this world's mutations, and men's own,
Since he had seen them changing up and down,
Joy after woe, and woe from happiness:

1230 He showed them, by example, the process.
"Just as there never died a man," quoth he,
"But he had lived on earth in some degree,
Just so there never lived a man," he said,
"In all this world, but must be sometime dead.

1235 This world is but a thoroughfare of woe,
And we are pilgrims passing to and fro;
Death is the end of every worldly sore."
And after this, he told them yet much more
To that effect, all wisely to exhort

Palamon howled and Emily shrieked until Theseus took her in his arms and led her away. How will it help if I now tell you how she wept continually night and day? For in such cases, women have great sorrow when their husbands die, and most of the time they carry on so or else fall gravely ill and, at last, die.

Great were the sorrows and the tears of both the young and old people throughout the town at the death of Arctia. Every man, woman and child wept for him. When Hector was slain and his body brought back to Troy, it is certain there was no greater weeping. So great was this sorrow! Many tears flowed and women, in their grief, pulled at their hair. These women cry, "Oh why are you dead Arctia; you who had gold enough and Emily's heart?"

Duke Theseus could not be comforted by anyone except his father, Aegeus, who knew how the things of this world change. Aegeus had seen life change; he had seen fortune go up and down. He had seen joy follow sorrow, and sorrow follow happiness. He showed them all of this, by this example.

"Just as there never died a man," said he, "who had not first lived in some degree, there never lived a man, who must not at some time die. This world is but a highway of sorrow, and we are pilgrims traveling back and forth with death at the end of our worldly pain." And then Aegeus said much more to this effect, and in this way, he urged the people to find some comfort from their grief.

- 1240 The people that they should find some comfort.
 Duke Theseus now considered and with care
 What place of burial he should prepare
 For good Arcita, as it best might be,
 And one most worthy of his high degree.
 1245 And at the last concluded, hereupon,
 That where at first Arcita and Palamon
 Had fought for love, with no man else between,
 There in that very grove, so sweet and green,
 Where he mused on his amorous desires
 1250 Complaining of love's hot and flaming fires,
 He'd make a pyre and have the funeral.
 Accomplished there, and worthily in all.
 And so he gave command to hack and hew
 The ancient oaks, and lay them straight and true
 1255 In split lengths that would kindle well and burn.
 His officers, with sure swift feet, they turn
 And ride away to do his whole intent.
 And after this Duke Theseus straightway sent
 For a great bier, and had it all o'er-spread
 1260 With cloth of gold, the richest that he had.
 Arcita clad he, too, in cloth of gold;
 White glove were on his hands where they did fold;
 Upon his head a crown of laurel green,
 And near his hand a sword both bright and keen.
 1265 Then, having bared the dead face on the bier,
 The duke so wept, 'twas pitiful to hear.
 And, so that folk might see him, one and all,
 When it was day he brought them to the hall
 Which echoed of their wailing cries anon.
 1270 Then came this woeful Theban, Palamon,
 With fluttery beard and matted, ash-strewn hair,
 All in black clothes wet with his tears; and there,
 Surpassing all in weeping, Emily,
 The most affected of the company.
 1275 The noblest Greeks did gladly volunteer
 To bear upon their shoulders that great bier,
 With measured pace and eyes gone red and wet,
 Through all the city, by the wide main street,

Duke Theseus now carefully considered what place of burial he should prepare for Arcita. And at last he concluded, that where Arcita and Palamon first had fought for love, Arcita should be buried; there, in that sweet and green grove, where he mused on his amorous desires and complained of love's hot and flaming fires. In that spot, he would make a pyre to have the funeral; and so he gave the command to cut down the ancient oaks, and lay them straight and true in split lengths so they would burn easily. His officers swiftly rode off to do his bidding. And after this Duke Theseus sent for a great casket, and had it covered with cloth of gold, the richest that he had. Arcita, also, he dressed in a cloth of gold and upon his head he placed a crown of green, and near his hand a sharp sword. Then, in looking at Arcita's face, the duke wept so, it was pitiful to hear. And, so that all folks might see Arcita when it was day, he brought them to the hall, which echoed from their cries. Then came the woeful Palamon, with fluttery beard and matted hair. He was dressed all in black clothes that were wet with his tears; but surpassing all in weeping was Emily, the most affected of all those present.

