

THE KNIGHT'S TALE <1>

WHILOM*, as olde stories tellen us, *formerly There was a
duke that highte* Theseus. *was called <2> Of Athens he was
lord and governor, And in his time such a conqueror That greater was there
none under the sun. Full many a riche country had he won. What with his
wisdom and his chivalry, He conquer'd all the regne of Feminie,<3> That
whilom was y-cleped Scythia; And weddede the Queen Hippolyta And
brought her home with him to his country With muchel* glory and great
solemnity, *great And eke her younge sister Emily, And
thus with vict'ry and with melody Let I this worthy Duke to Athens ride, And
all his host, in armes him beside.

And certes, if it n'ere* too long to hear, *were not I would have
told you fully the mannere, How wonnen* was the regne of Feminie, <4>
*won By Theseus, and by his chivalry; And of the greate battle for the nonce
Betwixt Athenes and the Amazons; And how assieged was Hippolyta, The
faire hardy queen of Scythia; And of the feast that was at her wedding And
of the tempest at her homecoming. But all these things I must as now
forbear. I have, God wot, a large field to ear* *plough<5>; And
weake be the oxen in my plough; The remnant of my tale is long enow. I will
not *letten eke none of this rout*. *hinder any of Let every fellow
tell his tale about, this company* And let see now who shall
the supper win. There *as I left*, I will again begin. *where I left
off*

This Duke, of whom I make mentioun, When he was come almost unto the
town, In all his weal, and in his moste pride, He was ware, as he cast his eye
aside, Where that there kneeled in the highe way A company of ladies, tway
and tway, Each after other, clad in clothes black: But such a cry and such a
woe they make, That in this world n'is creature living, That hearde such
another waimenting* *lamenting <6> And of this crying would
they never stenten*, *desist Till they the reines of his bridle
henten*. *seize "What folk be ye that at mine homecoming
Perturben so my feaste with crying?" Quoth Theseus; "Have ye so great envy
Of mine honour, that thus complain and cry? Or who hath you misboden*,
or offended? *wronged Do telle me, if it may be amended;
And why that ye be clad thus all in black?"

The oldest lady of them all then spake, When she had swooned, with a
deadly cheer*, *countenance That it was ruthe* for to see or hear.

pity She saide; "Lord, to whom fortune hath given Vict'ry, and as a conqueror to liven, Nought grieveth us your glory and your honour; But we beseechen mercy and succour. Have mercy on our woe and our distress; Some drop of pity, through thy gentleness, Upon us wretched women let now fall. For certes, lord, there is none of us all That hath not been a duchess or a queen; Now be we caitives, as it is well seen:
 *captives Thanked be Fortune, and her false wheel, That *none estate ensureth to be wele*. *assures no continuance of And certes, lord, t'abiden your presence prosperous estate* Here in this temple of the goddess Clemence We have been waiting all this fortenight: Now help us, lord, since it lies in thy might.

"I, wretched wight, that weep and waile thus, Was whilom wife to king Capaneus, That starf* at Thebes, cursed be that day: *died <7>
 And alle we that be in this array, And maken all this lamentatioun, We losten all our husbands at that town, While that the siege thereabouten lay. And yet the olde Creon, wellaway! That lord is now of Thebes the city, Fulfilled of ire and of iniquity, He for despite, and for his tyranny, To do the deade bodies villainy*, *insult Of all our lorde's, which that been y-slaw, *slain Hath all the bodies on an heap y-draw, And will not suffer them by none assent Neither to be y-buried, nor y-brent*, *burnt But maketh houndes eat them in despite."
 And with that word, withoute more respite They fallen groff,* and cryden piteously; *grovelling "Have on us wretched women some mercy, And let our sorrow sincken in thine heart."

This gentle Duke down from his courser start With hearte piteous, when he heard them speak. Him thoughte that his heart would all to-break, When he saw them so piteous and so mate* *abased That whilom weren of so great estate. And in his armes he them all up hent*,
 *raised, took And them comforted in full good intent, And swore his oath, as he was true knight, He woulde do *so farforthly his might* *as far as his power went* Upon the tyrant Creon them to wreak*,
 avenge That all the people of Greece shoulde speak, How Creon was of Theseus y-served, As he that had his death full well deserved. And right anon withoute more abode *delay His banner he display'd, and forth he rode To Thebes-ward, and all his, host beside: No ner* Athenes would he go nor ride, *nearer Nor take his ease fully half a day, But onward on his way that night he lay: And sent anon Hippolyta the queen, And Emily her younge sister sheen*
 bright, lovely Unto the town of Athens for to dwell: And forth he rit; there is no more to tell. *rode

broke alway for love in each degree A man must needes love, maugre his head. He may not flee it, though he should be dead, *All be she* maid, or widow, or else wife. *whether she be* And eke it is not likely all thy life To standen in her grace, no more than I For well thou wost thyselfe verily, That thou and I be damned to prison Perpetual, us gaineth no ranson. We strive, as did the houndes for the bone; They fought all day, and yet their part was none. There came a kite, while that they were so wroth, And bare away the bone betwixt them both. And therefore at the kinge's court, my brother, Each man for himselfe, there is no other. Love if thee list; for I love and aye shall And soothly, leve brother, this is all. Here in this prison musten we endure, And each of us take his Aventure."

Great was the strife and long between these tway, If that I hadde leisure for to say; But to the effect: it happen'd on a day (To tell it you as shortly as I may), A worthy duke that hight Perithous<14> That fellow was to the Duke Theseus Since thilke* day that they were children lite** *that **little Was come to Athens, his fellow to visite, And for to play, as he was wont to do; For in this world he loved no man so; And he lov'd him as tenderly again. So well they lov'd, as olde bookes sayn, That when that one was dead, soothly to sayn, His fellow went and sought him down in hell: But of that story list me not to write. Duke Perithous loved well Arcite, And had him known at Thebes year by year: And finally at request and prayere Of Perithous, withoute ranson Duke Theseus him let out of prison, Freely to go, where him list over all, In such a guise, as I you tellen shall This was the forword*, plainly to indite, *promise Betwixte Theseus and him Arcite: That if so were, that Arcite were y-found Ever in his life, by day or night, one stound* *moment<15> In any country of this Theseus, And he were caught, it was accorded thus, That with a sword he shoulde lose his head; There was none other remedy nor rede*. *counsel But took his leave, and homeward he him sped; Let him beware, his necke lieth *to wed*. *in pledge*

How great a sorrow suff'reth now Arcite! The death he feeleth through his hearte smite; He weepeth, waileth, crieth piteously; To slay himself he waiteth privily. He said; "Alas the day that I was born! Now is my prison worse than befor: *Now is me shape* eternally to dwell *it is fixed for me* Not in purgatory, but right in hell. Alas! that ever I knew Perithous. For elles had I dwelt with Theseus Y-fettered in his prison evermo'. Then had I been in bliss, and not in woe. Only the sight of her, whom that I serve, Though that I never may her grace deserve, Would have sufficed right enough for me. O deare cousin Palamon," quoth he, "Thine is the vict'ry of this aventure, Full blissfully in prison to endure: In prison? nay certes, in paradise. Well hath fortune y-turned thee the dice, That hast the sight of

her, and I th' absence. For possible is, since thou hast her presence, And art
 a knight, a worthy and an able, That by some cas*, since fortune is
 changeable, *chance Thou may'st to thy desire sometime attain.
 But I that am exiled, and barren Of alle grace, and in so great despair, That
 there n'is earthe, water, fire, nor air, Nor creature, that of them maked is,
 That may me helpe nor comfort in this, Well ought I *sterve in wanhope* and
 distress. *die in despair* Farewell my life, my lust*, and my gladness.
 *pleasure Alas, *why plainen men so in commune *why do men so often
 complain Of purveyance of God*, or of Fortune, of God's
 providence?* That giveth them full oft in many a guise Well better than they
 can themselves devise? Some man desireth for to have richness, That cause is
 of his murder or great sickness. And some man would out of his prison fain,
 That in his house is of his meinie* slain. *servants <16> Infinite
 harmes be in this matter. We wot never what thing we pray for here. We
 fare as he that drunk is as a mouse. A drunken man wot well he hath an
 house, But he wot not which is the right way thither, And to a drunken man
 the way is slither*. *slippery And certes in this world so fare we.
 We seeke fast after felicity, But we go wrong full often truely. Thus we may
 sayen all, and namely* I, *especially That ween'd*, and
 had a great opinion, *thought That if I might escape from
 prison Then had I been in joy and perfect heal, Where now I am exiled from
 my weal. Since that I may not see you, Emily, I am but dead; there is no
 remedy."

