

THE TALE.

In Armoric', that called is Bretagne, There was a knight, that lov'd and *did his pain* *devoted himself, To serve a lady in his beste wise; strove* And many a labour, many a great emprise,* *enterprise He for his lady wrought, ere she were won: For she was one the fairest under sun, And eke thereto come of so high kindred, That *well unnethes durst this knight for dread,* *see note <1>* Tell her his woe, his pain, and his distress But, at the last, she for his worthiness, And namely* for his meek obeisance, *especially Hath such a pity caught of his penance,* *suffering, distress That privily she fell of his accord To take him for her husband and her lord (Of such lordship as men have o'er their wives); And, for to lead the more in bliss their lives, Of his free will he swore her as a knight, That never in all his life he day nor night Should take upon himself no mastery Against her will, nor kith* her jealousy, *show But her obey, and follow her will in all, As any lover to his lady shall; Save that the name of sovereignty That would he have, for shame of his degree. She thanked him, and with full great humbless She saide; "Sir, since of your gentleness Ye proffer me to have so large a reign, *Ne woulde God never betwixt us twain, As in my guilt, were either war or strife:* *see note <2>* Sir, I will be your humble true wife, Have here my troth, till that my hearte brest."* *burst Thus be they both in quiet and in rest.

For one thing, Sires, safely dare I say, That friends ever each other must obey, If they will longe hold in company. Love will not be constrain'd by mastery. When mast'ry comes, the god of love anon Beateth <3> his wings, and, farewell, he is gone. Love is a thing as any spirit free. Women *of kind* desire liberty, *by nature* And not to be constrained as a thrall,* *slave And so do men, if soothly I say shall. Look who that is most patient in love, He *is at his advantage all above.* *enjoys the highest Patience is a high virtue certain, advantages of all* For it vanquisheth, as these clerkes sayn, Thinges that rigour never should attain. For every word men may not chide or plain. Learne to suffer, or, so may I go,* *prosper Ye shall it learn whether ye will or no. For in this world certain no wight there is, That he not doth or saith sometimes amiss. Ire, or sickness, or constellation,* *the influence of Wine, woe, or changing of complexion, the planets* Causeth full oft to do amiss or spoken: On every wrong a man may not be wroken.* *revenged After* the time must be temperance *according to To every wight that *can of*

governance. *is capable of* And therefore hath this worthy wise
knight (To live in ease) sufferance her behight;* *promised And
she to him full wisly* gan to swear *surely That never
should there be default in her. Here may men see a humble wife accord;
Thus hath she ta'en her servant and her lord, Servant in love, and lord in
marriage. Then was he both in lordship and servage? Servage? nay, but in
lordship all above, Since he had both his lady and his love: His lady certes,
and his wife also, The which that law of love accordeth to. And when he was
in this prosperrity, Home with his wife he went to his country, Not far from
Penmark, <4> where his dwelling was, And there he liv'd in bliss and in
solace.* *delight Who coulde tell, but* he had wedded be,
*unless The joy, the ease, and the prosperity, That is betwixt a husband and
his wife? A year and more lasted this blissful life, Till that this knight, of
whom I spake thus, That of Cairrud <5> was call'd Arviragus, Shope* him to
go and dwell a year or twain *prepared, arranged In Engleland, that
call'd was eke Britain, To seek in armes worship and honour (For all his
lust* he set in such labour); *pleasure And dwelled there two
years; the book saith thus.

Now will I stint* of this Arviragus, *cease speaking And speak I
will of Dorigen his wife, That lov'd her husband as her hearte's life. For his
absence weepeth she and siketh,* *sigheth As do these noble
wives when them liketh; She mourneth, waketh, waileth, fasteth, plaineth;
Desire of his presence her so distraineth, That all this wide world she set at
nought. Her friendes, which that knew her heavy thought, Comforte her in
all that ever they may; They preache her, they tell her night and day, That
causeless she slays herself, alas! And every comfort possible in this case
They do to her, with all their business,* *assiduity And all to
make her leave her heaviness. By process, as ye knowen every one, Men
may so longe graven in a stone, Till some figure therein imprinted be: So
long have they comforted her, till she Received hath, by hope and by reason,
Th' imprinting of their consolation, Through which her greate sorrow gan
assuage; She may not always duren in such rage. And eke Arviragus, in all
this care, Hath sent his letters home of his welfare, And that he will come
hastily again, Or elles had this sorrow her hearty-slain. Her friendes saw her
sorrow gin to slake,* *slacken, diminish And prayed her on knees for
Godde's sake To come and roamen in their company, Away to drive her
darke fantasy; And finally she granted that request, For well she saw that it
was for the best.

