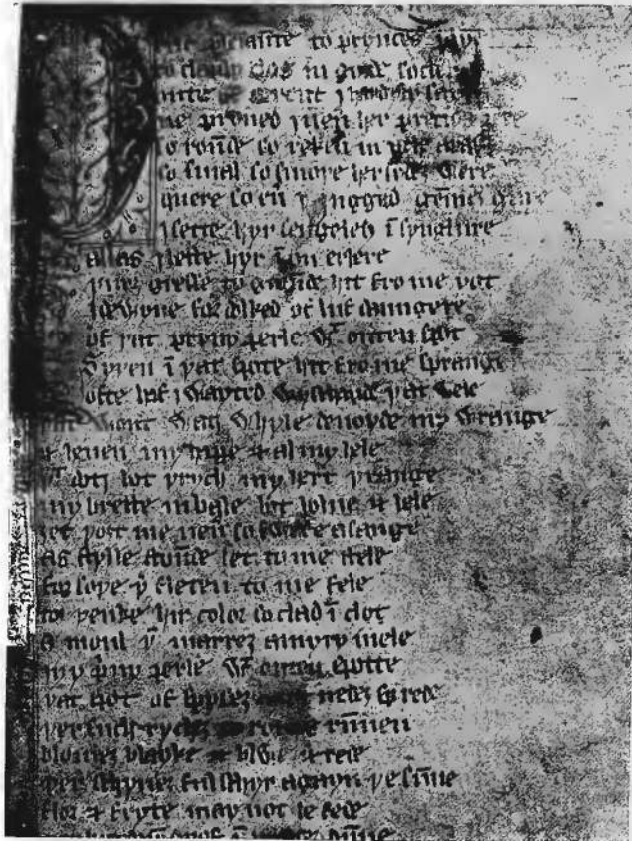


PERLE

§ I.

1.

f. 39^a **P**ERLE plesaunte to prynces paye,
To clanly clos in golde so clere!
Oute of Oryent, I hardyly saye,
Ne proued I neuer her precios pere. 4
So rounde, so reken in vche araye,
So smal, so smope her sydez were;
Quere-so-euer I jugged gemmez gaye,
I sette hyr sengeley in syng[u]l[e]re. 8
Allas! I leste hyr in on erbere;
þurȝ gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.
I dewyne, for-do[k]ked of luf-daungere
Of þat pryuy perle wyt^h-outen spot. 12



FROM COTTON MS. NERO A. 1, LL. 1-29.

PEARL

§ I.

I.

PEARL all-pleasing, prince's treasure,
too chastely set in gold so pure!
From out the Orient, I aver,
ne'er proved I pearl its precious peer.
So round, so royal wherever ranged,
so sweetly small, so wondrous smooth;
where'er I judged of joyous gems,
I placed my Pearl apart, supreme.

I lost it—in a garden—alas!
Through grass to ground 'twas gone from me.
I pine, by Severing Love despoil'd
of Pearl mine own, without a spot.

ii.

Syþen in þat spote hit fro me sprange,
 Ofte haf I wayted, wyschande þat wele,
 þat wont watȝ whyle deuoyde my wrange,
 & heuen my happe & al my hele. 16
 þat dotȝ bot þrych my hert[e] þrange,
 My breste in bale bot bolne & bele ;
 ȝet þoȝt me neuer so swete a sange,
 As styлле stounde let to me stele. 20
 For-soþe þer fleten to me fele,
 To þenké hir color so clad in clot.
 O moul, þou marrez a myry [m]ele,-
 My priuy perle wyth-outen spotte. 24

iii.

þat spot of spysez [mo]t nedeȝ sprede,
 þer such rychez to rot is runneȝ ;
 Blomeȝ blayke & blwe & rede 28
 þer schyneȝ ful schyr agayn þe sunne.
 Flor & fryte may not be fede
 þer hit down drof in moldeȝ dunne ;
 For vch gresse mot grow of grayneȝ dede,
 No whete were elleȝ to woneȝ wonne. 32
 Of goud vche goude is ay by-gonne ;
 So semly a sede moȝt fayly not,
 þat spry[n]gande spysez vp ne sponne
 Of þat þrecios perle wyth-outen spotte. 36

ii.

There, in that spot, since hence it sped,
oft have I watch'd, wanting that gem
that once was wont to vanquish woe,
and raise my hap and all my weal.
It doth but pierce my heart with pangs,
my breast in bale but boil and burn ;
yet ne'er me seem'd so sweet a song
as that still hour let steal to me.

Yea, many a thought to me flow'd there,
musing its charm so clad in clay.
O earth ! thou marrest a merry theme,—
Pearl mine own, without a spot.

iii.

From spot where such rich treasure wastes
fragrant spice must needs spring forth ;
blossoms white and blue and red
shine there full sheer against the sun.
Flower and fruit shall know no flaw
where it down drave to earth's dark mould ;
for from dead grain each blade must grow,
no wheat were else brought ever home.

Each good from good is aye begun ;
so seemly a seed can never fail ;
ne'er fragrant spice shall cease to spring
from that precious Pearl without a spot.

iv.

f. 39^b To þat spot þat I in speche expoun,
 I entred in þat erber grene,
 In Augoste in a hyȝ seysoun,
 Quen corne is coruen wyth crokeȝ kene. 40
 On huyle þer perle hit trendeled doun
 Schadowed þis worteȝ ful schyre & schene,—
 Gilofre, gyngure, & gromylyoun,
 & pyonys powdered ay by-twene. 44
 ȝif hit watȝ semly on to sene,
 A fayr reflayr ȝet fro hit flot,
 þer wonys þat worþyly, I wot & wene,
 My *precious* perle wyth-ouTEN spot. 48

v.

Bifore þat spot my honde I spenn[e]d,
 For care ful colde þat to me caȝt ;
 A deuely dele in my hert[e] denned,
 þaȝ resoun sette my seluen saȝt. 52
 I playned my perle þat þer watȝ penned†,
 Wyth fyr[c]e skylleȝ þat faste faȝt ;
 þaȝ kynde of Kryst me comfort kenned,
 My wreched wylle in wo ay wraȝte. 56
 I felle vpon þat floury flȝt,
 Suche odour to my herneȝ schot,
 I slode vpon a slepyng-slaȝte,
 On þat *prec[i]os* perle wyth-ouTEN spot. 60



FROM COTTON MS. NERO A. X., ILLUSTRATING LL. 57-64.

iv.

Unto the spot I picture forth
I enter'd into that garden green ;
'twas August, at a festal tide,
when corn is cut with keen-edg'd hook.
The mound my Pearl had roll'd adown
with herbs was shadow'd, beauteous, bright,—
gилvers, ginger, and gromwell-seed,
and peonies powder'd all about.

But if the sight was sweet to see,
fair, too, the fragrance floating thence,
where dwelleth that glory, I wot full well,
my precious Pearl without a spot.

v.

Before that spot my hands I clasp'd,
for care full cold that seized on me ;
a senseless moan dinned in my heart,
though Reason bade me be at peace.
I plain'd my Pearl, imprison'd there,
with wayward words that fiercely fought ;
though Christ Himself me comfort show'd,
my wretched will worked aye in woe.

I fell upon that flowery plat ;
such fragrance flash'd into my brain,
I slid into a slumber-swoon
o'er that precious Pearl without a spot.

§ II.

VI.

FRO spot my spyryt þer sprang *in* space,
 My body on balke þer bod *in* sweuen ;
 My goste is gon in Godez grace
 In auenture þer meruaylez meuen. 64
 I ne wyste in þis worlde quere þat hit wace,
 Bot I knew me keste þer klyfez cleuen ;
 To-warde a foreste I bere þe face,
 Where rych[e] rokkez wer to dyscreuen ; 68
 þe lyzt of hem myzt no mon leuen,
 þe glemande glory þat of hem glent ;
 For wern neuer webbez þat wyzez weuen
 Of half so dere adub[be]mente. 72

VII.

f. 40a Dubbed wern alle þo downez sydez
 Wyth crystal klyffez so cler of kynde ;
 Holte-wodez bryzt aboute hem bydez,
 Of bollez as blwe as ble of ynde ; 76
 As bornyst syluer þe lef onslydez,
 þat þike con trylle on vch a tynde ;
 Quen glem of glodez agaynz hem glydez,
 Wyth schymeryng schene fulschrylle þayschynde ;
 þe grauayl þat [I] on grounde con grynde 81
 Wern *precious* perlez of Oryente ;
 þe sunne-bemez bot blo & blynde
 In respecte of þat adubbement. 84

§ II.

vi.

THENCE, from that spot, my spirit sprang ;
 my body lay in trance on mound ;
 my soul, by grace of God, had fared
 adventuring, where marvels be.
 I knew not where that region was ;
 I was cast, I knew, where cliffs rose sheer.
 Towards a forest I set my face,
 where rocks so rich were to descry,
 that none can trow how rich the light,
 the gleaming glory glinting thence,
 for ne'er a web that mortals wove
 was half so wondrously bewrought.

vii.

Wondrously the hill-sides shone
 with crystal cliffs that were so clear ;
 and all about were holt-woods bright,
 with boles as blue as hue of Inde ;
 and close-set leaves on every branch
 as burnish'd silver sway'd and swung ;
 when glided 'gainst them glinting gleams,
 splendent they shone with shimmering sheen ;
 and the gravel I ground upon that strand
 were precious pearls of Orient ;
 the sunbeams were but dim and dark,
 if set beside that wondrous glow !

VIII.

The adubbenente of þo downeȝ dere
 Garten my goste al greffe for-ȝete ;
 So frech flauoreȝ of fryteȝ were,
 As fode hit con me fayre refete ; 88
 Fowleȝ þer flowen in fryth in fere,
 Of flaumbande hweȝ, boþe smale & grete ;
 Bot sytole-stryng & gyternere
 Her reken myrþe moȝt not retrete ; 92
 For quen þose bryddeȝ her wynges bete,
 þay songen wyth a swete asent ;
 So grac[̃]os gle couþe no mon gete
 As here & se her adubbenent. 96

IX.

So al watȝ dubbet on dere asyse
 þat fryth þer fortwne forth me fereȝ,
 þe derþe þer-of for to deuyse
 Nis no wyȝ worþe þat tonge bereȝ. 100
 I welke ay forth in wely wyse ;
 No bonk so byg þat did me dereȝ ;
 þe fyrre in þe fryth þe fei[r]er con ryse
 þe playn, þe plontteȝ, þe spyse, þe pereȝ, 104
 & raweȝ & randeȝ & rych reuereȝ,
 As fyldor fyn her b[o]nkes brent.
 I wan to a water by schore þat schereȝ,-
 Lorde, dere watȝ hit adubbenent ! 108

vii.

'Mid the magic of those wondrous hills
my spirit soon forgot all grief ;
flavours of fruit so fresh were there,
as food full well they gave me strength ;
birds in the wood together flew,
of flaming hues, both small and great ;
nor citole-string nor citherner
could e'er re-tell their goodly glee ;
for when those birds did beat their wings,
they sang with such a sweet accord,
no rapture could so stir a man
as to hear and see that wonderment.

ix.

All was so dight in wondrous wise,
no tongue of man hath power to tell
the beauty of that forest-land,
where fortune led me on and on.
Still forth I pressed in blissful mood ;
no hill, though high, might hinder me.
Deeper in wood, more fair arose
plains and plants and spice and fruits,
hedgerows and borders, and river-meads ;
as fine gold-thread were their steep banks.
A water I reach'd that cleft the strand,—
Lord, how wondrous was the sight !

x.

f. 406 The dubbemente of þo derworth depe
 Wern bonke3 bene of beryl bry3t ;
 Swangeande swete þe water con swepe,
 Wyth a rownande rourde raykande ary3t ; 112
 In þe founce þer stonden stone3 stepe,
 As glente þu3 glas þat glowed & gly3t,
 A[s] stremande sterne3, quen stroþe-men slepe,
 Staren in welkyn in wynter ny3t ; 116
 For vche a pobbel in pole þer py3t
 Wat3 emerad, saffer, oþer gemme gente,
 þat alle þe lo3e lemed of ly3t,
 So dere wat3 hit adubblement. 120

§ III.

xi.

THE dubbement dere of donn & dale3,
 Of wod & water & wlonk[e] playne3,
 Bylde in me blys, abated my bale3,
 For-didden my stresse, dystryed my payne3. 124
 Doun after a strem þat dry3ly hale3
 I bowed in blys, bred-ful my brayne3 ;
 þe fyrre I fol3ed þose floty vale3,
 þe more strengþe of ioye myn herte strayne3. 128
 As fortune fares þer-as ho frayne3,
 Wheþer solace ho sende oþer elle3 sore,
 þe wy3 to wham her wylle ho wayne3
 Hytte3 to haue ay more & more. 132

x.

The marvels of that wondrous flood !
 Beauteous its banks with beryl bright ;
 with music sweet its waters swept ;
 with whispering voice it wander'd on.
 And in the depths shone glittering stones ;
 as glint through glass they glimmer'd and glow'd ;
 as streaming stars in the welkin shine
 on a winter night, when dalesmen sleep.

Each pebble set there in that pool
 was an emerald, sapphire, or goodly gem,
 that all the water with light did gleam,—
 the glamour was so wondrous rare !

§ III.

xi.

THE wondrous glamour of down and dale,
 of wood and water and noble plain,
 stirr'd in me bliss, my bale allay'd,
 scatter'd sorrow, pain destroy'd.
 Along a stream I wended in joy,—
 slowly it flow'd,—my mind was full ;
 the farther I follow'd those watery vales,
 the mightier joy constrain'd my heart.

Fortune fareth where she listeth,
 sends she solace, or sends she care ;
 the wight on whom her will she worketh
 hath ever chance of more and more.

xii.