Upon that other side, Palamon, When that he wist Arcita was agone, Much
 sorrow maketh, that the greate tower Resounded of his yelling and clamour
 The pure* fetters on his shinnes great *very <17> Were of his
 bitter salte teares wet.

"Alas!" quoth he, "Arcita, cousin mine, Of all our strife, God wot, the fruit is
 thine. Thou walkest now in Thebes at thy large, And of my woe thou *givest
 little charge*. *takest little heed* Thou mayst, since thou hast wisdom
 and manhead*, *manhood, courage Assemble all the folk of our kindred,
 And make a war so sharp on this country That by some aventure, or some
 treaty, Thou mayst have her to lady and to wife, For whom that I must
 needes lose my life. For as by way of possibility, Since thou art at thy large,
 of prison free, And art a lord, great is thine advantage, More than is mine,
 that sterve here in a cage. For I must weep and wail, while that I live, With
 all the woe that prison may me give, And eke with pain that love me gives
 also, That doubles all my torment and my woe."

Therewith the fire of jealousy upstart Within his breast, and hent* him by
 the heart *seized So woody*, that he like was to behold

*madly The box-tree, or the ashes dead and cold. Then said; "O cruel
 goddess, that govern This world with binding of your word etern*
 eternal And writen in the table of adamant Your parlement and your
 eternal grant, *consultation What is mankind more *unto you y-
 hold* *by you esteemed Than is the sheep, that rouketh* in the
 fold! *lie huddled together For slain is man, right as another beast; And
 dwelleth eke in prison and arrest, And hath sickness, and great adversity,
 And oftentimes guileless, pardie* *by God What
 governance is in your prescience, That guileless tormenteth innocence? And
 yet increaseth this all my penance, That man is bounden to his observance
 For Godde's sake to *letten of his will*, *restrain his desire* Whereas a
 beast may all his lust fulfil. And when a beast is dead, he hath no pain; But
 man after his death must weep and plain, Though in this worlde he have
 care and woe: Withoute doubt it maye standen so. "The answer of this leave
 I to divines, But well I wot, that in this world great pine* is; *pain,
 trouble Alas! I see a serpent or a thief That many a true man hath done
 mischief, Go at his large, and where him list may turn. But I must be in
 prison through Saturn, And eke through Juno, jealous and eke wood*,
 *mad That hath well nigh destroyed all the blood Of Thebes, with his waste
 walles wide. And Venus slay'th me on that other side For jealousy, and fear
 of him, Arcite."

Now will I stent* of Palamon a lite**, *pause **little And let him
 in his prison stille dwell, And of Arcita forth I will you tell. The summer
 passeth, and the nightes long Increase double-wise the paines strong Both
 of the lover and the prisonere. I n'ot* which hath the wofuller mistere**.
 *know not **condition For, shortly for to say, this Palamon Perpetually is
 damned to prison, In chaines and in fetters to be dead; And Arcite is exiled
 on his head *on peril of his head* For evermore as out of that
 country, Nor never more he shall his lady see. You lovers ask I now this
 question, <18> Who lieth the worse, Arcite or Palamon? The one may see his
 lady day by day, But in prison he dwelle must alway. The other where him
 list may ride or go, But see his lady shall he never mo'. Now deem all as you
 liste, ye that can, For I will tell you forth as I began.

When that Arcite to Thebes comen was, Full oft a day he swelt*, and said,
 "Alas!" *fainted For see this lady he shall never mo'. And shortly
 to concluden all his woe, So much sorrow had never creature That is or
 shall be while the world may dure. His sleep, his meat, his drink is *him
 byraft*, *taken away from him* That lean he wex*, and dry as any shaft.
 *became His eyen hollow, grisly to behold, His hue sallow, and pale as ashes
 cold, And solitary he was, ever alone, And wailing all the night, making his
 moan. And if he hearde song or instrument, Then would he weepen, he

might not be stent*. *stopped So feeble were his spirits, and so
 low, And changed so, that no man could know His speech, neither his
 voice, though men it heard. And in his gear* for all the world he far'd
 *behaviour <19> Not only like the lovers' malady Of Eros, but rather y-like
 manie* *madness Engender'd of humours melancholic,
 Before his head in his cell fantastic.<20> And shortly turned was all upside
 down, Both habit and eke dispositioun, Of him, this woful lover Dan* Arcite.
 *Lord <21> Why should I all day of his woe indite? When he endured had a
 year or two This cruel torment, and this pain and woe, At Thebes, in his
 country, as I said, Upon a night in sleep as he him laid, Him thought how
 that the winged god Mercury Before him stood, and bade him to be merry.
 His sleepy yard* in hand he bare upright; *rod <22> A hat he
 wore upon his haire bright. Arrayed was this god (as he took keep*)
 *notice As he was when that Argus<23> took his sleep; And said him thus:
 "To Athens shalt thou wend*"; *go There is thee shapen* of thy
 woe an end." *fixed, prepared And with that word Arcite woke and
 start. "Now truly how sore that e'er me smart," Quoth he, "to Athens right
 now will I fare. Nor for no dread of death shall I not spare To see my lady
 that I love and serve; In her presence *I recke not to sterve.*" *do not
 care if I die* And with that word he caught a great mirror, And saw that
 changed was all his colour, And saw his visage all in other kind. And right
 anon it ran him ill his mind, That since his face was so disfigur'd Of malady
 the which he had endur'd, He mighte well, if that he *bare him low,*
 lived in lowly fashion Live in Athenes evermore unknow, And see his lady
 wellnigh day by day. And right anon he changed his array, And clad him as
 a poore labourer. And all alone, save only a squier, That knew his privy*
 and all his cas**, *secrets **fortune Which was disguised poorly as
 he was, To Athens is he gone the nexte* way. *nearest <24>
 And to the court he went upon a day, And at the gate he proffer'd his
 service, To drudge and draw, what so men would devise*. *order
 And, shortly of this matter for to sayn, He fell in office with a chamberlain,
 The which that dwelling was with Emily. For he was wise, and could soon
 espy Of every servant which that served her. Well could he hewe wood, and
 water bear, For he was young and mighty for the nones*,
 *occasion And thereto he was strong and big of bones To do that any wight
 can him devise.

A year or two he was in this service, Page of the chamber of Emily the
 bright; And Philostrate he saide that he hight. But half so well belov'd a man
 as he Ne was there never in court of his degree. He was so gentle of
 conditioun, That throughout all the court was his renown. They saide that it
 were a charity That Theseus would *enhance his degree*, *elevate him
 in rank* And put him in some worshipful service, There as he might his

virtue exercise. And thus within a while his name sprung Both of his
 deedes, and of his good tongue, That Theseus hath taken him so near, That
 of his chamber he hath made him squire, And gave him gold to maintain his
 degree; And eke men brought him out of his country From year to year full
 privily his rent. But honestly and slyly* he it spent, *discreetly,
 prudently That no man wonder'd how that he it had. And three year in this
 wise his life be lad*, *led And bare him so in peace and eke in
 werre*, *war There was no man that Theseus had so derre*.
 *dear And in this blisse leave I now Arcite, And speak I will of Palamon a
 lite*. *little

In darkness horrible, and strong prison, This seven year hath sitten
 Palamon, Forpined*, what for love, and for distress. *pin'd, wasted
 away Who feeleth double sorrow and heaviness But Palamon? that love
 distraineth* so, *afflicts That wood* out of his wits he went
 for woe, *mad And eke thereto he is a prisonere Perpetual,
 not only for a year. Who coulde rhyme in English properly His martyrdom?
 forsooth*, it is not I; *truly Therefore I pass as lightly as I
 may. It fell that in the seventh year, in May The thirde night (as olde bookes
 sayn, That all this story tellen more plain), Were it by a venture or destiny
 (As when a thing is shapen* it shall be), *settled, decreed That soon
 after the midnight, Palamon By helping of a friend brake his prison, And fled
 the city fast as he might go, For he had given drink his gaoler so Of a clary
 <25>, made of a certain wine, With *narcotise and opie* of Thebes fine,
 narcotics and opium That all the night, though that men would him
 shake, The gaoler slept, he mighte not awake: And thus he fled as fast as
 ever he may. The night was short, and *faste by the day *close at
 hand was That needes cast he must himself to hide*. the day during
 which And to a grove faste there beside he must cast about, or contrive,
 With dreadful foot then stalked Palamon. to conceal himself.* For
 shortly this was his opinion, That in the grove he would him hide all day,
 And in the night then would he take his way To Thebes-ward, his friendes
 for to pray On Theseus to help him to warray*. *make war
 <26> And shortly either he would lose his life, Or winnen Emily unto his
 wife. This is th' effect, and his intention plain.