Now stood her castle faste by the sea, And often with her friendes walked
she, Her to disport upon the bank on high, There as many a ship and barge
sigh,* *saw Sailing their courses, where them list to go.

But then was that a parcel* of her woe, *part For to herself
 full oft, "Alas!" said she, Is there no ship, of so many as I see, Will bringe
 home my lord? then were my heart All warish'd* of this bitter paine's smart."
 *cured <6> Another time would she sit and think, And cast her eyen
 downward from the brink; But when she saw the grisly rockes blake,*
 *black For very fear so would her hearte quake, That on her feet she might
 her not sustene* *sustain Then would she sit adown upon the
 green, And piteously *into the sea behold,* *look out on the sea*
 And say right thus, with *careful sikes* cold: *painful sighs* "Eternal
 God! that through thy purveyance Leadest this world by certain governance,
 In idle, as men say, ye nothing make; *idly, in vain* But, Lord,
 these grisly fiendly rockes blake, That seem rather a foul confusion Of work,
 than any fair creation Of such a perfect wise God and stable, Why have ye
 wrought this work unreasonable? For by this work, north, south, or west, or
 east, There is not foster'd man, nor bird, nor beast: It doth no good, to my
 wit, but *annoyeth.* *works mischief* <7> See ye not, Lord, how
 mankind it destroyeth? A hundred thousand bodies of mankind Have rockes
 slain, *all be they not in mind;* *though they are Which mankind is
 so fair part of thy work, forgotten* Thou madest it like to thine
 owen mark.* *image Then seemed it ye had a great cherte*
 *love, affection Toward mankind; but how then may it be That ye such
 meanes make it to destroy? Which meanes do no good, but ever annoy. I wot
 well, clerkes will say as them lest,* *please Byarguments, that
 all is for the best, Although I can the causes not y-know; But thilke* God
 that made the wind to blow, *that As keep my lord, this is my
 conclusion: To clerks leave I all disputation: But would to God that all these
 rockes blake Were sunken into helle for his sake These rockes slay mine
 hearte for the fear." Thus would she say, with many a piteous tear.

Her friendes saw that it was no disport To roame by the sea, but discomfort,
 And shope* them for to playe somewhere else. *arranged They
 leade her by rivers and by wells, And eke in other places delectables; They
 dancen, and they play at chess and tables.* *backgammon So on a
 day, right in the morning-tide, Unto a garden that was there beside, In
 which that they had made their ordinance* *provision, arrangement Of
 victual, and of other purveyance, They go and play them all the longe day:
 And this was on the sixth morrow of May, Which May had painted with his
 softe showers This garden full of leaves and of flowers: And craft of manne's
 hand so curiously Arrayed had this garden truely, That never was there
 garden of such price,* *value, praise *But if* it were the very
 Paradise. *unless* Th'odour of flowers, and the freshe
 sight, Would have maked any hearte light That e'er was born, *but if* too
 great sickness *unless* Or too great sorrow held it in distress; So

full it was of beauty and pleasance. And after dinner they began to dance
And sing also, save Dorigen alone Who made alway her complaint and her
moan, For she saw not him on the dance go That was her husband, and her
love also; But natheless she must a time abide And with good hope let her
sorrow slide.

