

CHAUCER FOR CHILDREN



KNIGHT SQUIRE BOY WIFE OF BATH PRIOR CHAUCER (A CLEKR) FRIAR MINE HOST
MONK SUMMONER PARDONER SECOND NUN FRANKLIN

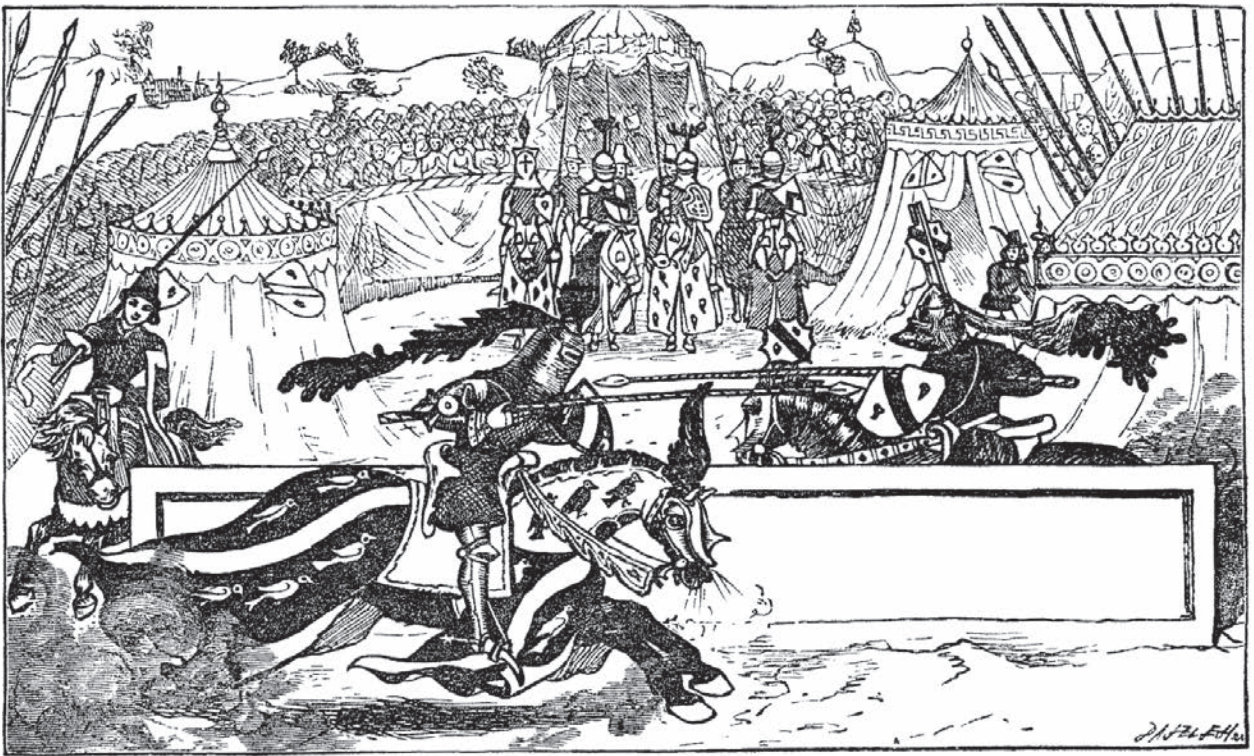
MINE HOST ASSEMBLING THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS

CHAUCER FOR CHILDREN

A Golden Key

BY MRS. H. R. HAWEIS

ILLUSTRATED WITH EIGHT COLOURED PICTURES AND
NUMEROUS WOODCUTS BY THE AUTHOR



'Doth now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!'

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

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CHIEFLY FOR THE USE AND PLEASURE OF

MY LITTLE LIONEL,

FOR WHOM I FELT THE NEED OF SOME BOOK OF THE KIND,

I HAVE ARRANGED AND ILLUSTRATED THIS

CHAUCER STORY-BOOK.

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FOREWORDS TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN revising *Chaucer for Children* for a New Edition, I have fully availed myself of the help and counsel of my numerous reviewers and correspondents, without weighting the book, which is really designed for children, with a number of new facts, and theories springing from the new facts, such as I have incorporated in my Book for older readers, *Chaucer for Schools*.

Curious discoveries are still being made, and will continue to be, thanks to the labours of men like Mr. F. J. Furnivall, and many other able and industrious scholars, encouraged by the steadily increasing public interest in Chaucer.

I must express my sincere thanks and gratification for the reception this book has met with from the press generally, and from many eminent critics in particular; and last, not least, from those to whom I devoted my pleasant toil, the children of England.

M. E. HAWEIS.

FOREWORDS.

To the Mother

A CHAUCER for Children may seem to some an impossible story-book, but it is one which I have been encouraged to put together by noticing how quickly my own little boy learned and understood fragments of early English poetry. I believe that if they had the chance, many other children would do the same.

I think that much of the construction and pronunciation of old English which seems stiff and obscure to grown up people, appears easy to children, whose crude language is in many ways its counterpart.

The narrative in early English poetry is almost always very simply and clearly expressed, with the same kind of repetition of facts and names which, as every mother knows, is what children most require in story-telling. The emphasis * which the final E gives to many words is another thing which helps to impress the sentences on the memory, the sense being often shorter than the sound.

It seems but natural that every English child should know something of one who left so deep an impression on his age, and on the English tongue, that he has been called by Occleve "the finder of our fair language." For in his day there was actually no national language, no national literature, English consisting of so many dialects, each having its own literature intelligible to comparatively few; and the Court and educated classes still adhering greatly to Norman-French for both speaking and writing. Chaucer, who wrote for the people, chose the best form of English, which was that spoken at Court, at a time when English was regaining supremacy over French; and the form he adopted laid the foundation of our present National Tongue.

* I use the word 'emphasis' in the same sense as one might speak of a crotchet in music, to which you count two, being more emphatic than a quaver, to which you count one.

Chaucer is, moreover, a thoroughly religious poet, all his merriest stories having a fair moral; even those which are too coarse for modern taste are rather naïve than injurious; and his pages breathe a genuine faith in God, and a passionate sense of the beauty and harmony of the divine work. The selections I have made are some of the most beautiful portions of Chaucer's most beautiful tales.

I believe that some knowledge of, or at least interest in, the domestic life and manners of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries, would materially help young children in their reading of English history. The political life would often be interpreted by the domestic life, and much of that time which to a child's mind forms the dryest portion of history, because so unknown, would then stand out as it really was, glorious and fascinating in its vigour and vivacity, its enthusiasm, and love of beauty and bravery. There is no clearer or safer exponent of the life of the 14th century, as far as he describes it, than Geoffrey Chaucer.

As to the difficulties of understanding Chaucer, they have been greatly overstated. An occasional reference to a glossary is all that is requisite; and, with a little attention to a very simple general rule, anybody with moderate intelligence and an ear for musical rhythm can enjoy the lines.

In the first place, it must be borne in mind that the E at the end of the old English words was usually a syllable, and must be sounded, as *Aprillē, swootē, &c.*

Note, then, that Chaucer is always *rhythmical*. Hardly ever is his rhythm a shade wrong, and therefore, roughly speaking, *if you pronounce the words so as to preserve the rhythm* all will be well. When the final *e* must be sounded in order to make the rhythm right, sound it, but where it is not needed leave it mute. *

Thus:—in the opening lines—

GLOSSARY.

when, showers, sweet	Whan that <i>April</i> <i>le</i> with his <i>schowr</i> <i>es</i> swoote
pierced, root	The drought of Marche hath per cèd to the roote
such, liquor	And bath ud eve ry veyne in swich licour
flower	Of whiche vertue engen drèd is the flour. (<i>Prologue.</i>)

You see that in those words which I have put in italics the final E must be sounded slightly, for the rhythm's sake.

small birds make	And sma le fow les ma ken me lodie
sleep, all	That sle pen al the night with o pen yhe. (<i>Prologue.</i>)

* Those who wish to study systematically the grammar, and construction of the metre, I can only refer to the best authorities, Dr. R. Morris and Mr. Skeat, respectively. It would be superfluous to enter on these matters in the present volume.