Now will I turn to Arcite again, That little wist how nighe was his care, Till
 that Fortune had brought him in the snare. The busy lark, the messenger of
 day, Saluteth in her song the morning gray; And fiery Phoebus riseth up so
 bright, That all the orient laugheth at the sight, And with his streames*
 drieth in the greves** *rays **groves The silver droppes, hanging on
 the leaves; And Arcite, that is in the court royal With Theseus, his squier
 principal, Is ris'n, and looketh on the merry day. And for to do his

cause wherefore that I die. Of all the remnant of mine other care Ne set I not
the *mountance of a tare*, *value of a straw* So that I could do
aught to your pleasance."

And with that word he fell down in a trance A longe time; and afterward
upstart This Palamon, that thought thorough his heart He felt a cold sword
suddenly to glide: For ire he quoke*, no longer would he hide.
quaked And when that he had heard Arcite's tale, As he were wood, with
face dead and pale, *mad He start him up out of the bushes
thick, And said: "False Arcita, false traitor wick"*, *wicked Now
art thou hent*, that lov'st my lady so, *caught For whom that I
have all this pain and woe, And art my blood, and to my counsel sworn, As I
full oft have told thee herebeforn, And hast bejaped* here Duke Theseus,
*deceived, imposed upon And falsely changed hast thy name thus; I will be
dead, or elles thou shalt die. Thou shalt not love my lady Emily, But I will
love her only and no mo'; For I am Palamon thy mortal foe. And though I
have no weapon in this place, But out of prison am astart* by grace,
escaped I dreade not that either thou shalt die, *doubt Or
else thou shalt not loven Emily. Choose which thou wilt, for thou shalt not
astart."

This Arcite then, with full dispiteous* heart, *wrathful When he
him knew, and had his tale heard, As fierce as lion pulled out a swerd, And
saide thus; "By God that sitt'th above, *N'ere it* that thou art sick, and wood
for love, *were it not* And eke that thou no weap'n hast in this place,
Thou should'st never out of this grove pace, That thou ne shouldest dien of
mine hand. For I defy the surety and the band, Which that thou sayest I
have made to thee. What? very fool, think well that love is free; And I will
love her maugre* all thy might. *despite But, for thou art a
worthy gentle knight, And *wilnest to darraine her by bataille*, *will
reclaim her Have here my troth, to-morrow I will not fail, by
combat* Without weeting* of any other wight, *knowledge
That here I will be founden as a knight, And bringe harness* right enough
for thee; *armour and arms And choose the best, and leave the
worst for me. And meat and drinke this night will I bring Enough for thee,
and clothes for thy bedding. And if so be that thou my lady win, And slay me
in this wood that I am in, Thou may'st well have thy lady as for me." This
Palamon answer'd, "I grant it thee." And thus they be departed till the
morrow, When each of them hath *laid his faith to borrow*. *pledged his
faith*

O Cupid, out of alle charity! O Regne* that wilt no fellow have with thee!
*queen <32> Full sooth is said, that love nor lordeship Will not, *his

thanks*, have any fellowship. *thanks to him* Well finden that
 Arcite and Palamon. Arcite is ridd anon unto the town, And on the morrow,
 ere it were daylight, Full privily two harness hath he dight*,
 prepared Both suffisant and meete to darraine *contest
 The battle in the field betwixt them twain. And on his horse, alone as he was
 born, He carrieth all this harness him befor; And in the grove, at time and
 place y-set, This Arcite and this Palamon be met. Then change gan the
 colour of their face; Right as the hunter in the regne* of Thrace
 *kingdom That standeth at a gappe with a spear When hunted is the lion or
 the bear, And heareth him come rushing in the greves*, *groves
 And breaking both the boughes and the leaves, Thinketh, "Here comes my
 mortal enemy, Withoute fail, he must be dead or I; For either I must slay
 him at the gap; Or he must slay me, if that me mishap:" So fared they, in
 changing of their hue *As far as either of them other knew*. *When they
 recognised each There was no good day, and no saluting, other
 afar off* But straight, withoute wordes rehearsing, Evereach of them help to
 arm the other, As friendly, as he were his owen brother. And after that, with
 sharpe speares strong They foined* each at other wonder long.
 thrust Thou mightest weene, that this Palamon *think In
 fighting were as a wood* lion, *mad And as a cruel
 tiger was Arcite: As wilde boars gan they together smite, That froth as white
 as foam, *for ire wood*. *mad with anger* Up to the ancle fought they
 in their blood. And in this wise I let them fighting dwell, And forth I will of
 Theseus you tell.

The Destiny, minister general, That executeth in the world o'er all The
 purveyance*, that God hath seen befor; *foreordination So strong
 it is, that though the world had sworn The contrary of a thing by yea or nay,
 Yet some time it shall fallen on a day That falleth not eft* in a thousand
 year. *again For certainly our appetites here, Be it of war, or
 peace, or hate, or love, All is this ruled by the sight* above. *eye,
 intelligence, power This mean I now by mighty Theseus, That for to hunt
 is so desirous -- And namely* the greate hart in May --
 *especially That in his bed there dawneth him no day That he n'is clad, and
 ready for to ride With hunt and horn, and houndes him beside. For in his
 hunting hath he such delight, That it is all his joy and appetite To be
 himself the greate harte's bane* *destruction For after Mars he
 serveth now Diane. Clear was the day, as I have told ere this, And Theseus,
 with alle joy and bliss, With his Hippolyta, the faire queen, And Emily, y-
 clothed all in green, On hunting be they ridden royally. And to the grove,
 that stood there faste by, In which there was an hart, as men him told,
 Duke Theseus the straighte way doth hold, And to the laund* he rideth him
 full right, *plain <33> There was the hart y-wont to have his

flight, And over a brook, and so forth on his way. This Duke will have a course at him or tway With houndes, such as him lust* to command. *pleased And when this Duke was come to the laund, Under the sun he looked, and anon He was ware of Arcite and Palamon, That foughte breme*, as it were bulles two. *fiercely The brighte swordes wente to and fro So hideously, that with the leaste stroke It seemed that it woulde fell an oak, But what they were, nothing yet he wote*. *knew This Duke his courser with his spurres smote, *And at a start* he was betwixt them two, *suddenly* And pulled out a sword and cried, "Ho! No more, on pain of losing of your head. By mighty Mars, he shall anon be dead That smiteth any stroke, that I may see! But tell to me what mister* men ye be, *manner, kind <34> That be so hardy for to fighte here Withoute judge or other officer, As though it were in listes royally. <35> This Palamon answered hastily, And saide: "Sir, what needeth wordes mo'? We have the death deserved bothe two, Two woful wretches be we, and caitives, That be accumbered* of our own lives, *burdened And as thou art a rightful lord and judge, So give us neither mercy nor refuge. And slay me first, for sainte charity, But slay my fellow eke as well as me. Or slay him first; for, though thou know it lite*, *little This is thy mortal foe, this is Arcite That from thy land is banisht on his head, For which he hath deserved to be dead. For this is he that came unto thy gate And saide, that he highte Philostrate. Thus hath he japed* thee full many year, *deceived And thou hast made of him thy chief esquier; And this is he, that loveth Emily. For since the day is come that I shall die I make plainly* my confession, *fully, unreservedly That I am thilke* woful Palamon, *that same <36> That hath thy prison broken wickedly. I am thy mortal foe, and it am I That so hot loveth Emily the bright, That I would die here present in her sight. Therefore I aske death and my jewise*. *judgement But slay my fellow eke in the same wise, For both we have deserved to be slain."