Upon this dance, amonge other men, Danced a squier before Dorigen That
fresher was, and jollier of array *As to my doom,* than is the month of May.
in my judgment He sang and danced, passing any man, That is or was
since that the world began; Therewith he was, if men should him describe,
One of the *beste faring* men alive, *most accomplished* Young,
strong, and virtuous, and rich, and wise, And well beloved, and holden in
great price.* *esteem, value And, shortly if the sooth I telle shall,
Unweeting of this Dorigen at all, *unknown to* This lusty
squier, servant to Venus, Which that y-called was Aurelius, Had lov'd her
best of any creature Two year and more, as was his aventure; *
*fortune But never durst he tell her his grievance; Withoute cup he drank all
his penance. He was despaired, nothing durst he say, Save in his songes
somewhat would he wray* *betray His woe, as in a general
complaining; He said, he lov'd, and was belov'd nothing. Of suche matter
made he many lays, Songes, complaintes, roundels, virelays <8> How that
he durste not his sorrow tell, But languished, as doth a Fury in hell; And die
he must, he said, as did Echo For Narcissus, that durst not tell her woe. In
other manner than ye hear me say, He durste not to her his woe bewray,
Save that paraventure sometimes at dances, Where younge folke keep their
observances, It may well be he looked on her face In such a wise, as man
that asketh grace, But nothing wiste she of his intent. Nath'less it happen'd,
ere they thennes* went, *thence (from the Because that he was her
neighbour, garden)* And was a man of worship and
honour, And she had knowen him *of time yore,* *for a long time*
They fell in speech, and forth aye more and more Unto his purpose drew
Aurelius; And when he saw his time, he saide thus: Madam," quoth he, "by
God that this world made, So that I wist it might your hearte glade,*
*gladden I would, that day that your Arviragus Went over sea, that I,
Aurelius, Had gone where I should never come again; For well I wot my
service is in vain. My guerdon* is but bursting of mine heart.
*reward Madame, rue upon my paine's smart, For with a word ye may me
slay or save. Here at your feet God would that I were grave. I have now no
leisure more to say: Have mercy, sweet, or you will *do me dey."*
cause me to die

She gan to look upon Aurelius; "Is this your will," quoth she, "and say ye
thus? Ne'er erst,"* quoth she, "I wiste what ye meant: *before But

now, Aurelius, I know your intent. By thilke* God that gave me soul and life,
 *that Never shall I be an untrue wife In word nor work, as far as I have wit; I
 will be his to whom that I am knit; Take this for final answer as of me." But
 after that *in play* thus saide she. *playfully, in jest* "Aurelius,"
 quoth she, "by high God above, Yet will I grante you to be your love (Since I
 you see so piteously complain); Looke, what day that endelong* Bretagne
 *from end to end of Ye remove all the rockes, stone by stone, That they not
 lette* ship nor boat to gon, *prevent I say, when ye have made
 this coast so clean Of rockes, that there is no stone seen, Then will I love
 you best of any man; Have here my troth, in all that ever I can; For well I
 wot that it shall ne'er betide. Let such folly out of your hearte glide. What
 dainty* should a man have in his life *value, pleasure For to go love
 another manne's wife, That hath her body when that ever him liketh?"
 Aurelius full oftensore siketh;* *sigheth Is there none
 other grace in you?" quoth he, "No, by that Lord," quoth she, "that maked
 me. Woe was Aurelius when that he this heard, And with a sorrowful heart
 he thus answer'd. "Madame, quoth he, "this were an impossible. Then must
 I die of sudden death horrible." And with that word he turned him anon.

Then came her other friends many a one, And in the alleys roamed up and
 down, And nothing wist of this conclusion, But suddenly began to revel new,
 Till that the brighte sun had lost his hue, For th' horizon had reft the sun
 his light (This is as much to say as it was night); And home they go in mirth
 and in solace; Save only wretch'd Aurelius, alas He to his house is gone with
 sorrowful heart. He said, he may not from his death astart.*