Again, to quote at random—

GLOSSARY.

lark, messenger	The bu sy lark e mess ager of day,	
saluteth, her, morning	Salu eth in hire song the mor we gray.	(<i>Knight's Tale.</i>)
legs, lean	Ful long e wern his leg gus, and ful lene;	
	Al like a staff ther was no calf y-sene.	(<i>Prologue—'Reve.'</i>)

or in Chaucer's exquisite greeting of the daisy—

always	Knelyng alwey til it unclo sèd was	
small, soft, sweet	Upon the sma le, sof te, swo te gras.	(<i>Legend of Good Women.</i>)

How much of the beauty and natural swing of Chaucer's poetry is lost by translation into modern English, is but too clear when that beauty is once perceived; but I thought some modernization of the old lines would help the child to catch the sense of the original more readily: for my own rendering, I can only make the apology that when I commenced my work I did not know it would be impossible to procure suitable modernized versions by eminent poets. Finding that unattainable, I merely endeavoured to render the old version in modern English as closely as was compatible with sense, and the simplicity needful for a child's mind; and I do not in any degree pretend to have rendered it in poetry.

The beauty of such passages as the death of Arcite is too delicate and evanescent to bear rough handling. But I may here quote some of the lines as an example of the importance of the final e in emphasizing certain words with an almost solemn music.

speech, fail	And with that word his <i>spech</i> <i>e fail</i> <i>e gan</i> ;	
	For fro his feete up to his brest was come	
overtaken	The cold of deth that hadde him o ver nome;	
now, arms	And yet moreo ver in his <i>ar</i> <i>mes</i> twoo	
gone	The vi tal strength is lost, and al agoo.	
without	Only the in tellect, withou ten more,	
heart, sick	That dwel led in his <i>her</i> <i>te sik</i> and sore,	
began to fail, felt death }	Gan <i>fayl</i> e when the <i>her</i> <i>te felt</i> e deth.	(<i>Knight's Tale.</i>)

There is hardly anything finer than Chaucer's version of the story of these passionate young men, up to the touching close of Arcite's accident and the beautiful patience of death. In life nothing would have reconciled the almost animal fury of the rivals, but at the last such a resignation comes to Arcite that he gives up Emelye to Palamon with a sublime effort of self-sacrifice. Throughout the whole of the *Knight's Tale* sounds as of rich organ music seem to peal from the page; throughout the Clerk's

Tale one seems to hear strains of infinite sadness echoing the strange outrages imposed on patient Grizel. But without attention to the rhythm half the grace and music is lost, and therefore it is all-important that the child be properly taught to preserve it.

I have adhered generally to Morris's text (1866), being both good and popular, * only checking it by his Clarendon Press edition, and by Tyrwhitt, Skeat, Bell, &c., when I conceive force is gained, and I have added a running glossary of such words as are not immediately clear, on a level with the line, to disperse any lingering difficulty.

In the pictures I have been careful to preserve the right costumes, colours, and surroundings, for which I have resorted to the MSS. of the time, knowing that a child's mind, unaided by the eye, fails to realize half of what comes through the ear. Children may be encouraged to verify these costumes in the figures upon many tombs and stalls, &c., in old churches, and in old pictures.

In conclusion I must offer my sincere and hearty thanks to many friends for their advice, assistance, and encouragement during my work; amongst them, Mr. A. J. Ellis, Mr. F. J. Furnivall, and Mr. Calderon.

Whatever may be the shortcomings of the book, I cannot but hope that many little ones, while listening to Chaucer's Tales, will soon begin to be interested in the picturesque life of the middle ages, and may thus be led to study and appreciate 'The English Homer' † by the pages I have written for my own little boy.

ACCENT OF CHAUCER.

The mother should read to the child a fragment of Chaucer with the correct pronunciation of his day, of which we give an example below, inadequate, of course, but sufficient for the present purpose. The whole subject is fully investigated in the three first parts of the treatise on 'Early English Pronunciation, with special reference to Shakespere and Chaucer,' by Alexander J. Ellis, F.R.S.

The *a* is, as in the above languages, pronounced as in *âne*, *appeler*, &c. *E* commonly, as in *écarté*, &c. The final *e* was probably indistinct, as in German now, *habe*, *werde*, &c.—not unlike the *a* in *China*: it was lost before a vowel. The final *e* is still sounded by the French in singing. In old French verse, one finds it as indispensable to the rhythm as in Chaucer,—and as graceful,—hence probably the modern retention of the letter as a syllable in vocal music.

* "No better MS. of the 'Canterbury Tales' could be found than the Harleian MS. 7334, which is far more uniform and accurate than any other I have examined; it has therefore been selected, and faithfully adhered to throughout, as the text of the present edition. Many clerical errors and corrupt readings have been corrected by collating it, line for line, with the Lansdowne MS. 851, which, notwithstanding

its provincial peculiarities, contains many excellent readings, some of which have been adopted in preference to the Harleian MS." (Preface to Morris's Revised Ed. 1866.) This method I have followed when I have ventured to change a word or sentence, in which case I have, I believe, invariably given my authority.

† Roger Ascham.

Ou is sounded as the French *ou*.

I generally as on the Continent, *ee*: never as we sound it at present.

Ch as in Scotch and German.

I quote the opening lines of the Prologue as the nearest to hand.

Whan that Aprille with his schowres swoote
The drought of Marche hath perced to the
roote,

And bathud every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertue engendred is the flour;

Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breethe
Enspirud hath in every holte and heethe
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne

Hath in the Ram his halfe cours i-ronne,

And smale fowles maken melodie,

That slepen al the night with open yhe,

So priketh hem nature in here corages—&c.

Whan that Aprilla with his shōōrēs sohta
The drōōkht of March hath pairsed to the
rohta,

And bahtthed ev'ry vīn in sweech licōōr,
Of which vairtú enjendrèd is the flōōr;

Whan Zephirōōs aik with his swaita braitha
Enspeered hath in ev'ry holt and haitha
The tendra croppes, and the yōōnga sōōnna

Hath in the Ram his halfa cōōrs i-rōōnna,

And smahla fōōles mahken melodee-a,

That slaipen al the nikht with ohpen ee-a,

So pricketh hem nahtúr in heer coràhges, &c.

It will thus be seen that many of Chaucer's lines end with a *dissyllable*, instead of a single syllable. *Sote, rote, brethe, hethe*, &c. (having the final *e*), are words of two syllables; *corages* is a word of three, *àges* rhyming with *pilgrimages* in the next line. It will also be apparent that some lines are lengthened with a syllable too much for strict *metre*—a licence allowed by the best poets,—which, avoiding as it does any possible approach to a doggerel sound, has a lifting, billowy rhythm, and, in fact, takes the place of a 'turn' in music. A few instances will suffice:—

'And though that I no wepne have in this place.'

'Have here my troth, tomorwe I nyl not fayle,
Withouten wityng of eny other wight.'

'As any raven fether it schon for-blak.'

'A man mot ben a fool other yong or olde.'

I think that any one reading these lines twice over as I have roughly indicated, will find the accent one not difficult to practise; and the perfect rhythm and ring of the lines facilitates matters, as the ear can frequently guide the pronunciation. The lines can scarcely be read too slowly or majestically.

I must not here be understood to imply that difficulties in reading and accentuating Chaucer are chimerical, but only that it is possible to understand and enjoy him without as much difficulty as is commonly supposed. In perusing the whole of Chaucer, there must needs be exceptional readings and accentuation, which in detail only a student of the subject would comprehend or care for.

