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THE LIFE AND ATTRAIBUTES OF THE VIRGIN MARY
IN MIDDLE ENGLISH RELIGIOUS LYRICS

by

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Salve. Mary, my patron and lady of estate.

Regina Deae, virgo, et mater, de Gyline.

Et in terra pacis, in pace, in pace.

Et in pace, in pace, in peace.

Et in pace, in peace, in peace.

Et in pace, in peace, in peace.

Et in pace, in peace, in peace.

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Et in pace, in peace, in peace.

Et in pace, in peace, in peace.

Et in peace, in peace, in peace.
TO

My Parents

Lee R. and Madeline Guthrie Riley
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter I.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VI.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Petitioner:  O sweete lady mayde mylde
(pray) for me to lie bi [childes]

Virgin Mary:  I am redy for all to [pray]
(to) my son.......

Salve  Hayll our patron & lady of erthe,
Regina  quhono of heuen & emprys of helo,
Vater  Noder of al blis pu art, pe froth,
Misericordie  Of mercy & grace pe secondo wolde,
Vita  lyfe come of pe, as pe swonde of a bell
Dulcedo  Swetnes, pu art both moder & mayde,
Et aupa Æra  Oure hope with pe bat we may dwolle
Salve  Hayll ful of grace as gabriel sayd.

Ad to  To be our sociour, our helpe, our trust,
Clamamus  we crye, we pray, we make our complaynt;
Exules  Exylde to pryson fro costely lust.
ffilij  be childer of adam, bat so was ataynte
Eue  Of eue our moder, hero, ar we dreynyte.
Ad to  To be, bat byndes be fonde whelpe,
Suspiramus  we sighde, we grone; we wax al faynte
Genantes  Wepyng for sorow, gode lady, now helpe!
Et flento  Wepyng for syn & for oure payne,
In hac  In his derynam our tyme we spende;
Lacrimarum  Of teres pe comforth is a sweete rayne,

(Carleton Brown, Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century, P. 474.)
Oh thou joy of women in the glory of glorious maiden the fairest o'er all the region of the earth, that the ocean-dwellers have ever heard tell of, unfold to us the mystery that came to thee from the skies, how thou didst ever receive increase by child-conception, and yet thou knewest not communion after human fashion. Truly we have not heard that ever in days of yore the like hath happened, such as thou in special grace receivedst, nor may we hope the thing to come to pass in future time. Verily the faith that dwelt in thee was worshipful, since thou didst bear within thy bosom the flower of glory, and thy great maidenhood was not destroyed.

O thou glorious lady of this middle-world! thou purest woman throughout the earth, of those that were from time eternal, how rightly do all men with gift of speech upon this earth name thee, and say, blithe in their hearts, that thou art bride of heaven's chief Lord! So too the highest in the heavens, the thanes of Christ, declare and sing, that thou, by holy might, art lady of the host of glory, and of the ranks of men on earth 'neath glory, and of those that dwell in hell, for that thou alone of all mankind nobly didst resolve in thy high thoughts, to bring thy maidenhood unto the Lord, and give it sinlessly. There hath not come among all men such another ring-adorned bride, who would send again with spirit pure the glorious gift unto the heavenly home. Therefore the Lord triumphant bade his arch-angel hither fly from his great glory, and anon make known to thee His might's avail, that thou, in pure conception, shouldst bear the Son of the Suprerno, in mercy to mankind, and mainless, Mary, hold thee o'en unsotted evermore.

With these majestic verses from the Christ of Cynewulf, (ca. A.D.750—ca.825), English poetry commences its praise of the Virgin Mother of God. Cynewulf, the second great English poet, wrote the
Christ as a poetic paraphrase of a sermon on the Ascension, the *Homilie in evangelia*, by Gregory the Great. The sections of this epic were, at first, printed as separate hymns. The lyric-toned hymn on the Incarnation incorporated various Advent anthems. It is evident in Cynewulf's praises of the Virgin that Catholic doctrine concerning her took firm root in early England and that devotion to her inspired lyric expression in poetry. In Anglo-Saxon poetry, Mary's prerogative of being the Mother of God, the basis of the honor paid to her by God and man and her special intercessory power with her Divine Son, is clearly defined.

During the years before and immediately following the Norman Conquest, the practice of singing religious songs in the vernacular was probably prevalent, but it is only from the closing years of the twelfth century that we have extant vernacular hymns. These lyrics probably would not now be in existence if it were not for the fact that they were incorporated into the Latin biography of their writer, St. Godric. Godric is said to have been a "pedlar, pirate and palmer" before he became a hermit at Finchale, near Durham. There, he lived as a recluse for sixty years, until he died ca. 1170. Joseph Hall believes that Godric's compositions were probably inspired by Latin hymns, but J. W. Rankin believes those three hymns were a sort of Christianized *lorica*, in the nature of charms or incantations, a type of native poetry remaining from pagan times. He states that they were singing formulas to secure aid and comfort in times of sorrow, weariness, or temptation.

As legend, with its story of Caedmon's vision, casts a soft glow over the beginnings of English poetry, likewise it glorifies in particular the beginnings of the Middle English vernacular religious lyrics.
The story of St. Godric's vision, like that of Caedmon's, deserves recognition by students of English literature. William Henry Schofield tells the story with reverent simplicity:

Of him it is related that one day, when the sun was shining bright in the heavens, he lay bowed in earnest prayer before the altar of the Virgin, when all at once Our Lady appeared to him, accompanied by Mary Magdalen, both very beautiful, with raiment shining white, in figure not large, resembling maidens of tender years. The petitioner was possessed by joy, but dared not move. Soon, however, the two drew near with slow steps, and Our Lady spoke. "We will," said she, "protect thee to the end of the world, and seek to support thee in every need." Godric threw himself at her feet, and confined himself to her care. Thereupon the holy ones laid their hands on his head and stroked the hair from his temples, and the whole place was filled with sweet fragrance. Next the mother of mercy taught him a new song, which she sang before him as before a pupil, and he sang it after her and remembered it all the days of his life. When he had the text and melody fast in his mind, she bade him, as often as pains plagued him, or temptation, or vexation threatened to overcome him, to sing the same, giving him this assurance: "From now on, if thou wilt call on me with this prayer, thou shalt have me at once as a propitious helper." Then, after making repeatedly over his head the sign of the cross, she and her companion vanished, leaving behind them the most wonderful fragrance. This tale, with tears flowing from his eyes, Godric more than once related to Reginald, monk of Durham, by whom it was recorded, together with the text of the song, as follows:

Sainte Marie, . . . virgine,  
Moder Jesu Cristes Nazareno,  
Onfe, schild, help thin Godric,  
Ofang, bring hehilic with thee in Godes ric.

Sainte Marie, Cristes bur,  
Maidenes claenhad, moderes flur,  
Dilo mine sinne, rixe in min mod,  
Bring me to winne with self God. 11
Godric's Marian lyric has all the melody, simplicity, and intense mysticism that characterize the best Marian lyrics in Middle English poetry.

Another twelfth century servant of the Church must be briefly mentioned for his indirect influence on the Middle English Marian lyrics. St. Bernard of Clairvaux helped to popularize the cult of Mary throughout Europe by his noted mystic advocacy of the Blessed Virgin. His devotion for the Virgin was very influential among the greatest men of his time. It was he whom the greatest of mediaeval poets, Dante, chose to be his spokesman before the White Rose Virgin in the Paradiso. Finally, Bernard's famous "Inviolata" prose furnished Latin tags for some of the mediaeval English Marian poems.

The Franciscans were also influential in the spread of the cult of Mary in England. Most of the authorities on the Middle English vernacular religious lyrics agree that the Order of St. Francis was the main impetus for writing the lyrics in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and for writing the more popular carols in the late fourteenth and entire fifteenth centuries. The missionary spirit, the practical side of mysticism, which the Franciscans embodied, was a leading motive in the development of the vernacular religious lyric, which originated in order to teach mediaeval Christians the truths of their religion. English poetry, acted upon by the loculatorum Dei of the Blessed Francis of Assisi, then became a popular means of religious instruction and a mode for expressing divine emotions. In this poetry, we look not so much for individual
genius as for the interests of the society for which the poems were written. Above all, we look for the mediaeval man's attitude towards the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is found in the Middle English Marian lyrics he produced in reverence and in love for his spiritual Mother.
The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was not officially promulgated by the Roman See until 1854, but the idea of the stainless conception of the Virgin has been upheld by devout Catholics since mediaeval times. The feast of the Conception of the Virgin was celebrated in England as early as the twelfth century. The great advocate of Mary in the Middle Ages, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, was opposed to the idea of the Immaculate Conception. However, during the century following his death, the thirteenth century, the idea became a popular one and for many mediaeval men the question of its validity had been answered in the affirmative by the Scholastic, Dun Scotus, although many of the Church's greatest servants, Alexander Hales, Bonaventura, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas opposed the doctrine. The Dominican Order opposed the doctrine while the Franciscan Order, supported by popular opinion, upheld it.

As the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception has been misunderstood by many non-Catholics, it is well to quote here the accurate and brief definition of it given by Father Charles R. Mulrooney in his thesis, *The Cultus of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Middle English Lyrics*, who, after having explained that Mary was conceived in a purely natural manner by her parents, says:

The soul, however, which God infused in her body at the moment of her conception, was not stained with original sin, as is the case with the rest of men, but was preserved immune....The term conception does not mean, however, the active
generative conception by the parents of Mary, but that the person is truly conceived when the soul is created and infused into the body. From the first moment of Mary's existence as a person, she was without blemish.

This dogma, however, does not negate Mary's need for redemption by her Son. That is, Mary could not enter Heaven until after the Redemption, although she was without original sin.

Little is said in the Middle English lyrics of the Virgin's conception, although, while reading the very few lyrics which do allude to it, one realizes that a great many mediaeval Englishmen must have considered it to have been an immaculate one, even though the Church had not officially sanctioned the doctrine. The poems, as we shall see, which allude to doctrines concerning the Virgin and events in her life which were not well established, such as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and the events of her early life, are often the works of theological-minded clerics whose aim it was to edify the laity on all Catholic beliefs concerning Mary. Such a poet was Lydgate, popular in his own day even if neglected today, who hints in his poem, "A Praise of St. Anne," of the Immaculate Conception:

For fou by grace were predostynate
Ful longe aforne by presence devyne,
To bore the virgynne pure, Invylolate.

In the fifteenth century poem, "Ave Gracia Plena," another poet definitely says that Mary was conceived without original sin:

Ave gracia plena, devoide of all trespass,
Right well knownen to god before the world began,
Promysed of prophets for oure chyfe solaco,  
Annumciat by Aungell was they concepctiuon,  
Without originall synne as diuere maketh  
menciuon—  
Botho gotene and borne, non in like case—  
Sherfore, haile! glorious lady, mary full  
of grace. 8

In the next stanza of the same poem we find:

Haile! gracious virgyn, in materno vtoro  
Sanctified also, or oure thou wast borne 
Esayas prophosycd, withe diuver other moo,  
pat pu shuldost consoyve whiche most holpe  
men forlorne,  
The blessed star of Jacob promysed long beforne, 9

but this last idea properly refers to the idea of Mary's sanctification  
in her mother's womb instead of the Immaculate Conception.

On the other hand, thore were those who did not believe in the  
Immaculate Conception. In a fifteenth century acrostic salutation to 
the Virgin, the poet, whom Carleton Brown believes to have been a  
Dominican friar, states that Christ redeemed mankind, including his  
Mother Mary, from original sin by His Crucifixion:

pe water & blode, by weemes it wescho,  
Of pat body was borne of pe; 11

In a late vernacular "Salvo Regina," we have a line implying that Mary  
was not free from original sin until after her birth:

After pe birthe vorroly clene maidon pu were; 12

That Mary was not free from original sin is implied in a thirteenth  
century poem on the Passion. Jesus says to the Virgin:
Thus, even in the Middle English Marian lyrics we can see the contention of mediæval Catholics over the question of Mary's freedom from original sin at the time of her conception. Other details of Mary's birth are generally agreed upon by all the poets however. The apocryphal books of the early Christian centuries, such as the Pseudo-Gospel of Matthew and the Protoevangelium, or apocryphal Book of James, of the second century, furnished later ages with the story of Mary's birth and lineage. Her father, Joachim, and her mother, Anna, were an aged, childless couple who had given up hope of having children. The father prayed in the Temple for a child and the mother was visited by an angel who informed her that she was to become a mother in her old age for she had found favor with God. This story of Mary's parents has obvious relations with the story of John the Baptist's parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth. Nature departed from her course when the Blessed Virgin was born as it had done when John the Baptist and when many of the Old Testament heroes and prophets were born; God had given Mary a part of the same intrauterine sanctification which He had granted to Jeremiah and John the Baptist, for she too had been purified in her mother's womb and had been sinless at her birth. St. Bernard first brought forth this idea of inter-uterine purity, but he believed that only when God was made incarnate in Mary's womb was she released from original sin. This belief became so popular, however, that Mary was
considered to be holy from her very birth. In the lyrics we find many references to Mary's parents and to her birth. Such a one is the Mary orison, "Thou Shalt Bear the Fruit of Life," which tells of Mary's birth:

So that intendeith in his herte to seke
To love the daughter of any woman fre,
He must, of gentilles, love the moder oke,
In honest wyse, by fygure as ye may see;
Right as for the fruyte honoured is the tre,
So he that to this lady Reverence list to do,
Hir moder, Soynt Anne, worship he also. 22

Lydgate includes in this poem a tribute to Anna, "bat whylome were of Joachim pe wyff," which anticipates the role of Mary in the Redemption and which also anticipates the Eucharist in its use of Old Testament imagery:

In the poem of the Scottish Chaucerian, Kennedy, "Ane Ballat in Praise of Our Lady," we find:
Blist be thou Mary, and thy modir An,
And Joachim that generit the [also].