*escape Him seemed, that he felt his hearte cold. Up to the heav'n his
 handes gan he hold, And on his knees bare he set him down. And in his
 raving said his orisoun.* *prayer For very woe out of his
 wit he braid;* *wandered He wist not what he spake, but
 thus he said; With piteous heart his plaint hath he begun Unto the gods,
 and first unto the Sun. He said; "Apollo God and governour Of every plante,
 herbe, tree, and flower, That giv'st, after thy declination, To each of them his
 time and his season, As thine herberow* changeth low and high;
 *dwelling, situation Lord Phoebus: cast thy merciable eye On wretched
 Aurelius, which that am but lorn.* *undone Lo, lord, my lady
 hath my death y-sworn, Withoute guilt, but* thy benignity
 *unless Upon my deadly heart have some pity. For well I wot, Lord Phoebus,
 if you lest,* *please Ye may me helpe, save my lady, best. Now
 vouchsafe, that I may you devise* *tell, explain How that I may
 be help,* and in what wise. *helped Your blissful sister,
 Lucina the sheen, <9> That of the sea is chief goddess and queen, -- Though
 Neptunus have deity in the sea, Yet emperess above him is she; -- Ye know
 well, lord, that, right as her desire Is to be quick'd* and lighted of your fire,

*quicken'd For which she followeth you full busily, Right so the sea desireth
 naturally To follow her, as she that is goddess Both in the sea and rivers
 more and less. Wherefore, Lord Phoebus, this is my request, Do this miracle,
 or *do mine hearte brest;* *cause my heart That flow, next at this
 opposition, to burst* Which in the sign shall be of the Lion,
 As praye her so great a flood to bring, That five fathom at least it overspring
 The highest rock in Armoric Bretagne, And let this flood endure yeares
 twain: Then certes to my lady may I say, "Holde your hest," the rockes be
 away. Lord Phoebus, this miracle do for me, Pray her she go no faster course
 than ye; I say this, pray your sister that she go No faster course than ye
 these yeares two: Then shall she be even at full alway, And spring-flood laste
 bothe night and day. And *but she* vouchesafe in such mannere
 if she do not To grante me my sov'reign lady dear, Pray her to sink every
 rock adown Into her owen darke regioun Under the ground, where Pluto
 dwelleth in Or nevermore shall I my lady win. Thy temple in Delphos will I
 barefoot seek. Lord Phoebus! see the teares on my cheek And on my pain
 have some compassioun." And with that word in sorrow he fell down, And
 longe time he lay forth in a trance. His brother, which that knew of his
 penance,* *distress Up caught him, and to bed he hath him
 brought, Despaired in this torment and this thought Let I this woeful
 creature lie; Choose he for me whe'er* he will live or die.
 *whether

Arviragus with health and great honour (As he that was of chivalry the
 flow'r) Is come home, and other worthy men. Oh, blissful art thou now, thou
 Dorigen! Thou hast thy lusty husband in thine arms, The freshe knight, the
 worthy man of arms, That loveth thee as his own hearte's life: *Nothing list
 him to be imaginatif* *he cared not to fancy* If any wight had spoke,
 while he was out, To her of love; he had of that no doubt;*
 fear, suspicion He not intended to no such mattere, *occupied
 himself with But danced, jousted, and made merry cheer. And thus in joy
 and bliss I let them dwell, And of the sick Aurelius will I tell In languor and
 in torment furious Two year and more lay wretch'd Aurelius, Ere any foot on
 earth he mighte gon; Nor comfort in this time had he none, Save of his
 brother, which that was a clerk.* *scholar He knew of all this
 woe and all this work; For to none other creature certain Of this matter he
 durst no worde sayn; Under his breast he bare it more secree Than e'er did
 Pamphilus for Galatee.<10> His breast was whole withoute for to seen, But
 in his heart aye was the arrow keen, And well ye know that of a sursanure
 <11> In surgery is perilous the cure, But* men might touch the arrow or
 come thereby. *except His brother wept and wailed privily, Till at
 the last him fell in remembrance, That while he was at Orleans <12> in
 France, -- As younge clerkes, that be likerous* -- *eager To