The rough rule suggested in the preface is a good one, as far as the rhythm goes: as regards the sound, I have given a rough example.

I will quote a fragment again from the Prologue as a second instance:—

Ther was also a nonne, a prioresse,	Ther was ahlsoa a nõön, a preeoressa,
That of hire smylyng was ful symple and coy;	That of her smeeling was fööl sim-pland cooy;
Hire gretteste ooth nas but by Seynte Loy;	Heer graitest ohth nas bööt bee Sī-ent Looy,
And sche was cleped Madame Eglentyne.	And shay was cleppèd Màmam Eglanteena.
Ful wel sche sang the servise devyne,	Fööl well shay sang the servicě divinä,
Entuned in hire nose ful semyly;	Entúned in heer nohsa fööl saimaly;
And Frensch sche spak ful faire and fetysly,	And French shai spahk fööl fēr and faitisly,
Aftur the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,	Ahfter the scohl of Strahtford ahtta Bow-a,
For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.	For French of Pahrees was toh her öön-know-a.

Observe *simpland* for *simple and*: simple being pronounced like a word of one syllable. With the common English pronunciation the lines would not scan. ‘Vernicle,’ ‘Christofre,’ ‘wimple,’ ‘chilindre,’ ‘companable,’ &c., are further instances of this mute *e*, and may be read as French words.

The Knight's Tale.

ONCE upon a time, as old stories tell us, there was a duke named Theseus, lord and governor of Athens, in Greece, and in his time such a conqueror that there was none greater under the sun. Full many a rich country owned his sway.

GLOSSARY.

	That with his wisdam and his chivalrie,	What with his wisdom and his chivalry
kingdom, } Amazons }	He conquered al the regne of Femynye,	The kingdom of the Amazons won he,
once, called	That whilom was i-cleped Cithea;	That was of old time naméd Scythia,
fresh	And wedded the fresshe quene Ipolita,	And wedded the fresh Queen Ipolita,
country	And brought her hoom with him to his contre,	And brought her to his own land sumptuously,
much, } solemnity }	With mochel glorie and gret solempnite;	With pomp and glory, and great festivity;
also, sister	And eek hire yonge suster Emelye.	And also her young sister Emelye.
music	And thus with victorie and with melodye	And thus with victory and with melodie
duke	Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,	Let I this noble duke to Athens ride,
arms	And al his ost, in armes him biside.	And all his glittering hosts on either side.

And, certainly, if it were not too long to listen to, I would have told you fully how the kingdom of the Amazons was won by Theseus and his host. And of the great battle there was for the time between Athens and the Amazons; and how Ipolita—the fair, hardy queen of Scythia—was besieged; and about the feast that was held at the wedding of Theseus and Ipolita, and about the tempest at their home-coming. But all this I must cut short.

plough	I have, God wot, a large feeld to ere;	I have, God knows, a full wide field to sow,
weak	And wayke ben the oxen in my plough.	And feeble be the oxen in my plough.

I will not hinder anybody in the company. Let every one tell his story in turn, and let us see now who shall win the supper!

I will describe to you what happened as Theseus was bringing home his bride to Athens.

* Tyrwhitt. Hyppolita, Smith's Dic.

GLOSSARY.

	This duk, of whom I make mencion,	This duke aforesaid, of deserved renown,
come	Whan he was comen almost unto the toun,	When he had almost come into the town
prosperity	In al his wele and in his moste pryde,	In all his splendour and in all his pride,
aware	He was war, as he cast his eyghe aside,	Perceivéd, as he cast his eyes aside,
kneeled	Wher that ther knelede in the hye weye	A company of ladies, in a row,
two	A compaignye of ladies, tweye and tweye,	Were kneeling in the highway—two by two,
each, black	Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;	Each behind each, clad all in black array;
woe	But such a cry and such a woo they make, That in this world nys creature lyvyng, That herde such another weymentynge,	But such an outcry of lament made they, That in this world there is no living thing That e'er heard such another outcrying;
cease	And of that cry ne wolde they never stenten,	Nor would they cease to wail and to complain
caught	Til they the reynes of his bridel henten.	Till they had caught him by his bridle-rein.
	What folk be ye that at myn hom comynge	“What folk are ye who at my home-coming
perturb	Pertourben so my feste* with crynging? Quod Theseus; Have ye so gret envye Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crie?	Perturb my festival with murmuring,” Quoth Theseus. “Or do you envy me Mine honour that ye wail so woefully?
injured	Or who hath yow misboden or offendid? And telleth me, if it may ben amendid;	Or who hath injured you, or who offended? Tell me, if haply it may be amended,
black	And why that ye ben clad thus al in blak?	And why are all of you in black arrayed?”
them	The oldest lady of hem alle spak....	The oldest lady of them all then said—

“Lord, to whom fortune has given victory, and to live ever as a conqueror, we do not grudge your glory † and honour, but we have come to implore your pity and help. Have mercy on us in our grief. There is not one of us that has not been a queen or duchess; now we are beggars, and you can help us if you will.

“I was wife to King Capaneus, who died at Thebes ‡: and all of us who kneel and weep have lost our husbands there during a siege; and now Creon, who is king of Thebes, has piled together these dead bodies, and will not suffer them to be either burned or buried.”

And with these words all the ladies wept more piteously than ever, and prayed Theseus to have compassion on their great sorrow.

The kind duke descended from his horse, full of commiseration for the poor ladies. He thought his heart would break with pity when he saw them so sorrowful and dejected, who had been lately of so noble a rank.

He raised them all, and comforted them, and swore an oath that as he was a true knight, he would avenge them on the tyrant king of Thebes in such a fashion that all the people of Greece should be able to tell how Theseus served Creon!

The duke sent his royal bride and her young sister Emelye on to the town of Athens, whilst he

* Feste in this place means rather festival than feast, as Theseus was only on his way to the city.

† At this period, the personal pronoun *you* was used only in the plural sense, or in formal address, as on the Continent now; whilst *thou* implied familiarity. The Deity, or any superior, was therefore addressed as *you*: intimates and

inferiors as *thou*. Throughout Chaucer the distinction is noticeable: but as the present mode reverses the order, I have in my lines adhered to no strict principle, but have used the singular or plural personal pronoun according as it seemed most forcible.

‡ Thebes, in Greece.

displayed his banner, marshalled his men, and rode forth towards Thebes. For himself, till he had accomplished this duty, he would not enter Athens, nor take his ease for one half-day therein.

The duke's white banner bore the red statue of Mars upon it; and by his banner waved his pennon, which had the monster Minotaur (slain by Theseus in Greece) beaten into it in gold. Thus rode this duke—thus rode this conqueror and all his host—the flower of chivalry—till he came to Thebes.

To make matters short, Theseus fought with the King of Thebes, and slew him manly as a knight in fair battle, and routed his whole army. Then he destroyed the city, and gave up to the sorrowful ladies the bones of their husbands, to burn honourably after their fashion.

When the worthy duke had slain Creon and taken the city, he remained all night in the field. During the pillage which followed, it happened that two young knights were found still alive, lying in their rich armour, though grievously wounded. By their coat-armour* the heralds knew they were of the blood-royal of Thebes; two cousins, the sons of two sisters. Their names were Palamon and Arcite.

These two knights were carried as captives to Theseus' tent, and he sent them off to Athens, where they were to be imprisoned for life; no ransom would he take.

Then the duke went back to Athens crowned with laurel, where he lived in joy and in honour all his days, while Palamon and Arcite were shut up in a strong tower full of anguish and misery, beyond all reach of help.

Thus several years passed.