A fifteenth-century carol by the blind and deaf John Audelay furnishes us with details of Mary's birth: when he speaks of Anna:

Baren þu were ful long before
þen god he se to þi melones
þat þu schuldist deyver þat was forelore
Mon soule þat lay in þe fyndis distros

foro joachym þat hole housband
prayyd to god ful paciently
þat he wold send his swete sond
Sum feryte be tweno þou two to be

þen god hom grawntid graciously
Betwene þou two a floure schul apryng
þe rote þor of in elpid iesse
þat ioye & blis to þe word schal boryng

According to the Golden Legend and to the tradition accepted in Jerusalem by pilgrims and crusaders, Anna was not a baron woman, but had married three times and by each husband had borne a daughter named Mary, so that there were three Marys: Mary, wife of Joseph and mother of Jesus; Mary, wife of Alpheus and mother of James the Minor Apostle, Joseph the Just, Simon, and Jude; and Mary, wife of Zebedee, mother of James the Major and John the Evangelist. This ingenious story thus explained away the passages in the Gospels which speak of Jesus' "brethren." These "brethren," according to Catholic tradition, which rejects the idea of the Blessed Virgin being the mother of any other children except the Christ Child for it would destroy the doctrine of her Perpetual Virginity, were therefore not Jesus' brothers but were his cousins. Agreeing with this legend, the poet who paraphrased the
"Psalterium b. Mariae" ascribed to Aquinas wrote:

pi kodur bar peeo Maries--
So foiire hire boe-tydde;
On was Marie Iacoboe,
And bat opur Cleophe,
And þou, ladi, þe bridde. Avg. 23

Mary in the Middle English lyrics is a mediaeval grande dame; she is no longer the humble peasant maiden of Galilee. The only exceptions to this rule, as we shall see later, are the few Christmas carols which show the folk influence on the popular carol in their emphasis on Mary’s poverty, but even in these carols, we must add, Mary still retains her noble dignity. The Virgin’s lineage is a long and noble one descending from David’s house, in keeping with the prophecies of the Old Testament that the Messiah would be one of the great king’s descendents. The root of Jesse and the key of David become symbols of Mary’s connection with the royal house of Judah, as we find in the thirteenth century version of the masterpiece of Marian lyrics, "I Sing of a Mayden":

Heo his wit-uten sunno and wit-uten hore,
I-cumon of kingos cunne of gesses more; 29

Also of her the poets say:

þu eart ecumen of hope kunne,
of daudi þe riche king,
尼斯 non maiden under sunne
þe mei beo þin eueni[ng], 30

In the ABC translated from the French of Deguilleville by Chaucer we find that she is called:

Noble princesse, that nevere haddest poore, 32
Others declare:

As for beauty
Or high glory,
She is the flower
By God elect
For this effect
Man to succour. 33

According to the apocryphal books, Mary was presented in the Temple when she was three years old, there to be dedicated as a virgin of God and to receive instruction in the Temple school until she came of age. Lydgate refers to this traditional story in "The Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary." This is the only instance we have found in the Middle English lyrics of an allusion to the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple when she was a child:

For thilke ioyo which thu haddist than
When thu were offryd by Iosehjim and Anne
In-to the temple, by scripture as I fynde, 34

Mary remained in this Hebrew equivalent of the mediaeval convent school until she was espoused to the aged Joseph, of whom it is said in one popular carol:

Joseph was an old man,
And an old man was he,
When he wedded Mary,
In the land of Galilee. 35

The monastic influence is seen in one lyric by the monk Lydgate, who classifies Mary's espousal with her Sorrows, for it prevented her from taking the lifetime vows of a Temple virgin, the counterpart of the mediaeval nun. Mary was sad
When the Bishop did his bosynesse
Tween the and Ioseph to make the weddyng,
Agayn thentent of chaast livyng, 36

Never before or since has the world contained such a perfect cre-
ated boing as Mary was in her earthly lifetime. The poets of the Middle
English lyrics taxed their poetic imaginations to the utmost of their
abilities in trying to describe adequately the attributes of the Virgin.

To understand and appreciate the imagery which they used to describe

the moral attributes and physical beauties of this greatest of women,

the reader of Middle English Marian lyrics must know some of the history
of this imagery. In the early centuries of Christianity, the Fathers of
the Church—Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and others allegorized the Old
Testament in order to connect it with the Gospels and, in doing so, out-
standing persons, things, and occurrences in the Old Testament, such as
the rod of Aaron, the burning bush of Moses, the rose of Jericho, the star
of Israel, the Shulamite of the Canticles, the righteous women Rachel,
Sarah, Esther, and Judeth all became symbolic of the Christ's Mother.

Many of these prefigurations were then incorporated into the liturgy of
the Church, from which the authors of the lyrics appropriated them.

As Frank Allen Patterson in his book, The Middle English Penitential
Lyric, says when referring to the debt owed by the poets to the liturgy:

The chief influence discernible in these poems comes from the liturgy....the very foundations of
the Middle English religious lyric were laid in the
daily services of the Church....the content of these
poems, as well as their phraseology, comes directly
from the devotions that were heard, read, sung, and
prayed, not daily only, but several times daily, by
poets who were for the most part priests and clerks
in regular orders....General ideas, too elusive to
be paralleled in quotations, detailed phrases and
the choice of words too slight or too uncertain
to justify a note, suggest at every turn how
immeasurably great is this indeptedness. 37

Elsewhere in his book, Patterson says that the influence of the liturgy
is more important that that of the sermons and treatises coming directly
from the Patristics on the Middle English religious lyrics. The
influence, only incidental, of the Latin hymns came directly from the
liturgy also. The liturgy furnished not only the most prominent and
striking thoughts found in those poems, but it also furnished in abund-
dance the most commonplace expressions. Such commonplace expressions
are the ideas of Mary's moral superiority, such as "ledi moke and
mylde," "mayden clono," and comparisons of Mary with the rose and
lily. Other influences upon the imagery found in the Middle English
Marian lyrics come from secular romances and French secular love lyrics,
such as the chansons d'amour, but those influences were not as great
as the liturgical ones. Ideas of Mary's courtesy, her high lineage,
and her physical beauty often are derived from such secular literature.

One cannot possibly cite all the phrases of the poets honouring
the Virgin for her perfect mind, morals, and beauty; one can only give
a few of the most representative and most striking metaphors used to
describe this ideal woman whom the poets felt they could not fully
describe accurately. As Chaucer explains in his prologue to the exqui-
site legend of the "litel clorgeon" in the Canterbury Tales, they can
not increase her honour with their words:

To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encreesen hir honour,
For she herself is honour and the root
Of bountee, next hir Sono, and soules boote. 44

The carol writer, Ryman, agrees with Chaucer:

Thow doist habundo so in all wise
With goodness, grace, and all vertu,
So thatte our laude cannott suffice
To the, swete moder of Jhesu; 45

Lydgate confesses:

Allas! for dool I can nor may expresso
Hir passand pris, and that is no mervaille. 46

so he asks for the "auriat licour off Clyo" as inspiration to write a
worthy poem in honour of the Virgin. In speaking of Mary's moral
qualities the poets say:

Of all vertues myrroure and spectacle 47
0 myrroure of mokenes moost prudent & wyse 48
0 closid gardyn al void of weedes wicke,
    Cristallyn welle of clonnesse cler consigned, 49
Virgine, that art so noble of apparaile 50
Bountee so fix hath in thin herte his tente, 51
Of vertues pou art spico 52
0 trest turtyl, trowest of all trewe,
    0 curteys columbe, replet of all mekenesse,
0 nyghtyngale, with thi notys newe,
    0 popinjay, plumed in clonnesse,
0 larke of loff, syngyng in sweitenesse,
    Phoebus awaiyng, till in thi brest he lyght, 53
swote lady, ful of wynne,
ful of grace & god with ynne,
as thu art flour of al pi lyn 54
Sche is sundas full of grace,
That spryngeth and sprepyth in every place; 55

Orignyal gynnyng of grace and al goodness,
And cleanest condite of vertu moost souerayno, 56

Chambyr and closet cleanest of chastyte 57

Grundid in grace, in hart full sure, 58

A woman, a mayd in thought and deede 59

Holy virgyn of virgyns alle 60

O make Hostor as mylde of mynde 61

In word, in will, in deede, in thocht,
Here maydehood dowfowled sheo night; 62

lilie of chastete 63

þu ard god & quote = brit,
of alle oboir i-corinne; 64

Yodor, ful of þeyos hendo,
Maide drej 65 & well itauch, 65

Haile, vessoll of all purite 66

Haile, lylly floure withouton thorno 67

O make of myende 68

O myrroure of humilitie 69

O violete of puriteo 70

þou art feeur & fro

e plejn de doucour; 71

O blissit ros, o gemme of chastitee,
O well of beautee, rate of all gudeness,
O way of bliss, flour of virginitee,
O heade of treuth, o sterr without dirknace 72

Haile! nory of goodnesse, maide so milde,
Haile! fairest flouro, pat neuer was defilid.
Haile! wit and welle of al wisdom,
Haile! loueli lely pat syne exilid, 73

The way of vorryte, 74
In describing Mary's physical beauty by means of imagery from the liturgy, secular romances and lyrics, and nature, the poets are even more profuse. Among the metaphors used to describe Mary's beauty, none are more beautiful than those taken from nature. Much of this nature imagery is derived from the Old Testament, as, for
example, the Rose of Jericho. If one were to collect the nature imagery which the medieval poets wrote with abandonment and obvious delight to describe the beauty of the most beautiful of created beings, Mary, along with the reasons for their choice of this imagery, he would have compiled a veritable Bestiary divided into chapters on precious stones, four-legged animals, birds, and plants. One amorous poet, borrowing a convention from the secular romances, made a detailed catalogue of his Lady's beauty, which literally praised Mary from the top of her head to the tip of her toes. In blessing each part in turn he gave reasons why they should be blest by devout Catholics. For example, Mary's left ear is to be blest for it listens to sinner's prayers, her knees are to be blest for they are ever kneeling in behalf of sinners, and her legs are to be blest for:

Ofte hast pow orly and late
Don yr erende at houene-ʒate

This is an exceptional poem, however, for most of the poets were content to praise her face and body in a less detailed way. The poets say of her beauty:

Blessed bec, ladi, þi brihte neb-schaft—
Of kaynde he coube ful wel his craft
þat his hedde entayled! 91

Hayle! most feyryst of syguro and faco, 92
Be thi persono, embaschød is natyro; 93
þi rody chokes so somely goot
Ben likned to þe pomogarnet.
þi faire nekke also per-wyth
Is lik þe castel of kyng David;
per-inne ben speres for þe bataile.
Hayden a-lonc, buyrde briht,
   Wel brihtor þen þe Somne; 116

Ladi, al in liht I-schrud, 117

Ifor rycht as phebus with his bemya brycht
Illuminate all this erd In longitude,
Rycht so your grace, your beaute, and your
mycht
Anourynt all this world in latitude; 118

Heil be thou, marie, that art flour of all
as rose in corbir so roed, 119

Thow of Iuda the verray porfite Rose, 120

And redolent oodyr most deorthwolt ydynn, 121

Bennyane brauncchelet of the pigmont tro, 122

Celestial ciprose set upon Syon, 123
chosyn ysope of the valys lowel; 124

Rede rose, flourynge with-outyn spyne, 125

This rose is raided on a rys 126

This rose, of floryo she is flour;
She no wole fade for no shouro; 127

Heo is of colour and beaute
As fresch as is þe Rose In May. 128

Haile! of alle women frute & flouro,
Volut Rosa vel lilium. 129

O lylly flowro of swete odowre, 130

Bryghtter than blossom that blowith on hill; 131

Hayle, fayerer then the flour in felde! 132

Haile! þe flouro of Iosep wand, 133

Thou flour on felde of Adams sede. 134

Spico, flour-de-lice of Paradyse, 135

Haile, grono daseyal 136
Haile, fresche flour femynynco!

Of rout the baith rute and ryne. 137

Heyll! blessed burioun, Heyll! blome of all beaute,
ffayrest of fayre, eue flowryng in fayrness. 138

And thou ert eke the purpyn rose
That whylom grew in Jerico; 139

Her beute holy to dyscryve
Who is she that may suffyce?
ffor-soth no clerk hat is on lyve,
asyth she is only withowtyn vyce;
Her flauour excedith the fflowr-delyce.
Afore all flowres I haue hur chose
Enterey in myn herte to close. 140

Ne flour in feld on someres-day
Ne lef on tre, ne sprynge on spray,
May ben lich pi swete face
pat is so fayr and ful of grace.
ffairnesse of flour is sone agon,
pi beute lestep euer in on. 141

As the final tribute to the Blessed Virgin's beauty, we quote
John Audelay, who sets up the Virgin as an example of beauty to the
maidens of England:

I pray 3oue flours of pis cuntre
where euer 3e go were euer 3e be
hold hup pi flour of good iesse
ffore 3oue freschenes & 3oue beute
as fayrist of al
& euer was & euer schal [be] 142
CHAPTER II

ECCE ANGILLA DOMINI

The marriage of Joseph and Mary was one of monastic chastity, such as is often encountered in Christian hagiographic literature. Moreover, Joseph was an obedient and retiring servant to his young ward, for he was conscious of his own unimportance as compared to that of his child bride. Because of Mary's chaste married life and because of her sincere humility, God chose her to be an instrument in the redemption of the world by His Son, Jesus Christ. William of Shoreham points out this fact:

Cause of allo pyse dignyte,
por3 clennesse and hmylyte, 3

Chaucer, in an orison to the Virgin, agrees with him:

Theo whom God chos to mooder for humblosse! 4

Another poet exclaims:

Haile be pouj hendo heven qwene
pat thurgh chastite was chosen with childe, 5

Kennedy says that because Mary was without pride she won the love of the Christ:

Thow was ay moike but vane glore, pry, or want,
Sibilla said, also Balaam, and sanct Dave,
Tharfore Christ chesit thy wene his house and hant, 6

The angel Gabriel explains:
Finally, Audelay says:

To fora alle maydenes to hyr he chos
fforo here clannes and here makenes
fforo mon soule heo schuld reles
& firo pe fynd & his pouste

According to Hoccleve's *The Recording of the Angels' Song of the Nativity of Our Lady,* the angels in Heaven were informed of the great event of the Annunciation, "po Muriesto meetyng pat euer was met," before it occurred. During their heavenly harmonies, they asked themselves which one of the angels would have the great honour of being chosen "Godes sonde" for the special occasion, and they agreed:

But wool is him pat schal pat maide sce,
And schal be schent to saluo hire, & grete,
And say "heil, mary, maide faire & sweet!"

Who euer it be, bat schal do this message,
fful wool is him that fynde may that grace;
It schal him wool suffice for his wage,
To see pat blissed sweet [e] lady face.