readen artes that be curious, Seeken in every *halk and every hern*
 nook and corner <13> Particular sciences for to learn,-- He him
 remember'd, that upon a day At Orleans in study a book he say*
 *saw Of magic natural, which his fellow, That was that time a bachelor of
 law All* were he there to learn another craft, *though Had
 privily upon his desk y-laft; Which book spake much of operations Touching
 the eight and-twenty mansions That longe to the Moon, and such folly As in
 our dayes is not worth a fly; For holy church's faith, in our believe,*
 *belief, creed Us suff'reth none illusion to grieve. And when this book was in
 his remembrance Anon for joy his heart began to dance, And to himself he
 saide privily; "My brother shall be warish'd* hastily *cured
 For I am sicker* that there be sciences, *certain By which
 men make divers apparences, Such as these subtle tregetoures play.
 *tricksters <14> For oft at feaste's have I well heard say, That tregetours,
 within a halle large, Have made come in a water and a barge, And in the
 halle rowen up and down. Sometimes hath seemed come a grim lioun, And
 sometimes flowers spring as in a mead; Sometimes a vine, and grapes white
 and red; Sometimes a castle all of lime and stone; And, when them liked,
 voided* it anon: *vanished Thus seemed it to every manne's
 sight. Now then conclude I thus; if that I might At Orleans some olde fellow
 find, That hath these Moone's mansions in mind, Or other magic natural
 above. He should well make my brother have his love. For with an
 appearance a clerk* may make, *learned man To manne's sight,
 that all the rockes blake Of Bretagne were voided* every one,
 *removed And shippes by the brinke come and gon, And in such form
 endure a day or two; Then were my brother warish'd* of his woe,
 *cured Then must she needes *holde her behest,* *keep her
 promise* Or elles he shall shame her at the least." Why should I make a
 longer tale of this? Unto his brother's bed he comen is, And such comfort he
 gave him, for to gon To Orleans, that he upstart anon, And on his way forth-
 ward then is he fare,* *gone In hope for to be lissed* of his
 care. *eased of<15>

When they were come almost to that city, *But if it were* a two furlong or
 three, *all but* A young clerk roaming by himself they met,
 Which that in Latin *thriftilly them gret.* *greeted them And after
 that he said a wondrous thing; civilly* I know," quoth he, "the
 cause of your coming;" Aud ere they farther any foote went, He told them all
 that was in their intent. The Breton clerk him asked of fellows The which he
 hadde known in olde daws,* *days And he answer'd him
 that they deade were, For which he wept full often many a tear. Down off his
 horse Aurelius light anon, And forth with this magician is be gone Home to
 his house, and made him well at ease; Them lacked no vitail* that might

Stimpthalides, When that her father slain was on a night, Unto Diana's
 temple went she right, And hent* the image in her handes two,
 *caught, clasped From which image she woulde never go; No wight her
 handes might off it arace,* *pluck away by force Till she was slain
 right in the selfe* place. *same Now since that maidens hadde
 such despite To be defouled with man's foul delight, Well ought a wife rather
 herself to sle,* *slay Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.
 What shall I say of Hasdrubale's wife, That at Carthage bereft herself of life?
 For, when she saw the Romans win the town, She took her children all, and
 skipt adown Into the fire, and rather chose to die, Than any Roman did her
 villainy. Hath not Lucretia slain herself, alas! At Rome, when that she
 oppressed* was *ravished Of Tarquin? for her thought it
 was a shame To live, when she hadde lost her name. The seven maidens of
 Milesie also Have slain themselves for very dread and woe, Rather than folk
 of Gaul them should oppress. More than a thousand stories, as I guess,
 Could I now tell as touching this matter. When Abradate was slain, his wife
 so dear <23> Herselfe slew, and let her blood to glide In Abradate's woundes,
 deep and wide, And said, 'My body at the leaste way There shall no wight
 defoul, if that I may.' Why should I more examples hereof sayn? Since that
 so many have themselves slain, Well rather than they would defouled be, I
 will conclude that it is bet* for me *better To slay myself,
 than be defouled thus. I will be true unto Arviragus, Or elles slay myself in
 some mannere, As did Demotione's daughter dear, Because she woulde not
 defouled be. O Sedasus, it is full great pity To reade how thy daughters died,
 alas! That slew themselves *for suche manner cas.* *in circumstances
 of As great a pity was it, or well more, the same kind* The
 Theban maiden, that for Nicanor Herselfe slew, right for such manner woe.
 Another Theban maiden did right so; For one of Macedon had her oppress'd,
 She with her death her maidenhead redress'd.* *vindicated What
 shall I say of Niceratus' wife, That for such case bereft herself her life? How
 true was eke to Alcibiades His love, that for to dien rather chese,*
 *chose Than for to suffer his body unburied be? Lo, what a wife was
 Alceste?" quoth she. "What saith Homer of good Penelope? All Greece
 knoweth of her chastity. Pardie, of Laedamia is written thus, That when at
 Troy was slain Protesilaus, <24> No longer would she live after his day. The
 same of noble Porcia tell I may; Withoute Brutus coulde she not live, To
 whom she did all whole her hearte give. <25> The perfect wifehood of
 Artemisie <26> Honoured is throughout all Barbarie. O Teuta <27> queen,
 thy wifely chastity To alle wives may a mirror be." <28>