The noblest Greeks gladly volunteered to carry Arcita's casket, with measured pace and eyes gone red and wet, through all the city, by the wide main street, which was all spread with black, and covered with this same cloth were all the houses. Upon the right,

Which was all spread with black, and, wondrous high,

1280

Covered with this same cloth were houses nigh,
Upon the right hand went old Aegeus,

And on the other side Duke Theseus,

With vessels in their hands, of gold right fine,

All filled with honey, milk, and blood, and wine;

1285

And Palamon with a great company;

And after that came woeful Emily,

With fire in hands, as use was, to ignite

The sacrifice and set the pyre alight.

Great labour and full great apparelling

1290

Went to the service and the fire-making.

That is to say, the branches went so wide.

Full many a load of straw they did provide.

But how the fire was made to climb so high;

Or what names all the different trees went by,

Or how they were felled, shant be told by me.

1295

Nor how aghast the ground was in the light,

Nor being used to seeing the sun so bright;

Nor how the fire was started first with straw,

And then with dry wood, riven thrice by saw,

And then with green wood and with spicery,

1300

And then with cloth of gold and jewelery

And garlands hanging with full many a flower,

And myrrh, and incense, sweet as rose in bower;

Nor how Arcita lies among all this,

Nor what vast wealth about his body is;

1305

Nor how this Emily, as was their way,

Lighted the sacred funeral fire, that day,

Nor how she swooned when men built up the fire,

Nor what she said, nor what was her desire;

1310

No, nor what gems men on the fire then cast,

When the white flame went high and burned so fast;

Nor how one cast his shield, and one his spear,

And some their vestments, on that burning bier,

With cups of wine, and cups of milk, and blood,

Into that flame, which burned as wild-fire would;

1315

Nor how the Greeks, in one huge wailing rout,

Rode slowly three times all the fire about,

Old Aegeus walked and on the other side Duke Theseus, with gold vessels in their hands, all filled with honey, milk, and blood, and wine; then came Palamon with a great company; and after that came woeful Emily carrying a fire in hands, which was to be used to ignite the sacrifice and set the pyre alight.

A great labor went into the preparation of the fire-making, that is to say, many branches and many a full load of straw they did provide. But how the fire was made to climb so high; or what names all the different trees went by, or how they were felled, shant be told by me. Nor how surprised the ground was in the light, not being used to seeing the sun so bright; nor how the fire was started first with straw and then with dry wood and then with green wood and with spices, and then with cloth of gold and jewelry and garlands hanging with many flowers and myrrh and incense, sweet as a rose in a bower; nor how Arcita lies among all this, nor what vast wealth lies about his body; nor how this Emily, as was their way, lighted the sacred funeral fire that day, nor how she swooned when men built up the fire, nor what she said, nor what was her desire; no, nor what gems men threw on the fire then. Nor how one threw on his shield, and one his spear, and some threw their garments, onto that burning casket, with cups of wine, and cups of milk and blood into that flame, which burned as wild-fire would; nor how the Greeks in one huge wailing cry rode slowly three times around the fire, upon the left hand, with a loud shouting, and three times more, with weapons clattering, while the women present raised up a great cry; nor shall I tell how homeward sad Emily was led; nor how Arcita burned until he was but cold ashes. Nor how the Greeks played all that night, nor who it was that, naked, wrestled best, nor who it was that best bore himself in appointed deeds. I will not even tell how they all went home to Athens, when the play was done; but I will get briefly to the point, now, and make an end of this lengthy tale.

- Upon the left hand, with a loud shouting,
And three times more, with weapons clattering,
While thrice the women there raised up a cry;
1320 Nor how was homeward led sad Emily;
Nor how Arcita burned to ashes cold;
All that same night, nor how the Greeks did play
Who, naked, wrestled best, with oil anointed,
Nor who best bore himself in deeds appointed.
1325 I will not even tell how they were gone
Home, into Athens, when the play was done;
But briefly to the point, now, will I wend
And make of this, my lengthy tale, an end.
1330 With passing in their length of certain years,
All put by was the mourning and the tears
Of Greeks, as by one general assent;
And then it seems there was a parliament
At Athens, upon certain points in case;
1335 Among the which points spoken of there was
The ratifying of alliances
That should hold Thebes from all defiances.
Whereat this noble Theseus, anon,
Invited there the gentle Palamon,
1340 Not telling him what was the cause and why;
But in his mourning clothes, and sorrowfully,
He came upon that bidding, so say I.
And then Duke Theseus sent for Emily.
When they were seated and was hushed the place,
1345 And Theseus had mused a little space,
Ere any word came from his full wise breast,
His two eyes fixed on whoso pleased him best,
Then with a sad face sighed he deep and still,
And after that began to speak his will.
1350 "When first God forged the goodly chain of love,
Great the effect, and high was His intent;
Well knew He why, and what thereof He meant;
For with that goodly chain of love He bound
1355 The fire, the air, the water, and dry ground
In certain bounds, the which they might not flee;
That same First Cause and Mover," then quoth he,