God, having resolved to restore to man his former dignity, sent for the fortunate angel, Gabriel, and, as a loyal knight receiving the commission of his liege lord, Gabriel duly submitted to the Almighty's will:

Gabriel pat aungello on hym gun he calle;
Forthe core pat semely and kneolde hym bi-forne.
'Goo to mayden Marie, my messangere, pou salle,
And bero hir blythe bodworde, of hir will I be borne.'
Thus he sent his dero sone out of his hoghe 
haulle,
Un-to pat mylde mayden in a mery mome,
And hir gret. 10

Gabriel is also a holy counterpart of the courtly love go-between when he is sent on the errand to the "tru love to the trynyte":

The angell Gabriell from above
Was sent by God to break his love
Unto the virgin Marie; 11

The first of the above passages says that the Annunciation occurred on a "mery mome," but, according to popular belief, the Annunciation is generally thought of as occurring in the evening, when the rest from labour and the twilight seem to make it the most serene and holy time of day. Also, there is natural symbolism in the idea that God joined himself to man at the moment when the sun sinks on the horizon. The season usually is thought of as spring, when the promise of flowers and fruits seems symbolic of the coming of the Creator's Son. In the Bible, the Annunciation is said to have occurred indoors, but many mediaeval poets, following contemporary pictorial art conventions and the allusion to the hortus conclusus of the Canticles, thought of the Annunciation as taking place in a garden. With the exception of a few changes of this type, very little novelty was added by the Middle English lyric poets to the account of the Annunciation found in the Gospel of Luke. The story of the Angelic Salutation, the first of the Virgin's Joys, had a fascination for the Marian poets and their great reverence for the simple story that they found in the Scriptures prevented them from unduly elaborating on it.
The flight from Heaven of the angel Gabriel and his striking appearance are incidentally reported by the poets:

An angyl fro hofne was sent ful snol
His name is cleyed Gabriel, 17

Thor cam an angoll bryght of face,
Flyeonge from heuyn with ful gret lyght, 18

Gabryell, that angoll bryght,
Bryghttor than the son lyght,
From heuyn to erta he toke his flyght; 19

Deviating from the Biblical account of the Annunciation is a poem in which Mary speaks of seeing Gabriel coming from Heaven:

I saw gabryel cum doune with lyght,
To me he soyde, pat soote wyght,
'Am maria, bu shalt lyght
Redemporis mater.' 20

Even tho supernatural being, Gabriel, humbled himself in the presence of Mary. The poets record the reverence he felt for her and the knightly courtesie he displayed in her presence:

Waan Gabrieli Owre Lady grett,
On hys kno he hym sette
So myldly, 21

Waan he fyrost presenteid was before hyro fayere visage,
In the most demure and goodly wyse he did to hyre omage
And said, 'Lady, frome heven so hy, that Lorde herytag
The wich off the borne wold be, I am sent on messag.' 22

In the English version of the "Angelus ad virginem" sung by Chaucer's "honde Nicholas" we find:
Gabriel, from evene-king  
    sent to be maide swete,  
    broute hire blisful tiding  
    And faire he gan hire greton:  
      'hail be pu ful of grace a-rith!'

Sometimes the poets say that a "treu knot," symbolising the Trinity, or a _fleur-de-lys_, symbolising the Christ, was set between the angel and Mary when they encountered one another.

The emotions of fear, doubt, and joyful submission that Mary felt during the Angelic Greeting are worthy subjects for a poet's pen. When the angel greeted the Virgin, as one poets says, in her room:

    par pu by in pi bright bourse,  
    Leuedi, quite als leli floure,  
    An angel com fra houe Cno toured,  
    sent gabriol,  
    sant gabriel,  
    And said, 'leuedi, ful of blis, ai worth pe wel!'

Mary was fearful because, according to Patristic interpretation, she never before had been addressed by a man while alone. Later, when she recognized the messenger as an angel, she answered him without trembling, for she had become acquainted with the angelic host during the years she had spent in the Temple, when they came from heaven to feed her in her cell. Therefore, as St. Jerome contended, she who was afraid of a man was unafraid of an angel. One poet must have been unfamiliar with this interpretation of the Virgin's conduct, for he wrote that when Mary saw Gabriel:

    She was sore abashed, ywys,  
    Lest that she had done a-mys.

The angel then told the Virgin that she was to become a mother:
'haylo be thu, virgin! I-prouced on prye,  
thu shalt conceyue a swete spycs.' 29

'Within they body schall be fulfilled  
That all those prophetes han preched so presto;  
God will be borne within they brest. 30

'. . . 'god wale the grotis;  
In the he will tak Rest and Rufe,  
but hurt of syne, or yit Reprufe;  
In him sett thi decrotis.' 31

"Lo, in this wombe thou shalt conceyue,  
And bear a sonne whose name shall have  
The glorious name of Jesus;  
He shal be greate in majestie,  
And calde the sonne of God most hee,  
Who still shall dwell amongst hus.  
The Lord for hym shall well provide  
The seate of his father Davyde;  
And he shall reigne for evermore,  
A safegarde stylle unto the poore,  
Those kingdoms sure shall have no ende,  
But stylle in joyes the tyme to spende." 32

In a fifteenth century lyric, the poet, in anticipation of the Crucifixion, elaborates on Gabriel's speech:

Kalle hym Ihesus of nasaret,  
god & man in on dogre,  
that in the rodo schalle suffre deth 33

The poet of one unusual lyric was influenced by mediaeval pictorial art, which sometimes showed Gabriel with a horn in the Annunciation pictures. The symbol of the hunter calling the mythical unicorn was used to express the idea that the wild Unicorn, the Christ, was tamed in a gentle maiden's breast:

By hyrying of a Angels horn,  
A mansueto mesage was the amydde,  
Godys moder to be called at euyn & morn. 35
The earliest Fathers of the Church thought that Mary's doubt concerning the tidings of Gabriel had to be interpreted in a favorable light. Mary, they said, did not faithlessly doubt the word of God told to her by His messenger, but her question: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" contained only a mild surprise, which was immediately satisfied by Gabriel's information. Some of the descriptions in the Marian lyrics of the doubting girl are noteworthy:

Mary stod stylle as any ston,  
And to the angyl she seyde a-non,  
"Thou herd I nevore of manys mon,  
Ie thinkit wonder thou seyst to me."  

Sodenly she, abashid truly, but not al thyng dysemaid,  
With mynd dyscret and mok spyryt to the angel she said,  
'With what manor shuld I chyld bero, the wich ever a maid  
Hauo lyvid chast al my lif past and neuer mane asaid?'

Gabriel then tells Mary how the child shall be conceived:

"The holye gost, be not affraide,  
From heaven shall come upon tho;  
And be the graics of God most hie,  
Powre shall over-shadowe the,  
I tell the truth, belove me,  
And also this cogen Elizabethe  
So in lykewise conceived haithe,  
Thus God canne make the barren tre  
To budde with frute most pleasantlye."  

Mary humbly and joyfully surrenders to the will of the Father:

Then Mary said, with one accord,  
"Behould the hande-mayde of the Lorde!  
The will of God be done in me,  
As yt shall please his majestie!"
Mary on bryst here hand che leyd,
Stytle xe stod, and thus xe sayd,
"Lo me here Codex owyn hand mayd,
With horte and wil and body fre." 42

'Eoce ancilla domini,'
pat was hire answere,
'Wolde god i were worpi
His blissful sone to bere; 43

Then seide the meydon full mildely,
'To me he schall be a welcome gesto;
'Eoce ancilla domini' 44

Stil þu stod, no stint þu noght,
þu said til him þo bescward broght[†],
'All his wil it sal be wroght,
in his ancole.' 45

She knelyd downe vpon her knee:
'As thou haste sayd, so may it bo.
With hert, thought, and mylde chor,
Goddos handmayd I am here.' 46

When the angell was vanesched away,
Scho stode al in her thoght,
And to herselfe sche can sey,
'All Goddes wille schall be wroght;
For he is well of all witte,
As witnesses welle this story.' 47

Fortunately for future ages, the lovely story of the Annunciation
was expressly told to Luke, according to a mediaeval English homilist,
by the Blessed Virgin because he was a "clone maydon" like herself and
because he was wont to visit her during the Public Ministry of her
Son.

In the Gospel of Luke, there is only a promise of the Incarnation.
In the Protoevangilo, it is said that Mary was to conceive a child by
the "word" of the Father. Pious imagination was not content with
these meager references to one of the two greatest mysteries of the
Christian religion, however, and through the ages, embroideries on the story of the Incarnation were made. General agreement was made that the event took place during the Angelic Greeting. Saint Augustine said that it was God who spoke through the mouth of the angel, and that the Virgin was fertilized through her ear: "et virgo per aurum impregnabatur." This idea was supported by the passage in the Gospel of John which speaks of the Logos: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,..." The Marian poets follow this tradition:

When Gabriel sayde 'hayle mary ful of grace'--
Wyth pe whoche wordes pe holy gost as blyue
Wythyn bi chest hath chosyn a joyful place. 53

And when this carpyn was compilit
Brightness fra bufe aboundis:
Thane fell that gay to groundis,
of goddis grace na thing begild,
Wox in hir chaumer chaist with child,
with crist our lyng that round is.

Thir tithings tauld, the messinger
Till hevin agano he glidis:
That princes pure, withoynyn peir,
Full plesandly applidis,
And blith with barno abidis. 54

'Behold,' she sayde, 'God dys handmeyde;
Thy wordes be done in me.'
And anon ryght by Goddy's myght
That tymo with chyld was sho. 55

Thou stodyst full still without blyn
When in thy ore that arund was done so;
The gracius God thy lyght withyn,
Gabrielis nuncio. 56

At that wurd that lady bryth
Anon conseuyd God ful of myth; 57

The holy brost of chastityo,
Verbo consepit Filium,
So brought before the Trinite  
With castytalis lylyum. 58

An angelle came to thatte meyde so fre  
And seide 'Haile, Mary, full of grace;  
The Lord of Alle now is with the  
In hert, in wombe, and euery place.' 59

When referring to the mystery of the Incarnation, the poets of the Church employed a symbolic method of expression. Allusions to the Old Testament, such as references to the fleece of Gideon, the Eastern gate of which Ezekiel prophesied, and the falling rain and dew mentioned in various parts of the Scriptures, were used to describe the action of the Holy Ghost and the purity of the Virgin during the Conception. One of the most beautiful of all the similes used to describe the event of the Incarnation is the comparison of the action of the Holy Ghost to the sun shining through stained glass, Mary, which, when penetrating the glass, does not harm it, (i.e. does not violate Mary's perpetual virginity) but, instead, it brings out the hidden beauty of the glass. This as well as many other Incarnation similes, are alike applied to the event of the Virgin Birth, and, consequently, it is very difficult to separate the imagery used for the two occasions. Alluding to the Vellus Gedeonis, the poets say:

This is Gedeonis wulfe-felle,  
On whom the dewe of heuen dyde dwelle;  
The dewe of heuen on Mary fel  
When she conceyued Adonay. 61

In thinking of the Incarnation, one poet recalls the words of the Psalmist:
A marvelous thyng I hafo musyd in my myndo:  
How that Veritas spronge owghte of the grounde. 
And Justicia for all mankynde.
  From houene to ortehe he cam adowne. 62

Others use the sun-glass motif:

Ryght as the sunne shone throwe the glas  
Jhesus Crist conceyued was, 63

As the sonne beames goith through the glasse  
And hurt to itt dothe none,  
Througho moyde Mary so did he passe  
To save [mankynde alone]. 64

Saint Anselme goith, 'So Cristo did pass  
Thurgh Marie myelde, as his wille was,
As the sonne beam goth thurgh tho glas,
That mayde full of honoure.' 65

As tho sonne beam goth thurgh tho glas  
And as a flourro berith his odoure,
So Crist of her conceyved was  
And borne of her withoute doloure. 66

The glasse is more pure and itto wasso  
Thorughe the which the sonne did schyno;  
So ys this moyde througho whom did passe  
The Sone of God by grace dyuyno.  
Mirabilo. 67

Ase po sonne takep hyro pas  
Wyp-outo broche bor3-oit pat glas,  
by maydonhod on-wemmod hyt was  
For bero of pyne chyldo. 68

Ryman says:

Meder Mary and virgyno pure  
Clothed hym with mortall vesture  
And closed hym in her clausure  
Of chastite alone. 69

Nature imagery is used:
po sodo hero of was godis sond
pat god him solue new with his hond
In bedlem in pat hole lond
in medis hore horboro per ho hir fond
bis blissfull floure
Sprang neuver bot in maris boure. 70

pu ort corpe to goda sode,
on pe listo pe heouene des
of pe sprang peo edo blode,
po holi gost hire on pe 665. 71

Place chea him, on forto resto
In pis world, crist godes zone,
In pinn cloe, blissful bresto:
Wel likede him per-in to wono,
And kennod was as brid in nosto; 72

The manna of the Old Testament is symbolic of the coming Christ:

It is bred fro heuene cam,
sfoych & blod of marie it nam; 73

Beholde this prophete called Jeromye,
Be a viniouse so hevenly and divyne,
Toke a chalice, and fast gan hym hye
To press out licour out of the rode vyno:
Grynne in the myddes, whiche, to make us dyne,
Was beste and bulted floure to make of brode,
A gracious fygure that a pure virgyno,
Should bere manna in whiche lay all our
spedes. 74

In Lydgate's best Marian lyric, "The Child Jesus to Mary, the Rose,
the Christ Child says:

by fader above, beholde thy moderesse,
As dow on Rosis doth his bawme sprade,
Sent his gost, most souerayne of glennes
Into thy brest, (al Rose of wommanhede!) 
Then I for man was borne in my manhedo;
For whiche with Rosis of hevenly Influence
I me rejoyse to play in thy presense. 75
Jewel imagery is also used:

for holy writ wipouten gyde
Likep þe to þe beryle.
Whan þe beryle recuyed lyȝt,
And hote of sunne shynep briȝt,
So sone as it hæþ hote y-wome
It brenne þorp ryȝt of þe sunne;
Ryȝt so dost pou, my lady swete,
Whan Gabriel þo com to grote;
pou со convoydest þo sone of ryȝt
And in lour brendest ful bryȝt,
bat diamand is not so dore, 76

In the Prologue of the Prioress's Tale, Chaucer alludes to the Bush of

Rosse as a symbol of Mary's virginity in the Conception. This symbol

is also often used in reference to the Virgin Birth:

O moodor Mayde! o mayde Mooder freuel
O bush unbrent, brenynge in Moses sicht, 77
That ravyshedest doun from the Deitee,
Thurgh thy humbleness, the Goost that in th'alighte,
Of whom vertu, when he thy hoerte lighte,
Conceyved was the Padres sapience,

In his "Invocatio ad Mariam" spoken by the "nonne chapoleyn," which he

paraphrased from the mystic prayer of St. Bernard to the White Rose in

Dante's Paradiso, we find another beautiful expression of the Eternal

Mystery:

Thow Mayde and Mooder, doughter of thy Sone,
Thow welo of mercy, synful soules cure,
In whom that God for bountee chees to wone,
Thow humble, and hoigh over evry creature,
Thow nobledest so forforth cure nature,
That no deodeyn the Maker hadde of kynde
His Sone in blood and flesh to clothe and wynde.

Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy sydis
Took mannes shap the eternel love and pees,
That of the tryne compas lord and gyde is,
Whom orthe' and see and hovone, out of rolces,
By heren; and thou, Virgine wemeloes,
Fear of thy body—and dwaltost maydon pure—
The Creatour of every creature. 78

Finally, we quote the entire "I Sing of a Mayden," a simple and sincere
tribute to the Mother of God Incarnate:

I syng of a mydon pat is makeles
I Syng of a myden
kyng of allo kynges
he can also stylle as dew in aprylle,
he can also stylle as dew in apryillo,
he can also stylle as dew in apryillo,
moder & maydon
wol may swych a lady
pat is makeles,
to hero sone che ches.
thor his moder was
pat fallyt on po gras.
to his moderos bowr
pat fallyt on po flour.
þor his moder lay
pat fallyt on po spray.
was neuer non but che—
godes moder be. 79

The appolations of "goddys spouse so deore" who carried the
Redeemer of the world in her womb are numerous and are often striking:

She is the chief of chastyte,
The concluse and the clostre clene 80

Impeirall wall, place palestrall,
Of peerless pulcritud;
Triumphale hall, his tour royall
Of Gods cellistud;
Hospitall riall. . . . . . 81

Hailo, Alphais habitaklo! 82
O triolyno of the Trinitie, 83
O chast bowre of the Trinitee 84
Hoil tabernacle Cleor
Of kyng strong in honde 85

Hoil Builcer boold of cristes bourn; 86

Palesys of Cryst 87

Temple devout, thor God hath his woninge, 88

Reolinatorye throne of kyng Salamoun 89

Thou art the temple of Salamon; 90

As thou art cyte of god, & sempiternal throne,
0 plesaunt olyue with grace circundate!
0 lemung lawmpo, in light passyng nature!
Hoyle virgyn mary surmountynge clere tytan! 91

Thronus dei thow art to toll, 92

In thy clesour our Saluiour
Wee Iouint god and man, 93

A rey hym harburd yn hur hall,
Sohe socourd hym sothly yn hur salo, 94

Hoil of Sonne pe cite
But dauid raesed on ende
Of whom pe sonne of riht, wuato
Wip cloude, hit gan forþ wende, 95

Hoil cite of god and man,
Of whuche pe founement
Buylde pe Samaritan, 96

Temple of the Trynyte, most blessid & most
bonyne,
Where the hooly goste his golde dowo lyset
down shod,
In-to thy Closette mosto Competent & condigne,
With sevyn scalyne, thy Bresto he lyseth
Consigne
Paraolitus to have ther Residence. 97

O flamod bushe in alle stature
Of Myles, of whomse nature
Jhesus hath take, . . . . 98

Thou art the bush on which thor gan desconde
The Holy Gost, the which that Myles wende
Had bon a-syr; and this was in figure. 99
Heil Archa of noo neuer to-broke,
for worldli wawe þat neuer wolde wre; 100

The gate the whyche Ezechiel
   Save alway cloe, bothe cue and morwe. 101

The prophete Ezechyel,
In hye boke, hyt wytnessteth wel,
Thou ort the gate so stronge so stel,
   As evere y-schet fram manne; 102

Heil valcye of humilite,
   In whom whom þer doun cam
Vorrey God þat tok of þe
   þe seed of Abraham, 103

O fillia Pharaonic! whom oure lady kept,
   Preseryyd Moyacs in hye cage, 104

Loo, here the blossum and bud of all oure glory;
   Off which þat prophetyg spak so long afor:
Loo, here the same þat was in memorye
   Of Ysace, long or she was born;
   Loo here, [of] Davið the delecious corn; 105

By ryste toknyng, þou ort þe hol
   Of waþ spalledo danyel;
þou ort emaus, þe ryche castel,
   þar restep alle worye;
Ine þe restede emanuel,
   Of waþ y-spokeþ ysaye. 106

O glorious viole, O vitre inviolate!
   O fery Tytan percyd with the lemys,
Whos vertuous bryghtnesse was in thi brest vibrate,
   That all this world embelished with his bemys! 107

þorwh whom dispostet hab vr kyng
   þe Testament of lyf; 108

Heil vessel of Clannesse
   Holdynyk Oygnement I-nough 109

Clobing of purpre þou art, certeyn,
   To þat kyng arrayed and met, 110

Heil Haydon maade chaambre briht
   Of Duyk þat sit an heih; 111
Something must be said here of the Catholic attitude towards Mary's part in the Redemption. When Mary consented to bear the Son of God, her action was considered personally meritorious, although she from all time was predestinate to bear the Christ. That Mary was appointed by God to counteract the work of Eve was taught before the end of the second century by St. Irenaeus and from the third century on this doctrine was taught by all the Fathers. St. Augustine said of Mary's undoing of Eve's work: "Eva nos damnari fecit per arboris pomum, absolvit Maria per arboris sacramentum, quia et Christus in ligno perpendit ut fructus." When the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, the Virgin became the point of contact between the human and the divine. However, her participation in the Redemption does not mean that she had no need of redemption by her Son. The Middle English
Poets acknowledged Mary's part in the divine plan of God. They drew upon the Old Testament for prophecies and prototypes of the Virgin, most of which had already been sanctioned by the Church. The poets declare that Mary "turnet abakward eues nome" and undid the sin of Adam:

Al þis world was for-lore
cun pecstatrice
Tyl our lord was y-bore
do to gentrice;
With auo it went a-way, 119

þu brutis us day and euo nith,
heo brout wou, þu brut rid,
þu almesse and heo sunne. 120

pat bargh ure kinde pat þe nedre bysuak. 121

þou hast y-ryztd pat was amys,
Y-wonne þat was ylore. 122

þet þet Euo vs hadde by-name
þow hast i-golde þowr by sone. 123

Vita lyfe come of þe, as þe sownde of a bell 124

þe gates of parais
þoruth euc weron iloken,
And þoruth ouro swote ladi
Aȝein hui beþ þouþe open. 125

First kalendys of our salvaþoun,
With þis woord Eua turynyd to Auo, 126

Adam lay I-bowndyn, bowndyn in a bond,
sowre bowseand wyntor þout he not to long;
And al was for an appil, an appil þat he tok,
As clorkis fyndyne wretyn in þer book.

Ne hadde þe appil take ben, þe appil taken ben,
ne hadde neuer our lady a ben heueno qwen;
Slyssid bo þe tyme þat appil take was,
þer-forwe wþe mowþsyngyn, 'doo gracias!' 127
She redeemed her own sex from the ignominy it encountered after Eve had obeyed the Serpent:

Wymmen weren alle ischents,
In praldom heldo and onworplie,
porgh eue pat bo deuel blento,
What ieu crist wip his maistrie
bo lettres of hire name wente,
And made of oua oua marie,
And alansing sente
To wynnyn of ech vileinie. 128

She allayed the enmity between the sexes:

Withe man and woman thor was great traverse:
Man said to the woman, 'Woe myght thou be!
'Nay,' quod the woman, 'Why dost thoue reverse?
For womans entisinge woe bo to the!
For God [made] man the heade and ruler of me.'
Thus God saved man and woman were not at one;
He thought in a woman to sett theins at one
To our solace;
His mercyo he graunted for our trespace. 129

She ended the strife among women:

Of womanhede, lo, thre degree there be:
Widowehede, wedlocke, and virginnitie.
Widowehede clamed heauen; her title is this:
By oppressions that mekelie suffrethe she,
Andwedlocke by generacion heauen hires shuld bo,
And virgins clave by chastite alone.
Then God thought a woman should sett them at one
And cease ther strife,
For Marie was maden, widowe, and wife. 130

Chaucer says that by her help the wrath of the Old Testament God was overcome:

Dowte is thor noon, thou queen of misericorde,
That thou n'art cause of grace and merci heere;
The poets are at their most inventive moments when they allegorise the
Old Testament to find in it prefigurations of the Redemprix:

God vouch'd sauf th'rough thee with us to accord
For, corte, Crysos blissful mooder deere,
Were now the bowe bost in swich manere
As it was first, of justice and of ire,
The rightfull God nolde of no mercy heero;
But th'rough thoe han wo grace, as wo desire. 131

The poets are at their most inventive moments when they allegorise the
Old Testament to find in it prefigurations of the Redemprix:

bou ert pe coloure of noe
pat broute be brauncho of olyuo tre,
In tolne pat pays scholde be
By-tuente god and manno. 132

bou ert be sling, by sone be ston,
pat dauy slange golye op-on; 133

Neil pou, buggynge us ageyn
Out of Egypes cleyn. 134

Neil eueneore of old lawe and of newe, 135

As Holy Writte thus conclueth,
For cause our e helthe is wono by the
Thou art bothe Ester and Judith,
Mater misericordie.

Holofernes, the fendo, is hede
With his ome swordes, 0 lady fro,
Thou hast smyte of and made hym dede,
Mater misericordie.

Aman alsoo, the fendo, oure foo,
Thou hast hanguyd upp on a tre;
Thus thou hast brought mankynd fro woo,
Mater misericordie. 136

bou ert Judith, pat fayre wyf,
bou hast abated al pat stryf;
Olofernes wyf his knyf
Hys heuede pou hym by-nome. 137

bou ert hoster, pat swete kyngo,
And anseuer po ryche kyngo
pe[y] hep ychose to hys woddyngye
And quene he hlep a-uonge;
For mardochoos, by derlyngye,
Syro aman was y-honge. 138
King Assucre was wrothe, ivis,
Whomno Quene Vasty had done amys,
And of her crowne privat she is;
But, when Hester his yorde did his,
By hir mokenes
She chaunged his moode into softnes.

King is God Almyght,
And Quene Vasty synag [ouge] hight,
But, when Vasty had lost her lyght,
Quene Hester thanne did shyne full bright,
For she forth brought
The Sonne of God, that alle hath wrought. 139

Mary is the woman of the Apocalypse about to give birth to a child who
will vanquish the Evil One:

Ine be apocalypsa sent Iohn
Ino3 ano wyman wyp somne by- gon
pane mone al onder hyro ton,
I-crowned wyp tuel sterre;
Swyl a louedy nas nouere non
Wyp pane fend to warre. 140

Of al dirkness thou dist away tho clips,
This wrochoed woorld tenlumyne with gladness,
Showed to Seyn Iohn in thapocalips,
Clad in a Sonne surmountyng of brightnesse,
Crownyd with sterrey of excellent cler- ness,
The stromys strechychng to the heouonly mansioun, 141

Heyl, glorioues queen! whom the Apostyl Iohn
In his avioun sawh, clothyd in a sonne,
With xij sterrey, and many a precious stoon,
Voydyng the dirkness of alle skyes dunne,
In tokne, thow hast the victorey wonno
Of Vices alle, in celis sublimata, 142

Joseph's consternation on finding Mary with child is variously
expressed in the poems. In the carol, "Marvel Not, Joseph," he says:

'I, Josep, wonder how hit may be,
I, Josep, wonder how hit may be,
That Mary wox grot when Y and she
Euer haue leugd in chastite;
If she be with chylde, hit ye not by me."  143

He is comforted by an angel who tells him that Mary is sinless. Then
Joseph confesses:

"What the angell of God to mo dothe say
I, Joseph, muste and will woble obey,
Ellyg priuely Y wolde haue stole away,
But noow will Y serue hors tille that I day."  144

In another poem, Joseph wishes to leave Mary, who he knows is a pure
maiden, in order not to see her stoned to death for adultery, which was
required by the Mosaic Law:

Joseph keede pat ho was mylde,
Josho pat ho wiste hy was wyp chylde,
A-way he wolde alone;
He molde nauzt he were a-slawe,
He forpe y-iuged by pe lawo
To by stend wyp stone.  145

In a carol by Ryman, Joseph wishes to leave Mary because, knowing the
holy thing that has happened to her, he thinks himself unworthy to be
in her presence:

Joseph wolde haue fled fro that mayde,
Not for noo synne no for offenco,
But to abyde he was affrayde
In hero so good and pure presence,
Exains virgo concipiens,
The mysterie for cause ho knew
In her of so full grotro vertuo.

"With her," ho seide, "why shuld I dwell?
Than I of degre she is more,
And in vertuo she doth excelle;
I wille deporte from her therefore."  146
Joseph gladly remains with Mary, however, when an angel tells him to do so.

The medieval trial by ordeal is recalled to mind when we read in one of Lydgate's poems of Mary's trial of chastity:

Occasion aught wher it was no neede,
When Abiather wold he maad a prooff,
Ordeyned a drynk to prooyn thy mydonhoode. 147

For the heynnesse thu haddist eek also
To be with childe whan thu wero accusyd,
Ther watir of prooff drank, as it was usyd,
Yuo by the bishop, and founde ay undeowyld, 148

The Visitation is recorded by Lydgate as one of Mary's Joys:

For thylke Ioye bow haddest, and pleaunce,
Whan thou mettest with Saincto Elizabetho,
Pyne hooely Cousyns, moste humble of coun-
naunce,—
And sheo agaynwardo with deuoute obynaunce,
Lowely beholding vppon thyn holy face,
And in her armes peo lowly did embrace 149

And for that Ioyo thu haddist in corteyn,
Whan Elizabeth moste meekly with the mette,
Fulfilled with grace vpon an hih mounteyn,
Thy blissed Cousyn devoutly thor the grotte,
Hir child reiessyng, she list no longer lotte,
In hir armys most goodly sgo sho the rauhte,—
Saido thos voruds, the Hooly Goost hir tawhto;

"Blissed be thu amongys women alle!
Blissed be the frute that shal be born of the!
What may this mene or how is this bofalle,
My lordys moodir, for to comyn to me?" 150

At the meeting with Elisabeth, the Virgin sang her "Magnificat," paraphrased from the Latin by Ryman:

Thus seide Mary of groote honoure:
'My soule my Lord dothe magnifie,
And in my God and Saviour
My spirite rejoyseth verily.