Thus plained Dorigen a day or tway, Purposing ever that she woulde dey,*
 *die But nathelless upon the thirde night Home came Arviragus, the worthy
 knight, And asked her why that she wept so sore. And she gan weepen ever

longer more. "Alas," quoth she, "that ever I was born! Thus have I said,"
quoth she; "thus have I sworn. " And told him all, as ye have heard before: It
needeth not rehearse it you no more. This husband with glad cheer,* in
friendly wise, *demeanour Answer'd and said, as I shall you devise.*
*relate "Is there aught elles, Dorigen, but this?" "Nay, nay," quoth she, "God
help me so, *as wis* *assuredly* This is too much, an* it were
Godde's will." *if "Yea, wife," quoth he, "let sleepe what is still,
It may be well par'venture yet to-day. Ye shall your trothe holde, by my fay.
For, God so wisly* have mercy on me, *certainly *I had
well lever sticked for to be,* *I had rather be slain* For very love
which I to you have, But if ye should your trothe keep and save. Truth is the
highest thing that man may keep." But with that word he burst anon to
weep, And said; "I you forbid, on pain of death, That never, while you lasteth
life or breath, To no wight tell ye this misaventure; As I may best, I will my
woe endure, Nor make no countenance of heaviness, That folk of you may
deeme harm, or guess." And forth he call'd a squier and a maid. "Go forth
anon with Dorigen," he said, "And bringe her to such a place anon." They
take their leave, and on their way they gon: But they not wiste why she
thither went; He would to no wight telle his intent.

This squier, which that hight Aurelius, On Dorigen that was so amorous, Of
aventure happen'd her to meet Amid the town, right in the quickest* street,
nearest As she was bound to go the way forthright *prepared, going
<29> Toward the garden, there as she had hight.* *promised
And he was to the garden-ward also; For well he spied when she woulde go
Out of her house, to any manner place; But thus they met, of aventure or
grace, And he saluted her with glad intent, And asked of her whitherward
she went. And she answered, half as she were mad, "Unto the garden, as my
husband bade, My trothe for to hold, alas! alas!" Aurelius gan to wonder on
this case, And in his heart had great compassion Of her, and of her
lamentation, And of Arviragus, the worthy knight, That bade her hold all
that she hadde hight; So loth him was his wife should break her truth*
troth, pledged word And in his heart he caught of it great ruth,
*pity Considering the best on every side, *That from his lust yet were him
lever abide,* *see note <30>* Than do so high a churlish
wretchedness* *wickedness Against franchise,* and alle
gentleness; *generosity For which in fewe words he saide thus;
"Madame, say to your lord Arviragus, That since I see the grete gentleness
Of him, and eke I see well your distress, That him were lever* have shame
(and that were ruth)** *rather **pity Than ye to me should breake thus
your truth, I had well lever aye* to suffer woe, *forever
Than to depart* the love betwixt you two. *sunder, split up I you
release, Madame, into your hond, Quit ev'ry surement* and ev'ry bond,

surety That ye have made to me as herebeforn, Since thilke time that ye were born. Have here my truth, I shall you ne'er reprove
 *reproach *Of no behest,* and here I take my leave, *of no (breach of)
 As of the truest and the beste wife promise* That ever yet
 I knew in all my life. But every wife beware of her behest; On Dorigen remember at the least. Thus can a squier do a gentle deed, As well as can a knight, withoute drede."* *doubt