More of wele wat3 in þat wyse
 þen I cowþe telle þa3 [tom I] hade ;
 For vrpely herte my3t not suffyse
 To þe tenþe dole of þo Gladne3 glade ; 136
 For-þy I þo3t þat Paradyse
 Wat3 þer o[u]er gayn þo bonke3 brade ;
 I hoped þe water were a deuysse
 By-twene [mere3] by [Myrþe] made ; 140
 By-3onde þe broke, by slente oþer slade,
 I hope[d] þat mote merked wore ;
 Bot þe water wat3 depe, I dorst not wade,
 & euer me longed a[y] more & more. 144

xiii.

f. 41a More & more, & 3et wel mare,
 Me lyste to se þe broke by-3onde ;
 For, if hit wat3 fayr þer I con fare,
 Wel loueloker wat3 þe fyrre londe. 148
 Abowte me con I stote & stare,
 To fynde a forþe faste con I fonde ;
 Bot woþe3 mo i-wysse þer ware,
 þe fyrre I stalked by þe stronde ; 152
 & euer me þo3t I schulde not wonde
 For wo[þe], þer wele3 so wyne wore ;
 þenne nwe note me com on honde,
 þat meued my mynde ay more & more. 156

xii.

More was of wealth there, of this kind,
than I could tell, were leisure mine,
for earthly heart might not attain
unto the tenth of that glad Joy.
Certes, methought that Paradise
lay there beyond, o'er those broad banks.
The stream was some device, I trow'd,
Sir Mirth had made between great wells ;
 beyond the brook, by hill or dale,
 the castle-bounds, I trow'd, were mark'd ;
 but the water was deep, I durst not wade,
 and ever long'd I, more and more.

xiii.

More and more, and yet still more,
I long'd to see beyond the brook ;
for if 'twas fair where I then pass'd,
far fairer was the farther land.
About me stumbled I and stared ;
to find a ford full hard I sought ;
but perils more, iwis, there were,
the further I stalk'd along the bank ;
 and ever methought I could not flinch,
 afeard, where wealth so winsome was ;
 when new delights at hand were nigh,
 that moved my mind, e'en more and more.

xiv.

More meruayle con my dom adaut ;
 I sez byzonde þat myry mere
 A crystal clyffe ful relusaunt ;
 Mony ryal ray con fro hit rere. 160
 At þe fote þer-of þer sete a faunt,
 A mayden of menske, ful debonere ;
 Blysnande whyt watȝ hyr bleaunt ;
 I knew hyr wel, I hade sen hyr ere. 164
 As glysnande golde þat man con schere,
 So schon þat schene an-vnder schore ;
 On lenghe I loked to hyr pere ;
 þe lenger, I knew hyr more & more. 168

xv.

The more I frayste hyr fayre face,
 Her fygure fyn quen I had fonte,
 Suche gladande glory con to me glace
 As lyttel byfore þerto watȝ wonte. 172
 To calle hyr lyste con me enchace,
 Bot baysment gef myn hert a brunt ;
 I sez hyr in so strange a place,
 Such a burre myȝt make myn herte blunt. 176
 þenne vereȝ ho vp her fayre frount,
 Hyr vysayge whyt as playn yuore,
 þat stonge myn hert, ful stray a[s]tount,
 & euer þe lenger, þe more & more. 180



FROM COTTON MS. NERO A. X., ILLUSTRATING LL. 101-8.

xiv.

More marvels then did daunt my soul ;
I saw beyond that merry mere
a crystal cliff that shone full bright,
many a noble ray stood forth ;
at the foot thereof there sat a child,—
so debonair, a maid of grace ;
glistening white was her rich robe ;
I knew her well, I had seen her ere.
 As gleaming gold, refin'd and pure,
 so shone that glory 'neath the cliff ;
 long toward her there I look'd,—
 the longer, I knew her more and more.

xv.

The more I scann'd her face so fair,
her beauteous form when I had found,
such gladdening glory came to me
as seldom had been wont to come.
Longing me seized to call her name,
but wonder dealt my heart a blow ;
I saw her in so strange a place,
well might the shock mine heart appal.
 Then lifted she her visage fair,
 as ivory pure her face was white ;
 it thrill'd mine heart, struck all astray,
 and ever the longer, more and more.

§ IV.

xvi.

f. 47^b **M**ORE þen me lyste my drede aros ;
 I stod ful styllē & dorste not calle ;
 Wyth yzen open & mouth ful clos, 184
 I stod as hende as hawk in halle.
 I hope[d] þat gostly watȝ þat porpose ;
 I dred on-ende quat schulde byfalle,
 Lest ho me eschaped þat I þer chos,
 Er I at steuen hir mozt stalle. 188
 þat gracios gay wyth-outen galle,
 So smoþe, so smal, so seme slyzt,
 Rysez vp in hir araye ryalle,
 A prec[i]os pyece in perlez pyzt. 192

xvii.

Perlez pyzte of ryal prys
 þere mozt mon by grace haf sene,
 Quen þat frech as flor-de-lys 196
 Doun þe bonke con boze by-dene.
 Al blysnande whyt watȝ hir beau mys,
 Vpon at sydez, & bounden bene
 Wyth þe myryste margarys, at my deuyse,
 þat euer I sez zet with myn [ene] ; 200
 Wyth lappez large, I wot & I wene,
 Dubbed with double perle & dyzte ;
 Her cortel of self sute schene,
 Wyth precios perlez al vmbe-pyzte. 204



FROM COTTON MS. NERO A. X., ILLUSTRATING LL. 193-228.

§ IV.

xvi.

MORE than me pleased was now my dread ;
 I stood full still, I dared not speak ;
 with open eyes and fast-closed mouth,
 I stood as gentle as hawk in hall.
 A ghostly vision I trow'd it was ;
 I dreaded what might there betide,
 lest what I saw should me escape
 ere I it held within my reach ;
 when, lo ! that spotless child of grace,
 so smooth, so small, so sweetly slight,
 arose in all her royal array,—
 a precious piece, bedight with pearls.

xvii

Choicest pearls, of sovereign price,
 favour'd mortal there might see,
 when all as fresh as a fleur-de-lys
 adown that bank she came anon.
 Gleaming white was her surcoat fine,
 open at sides, and nobly edged
 with pearls, the merriest, I trow,
 that e'er I saw yet with mine eyes ;
 ample the sleeves, I ween and wot,
 with double braid of pearl bedeck'd ;
 her beauteous kirtle, matching well,
 with precious pearls was all bedight.

XVIII.

A pyzt coroune zet wer þat gyrlē,
 Of mariorys & non oþer ston,
 Hiȝe pynakled of cler quyt perle,
 Wyth flurtd flowrez perfet vpon. 208
 To hed hade ho non oþer werle ;
 Her [h]ere [h]eke al hyr vmbe-gon ;
 Her semblaunt sade, for doc oþer erle ;
 Her ble more blaȝt þen whalleȝ bon. 212
 As schorne golde schyr her fax þenne schon,
 On schyldereȝ þat leghē vnlapped lyȝte ;
 Her depe colour zet wanted non
 Of *precios* perle in porfyl pyȝte. 216

XIX.

f. 42a Pyzt watȝ poyned & vche a hemme,
 At honde, at sydeȝ, at ouerture,
 Wyth whyte perle & non oþer gemme,
 & bornyste quyte watȝ hyr uesture ; 220
 Bot a wonder perle, *wytb*-outen *wemme*,
 In myddeȝ hyr breste watȝ sette so sure ;
 A manneȝ dom moȝt dryȝly demme,
 Er mynde moȝt malte in hit mesure. 224
 I hope no tong[e] moȝt endure
 No sauerly saghe say of þat syȝt,
 So watȝ hit clene & cler & pure,
 þat *precios* perle þer hit watȝ pyȝt. 228

xviii.

A crown that maiden wore, bedight
with margarites, and no stone else ;
high pinnaced with clear white pearls,
with figured flowers wrought thereon.
No other tire was on her head ;
her hair, too, hung about her neck ;
her look was grave, as duke's or earl's ;
whiter than whale-bone was her hue.

Bright as clear gold her tresses shone,
loose on her shoulders they softly lay ;
her glowing beauty had no lack
of precious pearls on broid'ry dight.

xix.

The hems and wristbands were bedight,
at the hands, at sides, at openings,
with white pearl, and none other gem ;
and burnish'd white her vesture was ;
but a wondrous pearl, without a flaw,
amid her breast was firmly set ;
soul of man would surely fail
ere mortal mind might mete its worth.

No tongue might e'er avail, I trow,
that sight to tell in fitting word,
so fair was it, and clear, and pure,
that precious pearl, where it was dight.

xx.

Pyzt in perle, þat precios py[ec]e
 On wyþer-half water com doun þe schore ;
 No gladder gome heþen in-to Grece,
 þen I, quen ho on brymme wore ; 232
 Ho wat3 me nerre þen aunte or nece ;
 My joy for-þy wat3 much þe more.
 Ho p[ro]fered me speche, þat special sp[ec]e,
 Enclynande lowe in wommon lore ; 236
 Ca3te of her coroun of grete tresore,
 & haylsed me wyth a lote lyzte.
 Wel wat3 me þat euer I wat3 bore,
 To sware þat swete in perlez pyzte. 240

§ V.

xxi.

“ O PERLE,” quoth I, “ in perlez pyzt,
 Art þou my perle þat I haf playned,
 Regretted by myn one, on nyzte ?
 Much longeyng haf I for þe layned, 244
 Syþen into gresse þou me aglyzte ;
 Pencyf, payred, I am for-payned,
 & þou in a lyf of lykyng lyzte
 In Paradys erde, of stryf vnstrayned. 248
 What wyrde hat3 hyder my iuel vayned,
 & don me in þys del & gret daunger ?
 Fro we in twynne wern towen & twayned,
 I haf ben a joylez juelere.” 252

xx.

Bedight with pearls, that precious thing
 came down the shore beyond the stream ;
 from here to Greece no gladder man
 than I, when she was at the brink.
 She was me nearer than aunt or niece,
 wherefore my joy was much the more.
 Proffer'd me speech that creature rare,
 inclining low in womanly wise ;
 her crown of richest worth she doff'd,
 and hail'd me with obeisance blithe.
 Well was me that e'er I was born,
 to answer that Sweet, in pearls bedight

§ V.

xxi.

“**O** PEARL!” quoth I, “bedight in pearls,
 art thou my Pearl, that I have plain'd,
 bewept by me, so lone, a-night ?
 Much longing have I borne for thee,
 since into grass thou hence didst glide ;
 pensive, broken, forpined am I ;
 but thou hast reach'd a life of joy,
 in the strifeless home of Paradise.
 What fate hath hither brought my jewel,
 and me in dolorous plight hath cast ?
 Since we were sunder'd and set apart,
 a joyless jeweller I have been.”

xxii.

f. 42^b That juel þenne, in gemmez gente,
 Vered vp her vyse wyth yzen graye,
 Set on hyr coroun of perle orient,
 & soberly after þenne con ho say :- 256
 “ Sir, 3e haf *your* tale myse-tente,
 To say *your* perle is al awaye,
 þat is in cofer so comly clente,
 As in þis gardyn gracios gaye, 260
 Here-inne to lenge for euer & play,
 þer mys neþ mornyng com neuer [n]ere ;
 Her were a forser for þe in faye,
 If þou were a gentyll jueler. 264

xxiii.

“ Bot, jueler gente, if þou schal lose
 þy ioy for a gemme þat þe wat3 lef,
 Me þynk þe put in a mad porpose, 268
 & busyez þe aboute a raysoun bref ;
 For þat þou leste3 wat3 bot a rose,
 þat flowred & fayled as kynde hyt gef ;
 Now þur3 kynde of þe kyste þat hyt con close
 To a perle of prys hit is put in pref. 272
 & þou hat3 called þy wyrde a þef,
 þat o3t of no3t hat3 mad þe cler ;
 þou blame3 þe bote of þy meschef,
 þou art no kynde jueler.” 276

XXII.

That jewel there, so fair begemm'd,
up-rais'd her face, her eyes so grey,
put on her crown of Orient pearl,
and thus full gravely then she spake :
“ Sir, thou hast misread thy tale,
to say thy Pearl is all perdu,
that is in chest so comely and strong
as in this garden of grace and glee ;
for ever to dwell and play herein,
where miss and mourning come never nigh ;
this were thy treasure-hold, i' faith,
wert thou a gentle jeweller.

XXIII.

“ But, gentle sir, if thou must lose
thy joy for a gem that to thee was dear,
thou'rt set, methinks, on mad intent,
and carest for too brief a cause :
what thou didst lose was but a rose,
that flower'd and fail'd, as Nature bade ;
through the casket's grace, enclosing it,
it now is proved a pearl of price.
And thou hast call'd thy fate a thief,
that ought from nought hath made for thee ;
thou blamest the balm of all thine ill,
thou art a graceless jeweller.”

XXIV.

A juel to me þen wat3 þys geste,
 & iuele3 wern hyr gentyl sawe3.
 "I-wyse," quat I, "my blysfol beste,
 My grete dystresse þou al to-drawe3. 280
 To be excused I make requeste ;
 I trawed my perle don out of dawe3 ;
 Now haf I fonde hyt, I schal ma feste,
 & wony wyth hyt in schyr wod-schawe3, 284
 & loue my Lorde & al his lawe3,
 þat hat3 me bro3[*t*] þys blys[*se*] ner.
 Now were I at yow by-3onde þise wawe3,
 I were a ioyfol jueler ! " 288

XXV.

f. 43^a "Jueler," sayde þat gemme clene,
 "Wy borde 3e men ? So madde 3e be !
 þre worde3 hat3 þou spoken at ene ;
 Vn-a-vysed, for-soþe, wern alle þre ; 292
 þou ne woste in worlde quat on dot3 mene,
 þy worde by-fore þy wytte con fle.
 þou says þou trawe3 me in þis dene,
 By-cawse þou may wyth y3en me se ; 296
 Anoper þou says, in þys countre
 þy self schal won wyth me ry3t here ;
 þe þrydde, to passe þys water fre,-
 þat may no ioyfol jueler. 300

XXIV.

A jewel to me was then this guest,
and jewels were her gentle words,
“Indeed,” quoth I, “blest dearest mine,
my dire distress away thou draw’st.
I make request to be excused ;
I trow’d my Pearl had pass’d from Day ;
but now ’tis found, I shall make mirth,
and dwell with it in radiant groves,
and praise my Lord and all His laws,
who hath me brought this bliss anigh.
Were I with thee beyond these waves,
I were a joyful jeweller !”