This worthy Duke answer'd anon again, And said, "This is a short conclusion. Your own mouth, by your own confession Hath damned you, and I will it record; It needeth not to pain you with the cord; Ye shall be dead, by mighty Mars the Red.<37>

The queen anon for very womanhead Began to weep, and so did Emily, And all the ladies in the company. Great pity was it as it thought them all, That ever such a chance should befall, For gentle men they were, of great estate, And nothing but for love was this debate They saw their bloody woundes wide and sore, And cried all at once, both less and more, "Have mercy, Lord, upon us women all." And on their bare knees adown they fall And would have kissed his feet there as he stood, Till at the last *aslaked was his

mood* *his anger was (For pity runneth soon in gentle heart);
 appeased* And though at first for ire he quoke and start He hath consider'd
 shortly in a clause The trespass of them both, and eke the cause: And
 although that his ire their guilt accused Yet in his reason he them both
 excused; As thus; he thoughte well that every man Will help himself in love
 if that he can, And eke deliver himself out of prison. Of women, for they
 wepten ever-in-one:* *continually And eke his hearte had
 compassion And in his gentle heart he thought anon, And soft unto himself
 he saide: "Fie Upon a lord that will have no mercy, But be a lion both in
 word and deed, To them that be in repentance and dread, As well as-to a
 proud dispiteous* man *unpitying That will maintaine what
 he first began. That lord hath little of discretion, That in such case *can no
 division*: *can make no distinction* But weigheth pride and
 humbles *after one*." *alike* And shortly, when his ire is thus
 agone, He gan to look on them with eyen light*, *gentle, lenient*
 And spake these same wordes *all on height.* *aloud*

"The god of love, ah! benedicite*, *bless ye him How mighty
 and how great a lord is he! Against his might there gaine* none obstacles,
 *avail, conquer He may be called a god for his miracles For he can maken at
 his owen guise Of every heart, as that him list devise. Lo here this Arcite,
 and this Palamon, That quietly were out of my prison, And might have lived
 in Thebes royally, And weet* I am their mortal enemy,
 *knew And that their death li'th in my might also, And yet hath love,
 maugre their eyen two, *in spite of their eyes* Y-brought them hither
 bothe for to die. Now look ye, is not this an high folly? Who may not be a
 fool, if but he love? Behold, for Godde's sake that sits above, See how they
 bleed! be they not well array'd? Thus hath their lord, the god of love, them
 paid Their wages and their fees for their service; And yet they weene for to
 be full wise, That serve love, for aught that may befall. But this is yet the
 beste game* of all, *joke That she, for whom they have this
 jealousy, Can them therefor as muchel thank as me. She wot no more of all
 this *hote fare*, *hot behaviour* By God, than wot a cuckoo or an
 hare. But all must be assayed hot or cold; A man must be a fool, or young or
 old; I wot it by myself *full yore agone*: *long years ago* For in
 my time a servant was I one. And therefore since I know of love's pain, And
 wot how sore it can a man distraint*, *distress As he that oft
 hath been caught in his last*, *snare <38> I you forgive wholly this
 trespass, At request of the queen that kneeleth here, And eke of Emily, my
 sister dear. And ye shall both anon unto me swear, That never more ye shall
 my country dere* *injure Nor make war upon me night nor
 day, But be my friends in alle that ye may. I you forgive this trespass *every
 deal*. *completely* And they him sware *his asking* fair and

was set on one degree He letted* not his fellow for to see.
 *hindered Eastward there stood a gate of marble white, Westward right such
 another opposite. And, shortly to conclude, such a place Was never on earth
 made in so little space, For in the land there was no craftes-man, That
 geometry or arsmetrike* can**, *arithmetic **knew Nor
 pourtrayor*, nor carver of images, *portrait painter That Theseus
 ne gave him meat and wages The theatre to make and to devise. And for to
 do his rite and sacrifice He eastward hath upon the gate above, In worship
 of Venus, goddess of love, *Done make* an altar and an oratory;
 caused to be made And westward, in the mind and in memory Of Mars, he
 maked hath right such another, That coste largely of gold a fother*.
 *a great amount And northward, in a turret on the wall, Of alabaster white
 and red coral An oratory riche for to see, In worship of Diane of chastity,
 Hath Theseus done work in noble wise. But yet had I forgotten to devise*
 *describe The noble carving, and the portraitures, The shape, the
 countenance of the figures That weren in there oratories three.

First in the temple of Venus may'st thou see Wrought on the wall, full
 piteous to behold, The broken sleepes, and the sikes* cold,
 sighes The sacred teares, and the waimentings, *lamentings
 The fiery strokes of the desirings, That Love's servants in this life endure;
 The oathes, that their covenants assure. Pleasance and Hope, Desire,
 Foolhardiness, Beauty and Youth, and Bawdry and Richess, Charms and
 Sorc'ry, Leasings* and Flattery, *falsehoods Dispenche, Business,
 and Jealousy, That wore of yellow goldes* a garland, *sunflowers
 <40> And had a cuckoo sitting on her hand, Feasts, instruments, and
 caroles and dances, Lust and array, and all the circumstances Of Love,
 which I reckon'd and reckon shall In order, were painted on the wall, And
 more than I can make of mention. For soothly all the mount of
 Citheron,<41> Where Venus hath her principal dwelling, Was showed on the
 wall in pourtraying, With all the garden, and the lustiness*.
 *pleasantness Nor was forgot the porter Idleness, Nor Narcissus the fair of
 yore agone, *olden times* Nor yet the folly of King Solomon,
 Nor yet the greate strength of Hercules, Th' enchantments of Medea and
 Circes, Nor of Turnus the hardy fierce courage, The rich Croesus *caitif in
 servage.* <42> *abased into slavery* Thus may ye see, that wisdom nor
 richness, Beauty, nor sleight, nor strength, nor hardiness Ne may with Venus
 holde champartie*, *divided possession <43> For as her liste the
 world may she gie*. *guide Lo, all these folk so caught were
 in her las* *snare Till they for woe full often said, Alas! Suffice
 these ensamples one or two, Although I could reckon a thousand mo'.

The statue of Venus, glorious to see Was naked floating in the large sea, And

*devouring <49> The cook scalded, for all his longe ladle. Nor was forgot, *by
 th'infortune of Mart* *through the misfortune The carter overridden
 with his cart; of war* Under the wheel full low he lay
 adown. There were also of Mars' division, The armourer, the bowyer*, and
 the smith, *maker of bows That forgeth sharp swordes on his
 stith*. *anvil And all above depainted in a tower Saw I
 Conquest, sitting in great honour, With thilke* sharpe sword over his head
 *that Hanging by a subtile y-twined thread. Painted the slaughter was of
 Julius<50>, Of cruel Nero, and Antonius: Although at that time they were
 yet unborn, Yet was their death depainted there beforne, By menacing of
 Mars, right by figure, So was it showed in that portraiture, As is depainted
 in the stars above, Who shall be slain, or elles dead for love. Sufficeth one
 ensample in stories old, I may not reckon them all, though I wo'ld.