<p>GLOSSARY. This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day, morning Till it fel oones in a morwe of May see That Emelye, that fairer was to seene Than is the lilie on hire stalkes grene, flowers And fresscher than the May with floures newe— strove, hue For with the rose colour strof hire hewe, I not which was the fayrere of hem two— Er it were day as sche was wont to do, dressed Sche was arisen, and al redy dight; sloth For May wole han no sloggardy e a nyght. The sesoun priketh every gentil herte, And maketh him out of his sleepe sterte, arise, thine And seith, Arys, and do thin observaunce.†</p>	<p>Thus passeth year by year, and day by day, Till it fell once upon a morn of May That Emelye—more beauteous to be seen Than is the lily on his stalk of green, And fresher than the May with flowers new (For with the rose's colour strove her hue I know not which was fairer of the two) Early she rose as she was wont to do, All ready robed before the day was bright; For May time will not suffer sloth at night; The season pricketh every gentle heart, And maketh him out of his sleep to start, And saith, Rise up, salute the birth of spring!</p>
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* A garment worn over the armour, on which the armorial bearings were usually embroidered, for the purpose of recognition. See *tabard*, p. 48.

† The rites and ceremonies, observed on the approach of spring, from the earliest times in many countries, but which have now died out in England, are among the most natural and beautiful of all popular fêtes. I have already in the preface alluded to the custom of riding out into the fields at daybreak to do honour to May, the month which was held to be the symbol of spring-time. Rich and poor, the court and the commoners, all rode out with one impulse. Boughs of hawthorn and laburnum were brought home to decorate all the streets, and dancing round the maypole, and feasting, and holiday-making, were observed almost like religious rites. It was a great privilege to be elected queen of May, and one which every young maiden coveted. At a later time we read of Henry VIII. and Queen Catherine of Aragon

formally meeting the heads of the corporation of London, on Shooter's Hill, to 'go a maying.'

But one thing should be remembered when we see how many pleasures were referred to May, and how much more people seemed to count on the weather of a month nowadays proverbially disappointing. The seasons were not the same then as they are now. Not because the climate of the land has altered so much, though that may be fairly surmised; but because the seasons were actually arranged otherwise. In Chaucer's time, May began twelve days later than our May, and ended in the midst of June, and therefore there was a much better chance of settled weather than we have. This fact also accounts for the proverbial connection of Christmas and hard weather, snow, and ice, which we get as a rule in January, while December is foggy and wet. Twelfth Day was the old Christmas Day. (See page 4.)



FAIR EMELYE GATHERING FLOWERS

'The fairnesse of the lady that I see
Vonde in the gardyn romynge to and fro.'

GLOSSARY.	This maked Emelye han remembraunce	And therefore Emelye, remembering
do	To don honour to May, and for to ryse.	To pay respect to May, rose speedily:
clothed	I-clothed was sche fressh for to devyse. *	Attired she was all fresh and carefully,
yellow	Hire yolwe heer was browdid in a tresse, Byhynde hire bak, a yerde long I gesse. And in the gardyn at the sonne upriste	Her yellow hair was braided in a tress Behind her back, a full yard long, I guess, And in the garden as the sun uprose
pleased	Sche walketh up and doun wher as hire liste. Sche gadereth floures, party whyte and reede, To make a sotil gerland † for hire heede, And as an aungel hevenly sche song.	She wandered up and down where as she chose. She gathereth flowers, partly white and red, To make a cunning garland for her head, And as an angel heavenly she sang.

The great tower, so thick and strong, in which these two knights were imprisoned, was close-joined to the wall of the garden.

Bright was the sun, and clear, that morning, as Palamon, by leave of his jailor, had risen, and was roaming about in an upper chamber, from which he could see the whole noble city of Athens, and also the garden, full of green boughs, just where fresh Emelye was walking.

This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon, kept pacing to and fro in this chamber, wishing he had never been born; and it happened by chance that through the window, square and barred with iron, he cast his eyes on Emelye.

He started and cried out aloud, "Ah!" as though he were stricken to the heart.

And with that cry Arcite sprang up, saying, "Dear cousin, what ails you? You are quite pale and deathly. Why did you cry out? For God's love be patient with this prison life since it cannot be altered. What is Heaven's will we must endure."

Palamon answered, "Cousin, it is not that—not this dungeon made me cry out—but I was smitten right now through the eye into my heart. The fairness of a lady that I see yonder in the garden, roaming to and fro, made me cry out. I know not whether she be woman or goddess: but I think it is Venus herself!"

And he fell down on his knees and cried, "Venus, if it be thy will thus to transfigure thyself in the garden, help us to escape out of the tower."

Then Arcite looked forth and saw this lady roaming to and fro, and her beauty touched him so deeply that he said, sighing, "The fresh beauty of her will slay me. And if I cannot gain her mercy, I am but dead, and there is an end."

But Palamon turned furiously on him, and said, "Do you say that in earnest or in play?"

"Nay," cried Arcite, "in earnest by my faith—God help me, I am in no mood for play."

"It were no great honour to thee," cried Palamon, "to be false and a traitor to me, who am thy cousin and thy brother, sworn as we are both, to help and not hinder one another, in all things till death part us. And now you would falsely try to take my lady from me, whom I love and serve, and ever shall till my heart break. Now, certainly, false Arcite, you shall not do it. I loved her first, and told thee, and thou art bound as a knight to help me, or thou art false!"

But Arcite answered proudly, "Thou shalt be rather false than I—and thou *art* false, I tell thee,

* At point devise—with exactness.

† The love of the Anglo-Saxons and the early English for flowers is very remarkable. The wearing of garlands

of fresh flowers was a common practice with both sexes: a beautiful custom, followed by the Romans, and previously by the Greeks.

utterly! For I loved her with real love before you did. You did not know whether she were woman or goddess. Yours is a religious feeling, and mine is love as to a mortal; which I told you as my cousin, and my sworn brother. And even if you had loved her first, what matters it? A man loves because he can't help it, not because he wishes. Besides, you will never gain her grace more than I, for both of us are life-long captives. It is like the dogs who fought all day over a bone; and while they were fighting over it, a kite came and carried it off."

Long the two knights quarrelled and disputed about the lady who was out of their reach. But you shall see what came to pass.

There was a duke called Perithous, who had been fellow and brother in arms * of Duke Theseus since both were children, and he came to Athens to visit Theseus. These two dukes were very great friends: so much so that they loved no one so much as each other.

Now, Duke Perithous had known Arcite at Thebes, years before, and liked him, and he begged Theseus to let Arcite out of prison.

Theseus consented, but only on the condition that Arcite should quit Athens; and that he should lose his head, were he ever found there again.

So Arcite became a free man, but he was banished the kingdom.

How unhappy then Arcite was! He felt that he was worse off than ever. "Oh, how I wish I had never known Perithous!" cried he. "Far rather would I be back in Theseus' prison, for then I could see the beautiful lady I love."

GLOSSARY.	O dere cosyn Palamon, quod he,	"O my dear cousin, Palamon," cried he,
thine, chance	Thyn is the victorie of this aventure,	"In this ill hap the gain is on thy side.
may'st	} Ful blisfully in prisoun maistow dure;	Thou blissful in thy prison may'st abide!
thou		In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!
endure	Wel hath fortune y-torned the the dys.	Kindly toward thee hath fortune turn'd the dice."

So Arcite mourned ever, because he was far away from Athens where the beautiful lady dwelt, and was always thinking that perhaps Palamon would get pardoned, and marry the lady, while he would never see her any more.

But Palamon, on the other hand, was so unhappy when his companion was taken away, that he wept till the great tower resounded, and his very fetters were wet with his tears.

"Alas, my dear cousin," he sighed, "the fruit of all our strife is thine!—You walk free in Thebes, and think little enough of my woe, I daresay. You will perhaps gather a great army and make war on this country, and get the beautiful lady to wife whom I love so much! while I die by inches in my cage."

And with that his jealousy started up like a fire within him, so that he was nigh mad, and pale as ashes. "O cruel gods!" he cried, "that govern the world with your eternal laws, how is man better than a sheep lying in the fold? For, like any other beast, man dies, or lives in prison, or is sick, or unfortunate, and often is quite guiltless all the while. And when a beast is dead, it has no pain further; but man may suffer after death, as well as in this world."