She thanked him upon her knees bare, And home unto her husband is she fare,* *gone And told him all, as ye have hearde said; And, truste me, he was so *well apaid,* *satisfied* That it were impossible me to write. Why should I longer of this case indite? Arviragus and Dorigen his wife In sov'reign blisse ledde forth their life; Ne'er after was there anger them between; He cherish'd her as though she were a queen, And she was to him true for evermore; Of these two folk ye get of me no more.

Aurelius, that his cost had *all forlorn,* *utterly lost* Cursed the time that ever he was born. "Alas!" quoth he, "alas that I behight*
 promised Of pured gold a thousand pound of weight *refined
 To this philosopher! how shall I do? I see no more, but that I am fordo.*
 ruined, undone Mine heritage must I needes sell, And be a beggar; here I will not dwell, And shamen all my kindred in this place, But I of him may gette better grace. *unless But natheless I will of him assay
 At certain dayes year by year to pay, And thank him of his greate courtesy. My trothe will I keep, I will not he." With hearte sore he went unto his coffer, And broughte gold unto this philosopher, The value of five hundred pound, I guess, And him beseeched, of his gentleness, To grant him *dayes of* the remenant; *time to pay up* And said; "Master, I dare well make avaunt, I failed never of my truth as yet. For sickerly my debte shall be quit Towardes you how so that e'er I fare To go a-begging in my kirtle bare: But would ye vouchesafe, upon surety, Two year, or three, for to respite me, Then were I well, for elles must I sell Mine heritage; there is no more to tell."

This philosopher soberly* answer'd, *gravely And saide thus, when he these wordes heard; "Have I not holden covenant to thee?" "Yes, certes, well and truly," quoth he. "Hast thou not had thy lady as thee liked?" "No, no," quoth he, and sorrowfully siked.* *sighed
 "What was the cause? tell me if thou can." Aurelius his tale anon began, And told him all as ye have heard before, It needeth not to you rehearse it more. He said, "Arviragus of gentleness Had lever* die in sorrow and distress, *rather Than that his wife were of her trothe false." The sorrow of Dorigen he told him als',* *also How loth her was to be a wicked wife,

And that she lever had lost that day her life; And that her troth she swore through innocence; She ne'er erst* had heard speak of apparence** *before **see note <31> That made me have of her so great pity, And right as freely as he sent her to me, As freely sent I her to him again: This is all and some, there is no more to sayn."

The philosopher answer'd; "Leve* brother, *dear Evereach of you did gently to the other; Thou art a squier, and he is a knight, But God forbidde, for his blissful might, But if a clerk could do a gentle deed As well as any of you, it is no drede* *doubt Sir, I release thee thy thousand pound, As thou right now were crept out of the ground, Nor ever ere now haddest knowen me. For, Sir, I will not take a penny of thee For all my craft, nor naught for my travail;* *labour, pains Thou hast y-payed well for my vitaille; It is enough; and farewell, have good day." And took his horse, and forth he went his way. Lordings, this question would I aske now, Which was the moste free,* as thinketh you? *generous <32> Now telle me, ere that ye farther wend. I can* no more, my tale is at an end. *know, can tell

Notes to The Franklin's Tale

1. Well unnethes durst this knight for dread: This knight hardly dared, for fear (that she would not entertain his suit.)
2. "Ne woulde God never betwixt us twain, As in my guilt, were either war or strife" Would to God there may never be war or strife between us, through my fault.
3. Perhaps the true reading is "beteth" -- prepares, makes ready, his wings for flight.
4. Penmark: On the west coast of Brittany, between Brest and L'Orient. The name is composed of two British words, "pen," mountain, and "mark," region; it therefore means the mountainous country
5. Cairrud: "The red city;" it is not known where it was situated.
6. Warished: cured; French, "guerir," to heal, or recover from sickness.
7. Annoyeth: works mischief; from Latin, "nocco," I hurt.
8. Virelays: ballads; the "virelai" was an ancient French poem of two rhymes.