The statue of Mars upon a carte* stood *chariot Armed, and
 looked grim as he were wood*, *mad And over his head
 there shone two figures Of starres, that be cleped in scriptures, That one
 Puella, that other Rubeus. <51> This god of armes was arrayed thus: A wolf
 there stood before him at his feet With eyen red, and of a man he eat: With
 subtile pencil painted was this story, In redouting* of Mars and of his glory.
 *reverance, fear

Now to the temple of Dian the chaste As shortly as I can I will me haste, To
 telle you all the descriptioun. Depainted be the walles up and down Of
 hunting and of shamefast chastity. There saw I how woful Calistope,<52>
 When that Dian aggrieved was with her, Was turned from a woman to a
 bear, And after was she made the lodestar*: *pole star Thus
 was it painted, I can say no far*; *farther Her son is eke a
 star as men may see. There saw I Dane <53> turn'd into a tree, I meane not
 the goddess Diane, But Peneus' daughter, which that hight Dane. There saw
 I Actaeon an hart y-maked*, *made Forvengeance that
 he saw Dian all naked: I saw how that his houndes have him caught, And
 freten* him, for that they knew him not. *devour Yet painted
 was, a little farthermore How Atalanta hunted the wild boar; And Meleager,
 and many other mo', For which Diana wrought them care and woe. There
 saw I many another wondrous story, The which me list not drawn to
 memory. This goddess on an hart full high was set*, *seated
 With smalle houndes all about her feet, And underneath her feet she had a
 moon, Waxing it was, and shoulde wane soon. In gaudy green her statue
 clothed was, With bow in hand, and arrows in a case*.
 *quiver Her eyen caste she full low adown, Where Pluto hath his darke
 regioun. A woman travailing was her beforne, But, for her child so longe was
 unborn, Full piteously Lucina <54> gan she call, And saide; "Help, for thou

sacrifice. Smoking* the temple full of clothes fair, *draping <65>
 This Emily with hearte debonnair* *gentle Her body
 wash'd with water of a well. But how she did her rite I dare not tell; But* it
 be any thing in general; *unless And yet it were a
 game* to hearen all *pleasure To him that meaneth well it
 were no charge: But it is good a man to *be at large*. *do as he
 will* Her bright hair combed was, untressed all. A coronet of green oak
 ceriall <66> Upon her head was set full fair and meet. Two fires on the altar
 gan she bete, And did her thinges, as men may behold In Stace of Thebes
 <67>, and these bookes old. When kindled was the fire, with piteous cheer
 Unto Dian she spake as ye may hear.

"O chaste goddess of the woodes green, To whom both heav'n and earth and
 sea is seen, Queen of the realm of Pluto dark and low, Goddess of maidens,
 that mine heart hast know Full many a year, and wost* what I desire,
 *knowest To keep me from the vengeance of thine ire, That Actaeon
 aboughte* cruelly: *earned; suffered from Chaste goddess, well
 wottest thou that I Desire to be a maiden all my life, Nor never will I be no
 love nor wife. I am, thou wost*, yet of thy company,
 knowest A maid, and love hunting and venery, *field sports
 And for to walken in the woodes wild, And not to be a wife, and be with
 child. Nought will I know the company of man. Now help me, lady, since ye
 may and can, For those three formes <68> that thou hast in thee. And
 Palamon, that hath such love to me, And eke Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
 This grace I pray thee withoute more, As sende love and peace betwixt them
 two: And from me turn away their heartes so, That all their hote love, and
 their desire, And all their busy torment, and their fire, Be queint*, or turn'd
 into another place. *quenched And if so be thou wilt do me no
 grace, Or if my destiny be shapen so That I shall needes have one of them
 two, So send me him that most desireth me. Behold, goddess of cleane
 chastity, The bitter tears that on my cheekes fall. Since thou art maid, and
 keeper of us all, My maidenhead thou keep and well conserve, And, while I
 live, a maid I will thee serve.

The fires burn upon the altar clear, While Emily was thus in her prayere:
 But suddenly she saw a sighte quaint*. *strange For right
 anon one of the fire's *queint And quick'd* again, and after that anon
 went out and revived That other fire was queint, and all agone: And as it
 queint, it made a whisteling, As doth a brande wet in its burning. And at the
 brandes end outran anon As it were bloody droppes many one: For which so
 sore aghast was Emily, That she was well-nigh mad, and gan to cry, For she
 ne wiste what it signified; But onely for feare thus she cried, And wept, that
 it was pity for to hear. And therewithal Diana gan appear With bow in hand,

right as an hunteress, And saide; "Daughter, stint* thine heaviness.
 *cease Among the goddes high it is affirm'd, And by eternal word writ and
 confirm'd, Thou shalt be wedded unto one of tho* *those
 That have for thee so much care and woe: But unto which of them I may
 not tell. Farewell, for here I may no longer dwell. The fires which that on
 mine altar brenn*, *burn Shall thee declaren, ere that thou
 go henne*, *hence Thine aventure of love, as in this case." And
 with that word, the arrows in the case* *quiver Of the goddess
 did clatter fast and ring, And forth she went, and made a vanishing, For
 which this Emily astonied was, And saide; "What amounteth this, alas! I put
 me under thy protection, Diane, and in thy disposition." And home she went
 anon the nexte* way. *nearest This is th' effect, there is no
 more to say.

The nexte hour of Mars following this Arcite to the temple walked is Of fierce
 Mars, to do his sacrifice With all the rites of his pagan guise. With piteous*
 heart and high devotion *pious Right thus to Mars he said
 his orison "O stronge god, that in the regnes* old *realms Of
 Thrace honoured art, and lord y-hold* *held And hast in
 every regne, and every land Of armes all the bridle in thine hand, And *them
 fortunest as thee list devise*, *send them fortune Accept of me my
 piteous sacrifice. as you please* If so be that my youthe may
 deserve, And that my might be worthy for to serve Thy godhead, that I may
 be one of thine, Then pray I thee to *rue upon my pine*, *pity my
 anguish* For thilke* pain, and thilke hote fire, *that In
 which thou whilom burned'st for desire Whenne that thou usedest* the
 beauty *enjoyed Of faire young Venus, fresh and free, And
 haddest her in armes at thy will: And though thee ones on a time misfill*,
 were unlucky When Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,
 net <69> And found thee liggig by his wife, alas! *lying For
 thilke sorrow that was in thine heart, Have ruth* as well upon my paine's
 smart. *pity I am young and unconning*, as thou know'st,
 ignorant, simple And, as I trow, with love offended most
 believe That e'er was any living creature: For she, that doth me all this woe
 endure, *causes Ne recketh ne'er whether I sink or fleet*
 swim And well I wot, ere she me mercy hete, *promise, vouchsafe I
 must with strengthe win her in the place: And well I wot, withoute help or
 grace Of thee, ne may my strengthe not avail: Then help me, lord, to-morr'w
 in my bataille, For thilke fire that whilom burned thee, As well as this fire
 that now burneth me; And do* that I to-morr'w may have victory.
 *cause Mine be the travail, all thine be the glory. Thy sovereign temple will I
 most honour Of any place, and alway most labour In thy pleasance and in
 thy craftes strong. And in thy temple I will my banner hong*,

*hang And all the armes of my company, And evermore, until that day I die,
Eternal fire I will before thee find And eke to this my vow I will me bind: My
beard, my hair that hangeth long adown, That never yet hath felt offension*
*indignity Of razor nor of shears, I will thee give, And be thy true servant
while I live. Now, lord, have ruth upon my sorrows sore, Give me the victory,
I ask no more."

The prayer stint* of Arcita the strong, *ended The ringes on
the temple door that hong, And eke the doores, clattered full fast, Of which
Arcita somewhat was aghast. The fires burn'd upon the altar bright, That it
gan all the temple for to light; A sweete smell anon the ground up gaf*,
gave And Arcita anon his hand up haf, *lifted And
more incense into the fire he cast, With other rites more and at the last The
statue of Mars began his hauberk ring; And with that sound he heard a
murmuring Full low and dim, that saide thus, "Victory." For which he gave
to Mars honour and glory. And thus with joy, and hope well to fare, Arcite
anon unto his inn doth fare. As fain* as fowl is of the brighte sun.
*glad