XXV.

“Jeweller !” said that purest gem,
“Why jest ye men ? So mad ye are !
Three words thou spakest at one time ;
thoughtless, forsooth, were all the three ;
thou knowest not what one doth mean ;
surely thy words outrun thy wit.
Thou sayest, thou deemest me in this dale,
because thou seest me with thine eyes ;
again, thou sayest, that in this land
thyself wilt dwell with me e’en here ;
thirdly,—this stream would’st freely pass ;
this may no joyful jeweller.

§ VI.

xxvi

I HALDE þat iueler lyttel to prayse,
 þat l[e]ue3 wel þat he se3 wyth y3e,
 & much to blame & vn-cort[a]yse,
 þat l[e]ue3 oure Lorde wolde make a ly3e, 304
 þat lelly hy3te *your* lyf to rayse,
 þa3 fortune dyd *your* flesch to dy3e.
 3e setten hys worde3 ful westernays,
 þat l[e]ue3 no þynk bot 3e hit sy3e ; 308
 & þat is† a poynt o sorquydry3e,
 þat vche god mon may euel byseme,
 To leue no tale be true to try3e,
 Bot þat hys one skyl may dem[e]. 312

xxvii.

“ Deme now þy self, if þou con dayly
 As man to God worde3 schulde heue ;
 þou sayt3 þou schal won in þis bayly ;
 Me þynk þe burde fyrst aske leue ; 316
 & 3et of graunt þou my3te3 fayle.
 þou wylne3 ouer þys water to weue ;
 Er moste þou ceuer to oþer counsayl[e] ;
 þy corse in clot mot calder keue ; 320
 For hit wat3 for-garte at Paradys greue ;
 Oure 3ore-fader hit con mysse3eme ;
 þur3 drwry deth bo3 vch ma dreue,
 Er ouer þys dam hym Dry3tyn deme.” 324

§ VI.

xxvi.

“**H**OLD that jeweller little to praise
 that trusteth what with eye he seeth,
 and much to blame and graceless he
 that thinketh our Lord would speak a lie,
 who leally promised to raise thy life,
 though fortune gave thy flesh to death.
 Full widdishins thou read’st His words,
 that trowest nought but what thou seest ;
 and ’tis an overweening thing,
 that ill beseems each righteous man,
 to trow no tale be trustworthy,
 save his mere reason deem it so.

xxvii.

“Deem now thyself, if thou hast dealt
 such words as man to God should lift.
 Thou sayest thou wilt dwell in this burgh ;
 ’twere meet, methinks, first to ask leave ;
 and yet thou mightest miss the boon.
 Thou wishest, too, to cross this stream ;
 first must thou reach another goal,—
 colder thy corse must cling in clay ;
 ’twas forfeit in grove of Paradise ;
 our forefather ill guarded it ;
 through dreary death each man must pass,
 ere God deem right he cross this flood.”

XXVIII.

f. 43^b "Demeȝ þou me," quoth I, "my swete,
 To dol agayn, þenne I dowyne.
 Now haf I fonte þat I for-lete,
 Schal I efte for-go hit, er euer I fyne? 328
 Why schal I hit boþe mysse & mete?
 My precios perle dotȝ me gret pyne!
 What serueȝ tresor bot gareȝ men grete,
 When he hit schal efte wytȝ teneȝ tyne? 332
 Now rech I neuer for to declyne,
 Ne how fer of folde þat man me fleme.
 When I am partleȝ of perleȝ myne,
 Bot durande doel what may men deme?" 336

XXIX.

"Thow demeȝ noȝt bot doel dystresse,"
 þenne sayde þat wyȝt; "why dotȝ þou so?
 For dyne of doel of lureȝ lesse
 Ofte mony mon for-gos þe mo; 340
 þe oȝte better þy seluen blesse,
 & loue ay God, [in] wele & wo,
 For anger gayneȝ þe not a cresse;
 Who nedeȝ schal þole, be not so pro. 344
 For þoȝ þou daunce as any do,
 Braundysch & bray þy braȝeȝ breme,
 When þou no fyrre may, to ne fro,
 þou moste abyde þat he schal deme. 348

XXVIII.

"Doomest thou me," quoth I, "my Sweet,
 to dole again, I pine away.
 Now have I found what I had lost,
 must I forgo it, ere ever I end?
 Why must I it both meet and miss?
 My precious Pearl doth me great pain!
 What serveth treasure but tears to make,
 if one must lose it soon with woe?
 Now reck I ne'er how low I droop,
 how far men drive me from my land;
 when in my Pearl no part is mine,
 what is my doom but endless moan?"

XXIX.

"Thou deem'st of nought but doleful grief,"
 said then that maid; "why dost thou so?
 Through din of dole for losses small
 many a man oft loseth more.
 Rather shouldst thou cross thyself,
 and praise aye God, in woe and weal;
 anger avails thee not a cress;
 who needs must bow, be not so bold;
 for though thou dance as any doe,
 chafe and cry in fiercest ire,
 since, to or fro, no way thou mak'st,
 thou must abide what He shall deem."

xxx.

" Deme Dryztyn, euer hym adyte
 Of þe way a fote ne wyl he wryþe ;
 þy mendeþ mounteþ not a myte,
 þaþ þou for sorþe be neuer blyþe. 352
 Styntþ of þy strot & fyne to flyte,
 & sech hys blyþe ful swefte & swyþe ;
 þy prayer may hys pyte byte,
 þat Mercy schal hyr crafteþ kyþe. 356
 Hys comferte may þy langour lyþe,
 [þat alle] þy lureþ of lyztly leme ;
 For, marre[d] oþer madde, morne & myþe,
 Al lys in hym to dyzt & deme." 360

§ VII.

xxxı.

f. 44^a **T**HENNE demed I to þat damyselle :
 " Ne worþe no wrathþe vnto my Lorde,
 If rapely [I] raue spornande in spelle,
 My herte watþ al wyþ mysse remorde ; 364
 As wallande water gotþ out of welle,
 I do me ay in hys myserecorde.
 Rebuke me neuer wyþ wordeþ felle,
 þaþ I forloyne, my dere endorde ; 368
 Bot [k]yþeþ me kyndely your coumforde,
 Pytosly þenkande vpon þysse,—
 Of care & me þe made acorde,
 þat er watþ grounde of alle my blysse. 372

xxx.

“Doom thou the Lord! Arraign Him still!
 He will not swerve a foot from the way.
 Thy mending ’mounteth not a mite,
 though thou, for grief, be never blithe.
 Stint from thy strife, and cease to chide,
 and seek His grace full swift and sure;
 thy prayer may His pity touch,
 and Mercy may show forth her craft.

His solace may assuage thy grief,
 that all thy losses glance lightly off;
 for, marr’d or made, mourning and mirth,
 all lieth in Him, as He deem fit.”

§ VII.

xxx1.

THEN deem’d I to that damosel:
 “Let not my Lord be wroth with me,
 if wildly I rave, rushing in speech,
 my heart with mourning all was torn.
 As welling water goeth from well,
 I yield me to His mercy aye.
 Rebuke me ne’er with cruel words,
 my dear adored, e’en though I stray;
 but show me kindly comforting,
 piteously thinking upon this,—
 of care and me thou madest accord,
 that wast of all my bliss the ground.

D

xxxii.

" My blysse, my bale, 3e han ben bo3e ;
 Bot much 3e bygger 3et wat3 my mon ;
 Fro þou wat3 wroken fro vch a wo3e,
 I wyste neuer quere my perle wat3 gon. 376
 Now I hit se, now le3e3 my lo3e ;
 & quen we departed, we wern at on ;
 God forbede we be now wro3e !
 We meten so selden by stok o3er ston. 380
 þa3 cortaysly 3e carp[e] con,
 I am bot mol, & ma[n]jere3 mysse ;
 Bot Crystes mersy & Mary & Jon,—
 þise arn þe grounde of alle my blysse 384

xxxiii.

" In blysse I se þe blyþely blent,
 & I a man al mornyf mate ;
 3e take þer-on ful lyttel tente,
 þa3 I hente ofte harme3 hate. 388
 Bot now I am here *in your presente*,
 I wolde bysech, wyth-outen debate,
 3e wolde me say *in sobre asente*
 What lyf 3e lede, erly & late. 392
 For I am ful fayn þat *your astate*
 Is worþen to worschyp & wele iwysse ;
 Of alle my joy þe hy3e gate,
 Hit is *in grounde of alle my blysse.*" 396

xxxii.

" My bliss, my bale, hast thou been both ;
 but much the more my moan hath been ;
 since thou wast banish'd from ev'ry path,
 I wist not where my Pearl was gone.
 Now I it see, now less'neth my loss ;
 and when we parted, at one we were ;
 God forbid we be now wroth !
 We meet so seldom by stock or stone.
 Though thou canst speak full courteously,
 I am but dust, and manners lack ;
 the mercy of Christ, and Mary, and John,
 these are the ground of all my bliss.

xxxiii.

" In bliss I see thee blithely blent,
 and I a man with mourning marr'd ;
 thereof thou takest little heed,
 though baleful harms befall me oft.
 But now, before thy presence here,
 I would beseech, without demur,
 that thou wouldst tell, with gentle grace,
 early and late what life thou lead'st.
 For I am glad that thine estate
 is all so changed to worth and weal ;
 the high-way this of all my joy ;
 it is the ground of all my bliss."

xxxiv.

f. 44^b "Now blysse, burne, mot þe bytyde!"
 þen sayde þat lufsoum of lyth & lere;
 "& welcum here to walk & byde,
 For now þy speche is to me dere. 400
 Mayster-ful mod & hyze pryde,
 I hete þe, arn heterly hated here;
 My Lorde ne loue3 not for to chyde,
 For meke arn alle þat wone3 hym nere. 404
 & when in hys place þou schal apere;
 Be dep deuote in hol mekenesse;
 My Lorde þe Lamb loue3 ay such chere,
 þat is þe grounde of alle my blysse. 408

xxxv.

"A blysfyl lyf þou says I lede;
 þou wolde3 knaw þer-of þe stage.
 þow wost wel when þy Perle con schede,
 I wat3 ful zong & tender of age; 412
 Bot my Lorde þe Lombe, þur3 hys God-hede,
 He toke my self to hys maryage,
 Corounde me quene in blysse to brede,
 In lenghe of daye3 þat euer schal wage. 416
 & sesed in alle hys herytage
 Hys lef is; I am holy hysse;
 Hys prese, hys prys, & hys parage
 Is rote & grounde of alle my blysse." 420

xxxiv.

“ Now bliss betide thee, noble sir,”
said she, so fair of form and face,
“ and welcome here to bide and walk,
for dear to me is now thy speech.
Masterful mood and mighty pride,
I tell thee, are bitterly hated here ;
my Master loveth not to blame,
for meek are all that dwell Him nigh.

And when in His place appear thou must,
in humbleness be deep devout ;
my Lord the Lamb such cheer aye loveth ;
He is the ground of all my bliss.

xxxv.

“ A blissful life thou say’st I lead,
and thou wouldst know the state thereof :
well know’st thou, when thy Pearl fared forth,
of tender age, full young, was I ;
but, through His Godhead, my Lord the Lamb
took me in marriage unto Himself ;
crown’d me Queen, to revel in bliss,
in length of days that ne’er shall wane ;
and dower’d with all His heritage
His Bride is ; I am wholly His ;
His praise, His price, His peerless rank,
of all my bliss are root and ground.”

§ VIII.

xxxvi.

BLYSFUL," quop I, "may pys be trwe?
 Dysplesez not if I speke *erroure*.
 Art þou þe quene of heuenez blwe,
 þat al pys worlde schal do honour? 424
 We leuen on Marye þat grace of grewe,
 þat ber a barne of vyrgyn flour;
 þe crowne fro hyr quo mozt remwe,
 Bot ho hir passed in *sum fauour*? 428
 Now, for synglerty o hyr dousour,
 We calle hyr Fenyx of Arraby,
 þat freles fleze of hyr fador,
 Lyk to þe Quen of cortaysye." 432

xxxvii.

f. 45a "Cortayse Quen," þenne s[a]yde þat gaye,
 Knelande to grounde, folde vp hyr face,
 "Makelez Moder & myryst May,
 Blessed Bygynner† of vch a grace!" 436
 þenne ros ho vp & con restay,
 & speke me towarde in þat space:
 "Sir, fele here porchasez & fongez pray,
 Bot supplantorez none wyth-inne pys place. 440
 þat Emperise al heuenz hatz,
 & vrpe & helle in her bayly;
 Of erytage zet non wyl ho chace,
 For ho is Quen of cortaysye. 444

§ VIII.

xxxvi.

“**B**LISSFUL,” quoth I, “may this be so?
Speak I amiss, be not displeasèd.

Art thou the Queen of heavens blue,
whom all this world must honour now?
We believe in Mary, from whom sprang grace,
who bore a child from virgin flower,
and who can take from her the crown,
save she excel her in some worth?

And for her peerlessness of charm
Phœnix of Araby we her call,
the bird immaculate of form,
like to that Queen of Courtesy.”

xxxvii.

“Courteous Queen!” said then that joy,
kneeling to earth, her face enveil’d,
“Matchless Mother, Merriest Maid,
Blest Beginner of every grace!”

Then rose she up, and there she paused,
and spake toward me from that spot :—
“Sir! folk find here the prize they seek,
but no usurpers bide herein.

That Empress in her empire hath
the heavens all and earth and hell;
from heritage yet she driveth none,
for she is Queen of Courtesy.

xxxviii.

"The court of þe kyndom of God alyue
 Hat3 a *property* in hyt self beyng ;
 Alle þat may þer-inne aryue
 Of alle þe reme is quen *oper* kyng, 448
 & neuer *oper* zet schal de pryue ;
 Bot vchon fayn of *oper*z hafyng,
 & wolde her corounez wern worþe þo fyue,
 If possyble were her mendyng. 452
 Bot my Lady, of quom Jesu con spryng,
 Ho haldez þe empyre ouer *us* ful hyze ;
 & þat dysplesez non of oure gyng,
 For ho is Quene of cortaysye. 456

xxxix.