Now I will leave Palamon, and tell you more of Arcite.

* Formal compacts for the purpose of mutual counsel and assistance were common to the heroic and chivalrous ages.—B.

Arcite, in Thebes, fell into such excessive sorrow for the loss of the beautiful lady that there never was a creature so sad before or since. He ceased to eat and drink, and sleep, and grew as thin and dry as an arrow. His eyes were hollow and dreadful to behold, and he lived always alone, mourning and lamenting night and day. He was so changed that no one could recognize his voice nor his look. Altogether he was the saddest picture of a man that ever was seen—except Palamon.

One night he had a dream. He dreamed that the winged god Mercury stood before him, bidding him be merry; and commanded him to go to Athens, where all his misery should end.

Arcite sprang up, and said, "I will go straight to Athens. Nor will I spare to see my lady through fear of death—in her presence I am ready even to die!"

He caught up a looking-glass, and saw how altered his face was, so that no one would know him. And lie suddenly bethought him that now he was so disfigured with his grief, he might go and dwell in Athens without being recognized, and see his lady nearly every day.

He dressed himself as a poor labourer, and accompanied only by a humble squire, who knew all he had suffered, he hastened to Athens.

He went to the court of Theseus, and offered his services at the gate to drudge and draw, or do any menial work that could be given him. Well could he hew wood and carry water, for he was young and very strong. Now, it happened that the chamberlain of fair Emelye's house took Arcite into his service.

Thus Arcite became page of the chamber of Emelye the bright, and he called himself Philostrate.

Never was man so well thought of!—he was so gentle of condition that he became known throughout the court. People said it would be but right if Theseus promoted this Philostrate, and placed him in a rank which would better display his talents and virtues.

At last Theseus raised him to be squire of his chamber, and gave him plenty of gold to keep up his degree. Moreover, his own private rent was secretly brought to him from Thebes year by year. But he spent it so cunningly that no one suspected him. In this crafty way Arcite lived a long time very happily, and bore himself so nobly both in peace and war that there was no man in the land dearer to Theseus.

Now we will go back to Palamon.

Poor Palamon had been for seven years in his terrible prison, and was quite wasted away with misery. There was not the slightest chance of getting out; and his great love made him frantic. At last, however, one May night some pitying friend helped him to give his jailor a drink which sent him into a deep sleep: so that Palamon made his escape from the tower. He fled from the city as fast as ever he could go, and hid himself in a grove; meaning afterwards to go by night secretly to Thebes, and beg all his friends to aid him to make war on Theseus. And then he would soon either die or get Emelye to wife.

GLOSSARY.

turn	Now wol I torn unto Arcite agayn,	Now will I tell you of Arcite again,
knew, near }	That litel wiste how nyh that was his care,	Who little guess'd how nigh him was his care
	Til that fortune hadde brought him in the snare.	Until his fortune brought him in the snare.
	The busy larke, messenger of day,	The busy lark, the messenger of day,
saluteth	Salueth in hire song the morwe gray;	Saluteth in her song the morning grey;
	And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,	And fiery Phoebus riseth up so bright,
	That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,	That all the orient laugheth for the light;

GLOSSARY.

rays, groves	And with his stremes dryeth in the greves	And in the woods he drieth with his rays
leaves	The silver dropes, hongyng on the leeves.	The silvery drops that hang along the sprays.
royal*	And Arcite, that is in the court ryal	Arcite—unknown, yet ever waxing higher
squire	With Theseus, his squyer principal, Is risen, and loketh on the merye day.	In Theseus' royal court, now chiefest squire— Is risen, and looketh on the merry day:
do, ceremony }	And for to doon his observaunce to May, Remembryng on the poynt of his desir,	And, fain to offer homage unto May, He, mindful of the point of his desire,
starting, fire	He on his courser, stertyng as the fir,	Upon his courser leapeth, swift as fire,
fields, play	Is riden into the feeldes him to pleye Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye.	And rideth to keep joyous holiday Out in the fields, a mile or two away.
you	And to the grove of which that I yow tolde,	And, as it chanced, he made towards the grove,
chance, began }	By aventure his wey he gan to holde,	All thick with leaves, whereof I spake above,
make	To maken him a garland of the greves,	Eager to weave a garland with a spray
leaves	Were it of woodebynde or hawethorn leves,	Of woodbine, or the blossoms of the may.
sang, against	And lowde he song ayens the sonne scheene: O May, † with al thy floures and thy greene,	And loud against the sunshine sweet he sings, “O May, with all thy flowers and thy green things,
	Welcome be thou, wel faire freissche May!	Right welcome be thou, fairest, freshest May!
some, may get }	I hope that I som grene gete may.	Yield me of all thy tender green to-day!”
heart	And fro his courser, with a lusty herte,	Then from his courser merrily he sprang,
started	Into the grove ful hastily he sterte,	And plunged into the thicket as he sang;
roamed	And in a pathe he romed up and down,	Till in a path he chanced to make his way
where, chance }	Ther as by aventure this Palamoun Was in a busche, that no man might him see,	Nigh to where Palamon in secret lay. Sore frightened for his life was Palamon:
afraid, death	For sore afered of his deth was he.	But Arcite pass'd, unknowing and unknown;
	Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite:	And neither guess'd his brother was hard by;
knows, guessed, little, truly, gone, since }	God wot he wolde han trowed it ful lite.	But Arcite knew not any man was nigh.
eyes, ears }	For soth is seyde, goon sithen many yeres, That feld hath eyen, and the woode hath eeres.	So was it said of old, how faithfully, ‘The woods have ears, the empty field can see.’

A man should be prudent, even when he fancies himself safest: for oftentimes come unlooked-for meetings. And little enough thought Arcite that his sworn brother from the tower was at hand, sitting as still as a mouse while he sang.

Whan that Arcite hadde romed al his fill,
And songen al the roundel lustily,

Now when Arcite long time had roam'd his fill,
And sung all through the rondel lustily,

* The words *court* and *royal*, now applied only to the sovereign of the land, were applicable then to the domains of the great nobles, who were to all intents and purposes kings. Their pride, and wealth, and immense power, made them very formidable to the sovereign, as we constantly find in following the history of England or any other

country. They often mustered as big an army as the king, because they could afford to pay the knights (see note, p. 19), and were invincible in their strongholds, surrounded by their serfs dependent on them.

† Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.

reverie	Into a studie he fel sodeynly,	He fell into dejection suddenly,
curious fashions } briars	As don thes loveres in here queynte geeres, Now in the croppe, * now down in the breres, Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.	As lovers in their strange way often do, Now in the clouds and now in abject wo, Now up, now down, as bucket in a well.

He sat down and began to make a kind of song of lamentation. "Alas," he cried, "the day that I was born! How long, O Juno, wilt thou oppress Thebes? All her royal blood is brought to confusion. I myself am of royal lineage, and yet now I am so wretched and brought so low, that I have become slave and squire to my mortal foe. Even my own proud name of Arcite I dare not bear, but pass by the worthless one of Philostrate! Ah, Mars and Juno, save me, and wretched Palamon, martyred by Theseus in prison! For all my pains are for my love's sake, and Emelye, whom I will serve all my days."

	Ye slen me with youre eyen, Emelye;	"You slay me with your eyes, O Emelye!
be	Ye ben the cause wherfore that I dye:	You are the cause wherefore I daily die.
remnant	Of al the remenant of myn other care	For, ah, the worth of all my other woes
amount	Ne sette I nought the mountaunce of a tare,	Is not as e'en the poorest weed that grows,
were able to	So that I couthe don aught to youre pleasaunce!	So that I might do aught to pleasure you!"