And right anon such strife there is begun For thilke* granting, in the heav'n
above, *that Betwixte Venus the goddess of love, And Mars
the sterne god armipotent, That Jupiter was busy it to stent*:
*stop Till that the pale Saturnus the cold,<70> That knew so many of
adventures old, Found in his old experience such an art, That he full soon
hath pleased every part. As sooth is said, eld* hath great advantage,
age In eld is bothe wisdom and usage: *experience Men
may the old out-run, but not out-rede*. *outwit Saturn anon,
to stint the strife and drede, Albeit that it is against his kind,*
*nature Of all this strife gan a remedy find. "My deare daughter Venus,"
quoth Saturn, "My course*, that hath so wide for to turn, *orbit
<71> Hath more power than wot any man. Mine is the drowning in the sea
so wan; Mine is the prison in the darke cote*, *cell Mine
the strangling and hanging by the throat, The murmur, and the churlish
rebellling, The groyning*, and the privy poisoning. *discontent I
do vengeance and plein* correction, *full I dwell in the
sign of the lion. Mine is the ruin of the highe halls, The falling of the towers
and the walls Upon the miner or the carpenter: I slew Samson in shaking
the pillar: Mine also be the maladies cold, The darke treasons, and the
castes* old: *plots My looking is the father of pestilence.
Now weep no more, I shall do diligence That Palamon, that is thine owen
knight, Shall have his lady, as thou hast him hight*. *promised
Though Mars shall help his knight, yet nathelless Betwixte you there must
sometime be peace: All be ye not of one complexion, That each day causeth

such division, I am thine ayel*, ready at thy will; *grandfather
 <72> Weep now no more, I shall thy lust* fulfil." *pleasure Now
 will I stenten* of the gods above, *cease speaking Of Mars, and of
 Venus, goddess of love, And telle you as plainly as I can The great effect, for
 which that I began.

Great was the feast in Athens thilke* day; *that And eke the
 lusty season of that May Made every wight to be in such pleasance, That all
 that Monday jousten they and dance, And spenden it in Venus' high service.
 But by the cause that they shoulde rise Early a-morrow for to see that fight,
 Unto their reste wente they at night. And on the morrow, when the day gan
 spring, Of horse and harness* noise and clattering *armour
 There was in the hostelries all about: And to the palace rode there many a
 rout* *train, retinue Of lordes, upon steedes and palfreys. There
 mayst thou see devising* of harness *decoration So uncouth*
 and so rich, and wrought so weel *unkown, rare Of goldsmithry, of
 brouding*, and of steel; *embroidery The shieldes bright, the
 testers*, and trappures** *helmets<73> Gold-hewen helmets,
 hauberks, coat-armures; **trappings Lordes in parements* on
 their coursers, *ornamental garb <74>; Knightes of retinue, and eke
 squiers, Nailing the spears, and helmes buckeling, Gniding* of shieldes, with
 lainers** lacing; *polishing <75> There as need is, they were nothing
 idle: **lanyards The foamy steeds upon the golden bridle
 Gnawing, and fast the armourers also With file and hammer pricking to and
 fro; Yeomen on foot, and knaves* many one *servants With
 shorte staves, thick* as they may gon**; *close **walk Pipes,
 trumpets, nakeres*, and clariouns, *drums <76> That in the
 battle blowe bloody souns; The palace full of people up and down, There
 three, there ten, holdingtheir questioun*, *conversation Divining* of
 these Theban knightes two. *conjecturing Some saiden thus,
 some said it shall he so; Some helden with him with the blacke beard, Some
 with the bald, some with the thick-hair'd; Some said he looked grim, and
 woulde fight: He had a sparth* of twenty pound of weight. *double-
 headed axe Thus was the halle full of divining* *conjecturing
 Long after that the sunne gan up spring. The great Theseus that of his sleep
 is waked With minstrelsy, and noise that was maked, Held yet the chamber
 of his palace rich, Till that the Theban knightes both y-lich*
 alike Honoured were, and to the palace fet. *fetched Duke
 Theseus is at a window set, Array'd right as he were a god in throne: The
 people presseth thitherward full soon Him for to see, and do him reverence,
 And eke to hearken his hest* and his sentence**. *command **speech
 An herald on a scaffold made an O, <77> Till the noise of the people was y-
 do*:
 *done And when he saw the people of noise all still,

Thus shewed he the mighty Duke's will. "The lord hath of his high discretion
 Considered that it were destruction To gentle blood, to fighten in the guise
 Of mortal battle now in this emprise: Wherefore to shape* that they shall not
 die, *arrange, contrive He will his firste purpose modify. No man
 therefore, on pain of loss of life, No manner* shot, nor poleaxe, nor short
 knife *kind of Into the lists shall send, or thither bring. Nor short
 sword for to stick with point biting No man shall draw, nor bear it by his
 side. And no man shall unto his fellow ride But one course, with a sharp y-
 grounden spear: *Foin if him list on foot, himself to wear. *He who
 wishes can And he that is at mischief shall be take*, fence on foot to
 defend And not slain, but be brought unto the stake, himself, and he
 that That shall be ordained on either side; is in peril shall be taken*
 Thither he shall by force, and there abide. And if *so fall* the chiefetain be
 take *should happen* On either side, or elles slay his make*,
 *equal, match No longer then the tourneying shall last. God speede you; go
 forth and lay on fast. With long sword and with mace fight your fill. Go now
 your way; this is the lordes will. The voice of the people touched the heaven,
 So loude cried they with merry steven*: *sound God save
 such a lord that is so good, He willeth no destruction of blood.

Up go the trumpets and the melody, And to the listes rode the company *By
 ordinance*, throughout the city large, *in orderly array* Hanged with
 cloth of gold, and not with sarge*. *serge <78> Full like a lord this
 noble Duke gan ride, And these two Thebans upon either side:

And after rode the queen and Emily, And after them another company Of
 one and other, after their degree. And thus they passed thorough that city
 And to the listes came they by time: It was not of the day yet fully prime*.
 *between 6 & 9 a.m. When set was Theseus full rich and high, Hippolyta the
 queen and Emily, And other ladies in their degrees about, Unto the seates
 presseth all the rout. And westward, through the gates under Mart, Arcite,
 and eke the hundred of his part, With banner red, is enter'd right anon; And
 in the selve* moment Palamon *self-same Is, under
 Venus, eastward in the place, With banner white, and hardy cheer* and face
 expression In all the world, to seeken up and down So even without
 variatioun *equal There were such companies never
 tway. For there was none so wise that coulde say That any had of other
 avantage Of worthiness, nor of estate, nor age, So even were they chosen for
 to guess. And *in two ranges faire they them dress*. *they arranged
 themselves When that their names read were every one, in two
 rows* That in their number guile* were there none, *fraud
 Then were the gates shut, and cried was loud; "Do now your devoir, younge
 knights proud The heralds left their pricking* up and down *spurring

their horses Now ring the trumpet loud and clarioun. There is no more to
 say, but east and west In go the speares sadly* in the rest;
 *steadily In go the sharpe spurs into the side. There see me who can joust,
 and who can ride. There shiver shaftes upon shieldes thick; He feeleth
 through the hearte-spoon<79> the prick. Up spring the speares twenty foot
 on height; Out go the swordes as the silver bright. The helmes they to-
 hewen, and to-shred*; *strike in pieces <80> Out burst the blood, with
 sterne streames red. With mighty maces the bones they to-brest*.
 burst He <81> through the thickest of the throng gan threst. *thrust
 There stumble steedes strong, and down go all. He rolleth under foot as doth
 a ball. He foineth* on his foe with a trunchoun, *forces himself
 And he him hurtleth with his horse adown. He through the body hurt is,
 and *sith take*, *afterwards captured* Mauge his head, and brought
 unto the stake, As forword* was, right there he must abide.
 covenant Another led is on that other side. And sometime doth them
 Theseus to rest, *caused Them to refresh, and drincken if
 them lest*. *pleased Full oft a day have thilke Thebans two
 *these Together met and wrought each other woe: Unhorsed hath each other
 of them tway* *twice There is no tiger in the vale of
 Galaphay, <82> When that her whelp is stole, when it is lite*
 *little So cruel on the hunter, as Arcite For jealous heart upon this Palamon:
 Nor in Belmarie <83> there is no fell lion, That hunted is, or for his hunger
 wood* *mad Or for his prey desireth so the blood, As
 Palamon to slay his foe Arcite. The jealous strokes upon their helmets bite;
 Out runneth blood on both their sides red, Sometime an end there is of
 every deed For ere the sun unto the reste went, The stronge king Emetrius
 gan hent* *sieze, assail This Palamon, as he fought with
 Arcite, And made his sword deep in his flesh to bite, And by the force of
 twenty is he take, Unyielding, and is drawn unto the stake. And in the
 rescue of this Palamon The stronge king Licurgus is borne down: And king
 Emetrius, for all his strength Is borne out of his saddle a sword's length, So
 hit him Palamon ere he were take: But all for nought; he was brought to the
 stake: His hardy hearte might him helpe naught, He must abide when that
 he was caught, By force, and eke by composition*. *the
 bargain Who sorroweth now but woful Palamon That must no more go again
 to fight? And when that Theseus had seen that sight Unto the folk that
 foughte thus each one, He cried, Ho! no more, for it is done! I will be true
 judge, and not party. Arcite of Thebes shall have Emily, That by his fortune
 hath her fairly won." Anon there is a noise of people gone, For joy of this, so
 loud and high withal, It seemed that the listes shoulde fall.