9. Lucina the sheen: Diana the bright. See note 54 to the Knight's Tale.
10. In a Latin poem, very popular in Chaucer's time, Pamphilus relates his amour with Galatea, setting out with the idea adopted by our poet in the lines that follow.
11. Sursanure: A wound healed on the surface, but festering beneath.
12. Orleans: Where there was a celebrated and very famous university, afterwards eclipsed by that of Paris. It was founded by Philip le Bel in 1312.
13. Every halk and every hern: Every nook and corner, Anglo- Saxon, "healc," a nook; "hyrn," a corner.
14. Tregetoures: tricksters, jugglers. The word is probably derived -- in "treget," deceit or imposture -- from the French "trebuchet," a military machine; since it is evident that much and elaborate machinery must have been employed to produce the effects afterwards described. Another derivation is from the Low Latin, "tricator," a deceiver.
15. Lissed of: eased of; released from; another form of "less" or "lessen."
16. Gironde: The river, formed by the union of the Dordogne and Garonne, on which Bourdeaux stands.
17. Nor gladly for that sum he would not gon: And even for that sum he would not willingly go to work.
18. "Noel," the French for Christmas -- derived from "natalis," and signifying that on that day Christ was born -- came to be used as a festive cry by the people on solemn occasions.
19. Tables Toletanes: Toledan tables; the astronomical tables composed by order Of Alphonso II, King of Castile, about 1250 and so called because they were adapted to the city of Toledo.
20. "Alnath," Says Mr Wright, was "the first star in the horns of Aries, whence the first mansion of the moon is named."
21. Another and better reading is "a week or two."
22. These stories are all taken from the book of St Jerome "Contra

Jovinianum," from which the Wife of Bath drew so many of her ancient instances. See note 1 to the prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale.

23. Panthea. Abradatas, King of Susa, was an ally of the Assyrians against Cyrus; and his wife was taken at the conquest of the Assyrian camp. Struck by the honourable treatment she received at the captors hands, Abradatas joined Cyrus, and fell in battle against his former alhes. His wife, inconsolable at his loss, slew herself immediately.

24. Protesilaus was the husband of Laedamia. She begged the gods, after his death, that but three hours' converse with him might be allowed her; the request was granted; and when her dead husband, at the expiry of the time, returned to the world of shades, she bore him company.

25. The daughter of Cato of Utica, Porcia married Marcus Brutus, the friend and the assassin of Julius Caesar; when her husband died by his own hand after the battle of Philippi, she committed suicide, it is said, by swallowing live coals -- all other means having been removed by her friends.

26. Artemisia, Queen of Caria, who built to her husband Mausolus, the splendid monument which was accounted among the wonders of the world; and who mingled her husband's ashes with her daily drink. "Barbarie" is used in the Greek sense, to designate the non-Hellenic peoples of Asia.

27. Teuta: Queen of Illyria, who, after her husband's death, made war on and was conquered by the Romans, B.C 228.

28. At this point, in some manuscripts, occur the following two lines: -- "The same thing I say of Bilia, Of Rhodogone and of Valeria."

29. Bound: prepared; going. To "boun" or "bown" is a good old word, whence comes our word "bound," in the sense of "on the way."

30. That from his lust yet were him lever abide: He would rather do without his pleasure.

31. Such apparence: such an ocular deception, or apparition -- more properly, disappearance -- as the removal of the rocks.

32. The same question is stated at the end of Boccaccio's version of the story in the "Philocopo," where the queen determines in favour of Aviragus. The question is evidently one of those which it was the fashion to propose for debate in the mediaeval "courts of love."