Palamon, hearing this, felt as though a cold sword glided through his heart. He was so angry that he flung himself forth like a madman upon Arcite:—

	And seyde: False † Arcyte—false traitour wikke,	Crying, "False, wicked traitor! false Arcite!
wicked	Now art thou hent, that lovest my lady so, For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,	Now art thou caught, that lov'st my lady so, For whom I suffer all this pain and wo!
counsel	And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,	Yet art my blood—bound to me by thy vow,
before now	As I ful ofte have told the heere byforne,	As I have told thee oftentimes ere now—
tricked	And hast byjaped here duke Theseus, And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;	And hast so long befool'd Duke Theseus And falsely hid thy name and nurture thus!
dead, else	I wol be deed, or elles thou schalt dye. Thou schalt not love my lady Emelye,	For all this falseness thou or I must die. Thou shalt not love my lady Emelye—
more	But I wil love hire oonly and no mo;	But I will love her and no man but I,
foe	For I am Palamon, thy mortal fo.	For I am Palamon, thine enemy!
weapon	And though that I no wepne have in this place,	And tho' I am unarmed, being but now
escaped	But out of prisoun am astert by grace,	Escap'd from out my dungeon, care not thou,
fear	I drede not, that outhere thou schalt dye, Or thou ne schalt not loven Emelye.	For nought I dread—for either thou shalt die Now—or thou shalt not love my Emelye.
escape	Ches which thou wilt, for thou schalt not sterte.	Choose as thou wilt—thou shalt not else depart."
there	This Arcite, with ful dispitous herte,	But Arcite, with all fury in his heart,

* *Crop*, the top of the wood; *briars*, the thorny brushwood and weeds growing on the ground. This pretty metaphor

well expresses the fluctuating moods of an overwrought state of feeling. † Tyrwhitt.

GLOSSARY.	Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herde,	Now that he knew him and his story heard,
fierce	As fers as a lyoun, pulleth out a swerde,	Fierce as a lion, snatch'd he forth his sword,
were it not also	And seide thus: By God that sitteth above, Nere it that thou art sike and wood for love, And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,	Saying these words: "By Him who rules above, Were't not that thou art sick and mad for love, And hast no weapon—never should'st thou move,
step	Thou schuldest nevere out of this grove pace,	Living or like to live, from out this grove,
die	That thou ne schuldest deyen of myn hond.	But thou shouldest perish by my hand! on oath
defy	For I defye the seurté and the bond	I cast thee back the bond and surety, both,
sayest	Which that thou seyst that I have maad to the; What, verray fool, think wel that love is fre!	Which thou pretendest I have made to thee. What? very fool! remember love is free,
In spite of	And I wol love hire mawgré al thy might.	And I will love her maugré all thy might!
because	But, for thou art a gentil perfight knight,	But since thou art a worthy, noble knight,
art willing	And wilnest to dereyne hire by batayle,	And willing to contest her in fair fight,
pledge	Have heere my trouthe, to morwe I nyl not fayle,	Have here my troth, to-morrow, at daylight,
without knowledge } will, found	Withouten wityng of eny other wight, That heer I wol be founden as a knight, And bryngen harneys * right inough for the; And ches the best, and lef the worst for me. And mete and drynke this night wil I brynge Inough for the, and clothes for thy beddyng.	Unknown to all, I will not fail nor fear To meet thee as a knight in combat here, And I will bring full arms for me and thee; And choose the best, and leave the worst for me! And I will bring thee meat and drink to-night, Enough for thee, and bedding as is right:
win	And if so be that thou my lady wynne,	And if the victory fall unto thine hand,
wood	And sle me in this wode, ther I am inne, Thou maist wel have thy lady as for me. This Palamon answerde, I graunt it the.	To slay me in this forest where I stand, Thou may'st attain thy lady-love, for me!" Then Palamon replied—"I grant it thee."

Then these, who had once been friends, parted till the morrow.

all	O Cupide, out of alle charite!	O god of love, that hast no charity!
kingdom	O regne that wolt no felaw have with the!	O realm, that wilt not bear a rival nigh!
truly, nor willingly, fellowship } find	Ful soth is seyde, that love ne lordschipe Wol not, thonkes, have no felaschipe. Wel fynden that Arcite and Palamoun.	Truly 'tis said, that love and lordship ne'er Will be contented only with a share. Arcite and Palamon have found it so.
before	Arcite is riden anon unto the toun And on the morwe, or it were dayes light,	Arcite is ridden soon the town unto: And, on the morrow, ere the sun was high,
prepared	Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,	Two harness hath he brought forth prively,
sufficient field, them, } two carried	Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne The batayl in the feeld betwix hem tweyne. And on his hors alone as he was born,	Meet and sufficing for the lonely fight Out in the battle-field mid daisies white. And riding onward solitarily

* Harness was a technical term for the complete armour or equipment, as opposed to portions, which were equally *armour*.

GLOSSARY.

before	He caryed al this harneys him byforn;	All this good armour on his horse bore he:
	And in the grove, at tyme and place i-sette,	And at the time and place which they had set
be	This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.	Ere long Arcite and Palamon are met.
then, their	Tho chaungen gan here colour in here face,	To change began the colour of each face—
kingdom	Right as the honter in the regne of Trace	Ev'n as the hunter's, in the land of Thrace,
	That stondesth in the gappe with a spere,	When at a gap he standeth with a spear,
	Whan honted is the lyoun or the bere,	In the wild hunt of lion or of bear,
groves	And hereth him come ruschyng in the greves,	And heareth him come rushing through the
		wood,
breaking	And breketh bothe the bowes and the leves,	Crashing the branches in his madden'd mood,
	And thenketh, Here cometh my mortel enemy,	And think'th, "Here com'th my mortal enemy,
without	Withoute faile, he mot be deed or I;	Now without fail or he or I must die;
	For eyther I mot slen him at the gappe,	For either I must slay him at the gap,
	Or he moot slee me, if it me myshappe:	Or he must slay me if there be mishap."
their hue	So ferden they, in chaungyng of here hew,	So fared the knights so far as either knew,
far, them	As fer as eyther of hem other knewe.	When, seeing each, each deepend in his hue.
was not, } saluting }	Ther nas no good day, ne no saluyng;	There was no greeting—there was no 'Good
		day,'
	But streyt withouten wordes rehersyng,	But mute, without a single word, straightway
each, } helped }	Everich of hem helpeth to armen other,	Each one in arming turn'd to help the other,
own	As frendly, as he were his owen brother;	As like a friend as though he were his brother.
	And thanne with here scharpe speres stronge	And after that, with lances sharp and strong,
foined	They foyneden ech at other wonder longe,	They dash'd upon each other—lief and long.
then, } seemed }	Tho it semede that this Palamon	You might have fancied that this Palamon,
mad	In his fightyng were as a wood lyoun,	Fighting so blindly, were a mad lion,
	And as a cruel tygre was Arcite: *	And like a cruel tiger was Arcite.
began	As wilde boores gonne they to smyte,	As two wild boars did they together smite,
their } madness }	That frothen white as fome, for ire wood,	That froth as white as foam for rage—they stood
their	Up to the ancle faught they in here blood. †	And fought until their feet were red with blood.
	And in this wise I lete hem fightyng dwelle;	Thus far awhile I leave them to their fight.
you	And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.	And now what Theseus did I will recite.

Then something happened that neither of them expected.

It was a bright clear day, and Theseus, hunting with his fair queen Ipolita, and Emelye, clothed all in green, came riding by after the hart, with all the dogs around them; and as they followed the hart, suddenly Theseus looked out of the dazzle of the sun, and saw Arcite and Palamon in sharp fight, like two bulls for fury. The bright swords flashed to and fro so hideously that it seemed as though their smallest blows would fell an oak. But the duke knew not who they were that fought. †

Theseus smote his spurs into his horse, and galloped in between the knights, and, drawing his sword,

* Even these similes separate the two characters: the lion may be mad with rage; the tiger, which is a cat, is crafty as well as fierce.