When a number of years passed, all the mourning and the tears were stopped. At Athens, there was a meeting of the parliament upon certain points. Among the points they spoke of was the ratifying of alliances that should hold back Thebes from defying Athens. To this meeting, the noble Theseus invited gentle Palamon, not telling him what was the reason for the invitation. Nevertheless Palamon, in his mourning clothes and sorrowful, came as requested. And then Duke Theseus sent for Emily. When all were seated and the place hushed, before he spoke, Theseus stared thoughtfully on those who pleased him best. Then with a sad face he deeply sighed and after that began to speak his will.

"When God first forged the chain of love, the effect was great, and His intent was lofty. He knew well why and what He meant to do; for with that chain of love, He bound the fire, the air, the water, and dry ground in such a way that they might not flee. God, the First Cause and Mover," then said he, "has established a certain length of days that all creatures born in this world may call their own, beyond which, not by one day may they live, though, all may

- “Has stablished in this base world, up and down,
A certain length of days to call their own
For all that are engendered in this place,
Beyond the which not one day may they pace,
1360 Though yet all may that certain time abridge;
Authority there needs none, I allege,
For it is well proved by experience.
Well may man know, unless he be a fool
1365 That every part derives but from the whole,
And therefore, of His Wisdom’s Providence,
Has He so well established ordinance
That species of all things and all progressions,
If they’d endure, it must be by successions,
1370 Not being themselves eternal, ’tis no lie:
This may you understand and see by eye.”
“Lo now, the oak, that has long nourishing
Even from the time that it begins to spring,
And has so long a life, as we may see,
1375 Yet at the last all wasted is the tree.
“Consider, too, how even the hard stone
Under our feet we tread each day upon
Yet wastes it, as it lies beside the way:
And the broad river will be dry some day:
1380 And great towns wane; we see them vanishing.
Thus may we see the end to everything.”
“Of man and woman just the same is true:
Needs must, in either season of the two,
That is to say, in youth or else in age,
1385 All men perish, the king as well as page;
Some in their bed, and some in the deep sea,
And some in the wide field—as it may be;
There’s naught will help; all go the same way. Aye,
Then may I say that everything must die.
1390 Who causes this but Jupiter the King?
He is the Prince and Cause of everything,
Converting all back to that primal well
From which it was derived, ’tis sooth to tell.
And against this, for every thing alive,
1395 Of any state, avails it not to strive.

cut short that time; I need not quote an authority to prove this, for it is well proved by experience. Any man who is not a fool knows that every part derives from the whole, and, therefore, God in his wisdom has established that all species if they'd endure, it must be by succession, not being themselves eternal. This may you understand and see by your own eye.

“Look at the oak that has so long a life, as we may see, yet even this old oak tree must, at the last, also die. Consider, too, how even the hard stone under our feet, which we walk upon each day, eventually crumbles. And the broad river some day will be dry, and even great towns we see vanish. Thus may we see that there is an end to everything.

“Of man and woman just the same is true: either in youth or else in age, all men perish, the king as well as his page. Some die in their bed, and some in the deep sea, and some in the wide field—as it may be; there’s nothing that will help, for we all go the same way. Then may I say that everything must die. Who causes this but Jupiter the King? He is the Prince and Cause of everything, who converts all that exists back to that dust from which it had come. For every thing that lives, it is useless to strive against this.

“Then is it wisdom, as it seems to me,
To make a virtue of necessity;

And calmly take what we may not eschew,
And specially that which to all is due.

1400 Whoso would balk at aught, he does folly,
And thus rebels against His potency.

And certainly a man has most honour
In dying in his excellence and flower;

1405 When he is certain of his high good name;
For then he gives to friend, and self, no shame.

And gladder ought a friend be of his death
When, in much honour, he yields up his breath,

Than when his name's grown feeble with old age;
For all forgotten, then, is his courage.