For he the mokenes hath beholde
Of his handemayde, that Lorde so good,
That I am blessed manyfold
All kynredes shall say, of my olde moode. 151

In a chanson d'aventure type carol, the poet, while passing through a greenwood, hears a maiden sing, "I am with chyld this tyd." This poem is modeled on a secular complaint theme that was popular both in French and in English literature. Richard Leighton Greene, who publishes the poem in his book, The Early English Carols, says that this poem must have been a sharp contrast to an audience familiar with the type of song parodied. The Virgin Mother's time of waiting for her Child is almost over, as she joyfully sings:

152

"Gracyusly
Conceyued haue I
The Son of God so swwet;
Hys gracysus wyll
I put me tyll,
As moder hym to kepe.

Thys goostly cago
Dooth me embrace
Without dyspyte or moke;
With my derlyng
Lullay to sng
And louely hym to roke.

Without dystresse
In grete lyghtnesse
I am both nyght and day;
Thin heavenly fed
In hys chylhdod
Schal dayly with me play."
'Soone must I syng
With rejoycyng,
For the tym is all ronne
That I schal chyld,
All vndefyld,
The kyng of Hevons Sonne.' 153
The union of virginity with motherhood is the foundation of all the Virgin Mary's privileges and of man's veneration for her. The dogma of the Virgin Birth was established by the Roman Catholic Church only after a long and bitter controversy among the early Church fathers. The debates on this subject were connected with some of the great doctrinal disputes on the nature of Christ. The earliest Churchmen, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, and Epiphanius asserted that at the birth of the Christ Child, Mary lost her virginity. With the rise of monasticism, the Virgin was made the ideal for all pious nuns to imitate. It was felt that she should be regarded as having been a virgin throughout her life if she were to be a model of virginity. Ambrose, an advocate for monasticism, was the first Western theologian to favor the "virginitas in partu" doctrine of Jesus' birth. Jerome, Augustine, and others adopted Ambrose's idea and the doctrine of the Virgin Birth was soon unanimously promulgated by both the Eastern and the Western Churches. The closed tomb and the closed doors through which the Christ passed were used as analogies to support the dogma. Augustine said of the Virgin: "virgo concepions, virgo parions, virgo morions." Mary became known as the "Theotokos," the "God-bearer," and the "Deipara," the "Mother of God." In making this declaration, the Church did not mean that she was the mother of the uncreated divine essence or that she herself was divine, but only that she was the human point of contact with the divine.

The divine paradox of the maiden mother who gave birth to the child God is dwelt upon by the poets of the Middle English Marian lyrics.
A mother maid a child to bring,
Now who haitho hard of suche a thinge?
Or who can tell at full
How that a maid a mother was,
Or howe this same is brought to pas?
Mans wit it is to dull. 5

She may be called a sovereign lady,
That is a maid and beareth a baby.

A maid peerless hath born God's Son;
Nature gave place
When ghostly grace
Subdued reason. 6

Wyttro hath wondyr but Rezon tell no can,
Houh a mayde bare a chylde both god & man;
Therefore wyttro & take to the wondyr-
ffeyth goth a-bowe, & Rezon goth vndyr. 7

Another sign behould now, lo!
Of Sedrak, Bisake, Abbednago,
In a fornace concluded,
And not one haire of them adust;
As ys Godes wyll, Godos wyl'bo mupt,
Yt cannot be refussed. 8

O uirgo uirginum, alle perelos in uertu,
Wymen of iorln, muse on pis mater,
How pu, a maydyn, art the moder of Ihu.
Matheles, if any of them pis secretly enquire,
Sweit lady, then shortly make to þen pis an-swere:
'The hyo myght of god þis mystery first be-gane.
3o damesoles of Ìorln, why wonder 3o so thane?' 9

A semle solcoup hit is to se
pe burd þat had þis borne i borne
þis child conseguyd in he degre
& maydyn is as was be forme
Seche wonder tydyngus 3o now here
þat maydon & modur ys won yn fore
and lady ys of hye a ray. 10

A lady þat was so feyrc & briȝt
velut maris stella
Brouȝt forth ihu ful of mist,
parens et puella.
Lady, flour of all ping,
    rosa sine spina,
bat barist ihú heuyn king,
gracia diúina. 11

The conception that the prophets were aware of the Virgin Birth,
which they had foretold in the Old Testament, is found in the poems:

The prophottos therof ware nothyng dysmayde,
Of that tydynges before that they hadde
toldo,
For nowe yt ys fall ryghto as they sayde:
    A olen mayde hatho born a king.
And that ys true,
For he ys born to ware the purpull hwo. 12

To express the miracle of the Virgin Birth, the Marian poets use
imagery of the sun through glass motif, the burning bush of Moses, the
Eastern gate, the rod of Jesse, the stone cut from the hill of Daniel's
prophecy, the Bridegroom of the Psalms, the shining star, and the blooming
roso and flour-de-lys:

There ys a flowr sprong of a tro
The rote þer of is callid iosse
A floure of pryce
þer is non neche in paradise

þis flour is fayre & fresche of heue
hit fadis neuer bot euor is new
þe blissful branche þis flour on grow
was mare myld pat baro ihu
A flour of grace
Aȝyns a sorow hit is solas 13

An ore of whet of a masyd spronge,
xxxti wynter in ȝrth to stond,
    To make vs bred, all to his pay. 14

As a swete floure berith his odouro
This masydon myalde of grete honoure
Withouten maternall dolouro
    Oure Saviour hath borne. 15
A rose hath borne a lilly white,
The wiche floure is most pure and bright.

As the same beame goth throughe the glasse,
Thurgh this rose that lilly did pas

what freoli flour weore faire to fynde,
what gone worde go per-as hit grow-

As Mancer her-of made in his lynde,
bus kenned him Catoun, his craftes he knew-

What sogge on soi pat pat seed seuz,
Hit is holy at myn a-vys;
Above pe Braunches bep Blosmes new,
pe lele cheeses faire pe Flourdelys.

You lele ladi, I likne to pe
pe flour, to bi seroli some also,
pe blisful Blosmes pat ouer nihte be,
Trouly pat was be-twix you to.

A blusyte frut schow forthe gan bry[nc], 13

For his love that bought vs all dore,
Lystyn, lordynge that ben here,
And I will tell you in fere
Therof com the flour-de-lyce.

On Cristmas nyght when it was cold,
Owr Lady lay amonge bestes bolde,
And ther she bore Jheu, Josoph telde,
And therof com the flour-de-luce.

Aaron yorde, withoute maystowre,
Thatte longe was sore, a flowre hathe born;
So ence hath bornoure Sauyowre
To cause mankynde, thatte was forlorn.
MIRABILE. 20

A stone was kuttte owte of an hylle
Withouten helpe of manys hondes;
A mayden pure in dode and wyllle
Hath born the lord of every londe.
MIRABILE. 21

Kutto of the hill withoute manys hond,
Crist is the corners stone.

The Angel of Counsel now borne he is
Of a maide ful clene, ywis,
Sol de stella;
The sunne that ever shynoth bryght,
The sterre that ever yeueth his lyght,
   Semper clara.

Ryght as the sterre bryngth forth his bome,
So the maide hore barn-teme,
   Pari forma.

Mother the sterre for his bome,
Mother the maide for her barn-temo,
   Fit corrupta. 23

This Jacobys sterre with shynyng leme
That Balaam sey in Balakkys remo
Figuroth Mary, that in Bedlemo
   Bare Jhose and leyde in hay. 24

God is he pat iboren was,
Wipoute eurich senful likings,
Of pe, nso sorne porgh glas
Schinb wipoute ani brekinge. 25

A kinges sone and an emporouroure
Ys comyn oute of a madynys toure,
With us to dwelle with grote honoure. 26

As a Brid out of his bour
   Crist him-self out code,
As pe sorne in Morwtyd grey
   zcode out of his tente, 27

ffrom pe chosyne chamyr of chast clennes
Procedyng, and pure paleys of plesance,
Thurg hys grace owr myschoeff to roydros,
   A myghty Cyant off dowbyll substance,
flor to reypresse pe feendys fowlie pywssance,
ffrom hoyvyne tyl Erth hys cowre hath swotyly
tak
To cause owr joye and owr fynaunce to make. 28

Our wicht invinsable Sampson sprang tho fra,
   That with ane buffat bair douno Beliall; 29

Whycye hast fowtryd lying in thy lappo
Tetragramaton, that fed vs with Manna, 30

For now ys borne a baron of myght,
   Mundum pugillo continens. 31
Mary's painless child-bearing is found in the Pseudo Matthew, an apocryphal gospel. Following this and the Patristic belief that Mary was free from pain during the birth of Jesus because she had conceived the Child without sin, St. Bernard of Clairvaux said of the Lord: "conceptus fuit sine pudore, partus sine dolore." The English Marian poets agree with the twelfth-century saint:

Withoute poynse other loure
Mary bare oure Sauyoure; 34

Hyl! that conceyved and bore with-outen poynse
The second person in the trynyte, 35

Hailol pure virgyn, mary, in thy childes byrtho--
Of carefull payne and wo, there was non in the
Whiche women do suffre--pu haddest all ioye & myrtho,
Therefore pu maist be called a goddes; yf any be
Other in heven or erthe, then surely thou
art she-- 36

We come now to some of the most beautiful of the mediaeval English religious lyrics, the lullabies and creche lyrics of the Madonna and Child. The lullaby first appeared in Middle English lyric poetry in the fourteenth century. The earliest lullaby extant is the didactic, Franciscan, "Lollai, lollai, litel child." This poem does not mention the names of Mary and Jesus, but many later lullabies which do mention the names of the holy persons were modeled on this poem.

These Nativity songs are largely narratives with almost invariable mention of the coming Passion; their joyous tone is underlined with seriousness. The Nativity settings, full of light and color, harmonize in atmosphere with the early Italian art of Giotto and his contemporaries. In the lullaby carols, as in the miracolo plays, "the person-
ality of the Virgin is hung about with a tender humanity."

In those poems, Bethlehem is not a remote place of long ago, but it is vitally, vividly present. There are chanson d'aventure type lyrics in which the poet sees and, sometimes, speaks to the Virgin or her little Babe. Part of the beauty of the lullays and the shepherd carols lies in their originality, for they depart from the Gospels and do not include the often fantastic apocryphal stories, but, instead, they present purely imaginary, realistic scenes.

Sacred poetry, both in the Latin and in the vernacular, and sacred pictorial art were often closely associated in the Middle Ages, and the influence upon one was likely to influence the other. The development of the human side of the Nativity was influenced both in the Middle English lyrics and in art by the changing conception of the Madonna and Child of the Patristic and early Middle Ages. Émile Male, the great authority on mediaeval art, has this to say of the changing attitude with regard to the Mother Mary and the Child Jesus:

From the end of the thirteenth century on, the artists seem no longer able to grasp the great conceptions of earlier times. Before, the Virgin enthroned held her Son with the sacerdotal gravity of the priest holding the chalice. She was the seat of the All-Powerful, 'the throne of Solomon,' in the language of the doctors. She seemed neither woman nor mother, because she was exalted above the sufferings and joys of life. She was the one whom God had chosen at the beginning of time to clothe His word with flesh. She was the pure thought of God. As for the Child, grave, majestic, hand raised, He was already the Master Who commands and Who teaches....But at the end of the thirteenth century we come back down to earth from heaven.

Mary then becomes maternal and the Christ Child is as helpless as any other new-born babe.
Richard Leighton Groome believes this change was mainly the result of Franciscan Christianity, which permeates the sacred carols and, we add, the more literary lyrics:

...there are signs of strong Franciscan influence on the subject-matter and spirit of the carols. The tempering of the austerity of Christianity by the appeal to tender emotion and personal love for Christ, the invocation of pity for His sorrow in the cradle and suffering on the cross, which is particularly to be noted in the lullaby and Crucifixion carols, are part of the legacy of Francis to the centuries which followed his ministry. 41

St. Francis himself is said to have originated devotion for the Christmas Manger. The ox and the ass owe their recognition in part to this greatest and most humble of saints, who loved dumb animals as his brothers in Christ. The Franciscans emphasized the humility and the poverty of the Divine Infant, in remembrance of their own vows of humility and poverty, when they composed their Christmas songs. The particular devotion to the Virgin Mother for which many of the friars were noted gave additional reason to sing songs of the Manger scene. 42

Groome also tells us that the large number of Nativity, Epiphany, and other Christmas Season carols represents a response of the Middle English cleric poets to combat popular Christmastide customs remaining from pagan winter festivals, which made Christmas one of the chief occasions for outbreaks of ribald dances and songs. The Christmas Carol, far from being a spontaneous product of the people, was really a powerful weapon of the Church in her struggle to root out all vestiges of paganism, immorality, and heretical ideas from the minds of her children. Needless to say, the people gladly accepted it and made the carol part of themselves.
Heaven came down to earth when a little Child was born one winter night long ago:

Now man may to houen wonde;
Now houen and erthe to hym they bende;
He that was foo now isoure frende; l44

Angeles þor cam out of hore toure,
To loke upon þis freschele floure l45

The golden tymo ys nowe at hende,
The daye of joye from heaven doth springe,
Salvacyone over-flowes the lande, l46

Thor is no ro[se of] swych vertu
As is the rose that bar Jhesu;
Alleluya.

For in this rose conteynyed was
Houen and ortho in lytyl space
Ras miranda. l47

One poet uses the conceit that Mary is like the Primum Mobilo for she moves Heaven itself in her arms:

Sho is lik þe firmament also;
Sor sho stert at wylle, y-wys,
þe hio sone of riȝtfulnes
Now to hure barm, now til hure brost.
Thus houene in erthe hap taken his rest;
And now is þis a wondre steuone,
Houene is in erthe and erthe in houene. l48

In the Pseudo-Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus was born, the stable animals knew who He was. This is also true in the Middle English religious lyrics:

A babe was born
Erly by the morn
And layd between the ox and the asse;
The child they knew
That was born new;
On hym thei blew. 50
The oxo and asso in haro manyour,  
Thos that hy sezen hare creature  
Lyelynde ins hare forage,  
Alone knowynge thaj hy were,  
Hy nakede joyo in hare manere,  
And eke in hare langage. 51

In a orasco was pat chylde layde,  
bothe oxo and asso with hym playde  
with joyo and blisse  
miserere nobis. 52

The poverty of the Christ Child was meant to be a lesson in  
humility to others:

He pat was riche, without any node,  
Apperod in this world in right poro wede,  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
A stabil was his chambre; a crach was his bod;  
He had not a pylow to ley vnder his hod; 53

A penitent adresses the little Jesus:

Lullay, lullay litel chill, child resto pe a  
bower,  
Fro hey zo hider art þu sent with us  
to wono lowe;  
Pore & litel art þu mad, vnakut & vknowe  
Pine an wo to suffren her for þing pat  
was þin owe.  
Lullay, l[lullay] litel child, sormo mauth  
þu make;  
þu art sent in-to þis wed, as tu were  
for-sake.  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Child, it is a weping dale þat þu art  
conen inne,  
þi pore clutes it prouen wel, þi bod mad in  
be binne;  
Cold & hunger þu must þolen as þu were gotten  
in senne,  
& after deyzen on þe tre for bue of al  
man-kenne.  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Lullay, l[lullay] litel child, litel child  
þin ore!
It is al for oure owen gilt þat þu art peined sor;
but wólde we got kynde be, & liuen after þi lore,
& leten sono for þi loue, ne keepest þu
no more.