† An exaggeration simply for picturesque effect, such as many have indulged in since Chaucer.

‡ The helmet entirely concealing the face.

cried, "Ho! * No more, on pain of death! By mighty Mars, he dies who strikes a blow in my presence!" Then Theseus asked them what manner of men they were, who dared to fight there, without judge or witness, as though it were in royal lists? †

You may imagine the two men turning on Theseus, breathless and bloody with fight, weary with anger, and their vengeance still unslaked.

GLOSSARY.	This Palamon answerde hastily,	And Palamon made answer hastily,
need	And seyde: Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?	And said—"O Sire, why should we waste more breath?
two	We han the deth deserved bothe tuo.	For both of us deserve to die the death.
wretches, captives encum- bered by }	Tuo woful wrecches ben we, tuo kaytyves	Two wretched creatures are we, glad to die
}	That ben encombred of oure owne lyves,	Tired of our lives, tired of our misery—
}	And as thou art a rightful lord and juge	And as thou art a rightful lord and judge
give us not	Ne yeve us neyther mercy ne refuge.	So give us neither mercy nor refûge!
holy	And sle me first, for seynte charite;	And slay me first, for holy charity—
also	But sle my felaw eek as wel as me.	But slay my fellow too as well as me!
little	Or sle him first; for, though thou know him lyte,	—Or slay him first, for though thou little know,
	This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,	This is Arcite—this is thy mortal foe,
	That fro thy lond is banyscht on his heed	Who from thy land was banished on his head,
deserved	For which he hath i-served to be deed.	For which he richly merits to be dead!
	For this is he that come to thi gate	Yea, this is he who came unto thy gate,
was named	And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.	And told thee that his name was Philostrate—
befooled	Thus hath he japed the ful many a yer,	Thus year by year hath he defied thine ire—
made	And thou hast maad of him thy cheef squyer.	And thou appointest him thy chiefest squire
	And this is he that loveth Emelye.	—And this is he who loveth Emelye!
	For sith the day is come that I schal dye,	"For since the day is come when I shall die,
	I make pleynly my confessioun,	Thus plain I make confession, and I own
that	That I am thilke woful Palamoun,	I am that miserable Palamon
wickedly	That hath thy prisoun broke wikkedly.	Who have thy prison broken wilfully!
	I am thy mortal foo, and it am I	I am thy mortal foe,—and it is I
	That loveth so hoote Emelye the brighte,	Who love so madly Emelye the bright,
	That I wol dye present in hire sighte.	That I would die this moment in her sight!
sentence	Therefore I aske deeth and my juwyse;	Therefore I ask death and my doom to-day—
slay	But slee my felaw in the same wyse,	But slay my fellow in the selfsame way:—
	For bothe we have served to be slayn.	For we have both deservèd to be slain."
	This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,	And angrily the duke replied again,
	And seyde: This is a schort conclusioun:	"There is no need to judge you any more,
own	Your owne mouth, by your confessioun,	Your own mouth, by confession, o'er and o'er
condemned	Hath dampned you bothe, and I wil it recorde.	Condemns you, and I will the words record.

* *Ho* was the word by which the heralds or the king commanded the cessation of any action.

† What were called the 'lists' were the places built

and enclosed for combats on horseback, and tournaments. These combats got sometimes very serious, and many knights and horses were wounded, or even killed.

GLOSSARY. It needeth nought to pyne yow with the corde. * There is no need to pain you with the cord.
 dead Ye schul be deed by mighty Mars the reede! Ye both shall die, by mighty Mars the red!"

Then the queen, 'for verray wommanhede,' began to weep, and so did Emelye, and all the ladies present. It seemed pitiful that two brave men, both of high lineage, should come to such an end, and only for loving a lady so faithfully. All the ladies prayed Theseus to have mercy on them, and pardon the knights for their sakes. They knelt at his feet, weeping and entreating him—

	And wold have kist his feet ther as he stood,	And would have kissed his feet there as he stood,
	Till atte laste aslaked was his mood;	Until at last appeasèd was his mood,
runneth	For pite renneth sone in gentil herte,	For pity springeth soon in gentle heart.
shook	And though he first for ire quok and sterte,	And though he first for rage did quake and start,
	He hath considerd shortly in a clause	He hath considered briefly in the pause
	The trespass of hem bothe, and eek the cause:	The greatness of their crime, and, too, its cause;
their	And although that his ire hire gylt accusede,	And while his passion had their guilt accused,
them	Yet in his resoun he hem bothe excusede.	Yet now his calmer reason both excused.

Everybody had sympathy for those who were in love, † and Theseus' heart 'had compassion of women, for they wept ever in on' (continually).

So the kindly duke softened, and said to all the crowd good-humouredly, "What a mighty and great lord is the god of love!"

here	Lo, her this Arcite and this Palamoun,	"Here are this Arcite and this Palamon,
freely (quit)	That quyately weren out of my prisoun,	Safe out of prison both, who might have gone
royally	And might have lyved in Thebes ryally,	And dwelt in Thebes city royally,
know, their	And witen I am here mortal enemy,	Knowing I am their mortal enemy,
their, lieth	And that here deth lith in my might also,	And that their death within my power lies:
	And yet hath love, maugré here eyghen tuo,	Yet hath blind Love, in spite of both their eyes,

* A form of torture to extort confession. Theseus' grim humour at this juncture implies how far lighter human life was held then than now. But he was naturally in a great rage when he knew who the knights were. Palamon's insolent address in the *singular* personal pronoun was not likely to mollify him, coming as it did from a captive, though an equal by birth.

† How idealized, and how idolized, the passion of love had crown to be with the new elevation of woman's condition in these times is well known. Love literally covered a multitude of sins: the malefactor was pardoned whose offences were caused by love; the rough was made smooth for the feet of love to tread upon. There was a reason for this. It is but too true that the morals of the people will not bear the light of modern times; but it would be unfair to judge them by that light. Those were rough days, when laws were often feeble, narrow, or ill-enforced. The want of legal organization placed a great refining and ennobling power in the hands of woman. Many a knight, who was coarse or cowardly, was pricked to courteous ways and deeds of courage by his love of some fair woman,

when without it he would have sunk lower and lower in vice and degradation. The arts were oftentimes cultivated to win a woman's ear or eye; knowledge itself was sought for her sake, for knowledge is power. Of course the love of courtesy, valour, and learning were deeply rooted in the age, or the woman's sympathy could not have existed. But her encouragement of all that was æsthetic, her influence over men, and therefore the impetus she gave to the higher life, must never be underrated, however we may reprove the errors of that day. The institution of actual 'Courts of Love'—tribunals for the judgment of love-matters, bearing a definite recognition, and which seem so strange, almost repulsive to us, presided over as they were by ladies only—was the result of the worship of physical beauty and the passion which it inspired, and the proof, however grotesque, of the real value seen to lie in it. This will be better understood when we observe that even children were encouraged to cultivate somewhat of this ideal love, and the childish education of boys and girls consisted to a very large extent in learning the art of writing love-letters. Thus Palamon's and Arcite's adoration of fresh Emelye are seen to be neither exaggerated nor futile.

