

the broad, philanthropic, practical principles of Friendship.

Such is Pythianism. A bow in the sky of sorrow; a flash of pure light in the dark night of despair. Thousands of castles from which issue brave Knights, thoroughly equipped for the combat, not to pillage and destroy, but to lift up the down-trodden, succor the unfortunate, wipe away the tears of the sorrowing, and to spread far and wide, in practical activity, those principles, which in luminous beauty outshine the sun.—Archibald Head, in "Pythian Gleaner."

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### THE STORY OF PYTHIANISM.

By W. T. Hodson.

The following poem, read by Sir Knight Judge W. T. Hodson, of Galena, Ill., at a Pythian banquet given in that city, tells the beautiful story of Damon and Pythias so well that it is reproduced here for the benefit of our many Knights of Pythias readers in the Northwest.

On the ancient Isle of Sicily,  
Four thousand years ago,  
A band of earnest scholars  
Sought a higher life to know.

They had mastered common science,  
Were familiar with all rules;  
They hoped to fathom mysteries  
Which were not taught in schools!

Psychology, the mind, the soul,  
The destiny of man,  
The principles of philosophy,  
And God's salvation plan.

The starry heavens, sun and moon,  
The earth's component parts,  
Geometry and chemistry,  
And keys to modern arts.

In Wisdom's cause they formed a lodge,  
To help each other learn:  
To reap the fruits of friendship,  
And each other's love return.

\* \* \*

To the wicked King of Syracuse  
Their secrets were unknown,  
Until their plan for freedom  
Shook the cruel tyrant's throne.

Thus angered by the truths they taught,  
He cried, throughout the town:  
"Damon's head shall be cut off  
Before the sun goes down!"

Then Pythias plead for Damon:  
"Please, let four hours pass by,  
So Damon his family may see  
Before he has to die."

"Ah!" said the King; "he'll not come back,  
If I should let him go."  
"I'll be his hostage," Pythias said.  
"He will come back, I know."

The respite then was granted—  
For such bravery unknown;  
Pythias was cast in prison,  
While Damon hastened home.

The King stood in amazement.  
He could not comprehend  
How one would dare to risk his life  
On the promise of his friend.

\* \* \*

The secret of their friendship,  
The world shall never know;  
Their deeds shall be remembered  
While centuries come and go.

His last hour fast approaches,  
And Damon bids farewell  
To wife, to child, to kinsman,  
As evening shadows fell.

No selfish motives moved him,  
Appeals were all in vain:  
"I must return," the brave knight said,  
"Or Pythias will be slain."

Honor to him was more than life,  
While Pythian fires burn.  
The test and strength of mystic tie  
Depends on his return.

He turns to mount his charger,  
And fly with rapid speed,—  
Alas! a slave who loved him,  
Had slain his trusted steed!

Another horse he borrows,  
And goads it on to death—  
While Pythias calms the people  
Who jeer in taunting breath.

One moment left for respite,  
And Damon was not there:  
He calmly waits in prison,  
His brother's life to spare.

The headman's axe is hoisted,  
Midst the people's noise and din,  
But as Pythias bends to the block,  
Brave Damon rushes in!

"Oh, spare his life!" cried Damon.  
"I have come back to die."  
"No! no!" said Pythias, calmly;  
"He is worthy, more than I."

Here, more perplexed than ever,  
The King their friendship sought;

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