Lullay, l[lullay] littel child, softe slop & haste,
In sorwe endet euery loue but þin at þe lassto. 54

Another minner addresses Jesus:

Lullay for wo, þu littel bing,
þu littel barun, þu littel king;
Mankindde in cause of þi mourning,
þat þu hast loued so zore. 55

Mary says to Joseph:

"Hirhe he Is þat bors þe pryse
In all thyng þat he as wrought;
To hap my Barne Som clas I zarno,
Bot wat It I ne rought,
þis yoles day."
He sayd Ba-Day;
Soo sayd lullay,
þe virgine fresche as res In may. 56

Mary tries to protect her shivering Son from the cold:

Inesu, suete none dore,
In porful bed þu list nou here,
& þat me gretut sore;
For þi credel is als a bero,
Ox & Asso ben þi fero--
Wepen may i per fere.

Inesu, suete, be nout wroth,
I haue neipor clut ne cloth
þe inno for to folde;
I ne haue but a clut of a lappe,
þerfore lay þi feete to my pappe,
& kep þe fro þo colde. 57

In a dream, the poet sees Mary and Jesus:
Als i lay vp-on a nith
I lokede vp-on a stronde,
I be-held a mayden brith,
a child sche hadde in honde.

Hire loking was so loueli,
Hire semblant was so suete,
Of al my sorwe sikerli
Sche mithte my bales boto. 53

Joseph, a "sergant," tells the poet how his dear wife has given birth to the Son of God. In a pantourelle-type poem, the poet is bold enough to speak to the Virgin:

'Fayro maydyn, who is this barn
That thou boriste in thyn arme?'
'Sir, it is a Kyngos Son,
That in hovyn above doth wonne. 59

The first thing the Virgin Mary does after the birth of Jesus, according to Catholic tradition, is worship her child:

Thys mayden hyjth mary, she was full mylde,
she knolyde by-fore here own© dere chylde. 60

The Virgin delighted to play with her Babe:

Then she her deare Soane so,
She set him on her kne
And song, 'Hydder to mo--
Cum basse thy mother, deare.' 61

Glad were pou, lof in londe,
The pou haddyst in honde
The prynoe of oure peos. 62

With lyppes collyng,
His mouth ofte she dyd kysso
And sayd, 'Sweetechort myne,
I pray you, make good chere.' 63

Those louolo lado con grete her chyldo:
'Hayle, Sun, haile, Broder, haile, Fader derei!'
Mary is often pictured in the Nativity lyrics as singing to her Child. The Virgin had a beautiful singing voice, the sweetness of which caused the Christ to forsake the song of the angels:

Mary's happiness is often marred by the thought of the Crucifixion.
Sometimes Mary already knows the coming events of the Saviour's life:

**Sonnet**

Lullay, lullay! lytil chyld, myn owyn doro fode,
How xalt þu sufferin be naylid on þo rode?
So blyssid be þo tymo!

Lullay, lullay! lytil chyld, myn owyn doro smerte,
How xalt þu sufferin þe scharp spore to þi herto?
So [blyssid, etc.]

Lullay, lullay! lytyl child, I synge al for þi sake,
Many on is þe scharpe schour to þi body is schapo
So [blyssid, etc.]

Lullay, lullay! lytil child, fayre happis þo be-falle,
How xal þu sufferin to drynke ozyl & galle?
So [blyssid, etc.]

Lullay, lullay! lytil chyld, I syngo al be-forn,
How xalt þu sufferin þe scharp garlong of þorn?
So [blyssid, etc.]

Lullay, lullay! lytil chyld, quy wopy þu so sore
& art þu bopin god & man—quat woldyst þu be more? 69

The Shepherd carols were lato compositions of the Middle English religious poets. In this type of verse, we can see the growing love of Englishmen for pastoral poetry, which was to reach its climax in the immediately following centuries. A song used in the "Taylors and Shearemone Pagant" and dated 1534 is a pastoral poem that would have wide popularity:

Song I

As I out rode this onders night,
Of thre joli sheppardos I saw a sight,
And all aboute there fold a star shone bright;
They sange terli, terlow,
So mereli the sheppards ther pipes can blow.

Song III

Downe from heaven, from heaven so hio,
Of angeles ther came a great companie
With mirth and joy and great solemnity;
They[s] sange terly, terlow,
So meroli the sheppards ther pipes can blow. 69

A shepherd song by Ryman follows the Bible story:
When Crist was borne, an ангell bright
To sheperdson keepen shepe that nyght
Came and sayde with heavenly light,
'Thow Crist is borne, [the King of Blis.]

They dred greatly of that same light
That shone so bright that tyne of nyght
Thurgh the vertu, the grace, and myght
Of Goddes Son, [the King of Blis.]

The ангell sayde, 'Drode ye nothing;
Beholde, to you grete joye I bringe,
And vnto alle that be lyving,
For now is borne the King of Blis.

'Go to Bedlene, and there ye shall
With Marie myolde in an oxe stall
Fynde an infante that mon shull call
The Son of God and King [of Blis.]"

Greene notes the striking similarity in tone and conception of the poem,
"Jolly Wat the Shepherd," to the shepherd scenes in the mediaeval
mystery plays. This carol, with its dancing rhythm, is so irre¬
sistible that we cannot but quote most of it:

The sheperd vpon a hill he satt;
He had on hym his tabard and his hat,
Hys tarbox, hys pype, and hys flagat;
Hys name was called Joly, Joly Wat,
For he was a gud herdes boy.

The sheperd vpon a hill was layd;
Hys doge to hys gyrdyll was tayd;
He had not slept but a lytill broyd
But 'Gloria in excelsis' was to hym sayd.

The sheperd on a hill he stode;
Round about hym his shepe they yode;
He put hys hond vndor hys hode;
He saw a star as rode as blod.

Wat leavens his companions and runs all the way to Bethlehem:
When Wat to Bodlem cum was,
He swet; he had gon faster than a pace.
He found Jhesu in a symppyl place
Between an ox and an ass.

'Jhesu, I offer to the herow my pypp,
My skyrto, my tarbox, and my scrypse;
Home to my folowes now will I skype,
And also loke vnto my shope.'

'Now, farewell, myne owne herdesman Wat.'
'Ye, for God, lady, even so I hat.
Lull well Jhesu in thy lape,
And farewell, Joseph, wyth thy roymd cape.'

Returning home, Wat sings:

'Now may I well both hope and syng,
For I haue bone a Crysten beryng.
Home to my folowes now wyll I flyng.
Cryst of hevyu to his blis vs bryng!
Wth hoy!
For in his pipe he mad so myche joy. 72

At the Circumcision, Jesus gives a "token of love," blood, as a
forowarning of the blood He is to shed on the Cross:

A token of loue he fyrst nou shewed,
That he on vs wolde have pytye,
When he for vs was cruycyfed,
Ut declaratur hodie. 73

In the Middle English lyrics, the three Wai of the Nativity story
are either knights, "cnistes," or university scholars, "folosafers,"
from distant, exotic lands, "Saba," "Segent," "Indo lond," or "Caldey."

On their way to Bethlehem, they discuss the merits of their offerings:

Foret pe kinges gunnen iwoden,
pe sterre bi-gon for to springen,
When Herod hears the news the Magi tell him, he feels very dejected, but he assumes a mild manner in their presence:

In a fifteenth century poem, Herod wants to know where the Child is so that, as he tells the Magi, he may make a pilgrimage to the holy place:

The Wise Men continue their journey with the aid of the Star until they come to where the Child lies:

Finding Jesus in a crib of hay, a "pore aray," they say:
Now knele wo downe, all iij in-fere,
And offic to pis derlyng dere
Gold sorco and rekyle alere,
    and myre al so--
and myre al so in tokonyng
pat he is wert man and kyng,
Soffarond prins oour all thyng,
on and no moo,
for holy wryth bere wyttenes al so. 79

Horod then slew with pride and sin thousands of babon under two
years of age in hope of destroying the new-born King:

Crist erid in eradil modor baba
he childor of iral eridyn wa wa
ffore hore morp hit was aga
when erod fersly comp hem fray
    . . . . . . . . .
an hunderd & fourte bousand per wore
crist han cristynd al in fore
In sorblod & were matero
al alone virgyns hit is no nay 80

Messengers from Heaven warn Mary to flee into Egypt in order to escape
Horod’s wrath:

Angolys com to Oure Lady anon
And bade hyr into Egypte gone,
Thoryne to dwelle, theryne to wonny,
Yn tymo hyt wer Errod endyng day. 81

The Christmas Season ends with the Presentation of Mary in the
Temple forty days after the Nativity. Mediaeval Catholics believed
that the Virgin, who had no need for purification herself, performed
the rite of Purification in order to purify by proxy the souls of her
followers. It was customary in the Middle Ages to pray for the indi-
vidual soul on the Feast of the Purification. The poets say of Mary:
Thow beryst be frute of all chastite,  
And yet bow madyst by purification, 
To purifyoure soules for by charyte. 82

It was at the Presentation in the Temple that Simoon sang his immortal
"Nunc dimittis" when he recognised the Messiaih:

Simoon, on his arms ry3t,  
olyped Ihou ful of my3t,  
and sayde unto pat barno so bry3t:  
'Y see my Sauyur in sy3t';  
And songo thor-with, allelyua.

Tho he saide with-oute losa;  
'Lordo pou scite thy servaut in pecc,  
for nowo Y hauz pat Y ouer choce  
all oure luyes to encrece,  
thor scoyten syngeth, allelyua. 83

Simoon also prophesied that Mary's heart would be pierced by a sword of
sorrow:

Symoon seide the swordes shuld goo  
Thurgh hir myelde herte of care and woe, 84

Symoon seide a sharp sword shuld ryve  
Thurgh thy soule, and perco thyng herto blyve, 85

Lydgate is one of the few writers who mentions anything about the
Virgin during the time of the Christ's boyhood and Public Ministry. He
refers to the Finding in the Temple of the boy, Jesus, several events
of the Public Ministry, and the Wedding at Cana, of which he says:

Arroto is not to noon vnkynonosso,  
At the feasto, the gospel teile can,  
Of Archydeleyne, nor to no straunegnoosso,  
That Iesu thor called tho a woman,  
The name of moodir lefft behynden than, 86
In "Brother, Abide," a Complaint of the Christ on the Cross, there is a beautiful allusion to Mary's blessed Urchin:

I lede my yought wyth children in the strotte,
Poorly a-rayed in clothes bare and thyno,
Suche as my mother for my dyde make & spyno. 67

An imitator of Bonaventura's Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ used nature imagery to express how the Christ Child was protected in his childhood by His loving Mother:

(The) ffryt gan to rypo vnder pe lef,
Vnder pe moder pe child him thref. 88
CHAPTER IV
STABAT MATER

The Patristic attitude concerning the Madonna at the Cross is summed up in the words of St. Ambrose: "Stantem illam lego, flontem non lego."

In the art and literature of the Patristic and early Middle Ages, both Mary and Jesus were portrayed emancipated from human suffering. Mary stood erect and self-possessed at the foot of the Cross, for she stood there as a symbol of the Christian Church. Her faith made her erect, no sin bowed her to the earth, and her will corresponded to God's will. Even when the artist or the writer tried to recall the historic scene of the Crucifixion, he would depict only restrained grief. The conception that the sinless Maiden Mary gave birth to the Christ Child without pain fostered the belief that the Mother gave up her Son without human suffering.

Later, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the gentle mysticism of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the practical teaching of the early Franciscans emphasized the human nature of the Nazarene, the reality of His sufferings at Golgotha, and the duty of the Christian to feel compassion for Him. The medieval mind then became concerned with the concepts of the sacrifice made on the Cross for man's salvation. A planctus type of religious poetry, probably originating from the liturgy of the Church, evolved when pious imagination dramatized the sufferings of the Mother and the Son at Calvary. In the history of hymnology, of church drama, and of the Mary cult, these laments are of considerable importance. They represent the movement which from the twelfth century humanized
religion at the same time that it popularized the elements of mysticism. Four types of planetus poems were composed: laments of the Virgin, complaints against the Cross, appeals of the Christ on the Cross to sinful man, and personal meditations on the Crucifixion made by the writers themselves. These poems were probably important in the development of the Passion play. E. K. Chambers has shown that in the late drama, "Burial of Christ," the refrain "Iwo cannot wepe, come lerno of me" was used. George C. Taylor has given evidence that some of the laments found in the miracle plays, especially in the Hecce and the Digby Cycles, were drawn from individual planetus lyric sources. The dramatic element in these lyrics made them especially suitable for recitation at the great Church festivals.

In the fourteenth century, when devotion to the Sorrow of the Virgin became popular, the Passion of the Christ found its counterpart in the compassion of the Mother. The Virgin then became the apotheosis of maternal love and suffering. Émile Male adequately expresses the mediæval attitude toward the Stabat mater:

The Passion of Our Lady soon as a parallel to that of her Son is, indeed, a favorite conception of the mystics, who invariably associate the Son and His mother in their meditations. Jesus and Mary, they repeatedly affirm, are more than united in the mystery of the Passion: they become one and the same....Men's hearts are not great enough, the mystics said, to encompass the immensity of such grief [i.e., Mary's]....And so, from the fourteenth century onward, to Christi Passio is added Mariae Compassio, the compassion of the Virgin, which is the echo of the Passion in her heart.

Furthermore, it was thought by many that through her sorrows at the Cross
the Virgin had shared in the work of her Son's Atonement. In the writings of St. Brigitta, Mary's work in the Atonement is stressed. In the Meditationes of the Franciscan General, Bonaventura, Mary is not spoken of in this manner, but her suffering at Golgotha is emphatically stated.