"Of courtaysye, as sayt3 Saynt P[a]ule,
 Al arn we membrez of *lesu* Kryst ;
 As heued & arme & legg & naule
 Temen to hys body ful trwe & t[r]yste, 460
 Ryzt so is vch a Krysten saw[l]e
 A longande lym to þe Mayster of myste.
 þenne loke, what hate *oper* any gawle
 Is tached *oper* tyzed þy lymmez by-twyste ? 464
 þy heued hat3 nauþer greme ne gryste,
 On arme *oper* fynger þaz þou ber byze.
 So fare we alle wyth luf & lyste
 To kyng & quene by cortaysye." 468

xxxviii.

“The Court of the Kingdom of Living God
hath in itself this property,—
each one that may arrive therein
is king or queen of all the realm,
and yet shall not deprive another ;
but each is glad of others’ weal,
and would their crowns were worth five such,
were their enhancing possible.

But my Lady, from whom Jesu sprang,
She holdeth empire high o’er all ;
and this displeaseth none of our host,
for she is Queen of Courtesy.

xxxix.

“By courtesy, as saith Saint Paul,
we all are members of Jesu Christ ;
as head and arm and leg and trunk,
trusty and true, their body serve,
so is each Christian soul a limb
that to the Lord of Might belongs.
Lo now, what hatred or ill-will
is fast or fix’d between thy limbs ?

Thy head hath neither spleen nor spite,
on arm or finger though thou bear ring.
So fare we all in love and joy,
by courtesy, to King and Queen.”

XL.

f. 45^b "Cortays[y]e," *quod* l, "I leue,
 & charyte grete be yow among ;
 Bot, my speche þat yow ne greue,
 [Me þynk þou spekez now ful wronge ;] 47²
 þy self in heuen ouer hyz þou heue,
 To make þe quen þat watz so zonge.
 What more honour mozte he acheue
 þat hade endured in worlde stronge, 47⁶
 & lyued in penauuce hys lyuez longe,
 Wytþ bodyly bale hym blysse to byye ?
 What more worschyp mozt h[e] fonge,
 þen corounde be kyng by cortays[y]e ? 48⁰

§ IX.

XLI.

"**T**HAT cortays[y]e is to fre of dede,
 3yf hyt be soth þat þou cone3 saye ;
 þou lyfed not two 3er in oure þede ;
 þou cowpe3 neuer God nauþer plese ne pray, 48⁴
 Ne neuer nauþer Pater ne Crede ;
 & quen mad on þe fyrst[e] day !
 I may not traw, so God me spede,
 þat God wolde wryþe so wrange away. 48⁸
 Of countes, damysel, par ma fay,
 Wer fayr in heuen to halde asstate,
 Oþer ellez a lady of lasse aray ;
 Bot a quene !—hit is to dere a date." 49²

XL.

“Courtesy,” quoth I, “I grant,
 and charity great dwell in your midst ;
 but, pardon if my speech doth grieve,
 methinketh now thy words full wrong ;
 thou hast raised thyself in heaven too high,
 to make thee queen, that wast so young.
 What greater honour might he win,
 who suffer’d bravely in this world,
 and lived in life-long penance here,
 with bodily bale to purchase bliss ?
 What greater glory might he have
 than king be crown’d by courtesy ?

§ IX.

XLI.

“THIS courtesy is all too free,
 if it be sooth that thou hast said ;
 thou livedst not two years in our land,
 God thou couldst not please or pray,
 and never knewest Pater nor Creed ;
 yet on the first day made a Queen !
 I may not trow, so speed me God,
 that He would work so all amiss.
 As countess, damosel, *par ma fay*,
 ’twere fair in heaven to hold estate,
 or as a lady of lower degree ;
 but a Queen,—it is too great a goal.”

XLII.

“ þer is no date of hys god-nesse,”
 þen sayde to me þat worþy wyȝte ;
 “ For al is trawþe þat he con dresse,
 & he may do no þynk bot ryȝt. 496
 As Mathew meleȝ *in your* messe,
 In sothfol Gospel of God Al-myȝt,
 In-sample he can ful grayþely gesse,
 & lykneȝ hit to heuen lyȝte. 500
 ‘ My regne,’ he saytȝ, ‘ is lyk on hyȝt
 To a lorde þat hade a uyne, I wate ;
 Of tyme of ȝere þe terme watȝ tyȝt,
 To labor vyne watȝ dere þe date. 504

XLIII.

f. 46a “ þat date of ȝere wel knawe [h]ys hyne ;
 þe lorde ful erly vp he ros
 To hyre werkmen to hys vyne,
 & fyndeȝ þer summe to hys porpos. 508
 Into acorde þay con de-clyne
 For a peneȝ a day, & forth þay gotȝ,
 Wryþen & worchen & don gret pyne,
 Keruen & caggen & man hit clos. 512
 Aboute vnder þe lorde to marked totȝ,
 & ydel men stande he fyndeȝ þerate :
 ‘ Why stande ȝe ydel?’ he sayde to þos ;
 ‘ Ne knawe ȝe of þis day no date?’ 516

XLII.

"No goal, no end, His goodness hath,"
 then said to me that noble gem,
 "for all is just where He doth lead ;
 He can do nought but what is right.
 As Matthew telleth in your mass,
 in God Almighty's Gospel true,
 a parable He made full well ;
 to Heaven bright He likeneth it.
 ' My realm on high,' He saith, ' is like
 to a lord that had a vineyard once ;
 and, lo ! the time of year was come
 when vintage was the season's goal.

XLIII.

" ' The season's goal his household knows ;
 and up full early rose the lord
 to hire more workmen for his vines ;
 and to his purpose findeth some.
 They enter in agreement then
 for a penny a day, and forth they go ;
 they strain and strive and do great toil,
 they prune and bind and fasten firm.
 About noon the lord the market sought,
 and idle men found standing there.
 ' Why stand ye idle ? ' he said to them,
 ' Or know ye for this day no goal ? '

XLIV.

“ ‘ Er date of daye hider arn we wonne,
 So wat3 al samen her answar so3t ;
 ‘ We haf standen her syn ros þe sunne,
 & no mon bydde3 *vus* do ry3t no3t.’ 520
 ‘ Gos *in-to* my vyne, dot3 þat 3e conne ;’
 So sayde þe lorde, & made hit to3t :-
 ‘ What resnabeleþ hyre be na3t be runne
 I yow payþ *in* dede & þo3te.’ 524
 þay wente *in-to* þe vyne & wro3te ;
 & al day þe lorde þur 3ede his gate,
 & nw[e] men to hys vyne he bro3te,
 Wel-ne3 wyl-day wat3 passed date. 528

XLV.

“ ‘ At þe [date] of [day] of euen-songe,
 On oure byfore þe sonne go down,
 He sez þer ydel men ful stronge,
 & sade to he[m], *wyþ* sobre soun :- 532
 ‘ Wy stonde 3e ydel þise daye3 longe ?’
 þay sayden her hyre wat3 nawhere boun.
 ‘ Got3 to my vyne, 3emen 3onge,
 & wyrke3 & dot3 þat at 3e noun.’ 536
 Sone þe worlde by-com wel broun,
 þe sunne wat3 down, & þhit wex late ;
 To take her hyre he mad *sumoun* ;
 þe day wat3 al apassed date. 540

XLIV.

“ ‘ Ere dawn of day we hither came ; ’
so gave they answer, one and all ;
‘ we have stood here since rose the sun,
and no man biddeth us do aught.’
‘ Enter my vineyard ; do what ye can,’
said then the lord, and made it sure,—
‘ What wage is fair, by fall of night,
I will you pay, in thought and deed.’
They went unto his vines, and work’d ;
and thus all day the lord went forth,
and new men to his vineyard brought,
well-nigh till day had pass’d its goal.

XLV.

“ ‘ Nigh goal of day, at evensong,
one hour before the sun should set,
strong men he saw stand idle there,
and said to them, with earnest voice :—
‘ Why stand ye idle the livelong day ? ’
Nowhere, said they, was hire for them.
‘ Go to my vineyard, yeomen young,
and work and do as best ye can.’
Soon the world grew burnish’d brown ;
the sun was down, and it waxed late ;
to take their pay he summon’d them ;
the day was done, its goal was pass’d.

§ X.

XLVI.

f. 46b “ ‘**T**HE date of þe daye þe lorde con knaw,
 Called to þe reue: ‘ Lede, pay þe meny†;
 Gyf hem þe hyre þat I hem [a]we;
 & fyrre, þat non me may repren[y], 544
 Set hem alle vpon a rawe,
 & gyf vchon in-lyche a peny.
 Bygyn at þe laste þat standez l[a]we,
 Tyl to þe fyrste þat þou atteny.’ 548
 & þenne þe fyrst by-gonne to pleny,
 & sayden þat þay hade trauayled sore :-
 ‘ þese bot on oure hem con streny;
Vus þynk vus oze to take more. 552

XLVII.

“ ‘ More haf we serued, *vus þynk* so,
 þat suffred han þe dayez hete,
 þenn þyse þat wrozt not hourcz two,
 & þou dotz hem *vus* to counterfete.’ 556
 þenne sayde þe lorde to on† of þo :-
 ‘ Frende, no wani[n]g I wyl þe zete;
 Take þat is þyn owne & go.
 & I hyred þe for a peny a-grete, 560
 Quy bygynnez þou now to þrete?
 Watz not a pene þy couenaunt þore?
 Fyrre þen couenaunde is nozt to plete.
 Wy schalte þou þenne ask[e] more? 564

§ X.

XLVI.

“ ‘THE day was done, the master knew,-
 called to his reeve: ‘Sir, pay the men;
 give them the wage that I them owe,
 and further, that none may me reprove,
 set them all in one long line,
 and give a penny to each alike;
 begin at the last that standeth low,
 and so until thou reach the first.’

The first began then to complain,
 and said that they had sorely toil’d :-
 ‘These but an hour have strain’d their strength,
 seemeth to us we should take more.

XLVII.

“ ‘More have we deserved, we think,
 that here have borne the heat of day,
 than these that have not work’d two hours,
 and thou dost make them equal us.’
 Then said the lord to one of them :-
 ‘Friend, I would not do thee wrong;
 take what is thine own and go.
 Hired I thee for a penny withal,
 why beginnest thou now to chafe?
 Was not a penny thy covenant then?
 More than agreed one must not claim.
 Why shouldest thou then ask for more?’

E

XLVIII.

“ ‘ More, — weþer l[e]juyly is me my gyfte,
 To do wyth myn quat so me lykez,
 Oþer ellez þyn yze to lyþer is lyfte,
 For I am goude & non by-swykez ? ’ 568
 ‘ þus schal I, ’ quoth Kryste, ‘ hit akyste ;
 þe laste schal be þe fyrst þat strykez,
 & þe fyrst þe laste, be he neuer so swyft ;
 For mony ben calle[d], þaz fewe be mykez. ’ 572
 þus pore men her part ay pykez,
 þaz þay com late & lyttel wore ;
 & þaz her sweng wyth lyttel at-slykez,
 þe merci of God is much þe more. 576

XLIX.

f. 47a “ More haf I of joye & blysse here-inne,
 Of ladyschyp gret & lyuez blom,
 þen alle þe wyzez in þe worlde myzt wynne,
 By þe way of ryzt to aske dome. 580
 Wheþer welnygh now I con bygynne,
 In euentyde in-to þe vyne I come,
 Fyrst of my hyre my Lorde con mynne ;
 I watz payed anon of al & sum. 584
 zet oþer þer werne þat toke more tom,
 þat swange & swat for long[e] zore,
 þat zet of hyre no þynk þay nom,
 Paraunter nozt schal to-zere more. ” 588

XLVIII.

“ ‘ Moreover,—Is it my right to give,
to do with mine what so I please,
or is it thine eye is bent on ill,
since I am good, and none defraud ? ’
‘ Thus shall I,’ quoth Christ, ‘ ordain :
the last shall be the first to go,
and the first the last, be he ne’er so swift ;
for many are called, though few the elect.’

Thus do the poor their portion take,
though they come late, and low their place ;
though, little done, their toil is spent,
the mercy of God is much the more.

XLIX.

“ More have I here of joy and bliss,
of ladyship great and bloom of life,
than all the men in the world might win,
ask’d they award by way of right.
Though, well-nigh now, I late began,
at even to the vineyard came,
first of my hire my Lord bethought ;
I was paid anon the payment full.

Others were there who had to wait,
who sweated long before, and toil’d ;
yet nothing got they of their hire,
nor will perchance for long years more.”

L.

Then more I meled & sayde apert :-
 " Me þynk þy tale vnresoun-able ;
 Goddeȝ ryȝt is redy & euer-more rert,
 Oþer Holy Wryt is bot a fable. 592
 In Sauter is sayd a verce ouerte,
 þat spekeȝ a poynt determyuable :-
 ' þou quyteȝ vchon as hys desserte,
 þou hyȝe Kyng, ay p[re]termynable.' 596
 Now he þat stod þe long day stable,
 & þou to payment com hym byfore,
 þenne þe lasse in werke to take more able,
 & euer þe lenger þe lasse þe more." 600

§ XI.

LI.

" O f more & lasse in Godeȝ ryche,"
 þat gentyl sayde, " lys no joparde,
 For þer is vch mon payed inlyche,
 Wheþer lyttel oþer much be hys rewarde. 604
 For þe gentyl Cheuentayn is no chyche,
 Queþer-so-euer he dele nesch oþer harde ;
 He laueȝ hys gyfteȝ as water of dyche,
 Oþer goteȝ of golf þat neuer charde. 608
 Hys fraunchyse is large þat euer dard
 To hym þat matȝ in synne rescoghe ;
 No blysse betȝ fro hem reparde,
 For þe grace of God is gret i-noghe. 612

L.

Then said I more, and boldly spake :-
 "Thy tale me seemeth reasonless :
 God's right is ready, raised eterne,
 or Holy Writ is but a fable.
 In Psalter is said a verse full clear,
 putting, as point determin'd, this :-
 ' Each Thou requitest as his desert,
 Thou High King, ever fore-ordained ! '
 Now he who all day steadfast stood,-
 if thou to payment come ere he,
 then the less the work, the more the pay,
 and ever the longer the less the more."