1410 Hence it is best for all of noble name
To die when at the summit of their fame.

The contrary of this is wilfulness.
Why do we grumble? Why have heaviness

1415 That good Arcita, chivalry's fair flower,
Is gone, with honour, in his best-lived hour;

Out of the filthy prison of this life?
Why grumble here his cousin and his wife

About his welfare, who loved them so well?
Can he thank them? Nay, God knows, not! Nor tell

1420 How they his soul and their own selves offend.”
“What may I prove by this long argument

Save that we all turn to merriment,
After our grief, and give Jove thanks for grace.

1425 And so, before we go from out this place,
I counsel that we make, of sorrows two,

One perfect joy, lasting for aye, for you;
And look you now, where most woe is herein,
There will we first amend it and begin.

“Sister,” quoth he, “you have my full consent,
With the advice of this my Parliament,

1430 That gentle Palamon, your own true knight,
Who serves you well with will and heart and might,

And so has ever, since you knew him first—
That you shall, of your grace, allay his thirst

“Then since this is so, it is wisdom, as it seems to me, to make a virtue of necessity and to calmly accept what we may not avoid, especially that which must happen to us all. He who would balk at this is foolish, for in so doing, he thus rebels against God's power. And certainly a man has the most honor when he dies in his prime when he is certain of his high good name and he gives to friend and self no shame. And gladder ought a person be when a young friend dies in his prime, in contrast to when a friend's name is grown feeble with old age, and all have forgotten his courage. Hence, it is best for all of noble name to die when at the height of their fame. To act against this is wilfulness. Why do we grumble? Why have sorrow that Arcita, chivalry's fair flower, has gone with honor in his best-lived hour and escaped from the filthy prison of this life? Then why do his cousin and his wife complain about his welfare? Can he thank them? Not a bit! Nor can he tell them how they offend his soul and their own selves.

“What may I prove by this long argument except that after our grief, we all must turn to merriment and give Jove thanks for grace. And so, before we leave this place, I counsel that we make of two sorrows, one perfect joy for both of you; and look you now to the one with greatest sorrow, for there will we first begin to make a change.

“Sister,” said he to Emily, “you have my full consent, and the advice of Parliament that gentle Palamon, your own true knight, he who serves you well with will and heart and might, and has so ever since you first knew him—that it is he you shall take for lord and husband. Lend me your hand because this is our agreement, so let your woman's pity make him glad. For he is a king's brother's son,

- 1435 By taking him for husband and for lord:
Lend me your hand, for this is our accord.
Let now your woman's pity make him glad.
For he is a king's brother's son, by gad;
And though he were a poor knight bachelor,
1440 Since he has served you for so many a year,
And borne for you so great adversity,
This ought to weigh with you, it seems to me,
For mercy ought to dominate mere right."
Then said he thus to Palamon the knight:
1455 "I think there needs but little sermoning
To make you give consent, now, to this thing.
Come near, and take your lady by the hand."
Between them, then, was tied that nuptial band,
Which is called matrimony or marriage,
1450 By all the council and the baronage.
And thus, in all bliss and with melody,
Has Palamon now wedded Emily.
And God, Who all this universe has wrought,
Send him His love, who has it dearly bought.
1455 For now has Palamon, in all things, wealth,
Living in bliss, in riches, and in health;
And Emily loved him so tenderly,
And he served her so well and faithfully,
That never word once marred their happiness,
1460 No jealousy, nor other such distress.
Thus ends now Palamon and Emily;
And may God save all this fair company! Amen.

by heaven; and though he were a poor knight bachelor, since he has served you for so many a year, and has borne for you so great adversity, this ought to weigh with you in his favor, for mercy ought to dominate mere right."

Then he said to Palamon, "I think there needs little to be said in order to get you to give consent to this thing. Come near, and take your lady by the hand."

Between them then was tied that nuptial band, which is called matrimony or marriage, and thus, in all bliss and with melody, has Palamon now married Emily. And may God, the maker of all this universe, send him His love. For now Palamon is wealthy in all things, living in bliss, in riches, and in health; and Emily who loved him so tenderly, he served her well and faithfully. Not one word ever marred their happiness, no jealousy, nor other such distress. Thus ends the tale of Palamon and Emily; and may God save all this fair company! Amen.