GLOSSARY.	I-brought hem hider bothe for to dye.	Led them both hither only to be slain!
look, high	Now loketh, is nat that an heih folye?	Behold the height of foolishness most plain!
be	Who may not ben a fole, if that he love?	Who is so great a fool as one in love?
	Byholde for Goddes sake that sitteth above,	For mercy's sake—by all the gods above,
	Se how they blede! be they nought wel arrayed!	See how they bleed! a pretty pair are they!
them	Thus hath here lord, the god of love, hem payed	Thus their liege lord, the god of love, doth pay
their	Here wages and here fees for here servise.	Their wages, and their fees for service done;
think	And yet they wenen for to ben ful wise,	And yet each thinks himself a wise man's son
serve	That serven love, for ought that may bifalle.	Who serveth Love, whatever may befall.
	But this is yette the beste game of alle,	But this is still the greatest joke of all,
fun	That sche, for whom they have this jolitee,	That she, the cause of this rare jollity,
can them, } much	Can hem therfore as moche thank as me.	Owes them about as many thanks as I!
knows	Sche woot no more of al this hoot fare,	She knew no more of all this hot to-do,
knows	By God, than wot a cuckow or an hare.	By Mars! than doth a hare or a cuckoo!
must be } tried	But al moot ben assayed, hoot or colde;	But one must have one's fling, be't hot or cold;
must be, } either	A man moot ben a fool other yong or olde;	A man will play the fool either young or old.
	I woot it by myself ful yore agon:	I know it by myself—for long ago
one	For in my tyme a servant was I on.	In my young days I bowed to Cupid's bow."

This is as if he should say, "These two foolish boys have got nothing from their liege lord, the god of love, but a very narrow escape with their heads. And Emelye herself knew no more of all this hot business than a cuckoo! But I, too, was young once, and in love, and so I won't be hard upon them!" "I will pardon you," he added, "for the queen's sake and Emelye's, but you must swear to me never to come and make war on me at any time, but be ever my friends in all that you may for the future."

And they were very thankful and promised as he commanded.

Then Theseus spoke again, in a kind, half laughing way:—

speak, royal	To speke of real lynage and riches,	"And as for wealth and rank, and royal birth,
	Though that sche were a quene or a prynces,	Although she were the noblest upon earth,
princess	Ilk of yow bothe is worthy douteles	Each of you both deserves to wed your flame
each	To wedden, when time is, but natheles	Being of equal worth; but all the same
marry, } neverthe- less	I speke as for my suster Emelye,	It must be said, my sister Emelye
	For whom ye have this stryf and jelousye,	(For whom ye have this strife and jealousy),
	Ye woot youreself, sche may not wedde two	You see yourselves full well that she can never
know	At oones, though ye faughten ever mo;	Wed two at once although ye fought for ever!
once, fought	That oon of yow, or be him loth or leef,	But one of you, whether he likes or no,
unwilling } or willing	He mot go pypen in an ivy leef; *	Must then go whistle, and endure his wo.
must	This is to say, sche may nought now have	That is to say, she cannot have you both,
	bothe,	Though you be never so jealous or so wroth."
angry	Al be ye never so jelous, ne so wrothe.	

* 'To pipe in an ivy leaf.' A proverbial expression, similar to 'go whistle'—meaning to be engaged in any useless employment.

With that he made them this offer—that Palamon and Arcite should each bring in a year's time (50 weeks) a hundred knights, armed for the lists, * and ready to do battle for Emelye; and whichever knight won, Palamon and his host or Arcite and his host, should have her for his wife.

Who looks happy now but Palamon? and who springs up with joy but Arcite! Every one was so delighted with the kindness of Theseus that they all went down on their knees to thank him—but of course Palamon and Arcite went on their knees most.

Now, would you like to know all the preparations Theseus made for this great tournament?

First, the theatre for the lists had to be built, where the tournament was to take place. This was built round in the form of a compass, with hundreds of seats rising up on all sides one behind another, so that everybody could see the fight, and no one was in anybody's way. The walls were a mile round, and all of stone, with a ditch running along the outside. At the east and at the west stood two gates of white marble, and there was not a carver, or painter, or craftsman of any kind that Theseus did not employ to decorate the theatre. So that there never was such a splendid place built in all the earth before or since.

Then he made three temples: one over the east gate for Venus, goddess of love; one over the west gate for Mars, who is god of war; and towards the north, he built a temple all of alabaster and red coral; and that was for Diana. All these beautiful things cost more money than would fill a big carriage.

Now I will tell you what the temples were like inside.

First, in the Temple of Venus were wonderful paintings of feasts, dancing, and playing of music, and beautiful gardens, and mountains, and people walking about with the ladies they liked. All these were painted on the walls in rich colour.

There was a statue of Venus besides, floating on a sea of glass, and the glass was made like waves that came over her. She had a citole in her hand, which is an instrument for playing music on; and over her head doves were flying. Little Cupid was also there, with his wings, and his bow and arrows, and his eyes blinded, as he is generally made.

Then, in the Temple of Mars, who is the god of war, there were all sorts of dangers and misfortunes painted. Battles, and smoke, and forests all burning with flames, and men run over by carts, and sinking ships, and many other awful sights. Then a smith forging iron—swords and knives for war.

The statue of Mars was standing on a car, armed and looking as grim as possible: there was a hungry wolf beside him.

As for the Temple of Diana, that was very different from Venus's. Venus wishes everybody to marry the one they love. Diana does not want any one to marry at all, but to hunt all day in the fields. So the pictures in Diana's Temple were all about hunting, and the merry life in the forest.

Her statue showed her riding on a stag, with dogs running round about, and underneath her feet was the moon. She was dressed in the brightest green, and she had a bow and arrows in her hand.

Now you know all about the splendid theatre and the three temples.

At last the day of the great tournament approached!

* The tournament, great as the loss of life often was, seems to have been the greatest delight of the people in the middle ages. The ladies especially loved them, as they were often in homage to themselves. The victor in

the mimic battle received a crown from the queen of the tournament. In this case, Emelye is not asked whether she likes to be disposed of thus coolly! but she could not fail to be touched by the great compliment paid her.

Palamon and Arcite came to Athens as they had promised, each bringing with him a hundred knights, well armed; and never before, since the world began, was seen a sight so magnificent. Everybody who could bear arms was only too anxious to be among the two hundred knights—and proud indeed were those who were chosen! for you know, that if to-morrow there should be a like famous occasion, every man in England or anywhere else, who had a fair lady-love, would try to be there.

All the knights that flocked to the tournament wore shining armour according to their fancy. Some wore a coat of mail, which is chain-armour, and a breast-plate, and a gipon: others wore plate-armour, made of broad sheets of steel; some carried shields, some round targets. Again, some took most care of their legs, and carried an axe; others bore maces of steel.



It was on a Sunday, about nine o'clock in the morning, when all the lords and knights came into Athens.

With Palamon came the great Licurgus, King of Thrace; with Arcite came the mighty King of India, Emetrius: and I must give you the exact account of how these two kings looked, which is most minute. I should not wonder if these were the likenesses of Palamon and Arcite themselves.*

First, then, comes—

GLOSSARY. Ligurge himself, the grete kyng of Trace;
 Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.
 eyes The cercles of his eye in his heed
 between They gloweden bytwix yolw and reed,
 And lik a griffoun loked he aboute,
 stout With kempe heres † on his browes stowte;

Licurge himself, the mighty king of Thrace;
 Black was his beard, and manly was his face,
 The circles of his eyes within his head
 Glow'd of a hue part yellow and part red,
 And like a griffon look'd he about,
 With hair down-combed upon his brows so stout;

* There are no portraits, otherwise, of these two princes, whose characters are so clear and forcible all through that some physical description is sorely needed. The portraits of the two sovereigns fit singularly well the fierce, passionate nature of Palamon, and the cooler but equally noble one of Arcite.

† *Kemped heres*: Dr. Morris rejects the usual rendering of the word *kemped* as *combed*, and asserts that it means the very reverse, and, "instead of smoothly

combed, means bent, **curled**, and hence rough, shaggy." A similar term occurs a few lines farther on, describing the hair 'kempt behind his back,' where Dr. Morris reads *combed*. It seems, however, contrary to the rule of courtesy observed by lovers, that a noble knight should appear at a festival like a wild man of the woods. If, on the other hand, the shaggy hairs were on the *eyebrow*, it certainly adds to the ferocity of his look. I prefer the former reading for Emelye's bridegroom.