§ XI.

LI.

" **T**WIXT more and less in God's own
 realm,"
 that Gentle said, "lies no debate ;
 for there is each man paid alike,
 whether little or much be his reward.
 That gentle Chieftain is no niggard,
 whether His dole be hard or soft ;
 He poureth His gifts as water from weir,
 or streams of the deep that never turn.
 Large is his freedom who hath fear'd
 'fore Him that rescueth in sin ;
 no bliss shall be withheld from such ;
 the grace of God is great enough.

LII.

f. 47^b “ Bot now þou moteþ me for to mate,
 þat I my peny haf wrang tan here ;
 þou sayþ þat I þat com to late
 Am not worþy so gret [h]ere. 616
 Where wysteþ þou euer any bourne abate,
 Euer so holy in hys prayere,
 þat he ne forfeþed by sumkyn gate
 þe mede sum-tyme of heueneþ clere ? 620
 & ay þe ofter, þe alder þay were,
 þay laften ryþt & wroþten woghe.
 Mercy & grace moste hem þen stere,
 For þe grace of God is gret in-noþe. 624

LIII.

“ Bot in-noghe of grace hatþ innocent ;
 As sone as þay arn borne, by lyne
 In þe water of babtem þay dyssente ;
 þen arne þay boroþt in-to þe vyne. 628
 Anon þe day, wytþ derk endente,
 þe myþt of deth dotþ to en-clyne
 þat wroþt neuer wrang er þenne þay wente.
 þe gentyle Lorde þeme payeþ hys hyne ; 632
 þay dyden hys heste, þay wern þere-ine ;
 Why schulde he not her labour alow,
 þys, & pay h[e]m at þe fyrst[e] fyne ?
 For þe grace of God is gret in-noghe. 636

LII.

“ Yet now thou mootest, to checkmate me,
that I my penny have wrongly ta'en :
thou sayest that I, who came too late,
am not worth so great a wage.
Where knewest thou any man abide,
ever so holy in his prayer,
who ne'er, in some way, forfeited
the meed, some time, of heaven bright ?
And aye the oft'er, the older they were,
left they the right, and wrought amiss ;
Mercy and Grace must pilot them ;
The grace of God is great enough.

LIII.

“ But grace enough have innocents ;
as soon as they are born, by rule
in the water of baptism they descend ;
then are they to the vineyard brought.
Anon the day, with darkness fleck'd,
unto Death's might doth make them bow
who ne'er wrought wrong ere thence they went.
The gentle Lord His folk then payeth ;
they did His will, they were therein.
Why should He not allow their hire,
yea, pay them at the first day's close ?
The grace of God is great enough.

LIV.

"I-noȝe is knawen þat man-kyn grete
 Fyrste watȝ wroȝt to blyſſe parfyt ;
 Oure forme fader hit con forfete,
 þurȝ an apple þat he vpon con byte ; 640
 Al wer we dampned for þat mete
 To dyȝe *in* doel, out of delyt,
 & ſyþen wende to helle hete,
 þer-*inne* to won wyth-oute reſpyt. 644
 Bot þer on-com a bote as tyt ;
 Ryche blod ran on rode ſo roghe,
 & wyne water ; þen at þat plyt
 þe *grace* of God wex gret *in-noghe*. 648

LV.

f. 48a "In-noghe þer wax outȝ of þat welle,
 Blod & water of brode wounde ;
 þe blod *vus* boȝt fro bale of helle,
 & delyuered *vus* of þe deth ſecounde ; 652
 þe water is baptem, þe ſoþe to telle
 þat folȝed þe glayue ſo grymly grounde,
 þat waſcheȝ away þe gylteȝ felle
 þat Adam wyth inȝ deth *vus* drounde. 656
 Now is þer noȝt *in* þe worlde rounde
 By-twene *vus* & blyſſe bot þat he wyth-droȝ,
 & þat is reſtored *in* ſely ſtounde ;
 & þe *grace* of God is gret *in-nogh*. 660

LIV.

“ Enough is known, how mankind great
first was wrought for perfect bliss ;
our fore-father it forfeited,
through an apple that he bit upon.
And for that morsel were we damn'd
to die in dolour, afar from joy,
and thence to fare to heat of hell,
there to abide, with respite none.

But soon came there the antidote ;
on rood so rough ran richest blood
and winsome water ; then, in that plight,
the grace of God wax'd great enough.

LV.

“ Enough from out that well there flow'd,
blood and water, from wound so wide :
from bale of hell the blood us bought,
and ransom'd us from second death ;
the water is baptism, sooth to say,
that follow'd the glaive so grimly ground,
that washeth away the guilt so fell
that Adam drown'd us with in death.

Now is there nought in this round world
'twixt us and bliss but what He withdrew ;
all is restored in one fair hour.

The grace of God is great enough.

§ XII.

LVI.

“GRACE *in-nogh* þe mon may haue
 þat *synnez þenne new*, 3if hym repente,
 Bot *wytþ sorz & syt* he mot hit craue,
 & byde þe payne þer-to is bent ; 664
 Bot *resoun*, of ryzt þat con not raue,
 Sauez *euer-more* þe *innosent* ;
 Hit is a dom þat *neuer* God gaue,
 þat *euer* þe *gyltlez* schulde be schente. 668
 þe *gylytf* may *contryssyoun* hente,
 & be þurz mercy to grace þryzt ;
 Bot he to gyle þat *neuer* glente,
 At *in-oscen[c]e*, is saf [by] ryzte. 672

LVII.

“Ryzt þus † I knaw wel *in* þis cas,
 Two men to saue is god by skylle ;
 þe ryzt-wys man schal se hys fa[c]e,
 þe harmlez hapel schal com hym tylle. 676
 þe Sauter hyt satz þus *in* a pace :-
 ‘Lorde, quo schal klymbe þy hyz[e] hylle †,
 Oþer rest *wytþ-inne* þy holy place ?’
 Hymself to on-sware he is not dylle :- 680
 ‘Hondelyngez harme þat dyt not ille,
 þat is of hert bope clene & lyzt,
 þer schal hys step[pe] stable styllle.’
 þe *innosent* is ay saf by ryzt. 684

§ XII.

LVI.

“GRACE enough a man may have
 that sinneth anew, if he repent ;
 he must it crave with sorrow and sighs,
 and bide the pain thereto is bound ;
 but Reason, straying not from right,
 saveth the innocent evermore ;
 for 'tis a doom that God ne'er gave,
 that ever the guiltless should be shamed.

The guilty may contrition find,
 and be by Mercy led to Grace ;
 but into guile who glided ne'er,
 in innocence, is saved by right.

LVII.

“Right well I know of this same thing,
 two kinds to save is good and just,—
 the righteous man His face shall see,
 the harmless one shall come Him nigh.
 Thus saith the Psalter in a verse,—
 ‘Lord, who shall climb Thy lofty hill,
 or rest within Thy holy place?’
 Himself to answer He is not slow,—
 ‘Whose hands in malice ne'er did hurt,
 he that is clean and pure of heart,
 there shall his step stand ever firm.’
 The innocent is saved by right.

LVIII.

f. 48^b " The ryztwys man also sertayn
 Aproche he schal þat proper pyle,
 þat takez not her lyf in vayne,
 Ne glauerez her [n]eʒbor wyth no gyle. 688
 Of þys ryzt-wys saz Salamon playn
 How kyntly oure [Koyntyse hym] con aquyle ;
 By wayez ful strezt he con hym strayn,
 & scheued hym þe reagne of God awhyle, 692
 As quo says 'lo, ʒon louely yle !
 þou may hit wyne if þou be wyzte.'
 Bot, hardyly, wytþ-oute peryle,
 þe innosent is ay saue by ryzte. 696

LIX.

" An-ende ryztwys men ʒet saytz a gome-
 Daid in Sauter, if euer ʒe s[y]ʒ hit :-
 'Lorde, þy seruauant draʒ neuer to dome,
 [F]or non lyuyande to þe is justyfyt ! ' 700
 For-þy to corte quen þou schal com[e],
 þer alle oure causeʒ schal be [c]ryed,
 Alegge þe ryzt, þou may be in-nome,
 By þys ilke spech I haue asspyed. 704
 Bot he on rode þat bloody dyed,
 Delfully þurʒ hondez þryzt,
 Gyue þe to passe, when þou arte tryed,
 By innocens, & not by ryzte ! 708

LVIII.

“ Verily, eke the righteous man
approach shall he that noble tower,-
who taketh not his life in vain,
his neighbour cheateth not with guile.
Of such saw Solomon clearly once
how well our Wisdom welcomed him ;
He guided him by ways full straight,
shew'd him awhile the realm of God,
as who should say, ‘ Lo, you fair place !
thou may'st it win, if thou be brave.’
But, without peril, be thou sure,
the innocent is saved by right.

LIX.

“ Anent the righteous saith another,
David in Psalter. Hast it seen ?-
‘ Thy servant, Lord, draw never to doom ;
none living is justified 'fore Thee.’
So when thou comest to the Court,
where all our causes shall be cried,
renounce thy right, thou mayest come in,
by these same words that I have cull'd.
But He that bloodily died on rood,
whose hands were pierced so grievously,
grant thee to pass, when tried thou art,
by innocence and not by right !

LX.

" Ryȝtwysly quo [so] con rede,
 He loke on bok & be awayed,
 How *Jesus* hym welke in are-ȝede,
 & burnez her barnez vnto hym brayde; 712
 For happe & hele ȝat fro hym ȝede,
 To tou[c]h her chylde ȝay fayr hym prayed.
 His dessypelez wyth blame let be h[e]m bede,
 & wyth her resounez ful fele restayed. 716
Jesus þenne hem swetely sayde :-
 ' Do way, let chylde vnto me tyȝt;
 To suche is heuen-ryche arayed.'
 Þe innocent is ay saf by ryȝt. 720

§ XIII.

LXI.

f. 49^o " **I**ESUS con calle to hym hys mylde,
 & sayde hys ryche no wyȝ myȝt wynne
 Bot he com pyder ryȝt as a chylde,
 Oȝer elleȝ neuer more com þer-inne; 724
 Harmleȝ, trwe, & vnde-fylde,
 Wyth-outen mote oȝer mascle of sulphande synne,
 Quen such þer cnoken on þe bylde,
 Tyt schal hem men þe ȝate vnrȝinne. 728
 Þer is þe blys ȝat con not blynne,
 ȝat þe jueler soȝte þurȝ perre pres,
 & solde alle hys goud, boȝe wolen & lynne,
 To bye hym a perle watȝ mascelleȝ. 732

LX.

“ Who knoweth to read the Book aright,
 let him look in, and learn therefrom
 how Jesus walk'd once on a time,
 and folk their bairns press'd near to Him;
 to touch their children they Him besought,
 for hap and health that from Him came.
 His disciples sternly bade them cease;
 and at their words full many stay'd.

Then Jesus sweetly said to them :-
 ‘ Not so ; let children draw to Me ;
 for such is heaven's realm prepared.’
 The innocent is aye saved by right.

§ XIII.

LXI.

“ **J**ESUS call'd to Him His meek,
 and said, no man might win His realm
 save he came thither as a child ;
 else might he never therein come ;
 harmless, undefiled, and true,
 with ne'er stain nor spot of sapping sin,
 when such come knocking on that place,
 quickly for them the bolt is drawn.

There is the bliss that cannot fade,
 the jeweller sought 'mong precious gems,
 and sold his all, both linen and wool,
 to purchase him a spotless pearl.

LXII.

“ ‘ This ma[s]kellez perle, þat bozt is dere,
 þe joueler gef fore alle hys god,
 Is lyke þe reme of heuencs† [sp]ere ;
 So sayde þe Fader of folde & flode ; 736
 For hit is wemleþ, clene, & clere,
 & endeleþ rounde, & blyþe of mode,
 & commune to alle þat ryztwys† were.
 Lo, euen *in* myddeþ my breste hit stode ! 740
 My Lorde þe Lombe, þat schede hys blode,
 He pyzt hit þere *in* token of pes.
 I rede þe forsake þe worlde wode,
 & porchace þy perle maskelles.” 744

LXIII.

“ O maskeleþ Perle, *in* perleþ pure,
 þat bereþ,” *quod* I, “ þe perle of prys,
 Quo formed þe þy fayre fygure ?
 þat wrozt þy wede, he watþ ful wys ; 748
 þy beaute com *neuer* of nature ;
 Pymalyon paynted *neuer* þy vys ;
 Ne Arystotel nawþer by hys lettrure
 Of carpe[d] þe kynde þese *propert[y]*þ. 752
 þy colour passeþ þe *flour-de-lys* ;
 þyn angel-hauyng so clene corteþ !
 Breue me, bryzt, quat kyn of *triys*
 Bereþ þe perle so maskelleþ ? ” 756

LXII.

“ ‘This spotless pearl, so dearly bought,
 the jeweller gave his all therefor,
 is like the realm of Heaven’s sphere ;’
 so said the Father of field and flood ;
 for it is flawless, bright, and pure,
 endlessly round, of lustre blithe,
 and common to all that righteous were.
 Lo, its setting amid my breast !

My Lord the Lamb, who shed His blood,
 He set it there in token of peace.
 I rede thee forsake the world so wild,
 and get for thee thy spotless pearl.”

LXIII.

“ O spotless Pearl, in pearls so pure,
 that bearest,” quoth I, “ the pearl of price,
 who form’d for thee thy figure fair ?
 He was full wise that wrought thy robe ;
 thy beauty never from Nature came ;
 Pygmalion painted ne’er thy face ;
 nor Aristotle, with all his lore,
 told of the qualities of these gifts ;
 thy colour passeth the fleur-de-lis ;
 thy angel-bearing so all debonair !
 Tell me, Brightest, what is the peace
 that beareth as token this spotless pearl ? ”

LXIV.