What can now faire Venus do above? What saith she now? what doth this
 queen of love? But weepeth so, for wanting of her will, Till that her teares in

cry*, -- *caused to be proclaimed* To stenten* alle rancour and envy, --
 stop The gree as well on one side as the other, *prize, merit And
 either side alike as other's brother: And gave them giftes after their degree,
 And held a feaste fully dayes three: And conveyed the kinges worthily Out of
 his town ajournee* largely *day's journey And home went
 every man the righte way, There was no more but "Farewell, Have good day."
 Of this bataille I will no more indite But speak of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swellethe the breast of Arcite and the sore Increaseth at his hearte more and
 more. The clotted blood, for any leache-craft* *surgical skill
 Corrupteth and is *in his bouk y-laft* *left in his body* That
 neither *veine blood nor ventousing*, *blood-letting or cupping* Nor drink
 of herbes may be his helping. The virtue expulsive or animal, From thilke
 virtue called natural, Nor may the venom voide, nor expel The pipes of his
 lungs began to swell And every lacert* in his breast adown
 sinew, muscle Is shent with venom and corruption.
 destroyed Him gaineth neither, for to get his life, *availeth
 Vomit upward, nor downward laxative; All is to-bursten thilke region; Nature
 hath now no domination. And certainly where nature will not wurch,*
 work Farewell physic: go bear the man to chirch. *church
 This all and some is, Arcite must die. For which he sendeth after Emily, And
 Palamon, that was his cousin dear, Then said he thus, as ye shall after
 hear.

"Nought may the woful spirit in mine heart Declare one point of all my
 sorrows' smart To you, my lady, that I love the most: But I bequeath the
 service of my ghost To you aboven every creature, Since that my life ne may
 no longer dure. Alas the woe! alas, the paines strong That I for you have
 suffered and so long! Alas the death, alas, mine Emily! Alas departing* of
 our company! *the severance Alas, mine hearte's queen!
 alas, my wife! Mine hearte's lady, ender of my life! What is this world? what
 aske men to have? Now with his love, now in his colde grave Al one,
 withouten any company. Farewell, my sweet, farewell, mine Emily, And
 softly take me in your armes tway, For love of God, and hearken what I say.
 I have here with my cousin Palamon Had strife and rancour many a day
 agone, For love of you, and for my jealousy. And Jupiter so *wis my soule
 gie*, *surely guides my soul* To spoken of a servant properly,
 With alle circumstances truely, That is to say, truth, honour, and
 knighthead, Wisdom, humbles*, estate, and high kindred,
 *humility Freedom, and all that longeth to that art, So Jupiter have of my
 soul part, As in this world right now I know not one, So worthy to be lov'd as
 Palamon, That serveth you, and will do all his life. And if that you shall ever
 be a wife, Forget not Palamon, the gentle man."

And with that word his speech to fail began. For from his feet up to his
breast was come The cold of death, that had him overnome*.
*overcome And yet moreover in his armes two The vital strength is lost, and
all ago*. *gone Only the intellect, withoute more, That
dwelled in his hearte sick and sore, Gan faile, when the hearte felte death;
Dusked* his eyen two, and fail'd his breath. *grew dim But on
his lady yet he cast his eye; His laste word was; "Mercy, Emily!" His spirit
changed house, and wente there, As I came never I cannot telle where.<84>
Therefore I stent*, I am no divinister**; *refrain **diviner Of soules
find I nought in this register. Ne me list not th' opinions to tell Of them,
though that they writen where they dwell; Arcite is cold, there Mars his
soule gie.* *guide Now will I speake forth of Emily.

Shriek'd Emily, and howled Palamon, And Theseus his sister took anon
Swooning, and bare her from the corpse away. What helpeth it to tarry forth
the day, To telle how she wept both eve and morrow? For in such cases
women have such sorrow, When that their husbands be from them y-go*,
*gone That for the more part they sorrow so, Or elles fall into such malady,
That at the laste certainly they die. Infinite be the sorrows and the tears Of
olde folk, and folk of tender years, In all the town, for death of this Theban:
For him there weepeth bothe child and man. So great a weeping was there
none certain, When Hector was y-brought, all fresh y-slain, To Troy: alas!
the pity that was there, Scratching of cheeks, and rending eke of hair. "Why
wouldest thou be dead?" these women cry, "And haddest gold enough, and
Emily." No manner man might gladden Theseus, Saving his olde father
Egeus, That knew this worlde's transmutatioun, As he had seen it changen
up and down, Joy after woe, and woe after gladness; And shewed him
example and likeness. "Right as there died never man," quoth he, "That he
ne liv'd in earth in some degree*, *rank, condition Right so there
lived never man," he said, "In all this world, that sometime be not died. This
world is but a throughfare full of woe, And we be pilgrims, passing to and
fro: Death is an end of every worldly sore." And over all this said he yet
much more To this effect, full wisely to exhort The people, that they should
them recomfort. Duke Theseus, with all his busy cure*,
*care *Casteth about*, where that the sepulture *deliberates* Of
good Arcite may best y-maked be, And eke most honourable in his degree.
And at the last he took conclusion, That there as first Arcite and Palamon
Hadde for love the battle them between, That in that selve* grove, sweet and
green, *self-same There as he had his amorous desires, His
complaint, and for love his hote fires, He woulde make a fire*, in which th'
office *funeral pyre Of funeral he might all accomlice; And *let
anon command* to hack and hew *immediately gave orders* The oakes

old, and lay them *on a row* *in a row* In culpons*, well
 arrayed for to brenne**. *logs **burn His officers with swifte feet
 they renne* *run And ride anon at his commandement.
 And after this, Duke Theseus hath sent After a bier, and it all oversprad
 With cloth of gold, the richest that he had; And of the same suit he clad
 Arcite. Upon his handes were his gloves white, Eke on his head a crown of
 laurel green, And in his hand a sword full bright and keen. He laid him
 bare the visage on the bier, *with face uncovered* Therewith he wept,
 that pity was to hear. And, for the people shoulde see him all, When it was
 day he brought them to the hall, That roareth of the crying and the soun'.
 Then came this woful Theban, Palamon, With sluttery beard, and ruggy
 ashy hairs, <85> In clothes black, y-dropped all with tears, And (passing over
 weeping Emily) The ruefullest of all the company. And *inasmuch as* the
 service should be *in order that* The more noble and rich in its
 degree, Duke Theseus let forth three steedes bring, That trapped were in
 steel all glittering. And covered with the arms of Dan Arcite. Upon these
 steedes, that were great and white, There satte folk, of whom one bare his
 shield, Another his spear in his handes held; The thirde bare with him his
 bowTurkeis*, *Turkish. Of brent* gold was the case** and the harness:
*burnished **quiver And ride forth *a pace* with sorrowful
 cheer** *at a foot pace* Toward the grove, as ye shall after hear.
 **expression

The noblest of the Greekes that there were Upon their shoulders carried the
 bier, With slacke pace, and eyen red and wet, Throughout the city, by the
 master* street, *main <86> That spread was all with black, and
 wondrous high Right of the same is all the street y-wrie.* *covered
 <87> Upon the right hand went old Egeus, And on the other side Duke
 Theseus, With vessels in their hand of gold full fine, All full of honey, milk,
 and blood, and wine; Eke Palamon, with a great company; And after that
 came woful Emily, With fire in hand, as was that time the guise*,
 *custom To do th' office of funeral service.