- f. 49^b " My ma[s]kelez Lambe þat al may bete,"
 Quop scho, " my dere Destyne,
 Me ches to hys make, al-þa; vnmete
 Sum-tyme semed þat assemble. 760
 When I wente fro yor worlde wete,
 He calde me to hys bouerte :-
 ' Cum hyder to me, my lemman swete,
 For mote ne spot is non in þe.' 764
 He gef me myzt & als bewte ;
 In hys blod he wesch my wede on dese,
 &, coronde clene in vergynte,
 [He] pyzt me in perlez maskellez." 768

LXV.

- " Why, maskellez bryd, þat bryzt con flambe,
 þat reiatez hatz so ryche & ryf,
 Quat kyn þyng may be þat Lambe
 þat þe wolde wedde vnto hys vyf? 772
 Ouer alle oper so hyz þou clambe,
 To lede wyth hym so ladyly lyf.
 So mony a comly on-vunder cambe
 For Kryst han lyued in much stryf; 776
 & þou con alle þo dere out-dryf,
 & fro þat maryag[e] al oper depres,
 Al only þysself so stout & styf,
 A makelez may & maskellez ! " 780

LXIV.

“ My spotless Lamb, Who can better all,”
 quoth she, “ my Destiny so dear,
 chose me His bride, though all unfit
 the Spousal might a while well seem.
 When I went forth from your wet world,
 He call'd me to His Goodliness :—
 ‘ Come hither to Me, My truelove sweet,
 for stain or spot is none in thee.’

He gave me strength and beauty too ;
 in His blood on the Throne He wash'd my
 weeds ;
 and, crownèd clean in maidenhood,
 with spotless pearls He me beset.”

LXV.

“ Why, spotless Bride, that shinest bright,
 with regal glories rich and rare,
 what, forsooth, may be the Lamb,
 that thee as wife to Him would wed ?
 O'er all the rest hast thou climb'd high,
 with Him to lead so queenly a life.
 Many a fair, 'neath maiden crown,
 for Christ in mickle strife hath lived ;
 those dear ones thou hast all out-driven,
 and from that marriage all hast held,
 all save thyself, so strong and stiff,
 matchless maid, immaculate ! ”

§ XIV.

LXVI.

MASKELLES," *quop* þat myry quene,
 "Vnblemyst I am, wyth-ouren blot,
 & þat may I wyth mensk menteene;
 Bot 'makelez quene' þenne sade I not. 784
 þe Lambes vyuez in blysse we bene,
 A hondred & forty [fowre] þowsande flot,
 As in þe Apocalyppez hit is sene;
 Sant John hem syz al in a knot. 788
 On þe hyl of Syon, þat semly clot,
 þe apostel hem segh in gostly drem,
 Arayed to þe weddyng in þat hyl-coppe,
 þe nwe cyte o *Jerusalem*. 792

LXVII.

f. 50a "Of *Jerusalem* I in speche spelle.
 If þou wyl knaw what kyn he be—
 My Lombe, my Lorde, my dere Juelle,
 My Joy, my Blys, my Lemman fre— 796
 þe profete Ysaye of hym con melle
 Pitously of hys de-bonerte :—
 'þat glorious gy[^l]tlez þat mon con quelle
 Wyth-ouren any sake of felon[e]; 800
 As a schep to þe slazt þer lad watz he;
 &, as lombe þat clypper in lande [n]e[m],
 So closed he hys mouth fro vch quer[e],
 Quen Juez hym jugged in *Jerusalem* †.' 804

§ XIV.

LXVI.

“**I**MMACULATE,” said that merry queen,
 “unblemish’d I am, without a stain ;
 and this may I with grace avow ;
 but ‘matchless queen’—that said I ne’er.
 We all in bliss are Brides of the Lamb,
 a hundred and forty-four thousand in all,
 as in the Apocalypse it is clear ;
 Saint John beheld them in a throng.

On the Hill of Zion, that beauteous spot,
 the Apostle beheld them, in dream divine,
 array’d for the Bridal on that hill-top,—
 the City New of Jerusalem.

LXVII.

“Of Jerusalem is now my speech :
 If thou wouldst know what kind is He,
 my Lamb, my Lord, my dearest Jewel,
 my Joy, my Bliss, my noble Love,—
 the prophet Isaiah spake of Him,
 in pity of His gentleness,—
 ‘the Glorious Guiltless whom they killed
 with ne’er a cause of evil deed.

As a sheep to the slaughter He was led ;
 as lamb the shearer taketh a-field,
 He closed His mouth ’gainst questioning,
 when Jews Him judg’d in Jerusale m.’

LXVIII.

“ In *Jerusalem* wat3 my Lemman slayn
 & rent on rode wyth boyez bolde ;
 Al oure bale3 to bere ful bayn,
 He toke on hym self oure care3 colde ; 808
 Wyth boffete3 wat3 hys face flayn,
 þat wat3 so fayr on to byholde ;
 For synne he set hym self in vayn,
 þat neuer hade non hym self to wolde. 812
 For *vus* he lette hym fly3e & folde
 & brede vpon a bostwys bem ;
 As meke as lom[b] þat no playnt tolde,
 For *vus* he swalt in *Jerusalem*. 816

LXIX.

“ [In] *Jerusalem*, Jordan, & Galalye,
 þer-as baptysed þe goude Saynt Jon,
 His wordez acorded to Ysaye.
 When *Jesus* con to hym warde gon, 820
 He sayde of hym þys professye :-
 ‘ Lo, Gode3 Lombe as trwe as ston,
 þat dot3 away þe synne3 dry3e
 þat alle þys worlde hat3 wro3t vpon ! 824
 Hym self ne wro3t[e] neuer 3et non,
 Wheþer on hym self he con al clem.
 Hys generacyoun quo recen con,
 þat dy3ed for *vus* in *Jerusalem* ? ’ 828

LXVIII.

“ In Jerusalem was my Truelove slain
 and rent on rood by boist'rous churls ;
 full ready all our bales to bear,
 He took on Him our cares so cold.
 With buffets was His face all flay'd,
 that was so fair to look upon ;
 for sin He set Himself at nought,
 that ne'er had sin to call His own.

For us He let Him beat and bend
 and bind upon a rugged rood ;
 as meek as lamb, that made no plaint,
 for us He died in Jerusalem.

LXIX.

“ In Jerusalem, Jordan, and Galilee,
 where baptized folk the good Saint John,
 his words accorded with Isaiah's.
 When Jesus was come a-nigh to him,
 he spake of Him this prophecy :—
 ‘ Behold God's Lamb, as true as stone,
 who doth away the endless sins
 that all this world hath ever wrought.

Yet He Himself wrought never one,
 though on Himself all sins He laid.
 His generation who can tell,
 that died for us in Jerusalem ? ’

LXX.

f. 50b " In *Jerusalem þus* my *Lemman* sw[e]te
 Twyeꝝ for lombe waꝝ taken þare,
 By trw recorde of ayþer prophete,
 For mode so meke & al hys fare. 832
 þe pryde tyme is þer-to ful mete,
 In Apokalypeꝝ wryten ful zare.
 In mydeꝝ þe trone, þere saynteꝝ sete, 836
 þe apostel Iohn hym saꝝ† as bare,
 Lesande þe boke with leueꝝ sware,
 þere seuen sygnetteꝝ wern sette in-seme ;
 & at þat syzt vche douth con dare,
 In helle, in erþe, & *Jerusalem*. 840

§ XV.

LXXI.

" **T**HYS *Jerusalem* Lombe hadeneuer pechche
 Of oþer huee bot quyt jolyf,
 þat mot ne mask[e]lle mozt on streche, 844
 For wolle quyte so ronk & ryf ;
 For-þy vche saule þat hade neuer teche
 Is to þat Lombe a worthyly wyf ;
 & þaꝝ vch day a store he feche,
 Among *vous commeꝝ* [n]oþer strot ne stryf ; 848
 Bot vchon enle we wolde were fyf,—
 þe mo þe myryer, so God me blesse !
 In compayny gret our luf con þryf,
 In honour more & neuer þe lesse. 852

In nra an no leua i cote
 an is en lonk dicit tuer p ore
 by ito ptear of ay gyle te
 fu mod tulle y al nra ead
 pe ptear tulle as pto eul mare
 in nra luyes cuncton eul mare
 in nra pe trome pere cuncton mare
 pe apostel iohu ip cuncton as luy
 de loma ptear dicit luy cuncton
 pere luy dicit cuncton dicitur Thome
 at it luy dicit cuncton dicitur
 melle luy dicitur

Ihs in nra luy dicit nra ptear
 ut op huc ut qure iohu
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FROM COTTON MS. NERO A. X., LL. 829-57.

LXX.

“ In Jerusalem thus my Truelove sweet
twice was taken there as lamb,
by record true of prophets twain,
so meek His mood and all His mien.
The third time well befits thereto,
as written in Apocalypse.
Amidst the Throne, where sat the Saints,
the Apostle John Him clearly saw,
 opening the Book with pages square,
 with seven seals set forth thereon ;
 and at that sight the doughty quaked,
in Hell, in Earth, and Jerusalem.

§ XV.

LXXI.

“ **T**HIS Lamb of Jerusalem had no speck
of other hue save winsome white,
that ne'er a stain or spot might touch,
so white the wool, so rich and rare ;
wherefore each soul that hath no taint
is to that Lamb a wife ador'd ;
and though each day a many He bring,
nor strife nor stress among us comes ;
 but each one singly we would were five,—
 the more the merrier, so bless me God !
Our love can thrive in company great ;
our honour more and never less.

LXXII.

" Lasse of blysse may non *vus* bryng,
 þat beren þys perle vpon oure bereste,
 For þay of mote coupe *neuer* mynge,
 Of spotlez perlez þa[t] beren þe creste. 856
 Al-þaz oure corsen in clottez clynge,
 & 3e remen for raupe wyth-outen reste,
 We þur3-outly hauen cnawying,
 Of [o]n dethe ful oure hope is drest. 860
 þe lou[m]bc *vus* gladcz, ourc care is kest ;
 He myrþez *vus* alle at vch a mes ;
 Vchone3 blysse is breme & beste,
 & *neuer* one3 honour zet *neuer* þe les. 864

LXXIII.

f. 51a " Lest les þou leue my taleþ farande,
 In Appocalyppece is wryten in wro :-
 ' I scghc,' says John, ' þe Loumbe hym stande
 On þe mount of Syon, ful þryuen & þro, 868
 & wyth hym maydennez an hundreþe þowsande,
 & fowre & forty þowsande mo ;
 On alle her forhede3 wryten I fande
 þe Lombe3 nome, hys Fadere3 also. 872
 A hue fro heuen I herde þoo,
 Lyk flode3 fele l[e]den, runnen on resse,
 & as þunder þrowez in torrez blo,
 þat lote, I leue, watz *neuer* þe les. 876

LXXII.

“ Less of bliss may none us bring,
this pearl who bear upon our breasts,
for ne'er a thought of sin know they
the crown who bear of spotless pearls.
And though our corsers cling in clay,
and ye for ruth cry ceaselessly,
we knowledge have full well of this,—
from one death cometh all our hope.

Us gladd'neth the Lamb ; our care is cast ;
He maketh mirth at every meal ;
of each the bliss is bravest and best,
and no one's honour is yet the less.

LXXIII.

“ But lest thou deem my tale less true,
in Apocalypse is writ a verse :—
' I saw,' saith John, ' where stood the Lamb,
on the Mount of Zion, thriven and strong,
and with Him maidens a hundred thousand,
and four and forty thousand more ;
on all their foreheads writ I found
the Lamb's own name, His Father's eke.

A voice from heaven heard I then,
like many floods' roar, a-rushing on ;
as thunder hurtles in lowring skies ;
that sound, I trow, was none the less.

LXXIV.

“ ‘ Naupes, þaʒ hit schowted scharpe,
 & ledden loude al-þaʒ hit were,
 A note ful nwe I herde hem warpe ;
 To lysten þat watʒ ful lufly dere. 880
 As harporeʒ harpen in her harpe,
 þat nwe songe þay songen ful cler,—
 In souzande noteʒ a gentyl carpe ;
 Ful fayre þe modeʒ þay fonge in fere. 884
 Ryʒt byfore Godeʒ chayere,
 & þe fowre besteʒ þat hym obes,
 & þe alder-men so sadde of chere,
 Her songe þay songen neuer þe les. 888

LXXV.

“ ‘ Nowþe-lese non watʒ neuer so quoynt,
 For alle þe crafteʒ þat euer þay knewe,
 þat of þat songe myʒt synge a poynt, 892
 Bot þat meyny þe Lombe þa[t] swe ;
 For þay arn boʒt, fro þe vrþe aloynte,
 As newe fryt to God ful due,
 & to þe gentyl Lombe hit arn anioynt,
 As lyk to hym self of lote & hwe ; 896
 For neuer lesyng ne tale vn-trwe
 Ne towched her tonge for no dysstresse.
 þat moteles meyny may neuer remwe
 Fro þat maskeleʒ Mayster neuer þe les.’ ’ 900

LXXIV.

“ ‘ Nevertheless, though sharp the shout,
though loud the voice that echoed there,
a note full new I heard them raise ;
to list thereto was blissful joy.

As harpers harp upon their harps,
that new song sang they tunefully,—
a noble theme in clearest notes ;
sweetly in chorus they caught the strain.

And e’en before the Throne of God,
and the four beasts that bow to Him,
and the Elders all, so grave of mien,
their song they sang there never the less.

LXXV.

“ ‘ Nevertheless was none so skill’d,
for all the crafts that e’er he knew,
that of that song might sing a note,
save all the host that follow the Lamb.
They are redeem’d, remov’d from earth,
as first-fruits wholly due to God,
and to that gentle Lamb enjoin’d,
as like to Him in hue and look ;
for never a lie nor tale untrue
had touch’d their tongues, for any pain.
To spotless Lord the spotless host
shall nearest be, and never less.’ ”

LXXVI.

f. 51b "Neuer þe les let be my þonc,"

Quoth I, "my Perle, þa; I appose;
 I schulde not tempte þy wyt so wlonc,
 To Kryste; chambre þat art ichose. 904
 I am bot mokke & mul amon[c],
 & þou so ryche a reken rose,
 & byde; here by þys blyful bonc
 þer lyuez lyste may neuer lose. 908
 Now, hynde, þat sympelnesse cone; enclose;
 I wolde þe aske a þynge expresse;
 & þa; I be bustwys as a [w]ose, 912
 Let my bone vayl[e] neuer-þe-lese.

§ XVI.

LXXVII.

"NEUER-ÞE-LESE cler I yow by-calle,
 If ze con se hyt be to done;
 As þou art glorious wyth-ouen galle, 916
 Wyth-nay þou neuer my ruful bone.
 Haf ze no wone; in castel-walle,
 Ne maner þer ze may mete & won[e]?
 þou telle; me of *Jerusalem*, þe ryche ryalle,
 þer Dauid dere wat; dyzt on trone; 920
 Bot by þyse holte; hit con not hone;
 Bot in Judee hit is, þat noble note;
 As ze ar maskele; vnder mone,
 Your wone; schulde be wyth-ouen mote. 924

LXXVI.

“ And none the less my thanks have thou,”
 quoth I, “ my Pearl, though yet I ask ;
 I should not try thy noble mind,
 who chosen to Christ’s chamber art.
 I am but earth and dust a-while,
 and thou so rich a royal rose,
 and bidest by this blissful bank,
 where life’s delight may ne’er be lost.

Now, Lady,—simple wast thou once,—
 I fain would ask thee but one thing ;
 and though I be wild as man of the woods,
 let, ne’ertheless, my prayer avail !

§ XVI.

LXXVII.

“ **I** NONE the less beseech thee fair,
 if thou canst see it may be done,
 as thou art glorious, free from fault,
 my rueful prayer deny not thou.
 Have ye no homes in castle-walls ?
 No manor where ye may meet and bide ?
 Thou namest Jerusalem, rich and royal,
 where David dear was dight on throne ;
 but by these holts it cannot be ;
 ’tis in Judæa, that noble place ;
 as ye are spotless ’neath the moon,
 all spotless so should be your homes.

LXXVIII.

“ þys motelez meyny þou coneȝ of mele,
 Of þousandez þryȝt so gret a route ;
 A gret cete, for ȝe arn fele,
 Yow by-hod haue wytb-uten doute. 928
 So cumly a pakke of joly juele
 Wer euel don schulde lyȝ per-oute ;
 & by þyse bonkeȝ þer I con gele,
 †I se no bygynȝ nowhere aboute. 932
 I trowe al-one ȝe lenge & loute,
 To loke on þe glory of þys grac[i]ous gote ;
 If þou hatȝ oþer lyȝynȝeȝ stoute,
 Now tech me to þat myry mote.” 936

LXXIX.

f. 52a “ That mote þou meneȝ in Judy londe,”
 þat specyall spyce þen to me spakk,
 “ þat is þe cyte þat þe Lombe con fonde,
 To suffer inne sor for maneȝ sake,— 940
 þe olde *Jerusalem* to vnder-sonde,
 For þere þe olde gulte watȝ don to slake ;
 Bot þe nwe, þat lyȝt of Godeȝ sonde,
 þe apostel in Apocalyppe in theme con take. 944
 þe Lom[b]e þer, wytb-uten spotteȝ blake,
 Hatȝ feryed þyder hys fayre flote ;
 & as hys flok is wytb-uten flake,
 So is hys mote wytb-uten moote. 948

LXXVIII.

“This spotless band thou speakest of,
 this throng of thousands, such a host ;
 a city vast, so many ye are,
 without a doubt, ye needs must have.
 So comely a pack of joyous jewels
 ’twere perilous to lodge without ;
 but, where I tarry by these banks,
 I see no dwelling anywhere.

I trow ye but linger here and walk,
 to look on the glory of this fair stream ;
 if elsewhere thou hast dwellings firm,
 now lead me to that merry spot.”

LXXIX.

“The spot thou meanest, in Jewry land,”
 that wonder rare then said to me,
 “the city it is the Lamb did seek,
 to suffer there sore, for sake of man,—
 the Old Jerusalem, to wit,
 for there the old guilt was assoil’d ;
 but the New, come down by God’s own word,—
 the Apostle’s theme in Apocalypse,—
 ’tis there the Lamb, with no black stain,
 thither hath borne His beauteous throng ;
 and as His flock is without fold,
 moatless His mansion in that spot.

LXXX.

“Of motes two to carpe clene,
 & *Jerusalem* hyzt boþe nawþeles,—
 þat nys to yow no more to mene
 Bot cete of God oþer syzt of pes,— 952
 In þat on oure pes watȝ mad at ene ;
 Wytþ payne to suffer þe Lombe hit chese ;
 In þat oþer is noȝt bot pes to glene,
 þat ay schal laste wytþ-ouren reles. 956
 þat is þe borȝ þat we to pres
 Fro þat oure f[1]esch be layd to rote ;
 þer glory & blysse schal euer ences
 To þe meyny þat is wytþ-ouren mote.” 960

LXXXI.

“Motelez may so meke & mylde,”
 þen sayde I to þat lufly flor,
 “Bryng me to þat bygly bylde,
 & let me se þy blysfyl bor.” 964
 þat schene sayde :—“þat God wyl schylde ;
 þou may not enter wytþ-inne hys tor ;
 Bot of þe Lombe I haue þe aquylde
 For a syzt þer-of þurȝ gret fauor. 968
 Vt-wyth to se þat clene cloystor
 þou may, bot in-wyth not a fote
 To strech in þe strete þou hatȝ no vygour,
 Bot þou wer clene wytþ-ouren mote. 972



FROM COTTON MS. NERO A. X., ILLUSTRATING LL. 961-72.

LXXX.

“Of these twain spots to speak aright,
and yet hight both Jerusalem,—
which, know thou, meaneth nothing else
but *City of God*, or *Sight of Peace*,—
in the one, our peace one time was made ;
the Lamb chose there to suffer pain ;
in the other is nought but peace to glean,
that aye shall last unceasingly.

This is the bourne whereto we press,
soon as our flesh is laid to waste ;
there glory and bliss shall e'er increase
unto the host without a spot.”

LXXXI.

“Spotless maid, so meek and mild,”
then said I to that flower full fair,
“bring me to that blest abode,
and let me see thy blissful bower.”
That glory said : “God this forbiddeth ;
within His tower thou may'st not come ;
but from the Lamb I welcome thee
to a sight thereof, by His great grace.

That cloister clean may'st see without ;
within—thy vigour availeth not
to enter in its street one foot,
save thou wert clean in spotlessness.

§ XVII.

LXXXII.

f. 52^b “ **I**F I þis mote þe schal vn-hyde,
 Bow vp to-warde þys bornez heued,
 & I an-ende3 þe on þis syde
 Schal sve, tyl þou to a hil be veued.” 976
 þen wolde [I þer] no lenger byde,
 Bot lurked by launce3 so luffy leued,
 Tyl on a hyl þat I asspyed
 & blusched on þe burghē, as I forth dreued. 980
 By-3onde þe brok fro me warde keued,
 þat schyrrer þen sunne wytþ schafte3 schon;
 In þe Apokalypce is þe fasoun preued,
 As deuyse3 hit þe apostel Jhon. 984

LXXXIII.

As John þe apostel hit sy3 wytþ sy3t,
 I sy3e þat cyty of gret renoun,
 Jerusalem so nwe & ryally dy3t,
 As hit wat3 ly3t fro þe heuen adoun. 988
 þe bor3 wat3 al of brende golde bry3t,
 As glemande glas burnist broun,
 Wytþ gentyl gemme3 an-vnder py3t,
 Wytþ bantelez twelue on basyng boun; 992
 þe foundementez twelue of riche tenoun;
 Vch tabelment wat3 a serlype3 ston;
 As derely deuyse3 þis ilk toun
 In Apocalyppe3 þe apostel John. 996

§ XVII.

LXXXII.

“**S**HALL I to thee this spot reveal,
 bend thou toward this river’s head,—
 I, opposite, upon this bank,
 shall follow, till thou come to a hill.”
 No longer would I tarry then,
 but stole ’neath boughs, ’neath lovely leaves,
 till, from a hill, as on I went,
 I espied and gazed upon the Burgh.
 Deep set from me, beyond the brook,
 with rays it shone, than sun more bright.
 In Apocalypse is found its form,
 as pictureth the Apostle John.

LXXXIII.

As John the Apostle saw it then,
 saw I that City of noble fame,—
 Jerusalem, new and royally dight,
 as it was come from Heaven adown.
 The Burgh was all of burning gold,
 burnish’d bright as gleaming glass,
 with glorious gems beneath it set,
 with twelve steps rising from the base,
 foundations twelve, with tenons rich,
 and every slab a special stone ;
 as in Apocalypse this same Burgh
 John the Apostle pictureth well.

LXXXIV.

As [John] pise stone; *in* writ con nemme,
 I knew þe name[3] *after* his tale.
 Jasper hyzt þe fyrst[e] gemme,
 þat I on þe fyrst[e] basse con wale; 1000
 He glente grene *in* þe lowest hemme;
 Saffer helde þe secounde stale;
 þe calsydoyne þenne *wytb-*outen wemme
In þe þryd[de] table con purly pale; 1004
 þe emerade þe furþe so grene of scale;
 þe sardonysse þe fyfþe ston;
 þe sexte þe [sarde]; he con hit wale,
In þe Apocalyppe, þe apostel John. 1008

LXXXV.

f. 53^a 3et joyned John þe crysolyt,
 þe seuenþe gemme *in* fundament;
 þe aytþe þe beryl cler & quyt;
 þe topasye twynne-how þe nente endent; 1012
 þe crysopase þe tenþe is tyzt;
 þe jacyngh[t] þe enleuenþe gent;
 þe twelfþe, þe [try]este *in* vch a plyt,
 þe amatyst purple *wytb* ynde blente. 1016
 þe wal abof þe bantels b[r]ent,
 O jasporye as glas þat glysnande schon,—
 I knew hit by his deuysement
In þe Apocalyppe, þe apostel J[o]hn. 1020

LXXXIV.

As John these stones named in his book,
I knew the names, as he doth tell.
Jasper hight the first gem there,
that on the first base I discern'd ;
on lowest course it glisten'd green ;
sapphire held the second step ;
the chalcedony then, without a spot
on tier the third shone pale and pure ;
the emerald fourth, so green of scale ;
the fifth stone was the sardonyx ;
the sardius sixth ; in Apocalypse
John the Apostle discern'd it then.

LXXXV.

To these join'd John the chrysolite,
foundation-stone the seventh there ;
the eighth the beryl, white and clear ;
the twin-hued topaz ninth was set ;
the chrysoprase came next, the tenth ;
the gentle jacinth then, eleventh ;
the twelfth, the surest in every plight,
the purple amethyst, blent with blue.
The wall rose sheer above the steps,
of jasper as glass that gleaming shone ;
I knew it, as he pictured it
in Apocalypse, the Apostle John.

LXXXVI.

As John deuysed 3et sa3 I þare,—
 þise twelue de-gres wern brode & stayre ;
 þe cyte stod abof ful sware,
 As longe as brode as hy3e ful fayre ; 1024
 þe strete3 of golde as glasse al bare ;
 þe wal of jasper þat glent as glayre ;
 þe wone3 *wyrb-inne* enurned ware
 Wyth alle kynne3 perre þat mo3t repayre. 1028
 þenne helde vch sware of þis manayre
 Twelue [powsande] forlonge† er euer hit fon,
 Of he3t, of brede, of lenþe, to cayre ;
 For meten hit sy3 þe apostel John. 1032

§ XVIII.

LXXXVII.

AS John hym wryte3 3et more I sy3e :
 Vch pane of þat place had þre 3ate3 ;
 So twelue *in poursent* I con asspye ;
 þe portalez pyked of ryche plate3 ; 1036
 & vch 3ate of a margyrye,
 A parfyt perle þat neuer fate3.
 Vchon *in scrypture* a name con plye
 Of *Israel* barne3, folewande her date3, 1040
 þat is to say, as her byrb[e]-whate3 ;
 þe aldest ay fyrst þer-on wat3 done.
 Such ly3t þer lemed *in alle* þe strate3,
 Hem nedde nawþer sunne ne mone. 1044

LXXXVI.

As John there pictured, saw I too,—
 broad and steep were these twelve steps ;
 the City stood above full square,
 in length as great as breadth and height ;
 the streets of gold, as clear as glass ;
 the wall of jasper ; as glair it gleam'd.
 The mansions were adorn'd within
 with every kind of gem e'er found.

And held each side of that domain
 twelve thousand furlongs, ere ended then,
 in height, in breadth, in length, its course ;
 for measured saw it the Apostle John.

§ XVIII.

LXXXVII.

AS writeth John, yet saw I more,—
 three gates had each side of that place,
 yea, twelve in compass I espied,
 the portals deck'd with plates full rich ;
 each gate was of one margery pearl,—
 a perfect pearl that fadeth ne'er.
 Each bore thereon a name inscribed
 of Israel's children, in order of time,
 that is to say, as their fortunes of birth ;
 ever the elder first was writ.
 Such light there gleam'd in all the streets,
 they needed neither sun nor moon.

LXXXVIII.

f. 53^b Of sunne ne mone had þay no nede ;
 þe self[e] God wat3 her lom[p]e-lyzt,
 þe Lombe her lantyrne wytþ-ouren drede ;
 þur3 hym blysned þe bor3 al bryzt. 1048
 þur3 wo3e & won my lokyng zede,
 For sotyle cler no3t lette no [s]yzt ;
 þe hy3e trone þer mo3t 3e hede
 Wytþ alle þe apparaylmente vmbe-py3te, 1052
 As John þe appostel in terme3 tyzte ;
 þe hy3e Gode3 self hit set vpone ;
 A reuer of þe trone þer ran out-ryzte
 Wat3 bryzter þen boþe þe sunne & mone. 1056

LXXXIX.