High labour, and full great appareling* *preparation Was at the
 service, and the pyre-making, That with its greene top the heaven raught*,
 reached And twenty fathom broad its armes straught:
 *stretched This is to say, the boughes were so broad. Of straw first there
 was laid many a load. But how the pyre was maked up on height, And eke
 the names how the trees hight*, *were called As oak, fir, birch,
 asp*, alder, holm, poplere, *aspens Willow, elm, plane, ash, box,
 chestnut, lind*, laurere, *linden, lime Maple, thorn, beech, hazel, yew,
 whipul tree, How they were fell'd, shall not be told for me; Nor how the
 goddes* rannen up and down *the forest deities Disinherited of

their habitatioun, In which they wonned* had in rest and peace,
 *dwelt Nymphes, Faunes, and Hamadryades; Nor how the beastes and the
 birdes all Fledden for feare, when the wood gan fall; Nor how the ground
 aghast* was of the light, *terrified That was not wont to see the
 sunne bright; Nor how the fire was couched* first with stre**, *laid
 **straw And then with dry stickes cloven in three, And then with greene
 wood and spicery*, *spices And then with cloth of gold and
 with pierrie*, *precious stones And garlands hanging with full many a
 flower, The myrrh, the incense with so sweet odour; Nor how Arcita lay
 among all this, Nor what richness about his body is; Nor how that Emily, as
 was the guise*, *custom *Put in the fire* of funeral
 service<88>; *applied the torch* Nor how she swooned when she
 made the fire, Nor what she spake, nor what was her desire; Nor what jewels
 men in the fire then cast When that the fire was great and burned fast;

Nor how some cast their shield, and some their spear, And of their
 vestiments, which that they wear, And cuppes full of wine, and milk, and
 blood, Into the fire, that burnt as it were wood*; *mad Nor
 how the Greekes with a huge rout* *procession Three times
 riden all the fire about <89> Upon the left hand, with a loud shouting, And
 thries with their speares clattering; And thries how the ladies gan to cry; Nor
 how that led was homeward Emily; Nor how Arcite is burnt to ashes cold;
 Nor how the lyke-wake* was y-hold *wake <90> All thilke*
 night, nor how the Greekes play *that Thewake-plays*, ne
 keep** I not to say: *funeral games **care Who wrestled best naked,
 with oil anoint, Nor who that bare him best *in no disjoint*. *in any
 contest* I will not tell eke how they all are gone Home to Athenes when the
 play is done; But shortly to the point now will I wend*,
 *come And maken of my longe tale an end.

By process and by length of certain years All stinted* is the mourning and
 the tears *ended Of Greekes, by one general assent. Then
 seemed me there was a parlement At Athens, upon certain points and cas*:
 *cases Amonge the which points y-spoken was To have with certain
 countries alliance, And have of Thebans full obeisance. For which this noble
 Theseus anon Let* send after the gentle Palamon,
 caused Unwist of him what was the cause and why:
 *unknown But in his blacke clothes sorrowfully He came at his
 commandment *on hie*; *in haste* Then sente Theseus for
 Emily. When they were set*, and hush'd was all the place *seated
 And Theseus abided* had a space *waited Ere any
 word came from his wise breast *His eyen set he there as was his lest*,
 *he cast his eyes And with a sad visage he sighed still, wherever he

pleased* And after that right thus he said his will. "The firste mover of the
 cause above When he first made the faire chain of love, Great was th' effect,
 and high was his intent; Well wist he why, and what thereof he meant: For
 with that faire chain of love he bond* *bound The fire, the air,
 the water, and the lond In certain bondes, that they may not flee:<91> That
 same prince and mover eke," quoth he, "Hath stablish'd, in this wretched
 world adown, Certain of dayes and duration To all that are engender'd in
 this place, Over the whiche day they may not pace*, *pass
 All may they yet their dayes well abridge. There needeth no authority to
 allege For it is proved by experience; But that me list declare my sentence*.
 opinion Then may men by this order well discern, That thilke mover stable
 is and etern. *the same Well may men know, but that it be a
 fool, That every part deriveth from its whole. For nature hath not ta'en its
 beginning Of no *partie nor cantle* of a thing, *part or piece*
 But of a thing that perfect is and stable, Descending so, till it be
 corruptable. And therefore of His wise purveyance*
 providence He hath so well beset his ordinance, That species of things and
 progressions Shallen endure by successions, And not etern, withouten any
 lie: This mayst thou understand and see at eye. Lo th' oak, that hath so long
 a nourishing From the time that it 'ginneth first to spring, And hath so long
 a life, as ye may see, Yet at the last y-wasted is the tree. Consider eke, how
 that the harde stone Under our feet, on which we tread and gon*,
 *walk Yet wasteth, as it lieth by the way. The broade river some time waxeth
 drey*. *dry The greate townes see we wane and wend*.
 *go, disappear Then may ye see that all things have an end. Of man and
 woman see we well also, -- That needes in one of the termes two, -- That is
 to say, in youth or else in age,- He must be dead, the king as shall a page;
 Some in his bed, some in the deepe sea, Some in the large field, as ye may
 see: There helpeth nought, all go that ilke* way: *same Then
 may I say that alle thing must die. What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
 The which is prince, and cause of alle thing, Converting all unto his proper
 will, From which it is derived, sooth to tell And hereagainst no creature
 alive, Of no degree, availeth for to strive. Then is it wisdom, as it thinketh
 me, To make a virtue of necessity, And take it well, that we may not
 eschew*, *escape And namely what to us all is due. And
 whoso grudgeth* ought, he doth folly, *murmurs at And rebel is
 to him that all may gie*. *direct, guide And certainly a man hath
 most honour To dien in his excellence and flower, When he is sicker* of his
 goode name. *certain Then hath he done his friend, nor
 him*, no shame *himself And gladder ought his friend be of his
 death, When with honour is yielded up his breath, Than when his name
 appalled is for age; *decayed by old age* For all forgotten is his
 vassalage*. *valour, service Then is it best, as for a worthy fame,

To dien when a man is best of name. The contrary of all this is wilfulness.
 Why grudge we, why have we heaviness, That good Arcite, of chivalry the
 flower, Departed is, with duty and honour, Out of this foule prison of this
 life? Why grudge here his cousin and his wife Of his welfare, that loved him
 so well? Can he them thank? nay, God wot, neverdeal*, -- *not a jot
 That both his soul and eke themselves offend*, *hurt And yet
 they may their lustes* not amend**. *desires **control What may I
 conclude of this longe serie*, *string of remarks But after sorrow I
 rede* us to be merry, *counsel And thanke Jupiter for all his
 grace? And ere that we departe from this place, I rede that we make of
 sorrows two One perfect joye lasting evermo': And look now where most
 sorrow is herein, There will I first amenden and begin. "Sister," quoth he,
 "this is my full assent, With all th' advice here of my parlement, That gentle
 Palamon, your owen knight, That serveth you with will, and heart, and
 might, And ever hath, since first time ye him knew, That ye shall of your
 grace upon him rue*, *take pity And take him for your husband
 and your lord: Lend me your hand, for this is our accord. *Let see* now of
 your womanly pity. *make display* He is a kinge's brother's
 son, pardie*. *by God And though he were a poore
 bachelere, Since he hath served you so many a year, And had for you so
 great adversity, It muste be considered, *'lieveth me*. *believe
 me* For gentle mercy *oweth to passen right*." *ought to be rightly
 Then said he thus to Palamon the knight; directed* "I trow
 there needeth little sermoning To make you assente to this thing. Come
 near, and take your lady by the hand." Betwixte them was made anon the
 band, That hight matrimony or marriage, By all the counsel of the baronage.
 And thus with alle bliss and melody Hath Palamon y-wedded Emily. And
 God, that all this wide world hath wrought, Send him his love, that hath it
 dearly bought. For now is Palamon in all his weal, Living in bliss, in riches,
 and in heal*. *health And Emily him loves so tenderly, And
 he her serveth all so gentilly, That never was there worde them between Of
 jealousy, nor of none other teen*. *cause of anger Thus endeth
 Palamon and Emily And God save all this faire company.