Sunne ne mone schon neuere so swete,
 A[s] þat foysoun flode out of þat flet ;
 Swyþe hit swange þur3 vch a strete,
 Wytþ-ouren fylþe oþer galle oþer glet. 1060
 Kyrk þer-inne wat3 non 3ete,
 Chapel ne temple þat euere wat3 set ;
 þe Al-myzty wat3 her mynyster mete ;
 þe Lombe þe saker-fyse þer to reget. 1064
 þe 3ate3 stoken wat3 neuere zet,
 Bot euere-more vpen at vche a lone ;
 þer entre3 non to take reset,
 þat bere3 any spot an-vnde[r] mone. 1068

LXXXVIII.

Of sun or moon had they no need ;
 their lamp-light was the very God ;
 the Lamb their lantern that never fail'd ;
 through Him the City brightly gleam'd.
 Through wall and mansion pierced my gaze ;
 all was so clear, nought hinder'd sight.
 The High Throne might ye there behold,
 engirt with all its fair array,
 as John the Apostle drew in words ;
 and thereon sat High God Himself.
 A river from the Throne ran out ;
 'twas brighter than both sun and moon.

LXXXIX.

Nor sun nor moon so sweetly shone
 as that rich flood from out that floor ;
 through every street it swiftly surged,
 free from filth and mud and mire.
 Church therein was none to see,
 chapel nor temple that ever was set ;
 the Almighty was their minster meet,
 the Lamb their sacrifice, there to atone.
 The portals never yet were barr'd,
 but evermore open at ev'ry lane ;
 none entereth there to take abode,
 that beareth spot beneath the moon.

xc.

The mone may þer-of acroche no myzte ;
 To spotty ho is, of body to grym ;
 & al-so þer ne is neuer nyzt.
 What schulde þe mone þer compas clym, 1072
 & to euen wyth þat worþly lyzt,
 þat schyneþ vpon þe brokeþ bryni ?
 þe planeteþ arn in to pouer a plyzt,
 & þe self[e] sunne ful fer to dym. 1076
 Aboute þat water arn tres ful schym,
 þat twelue fryteþ of lyf con bere ful sone ;
 Twelue syþeþ on þer þay beren ful frym,
 & re-nowleþ nwe in vche a mone. 1080

xci.

f. 54^a An-vnder mone so gret merwayle
 No fleschly hert ne myzt endeure,
 As quen I blusched vpon þat ba[y]l[e],
 So ferly þer-of watþ þe fasure. 1084
 I stod as styll as dased quayle,
 For ferly of þat freuch fygure,
 þat felde I nawþer reste ne trauayle,
 So watþ I rauyste wyth glymme pure. 1088
 For I dar say wytþ conciens sure,
 Hade bodyly burne abiden þat bone,
 þaþ alle clerkeþ hym hade in cure,
 His lyf wer loste an-vnder mone. 1092

xc.

The moon no might may there acquire ;
too spotty is she, too grim her form ;
and night is never in that place.
Why should the moon climb there her course,
as 'twere with that rich light to vie,
that shineth upon the river's bank ?
The planets' plight is all too poor ;
the very sun is far too dim.

About that stream are trees full bright,
that bear full soon twelve fruits of life ;
twelve times each year they bravely bear,
their fruit renewing every moon.

xci.

Beneath the moon no heart of flesh
so great a marvel might sustaio,
as I, a-gazing on that Burgh,
so wondrous was the form thereof.
I stood as still as dazed quail,
in wonder of that gladsome sight ;
nor rest nor travail felt I then,
so ravish'd by that radiance rare.

For I, with knowledge sure, dare say,
had mortal bodily borne that bliss,
though all our clerks had him in cure,
his life were lost beneath the moon.

§ XIX.

xcii.

RYȝT as þe maynful mone con rys,
 Er þenne þe day-glem dryue al douu,
 So sodanly on a wonder wyse,
 I watȝ war of a proressyoun. 1096
 þis noble cite of ryche enpr[y]se
 Watȝ sodanly ful, wyth-outen sommoun,
 Of such *vergynez in* þe same gyse
 þat watȝ my blysful an-vnder croun; 1100
 & coronde wern alle of þe same fasoun,
 Depaynt *in* perlez & wedez qwyte;
In vchoneȝ breste watȝ bounden boun
 þe blysful perle wyth [gret] delyt. 1104

xciii.

Wyth gret delyt þay glod *in* fere
 On golden gateȝ þat glent as glasse;
 Hundreth þowsandeȝ I wot þer were,
 & alle in sute her liureȝ wasse; 1108
 Tor to know þe gladdest chere.
 þe Lombe byfore con proudly passe,
 Wyth hornez seuen of red g[ol]de cler;
 As prayсед perlez his wedeȝ wasse. 1112
 Towarde þe throne þay trone a tras;
 þaȝ þay wern fele, no pres *in* plyt;
 Bot mylde as maydeneȝ seme at mas,
 So droȝ þay forth wyth gret delyt. 1116

§ XIX.

xcii.

AS when the mighty moon doth rise,
 ere thence the gleam of day may set,
 so, suddenly, in wondrous way,
 I was 'ware of a procession there.
 This noble city of rich renown
 was suddenly, without summons, full
 of maidens, all in self-same garb
 as was my Blissful beneath her crown ;
 and crownèd were they all alike,
 array'd in pearls and raiment white ;
 on each one's breast was fasten'd firm,
 with great delight, the blissful pearl.

xciii.

With great delight they fared together
 on golden streets that gleam'd as glass ;
 hundreds of thousands I wot there were,
 as of one Order was their guise ;
 'twere hard to choose the gladdest mien.
 Before them proudly pass'd the Lamb,
 with seven horns of clear red gold ;
 His robe most like to praisèd pearls.
 Toward the Throne they took their track ;
 though they were many, none did press ;
 but mild as modest maids at mass,
 so drew they on, with great delight.

xciv.

f. 54^b Delyt þat [þer] hys come encroched,
 To much hit were of for to melle ;
 þise alder-men, quen he aproched,
 Grouelyng to his fete þay felle ; 1120
 Legyounes of aungeles; togeder uoched
 þer kesten ensens of swete smelle ;
 þen glory & gle wat3 nwe abroched ;
 Al songe to loue þat gay Juelle. 1124
 þe steuen mozt stryke þur3 þe vrþe to helle,
 þat þe Vertues of heuen of joye endyte ;
 To loue þe Lombe, his meyny in melle,
 I-wysse I la3t a gret delyt. 1128

xcv.

Delit þe Lombe for to deuise
 Wytþ much meruayle in mynde went ;
 Best wat3 he, blyþest, & moste to pryse,
 þat euer I herde of speche spent. 1132
 So worþly whyt wern wede3 hys[e],
 His loke3 symple, hym self so gent ;
 Bot a wounde ful wyde & weete con wyse
 An-ende hys hert, þur3 hyde to-rente. 1136
 Of his quyte syde his blod out-sprent.
 A-las ! þo3t I, who did þat spyt ?
 Ani breste for bale a3t haf for-brent
 Er he þer-to hade had delyt. 1140

xciv.

Delight that there His coming brought,
 too much it were to tell thereof;
 those Elders all, when He approach'd,
 prostrate they fell before His feet;
 legions of angels, call'd together,
 scatter'd there incense of sweetest smell;
 then glory and glee pour'd forth anew;
 all sang to laud that gladsome Jewel.

Through earth to hell the strain might strike,
 that the Virtues of Heaven attune in joy;
 to laud the Lamb, His host amid,
 in sooth possess'd me great delight.

xcv.

Delight, much marvel, held my mind
 aright to picture forth the Lamb;
 best was He, blithest, and most to prize,
 that e'er I heard in speech set forth.
 So wondrous white was His array,
 simple His looks, Himself so calm;
 but a wound full wide and wet was seen,
 against His heart, through sunder'd skin;
 from His white side His blood stream'd out.
 Alas! thought I, who did that hurt?
 Any breast should all have burnt in bale,
 ere it thereto had had delight.

xcvi.

The Lombe delyt non lyste to wene ;
 þaz he were hurt & wounde hade,
 In his sembelauht wat3 neuer sene,
 So wern his glente3 glorious glade. 1144
 I loked among his meyny schene,
 How þay wyth lyf wern laste & lade ;
 þen sa3 I þer my lyttel quene,
 þat I wende had starden by me in sclade. 1148
 Lorde, much of mirþe wat3 þat ho made,
 Among her fere3 þat wat3 so quyt !
 þat sy3t me gart to þenk to wade,
 For luf-longyng in gret delyt. 1152

§ XX.

xcvii.

f. 55a. **D**ELYT me drof in y3e & ere ;
 My mane3 mynde to maddyng malte ;
 Quen I se3 my frely, I wolde be þere,
 By3onde þe water þaz ho were walte. 1156
 I þo3t þat no þyng my3t me dere
 To fech me bur & take me halte ;
 & to start in þe strem schulde non me stere,
 To swymme þe remnaunt þaz I þer swalte. 1160
 Bot of þat munt I wat3 bi-talt ;
 When I schulde start in þe strem astraye,
 Out of þat caste I wat3 by-calt ;
 Hit wat3 not at my Prynce3 paye. 1164

xcvi.

But none would doubt the Lamb's delight ;
 though He were hurt and wounded sore,
 none could it in His semblance see,
 His glance so glorious was and glad.
 I look'd among His radiant host,
 how they with life were fill'd and fraught ;
 then saw I there my little queen,
 I thought was nigh me in the glen.

Lord, much of mirth was it she made !
 Among her peers she was so fair.
 That sight there made me think to cross,
 for love-longing and great delight.

§ XX.

xcvii.

DELIGHT so drove me, eye and ear ;
 melted to madness my mortal mind ;
 when I saw my Precious, I would be there,
 beyond the stream though she were held.
 Nothing, methought, might hinder me
 from fetching birr and taking-off ;
 and nought should keep me from the start,
 though I there perish'd swimming the rest.

But I was shaken from that thought ;
 as I wildly will'd to start a-stream,
 I was recall'd from out that mood ;
 it was not pleasing to my Prince.

xcviii.

Hit payed hym not þat I so flonc
Ouer meruelous merez, so mad arayde,
 Of raas þaȝ I were rasch & ronk,
 ȝet rapely þer-inne I watȝ restayed. 1168
 For ryȝt as I sparred vn-to þe bonc,
 þat brat[h]e out of my drem me brayde.
 þen wakned I in þat erber wlonk;
 My hede vpon þat hylle watȝ layde, 1172
 þer-as my perle to grounde strayd.
 I raxled, & fel in gret affray,
 & sykyng to myself I sayd,
 “Now al be to þat Prynceȝ paye.” 1176

xcix.

Me payed ful ille to be out-fleme
 So sodenly of þat fayre regioun,
 Fro alle þo syȝtez so quykeȝ & queme.
 A longeyng heuy me strok in swone, 1180
 & rewfully þenne I con to reme :-
 “O Perle,” quoth I, “of rych renoun,
 So watȝ hit me dere þat þou con deme
 In þys veray avysyoun! 1184
 Ifȝ hit be ueray & soth sermoun,
 þat þou so st[r]ykeȝ in garlande gay,
 So wel is me in þys doel-doungoun,
 þat þou art to þat Prynseȝ paye.” 1188

xcviii.

It pleased Him not I flung me thus,
so madly, o'er those wondrous meres ;
though on I rush'd, full rash and rude,
yet quickly was my running stay'd ;
for as I sped me to the brink,
the strain me startled from my dream.
Then woke I in that garden green ;
my head upon that mound was laid,
e'en where my Pearl had strayed below.
I roused me, and fell in great dismay,
and, sighing, to myself I said,
" Now, all be as that Prince may please ! "

xcix.

Me pleased it ill to be out cast
so suddenly from that fair realm,
from all those sights so blithe and brave.
Sore longing struck me, and I swoon'd,
and ruefully then I cried aloud :-
" O Pearl," quoth I, " of rich renown,
how dear to me was all that thou
in this true vision didst declare !
And if the tale be verily true,
that thou thus farest, in garland gay,
so well is me in this dungeon dire,
that thou art pleasing to that Prince ! "

c.

f. 55^b. To þat Pryncez paye hade I ay bente,
 & ʒerned no more þen watʒ me g[y]uen,
 & halden me þer in trwe entent,
 As þe Perle me prayed þat watʒ so þryuen, 1192
 As helde drawen to Goddeʒ present,
 To mo of his mysterys I hade ben dryuen.
 Bot ay wolde man of happe more hente
 þen moʒte† by ryʒt vpon hem clyuen. 1196
 þer-fore my ioye watʒ ʒone to-riuen,
 & I kaste of kytheʒ þat lasteʒ aye.
 Lorde, mad hit arn þat agayn þe stryuen,
 Oþer proferen þe oʒt agayn þy paye ! 1200

c1.

To pay þe Prince, oþer sete saʒte,
 Hit is ful epe to þe god Krystyn ;
 For I haf founden hym, boþe day & naʒte,
 A God, a Lorde, a Frende ful fyin. 1204
 Ouer þis hyul þis lote I laʒte,
 For pyty of my Perle enclyin ;
 & syþen to God I hit by-taʒte,
 in Krysteʒ dere blessyng & myn, 1208
 þat, in þe forme of bred & wyn,
 þe preste *vus* scheweʒ vch a daye ;
 He gef *vus* to be his homly hyne,
 Ande precious perleʒ vnto his pay ! 1212
 Amen. Amen.

c.

That Prince to please had I still bow'd,
 nor yearn'd for more than was me given,
 and held me there with true intent,
 as the Pearl me pray'd, that was so wise,
 belike, unto God's presence drawn,
 to more of His mysteries had I been led.
 But aye will man seize more of bliss
 than may abide with him by right.

Wherefore my joy was sunder'd soon,
 and I cast forth from realms eterne.

Lord, mad are they that 'gainst Thee strive,
 or 'gainst Thy pleasure proffer aught !

ci.

To please the Prince, to be at peace,
 good Christian hath it easy here ;
 for I have found Him, day and night,
 a God, a Lord, a Friend full firm.

Over yon mound had I this hap,
 prone there for pity of my Pearl ;
 to God I then committed it,
 in Christ's dear blessing and mine own,—

Christ that in form of bread and wine
 the priest each day to us doth shew ;
 He grant we be His servants leal,—
 yea, precious Pearls to please Him aye !

Amen. Amen.