The conception that the Virgin verbally expressed her grief at Calvary entered into Latin and vernacular literature after the tenth century. This idea came from the Eastern Church, which long before had included Syrian Good Friday hymns and Stauropothokia, lyric poems on the Passion, in its liturgy. Versified Marian laments became popular with the development of the cult of Mary in the twelfth century. Herman Thien has shown that they were dependent on the so-called Tractate of the twelfth-century saint, Bernard of Clairvaux. He has also stated that the north of England was especially productive of these Marian laments from the beginning of the fourteenth century. The Middle English Marian laments, which reached their climax in the fifteenth century, were, Thien believes, prevalently lyrical or epic in character, in contrast to the dramatic laments of mediaeval German and Italy. This species of religious poetry was more human and more passionate than the orthodoxy of the Patristic Age would have permitted. In the planetus poems, the Virgin faints, shrieks, wishes to die with her Son, recalls with bitterness her former happiness with the Christ Child, curses Judas, the Jews, the Cross, and Nature, and sheds tears of blood, to correspond with the blood her Son shed on the Cross. Marian laments which overworked these motifs became unsuitable to portray the sublime emotion of love and the act of sacrifice that characterized the Crucifixion. These lyrics robbed the Virgin Mother of her admirable self-control and fortitude, for there
was nothing of the dignity of the God-bearer in her lamentations, and still less was there any Christian resignation. Other lyrics, especially those which translated or imitated the great liturgical hymns, the *Stabat lux* Christi crucem and the *Stabat mater dolorosa*, which were not themselves personal laments of the Virgin, did not overemphasize these motifs at the sacrifice of restraint. "Who Cannot Speak, Come Learn of Me," "Mary, Mother, Come and See," and "Stand Well, Mother, Under Roof," examples of this type, are masterpieces of lyric poetry.

In the Passion poems, a brief account of the events which were climaxed on Calvary is given. The Virgin Mother is often a witness to these events. She knows of Judas' betrayal of her Son and she curses him for his treachery:

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When that my swete Son was thirti wyntor old,  
Than the traytor Judas wexed very bold.  
For thirti plates of money his Master he had sold;  
But when I it wyst, Lord, my hart was cold!

Upon Shero Thursday than truly it was,  
On my Sonnes doth that Judas did on passe.  
Many were tho fals Jewos that folowed hym by trace,  
And ther befoore them all he kyssed my Sonnes face.  22
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. . 'O Judas how durst pu be so bolde  
To betray my son to any iewe?  
For xxx d. pu hym solde  
ful wel pu wist hit was not dewe.  
Soro of pat bargan pu may row,  
per-for pu saule in hel is drest.  
Wo worth pu tyne pat I pe knew!  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

. . 'per-for pu sorrow shall never alake,  
Traytur, for pu fals trayng.  
pu made pu Iewys my son to take,  
Caytef oursaid, with pu kyssyng;
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Mary suffers to see and hear of her Son's torments in the hands of his accusers:

When he came to Cæphas and An
To be juged for synfull man,
In her hort she was woofull than
    For hir doro Son alone.

When that she sawe his fleshe to-torn,
    And on his hode a crowne of thorn,
And how the Jewes hym did scorn,
    She was woofull alone. 24

Quhat doHour persit our ladyis hort,
    Quhan echo hal'd hii* aone was tone
    &
Syno led to Annas, pat of syn had na part,
    Quhair fals witnes agane him sone wer fud.

... At prime scho followit him to pilotis place,
    With sobing, siching, lik to fall in swone;
Thair the Iowis spittit in his face
    And fals witnes spak fast to put him doun. 25

My Son, befoore Pilat brought was he,
And Peter said iii tymes he knew hym not, pordo.
Pilat said vnto the Jewes, "What say ye?"
Than they cryd with on voys, "Crucifye!" 26

At torco, 'crucify him!' pe Iowis can cry;
    The quhit coit and purpour claith gai' him
    for scorne,
Thai scourgit him; and our lady pat stude by,
    Saw him beir croce and crownt with thorne. 27

Lydgate tells of the oncunter of the Mother with her Cross-laden Son
on the Via dolorosa:

When Iesu bare his croc to Caluary,
    And thy to mete hym ran thuruh the Cite,
Born of with press, thy myghtist hym not see,
When thy hym mettist, he fel doun for ffeyntise, 28

In a late carol on the Passion, Jesus says:

I bare the cross, that was so longo,
To Calvary, where my doth was dight.
My mother followed with rufull songe;
Sayng my trauel, she fel downe ryght.
To se me in such payn ibrought
For the syn, man, that thou hast wrought,
She was full wo. 29

The Virgin describes the bloody road trod by the Agnus Dei:

Throwe Ierlm streitis a man mysto trace pe blode of my childe like a leeste. 30

In a few poems, Mary does not know of the sufferings of her Son until John tells her of the Crucifixion:

'Mary moder, cum and se
Thy swet Son mayled on a tre.

'Thys blessyd babe that thou hast born,
Hys blessyd body ys all to-torne
To bye vs agayn, that were forlorn;
Hys hod ys crownyd with a thorn.' 31

'From his heed vnto his too
His skynne is torne, and fleshe also;
His body is bothe wanno and blo,
And mayled he is on a tre.

'Thys louely Sone that thou hast borne
Is crownd with a crowne of thorne
To saue mankynde, that was but lorne,
And brynge man but to his libert.' 32

Mary then hurries to the hill of Golgotha:
When Johan this tale began to toll,
Mary wolde no longer dwell,
But went amongst the Jewses foill,
There she myght her Sone so. 33

The Marian *planctus* lyrics properly begin with the Virgin Mother keeping her station at the foot of the Cross. The Virgin Mother is heart-broken when she sees the tormented and broken body of her Son, and in her anguish, she weeps tears of blood:

Noy a-pone dune
as al rolke hit se may,
a mile wyh-hute po tune
a-bute po mid-day,
po rode was op a-eride.
(his frendis warin al of-ferde,
poi clungin so po aley)
po rod stonit in ston.
mari hir-selfe al-hon,
hir songe was way-le-waye]. 34

Full maydynly, full moderly,
Whan she the crosse behelde,
The teris from her eyen fill;
She said, 'Alas, my child!' 35

With pale visage trembling she stode her child before,
Beholdyng ther his lytmys all to-rent and tore. 36

Mayde & Moder bar astod,
marie ful of grace;
An[d of her eyen heo] lot blod
wallon in po place.
po trace ran of her blod,
changed [h]oro fles & blod
& face.
he was to-drawe,
so dur islawe
in chaco. 37

She lokyd vp hygh vnto the crosse,
She saw her son open hit hyng,
How myght pat may have had more losse
Than lese her son pat was a kyng?
She myndyd well, he made all thyng,
And myght have sauyd hymself fro wo,
Therfore sorow to her hort dyd hyng
That he suffred such wrecches to sly hyng so.

Mi suete Sono, that art wo dore,
Wat hast thou don? Qui art thou here?
Thi sueto bodi that in wo rest,
That loueli mouth that I hauo kast!
Mou is on rode mad thi nest;
Mi dere child, quat is wo best? 39

A maidon hadde in huro gardyn
be fruyt of loue pat was so Wyn.
pat fruyt fro huro be cruys fette,
He on his branches he it sette. 40

on ston ase bou stode,
pucelo, tot peuaunt,
pou restest be under rode,
ton fitsu voites pendant
pou seze is sidis of blodo,
lamo de ly partaunt;
he ferede vch-an rode
on mound que fut vuaunt.

ys siden were sere
lo sang de ly cora;
bat lond wes fowlore,
mos il le rochata.

vch born pat wes ybor
on enfen desends;
he poldeo dep per fere,
on ciel puis monta. 41

Hasso ho biheould be rode,
be modir pat was of miste
& per l-sei al ablole
Hir sono pat hor was briste,
Hasso tuo suete honden
Wid nailes al to-rondon,
Is fehit ipurlid bo,
Is suete softe side
I-purlit depe & vydo--
Wey, pat hire was wo!

Ha isoi pe rode stonden,
Hire sono per-to ibunden
Hoe wroinc hire honden,
Bi-heild his suete wunden.
pe gyues to him leden
On him for-to greden
Jesus pitied and tried to comfort His grief-stricken Mother:

Sore and ardo he was iswungen,
Feth and andes purwe istungen,
Ac me of alle in othre wunden
Im dode is moder swerc wo,
In al his pino, in al his wrake,
Pat he droi for manes sake
Ho soi in moder sorwen maken—
Wol roufuliche ho spac hiro to.
He said, 'Women lone me here,
their child that to manne here.
With-uten sor and wep pu were
po ics was of po iborn.
Ac nu pu must þi pine dreien,
wan þu siost mo with þin eyen
pine pole o rode, and deien
to heilen man þat was forlorn.' 44

'Stand wol, moder, ounder rode, 45
Behold þi child wip glad mode, Moder blipo miȝt þou bo.'

'Moder, do way þi wo-pinge; 46
Ich þolie dep for monnes kuinde—Nor mine gultes no þolie I non.'

'Moder, do woi þine teres, pou wip away þe blodi teres,
Hy dep me worse þone mi dep.'

He Rewis for mary, my moder mylde,
That murnis so sair for me hir chyldes;
ffor sche me saw þuggait revylde,
In alkin thyng
Leid as anc tyke,
& thoſeſ-lyke,
On gallowis to hyng. 46

He gives His Mother to St. John as a "maydyn to be a maydnyg make": 47

pan spak þat noble kynge was mayled on þat tre,
Un-till his modir dere was mourmande þat tyde:
'Leue þi wopynge, woman, and morn maghte for me,
Take John to þi son þat standis bi þi side;
John, take mary [m[i moder now [moder] to þe,
To kopo and to conforthe, 3oure blysse for to byde.' 47

'Saynt Jon,' he said, 'my dere derlyng,
Take my moder into thi kepyng;
Nei is my joy, my hert swytyng;
Loke thou leue not hero anon.' 48
The Virgin Mary refuses to be comforted by her Son. She reminds us of Troilus when Chaucer's hero was in the depths of despair when she says of herself:

Vessel of care & wo, & sorrows all!
Now thou art frosty cold / now fyre hoot;
And right as pat a ship, or barge, or boat,
Among the waves dryeth steerless,
So doest thou, woful woman, comfortless!

She thinks of the happiness she had when she learned from Gabriel that she was to conceive the Son of God:

Gabriel, pu dedeste calle me ful of grace;
nowe full of sorowe pu mo seystel!

'Gabryell grot me all with grace,
And all with myrthe he myngyd me modo;
And now I lake open thy face,
And se the hyng there on the rode,
Sopylyd and sproynkelyd all with blode,
Socrynhd and socorgyd & all to-shent.
Now may there nothyng do me good,
For sorow and care so hath me hent.

In one of Hoccleve's poems, Mary says to God the Father:

I had ioye entiere, & also gladness,
When thou bo-took him me to clothe & wrappe
In mannes flesh. I wond, in sothfastnesse,
Have had for euore ioye be the lappe;
But now hath sorwe caught me with his trappe;

Alluding to her "Magnificat" she says:

I song to sone, for I sange be the morwe,
And now at evene I wope and make sorwe.

She remembers the happy times she had when she played with the Christ Child:
Somtyme I leppyd tho in myne arme,
And thought ful kyndely tho to kysse;
I weryd tho wyll fro all kyn hams,
On tho was all my ioy and blysso.
But now methynke hit ys all amyss
To so thy blood renne from thy hort.
But I must take hit as hyt ys,
And sofre sorow with peynos smort.

'I lappyd tho, I lullyd tho, I layd tho soft,
I kyseyd tho oft opon my kne;
And now thou makkest me syng full oft,
To se tho thus hang on thy s tre.
'Allas! wyll hit no better be?
Shall all my ioyen pus fro me go?'
Take here my ende, take me with tho,
And lat me nouer abyde thyys wo.' 54

The Virgin complains to the Cross:

Oure ladi freo,
on Rode tree,
made hire mon;
Hoo ceyde on pe
pe fruit of me
is wo bigon;
Mi fruit I sco
in blodi bleo
Among his fon,
Serwe I sco,
pe voinois fleo
from blodi bon;
Cros? pou dest no throube
On a pillori my fruit to pinne,

Tro wakynde pou schalt bo kud,
Mi som step-Wader I pe calle:
Mi fruit was born wip beestes on bed,
And bo my fleesh my flour gan falla,
Wip my beestes my brid I fed;
Cross pou 3euest him Eydel and Galle;
Mi white Rode rod is spred,
bat fostred was in a fodderes stalle;
Feet and fayre homes
bat nou bon croised I custe hem ofte,
She asks to die with Jesus:

**Take me with thee, my Ioyes be gone,**
**Lat bothe be lyke, thy deth and myne.**  
56

Speaking to the Apostle John, Mary says:

**We drery wightes two / wher may we wano?**
**Thou art of comfort / destitut / I see;**
**And so am I / ful careful boon woo!**

I see non othir / die moot wo tweyne;
Now let vs steruen heer par companion;
Storus thow there / & heere woile I die.  
57

In the fifth century apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, often called the *Acta Pilati*, it is written: "Accipiens autem Longinus miles lanceam aperuit latus eius." Thus, the soldier who pierced the side of Emmanuel was identified as Longinus, a blind knight, who, recovering his sight through contact with the sacrificial blood shed by the Redeemer at Calvary, was converted and later died a Christian martyr. The belief became widespread in the Middle Ages that Longinus' lance was the sword of sorrow of which Simeon had prophesied. The point of the soldier's lance pierced at once the Saviour's side and His Virgin Mother's soul.
The Virgin, in describing the closing moments of the Passion, tells of Longinus:

Though I were sorrowfull, no man have at yt wonder,
For howe was the earthquak, horlyble was the thonder.
I lokèd on my swet Son on the crosse that I stode under;
Than cam Lunguus with a sperre and clift his hart in sonder.' 61

Elsewhere we find:

Lungius, that blynd knythe, wyth a sharpe sperre
He smote wore sauyor into the harte;
and than be-gan the yorth to quake,
the sun dyd lose hys lythe. 62

His Mylde Loder stod him nest,
Loked vpward And hire was wo,
A sword swapped hire poyr pe brest:
Out of pe cros pe knyf com po,

be sword of loue poyr hire gan launce,
Hoo swapte on swoynyng poyr pat chaunce;
To scornen hire pey gan daunce,
Iewes bi ten and twelue: 63

The Mother's only consolation was that she know her Son was God:

Saynt Jhon than said,
'Peer not, Mary; his payynys all
Ho willfully doth suffir for loue speciall
He hath to man, to make hym fre that now is thrall.'
'O frend,' she said, 'I am sure he is immortall.'
'Why than so depe morne ye?'
'Of modirly pete
I must nodes woftall be,
As a woman terrestriall
Is by nature constraynyd to smert,
And yet vorely I know in myn hart
From deth to lyff he aryso shall.' 64
Yet was there oo byng made her fayne,
She wyster that he shuld ryse agayne: 65

In His last moments before death, Jesus looks at his Mother:

The erth quakyd, the son was dark, whos lyght
was past,
When he lamentable
Cried, 'Hely, hely, hely!'
His moder rufully
Wopyng and wrang her handes fast,
Vppon her he cast his dedly looke, 66

By His ignominious death, the Saviour signed the Charter of Freedom for
man:

Vor loute þe charte wrot,
þe enko orn of hys wounde. 67

A proclamation is issued by God the Father of His Son's sacrifice:

Be hit knovyn to all that byn here
and to all that here afftir to me shalbe
leffe and dore
That Jhesus off nasareth for thi loute man
have suffyrde deth
vppon the crosse with woundis smert
In hed in fote in handis in hart
and for I wolde haue thyne herytage agayne
Therfor I suffyrde all this payne,
A man I haue goyn and made a graunt
to the end and thou wilt be repentaunt
houyn bliss thyne eritage withoute endyng
as long as I am lord and kyng
not covetyng nor for all my smert
but a lousyng and a contrite hart
and that þou be In charite
louve þi neyboure as I louse the
that am the cheffe lord of the fee. 68

A thirteenth-century quatrain, "Sunset on Calvary," paints a picture by
suggestion of Nature mourning the loss of her Creator's Son while the
poet sympathizes with the Mother Mary and the Nazarone:

Non goth sonne vnder wod,—
mo royeth, marie, bi faire Rode.
Non goth sonne vnder tro,—
mo roweph, marie, bi sone and pe. 69

When the Knight of the Cross had won the field, he was taken from the Cross by His Mother and her companions:

My fender of my fosc, sa fondon in tho felda,
So lufly lyghtand at tho ouensang tyde;
Thi moder and hir menghe vnlaed thi schold—
All weped that thar wero, thi woundes was so wyde. 70

The Virgin received the Saviour in her arms in order to wipe the blood from his face and pick the thorns from his head. The pietà scenes are often introduced in the Marian lemonts by chanson d'aventure narrations in which the poet tells of seeing a comfortless Mother mourn the death of her Son. One poet says that as he was going through the wilderness he saw a "solompne cito" in the distance. He rode towards it, and at its outskirts he met a lovely maiden weeping and tearing her hair. She told the traveller of her Son's death and she cursed his murderers:

Cursyd Iues, why dude ye pusse?
how durste ye slo youre savoure?
When he schall demo ben schall ye curse;
ye canne not hyde you from his scharpo schoure.
All oher creaturye pay are potuvasse:
bo sone, bo clowdys, for his doloure,
ye tokenyng boi chanyd & mornyd tyll vsse
When ye dide hym pin dynhonowre.
The orthe quakyd, bothe temple & towre,
pat bare you synfull proude & presto,
bo planetis changed & made dolowre—
filius Regis mortuus est. 71
In a ballad-like poem, Mary curses the Jews and Judas for their foul works. She commences her imprecations by saying:

Lstyns, lordyngus, to my tale
And 3e shal here of en story,
Is bottur then super wyne or ale
Pat euor was made in this cuntry,
How iowys demyd my son to dye.
yohan a doth to hym poi drest.
'Alas!' sayd Mary pat is so fre,
'hat chylde is dcd pat soke my brest.'

The Virgin addresses all mothers who have the joy of playing with their children on their knees:

Off alle women pat euor were borne
That berys childur, abyde and se
How my son liggus me befoorne
Upon my kne, takyn fro tre.
Your childur 3e dawse upon your kne
With lazyng, kyseyng and mery chere;
Be-holde my childe, be-holde now mo,
ffor now liggus ded my dere son, dere.

Off alio women fcat euer were borne
That borys ohlldur, abydo and se
How my son liggus xco befornc
Vpon my kne, takyn fro tre.
Your childur 3e dawse vpon your kne
With lazyng, kyseyng and mery chere;
Be-holde my childe, be-holde now mo,
ffor now liggus ded my dere son, dere.
In the most impressive of the pieta lyrics, the poet sees an unknown
Mother weep for her dead Child:

Sodenly afraide, half waking, half slopyng
and gretly dismayde, A woman sat weepyng,

With favour in hir face forr passyng my Reason,
And of hir sone weepyng this was the exchosone:
Hir soon in hir lap lay, she seid, slayno by
treason.
Yif wepyng myght ripe beo it seemyd pan in season.
Thenu, so she gobbid,
So hir soon was bobbid
and of his lif robbid,
Saying pios wordis as I say pee,
'Sho cannot wepe come lornes at me.'

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

'Now broke hert, I the pray, this corts lith so
erulye,
So betyn, so wowanid, entreted so lowlye,
That wist may no behold & wepe ne? noon truly!
To see my deed dere soone lych bleedynge lo!
this nowlye.'

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

On me she caste hire ey, said 'see, mane, thy
brothir!
She kissid hym & said, 'swote, am I not thy modir?'
In sownyng she fill there, it wolde be non uther;
I not which more doodly, the toone or the tothir.
Yit she revived & gobbid,
so hir soon was bobbid
& of his lif robbid.
'Sho cannot wepe,' this was the laye,
& with pat word she vansh Ayay. 74

The Virgin at last consented to have Jesus lain in his grave. She alone
of all the Redeemer's loved ones remained with undoubted faith that her
Son would soon overcome Death and rise out of His tomb:

Our lady saw pano to graif his body boir,
And clois him pairin with a grot stano;
To keep him be Iowis put men of weir—
And be faith of Crist remanit in our lady
all (ano). 75

O swete louedye, wat bye was wo,
And dryry was by mone,
by sou seyze by lefe sone
Ibered vnder by stoney
but by wyent pount by fey
Arys he se scholde,
A dryry fay byt was to be
pat he lay vnder molo. 76

Traditional Catholic belief that the King of Kings first visited
His Mother on Easter morning is found in almost all the mediaeval English
poems of the Resurrection. Richard Rolle, the great English mystic,
translated the beautiful story of the Christ's appearance to his vigilant
Mother found in Bonaventura's Meditationes:

'Come agayno nou, thou my wele-beloued sone.
Come, thou onely my hope. Arouse me, my dore childe.'
And whyllos scho prayyd thus with louedy tores:
sodeynly come oure lord Ihesu in clothes whyto as
any snowo, his sface schynyng as the sone, all
speydous, all gloryous & all full of joye, and
said to his modire: 'Hailo, holy modire.' And as
scone scho turned hir & said: 'Art thou my dore sone
Ihesu?' & with that she knellid downne & wicoloryped
hym: and he lowly Enclyned and toko hir vp, & said:
'By dore modire, ya, I am your sone, & I am resynye,
& I am with yowe.' Then rose they vp to yernde, &
scho halado hym & kyssede hym, and tendirly and
loucandy loned one hym, and he tendirly & meky
holde hir vp. 77

There is a carol by Ryman which recalls this story to mind:

Salve, sancta parente,
Omni labo carens.

O houenly stella so clere and bright,
In whome did light the Sonne of Right;
Therefore we singe with alle our myght,
'Salue, sancta parens.'

Whenne Criste thy Sonne had suffred payne
And rose fro deth to lyfe agayne,
To the he saide, and not in vayne,
'Salue, [sancta parens.]'

As grote payne tho it was to the
Thyne owne dere Sonne in payn to se
As vnto hym nagled on tree,
'Omnis labores caronens.'

But with alle joye thou were repleto
Whenne thy dere Sonne with thy did mete
And grote the with this wordes swote:
'Salue, sancta [parens.]'

No wonder was yf thou were gladde,
Seyng for whome thou haddest be sadde,
Thy Sonne, of whom alle joye is hadde,
'Omnis labores caronens.'

O moder of bothe God and man,
Aftur oure myght and as we can
We say to tho, as he saide than,
'Salue, sancta parens.'
CHAPTER V

REGINA COELI

That the Incarnate God suffered all the conditions of human existence while He was on earth was an inevitable consequence of His sacrifice for the restoration of grace to man. His Mother, however, who was also without sin, did not have to atone for the sins of mankind, except through her grief at Calvary. Early Christians believed that she was therefore released from mortal life without the death-struggle which earthly beings endure. As she had given birth to her Son without pain or pollution, it was conceived that the soul departed from her body without effort and that her mortal body did not suffer corruption in the grave. If the great men, Enoch and Elijah, were exempted from death, then surely, men thought, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the most perfect of created beings, was translated into Heaven as the Old Testament characters wore. As the author of the Vvere of oure Ladie, an instruction book for the use of English nuns, says:

The kyngc of blysse hath not suffered hya 
mother body to rotto....But he hathe borne 
yt with the soile in the paleys of heuen, to 
receyue endlesse ioyes wyth the tryntyto. 2

Distinction was made between the Ascensio of the Saviour, made possible by virtue of His divine nature, and the Assumptio of the Virgin, made possible by the grace she received when she bore the Christ and by her own merit.

The nucleus of the belief in the Assumption may be as old as the
third century. Legends of the Assumption were written in the early Christian centuries in Coptic, Syrian, Greek, and Latin. The account of the Assumption given by Gregory of Tours (d. 595) made the legend popular in the West. The stories related by him and the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite told for the first time the legend that the soul of Mary was transported to Heaven by the Christ and many angels in the presence of the Apostles, and that on the following morning, her body was also transported thither on a cloud and was united with the soul in Heaven. Other legends told the story concerning St. Thomas of India, who came too late to witness the passing of the Virgin's soul into the other world. The other Apostles opened the tomb of the Virgin in order that Thomas could have a last look at her lovely face, when, lo!, Mary's body had been caught up into Heaven and only the shroud remained in the grave. Of all the mediæval accounts of the Assumption, none was so well known as the one written by Jacobus de Voragine for his *Legenda aurea*. The Festival of the Assumption was established in the East by the Emperor Maurice (d. 602) but it was only gradually established in the West. The doctrine of the *Transitus sanctae Mariae* spread slowly in the West because the Fathers of the Roman Church did not approve of it. In the seventh century, a special festival was established in commemoration of the Virgin's death, or, rather, her sleeping, *Dormitio*. Her *Assumptio* then won ever increasing recognition. By the ninth century, the Assumption of the Virgin was one of the principal feasts celebrated in Rome. The Assumption was considered the most popular of Mary's traditional Five Joys in mediæval England. Mediæval Englishmen considered it to be, as Lydgate says, the "grettest solemnyte Of al hir festys." This dogma, which seemed so valid to the
mediaeval man, was not promulgated as an article of faith by the Roman Church, however, until Holy Year 1950.

The mediaeval belief in the Assumption of the Virgin finds further proof in the Middle English Marian lyrics. Whereas the poets disagree as to whether or not Mary's conception by her parents was an immaculate one, we find no disagreement whatever in the lyrics concerning the Assumption, which was as veritable to the poets as was the Ascension of the Saviour. Carleton Brown, in Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century, comments on the greatly increased volume of Marian songs during the fifteenth century as compared to the preceding one and adds that these expressions of devotion, when compared with those of the fourteenth century, show a certain loss of fervour and tend to become formal exercises. He continues:

This is well illustrated by the poems on the Joys of the Virgin. Whereas in the fourteenth century these, with their recital of the Annunciation, Nativity, and Resurrection, concerned themselves with the terrestrial joys, the scene in almost all the fifteenth-century pieces is transferred to heaven, and the praises of the Virgin are sung by cherubim and celestial choirs. One misses the touch of human reality also in the Songs of the Assumption and the Coronation of the Virgin, in which the sense of artificiality is increased by the pomposity of the aureate style. A considerable group of these songs are based upon the Latin hymns Ave regina colorum, Salve regina, and Regina cella letarum. But the Latin original is often farced by tedious repetition, and instead of spontaneity we have the verbal ingenuity of an acrostic.

In the Marian lyrics of mediaeval England, the Ascension of the Christ was thought to be preparatory to the Assumption of the Virgin. Mary is said to have witnessed the Ascension:
William of Shoreham says that the manner in which Mary ascended into Heaven is not known by man, although the Church believes that her body did not suffer death's throws:

pe fyte ioye of oure leudoy
Not orplych man hou hyt may by,
Ne per-of [may] more aspye,
Bote pat be glorioue boordo
Out of byse world be glorioue ferde,
Wyp greate melodye.

Ac holy chorche der wel by-knowe
pat hy no polede none deapes browe,
pat lowob pat lyf of heuone.

Hyt hyg y-wryte pat angeles brytto
To holy manne deape alyzto
pet her on erpe laye;
In holy bok hyg hyt inome
pat god hym self a walde come,
Whanne hy scholde deye.

per-byo wo nowe wel y-wyte,
paz per be naust of y-wyte,
pat oryst hym self was per;
Other poets are more explicit in telling the story of Mary's "celestiall hye Ascendaunte Assumpcion." We find in a lyric by Lydgate an allusion to the story, found in the Golden Legend, of Gabriel's appearance to the Virgin on earth to make a second announcement to her. He told her that she was soon to pass into the other world and he gave her a palm branch from Paradise, which was to be borne before her coffin. The palm is thought to have been either symbolic of the lily stem Gabriel carried at the Annunciation or a branch of the palm tree which bowed its crest to the Virgin Mother and her Child when she was in Egypt. Mary was joyful

When Gabriel the palme hath to the brought,
Sent fro Iesu, deolaryng vnto the
Withynne thre dayes thu shuldyst with hym be,
Rih in the houene to sitto on the riht syde, 21

In the same poem, we find reference to the story of the Apostles' assembly at Mary's Dormitio. Lydgate adds that the Apostles' Creed was composed at this time:

When alle apostelis cam to thy prescence
From divers partyes to playyn thy womanheede,
Som bookys tolle thy made ther the Creedo, 22

The poet also mentions that the Saviour sent His angels down to earth to convey Mary to her new Home. The fifth Joy of the Virgin was

When Christ Iesu hath his angelis sent
The to convoye to the houonly mansioun,
Soule and boody above the the [sic] firmament,
Ther to be crowynd as queen moost excellent. 23

Elsewhere we find references to the Assumption:

An hoste of angelles down he sent
And assumpte thy sowlo with thy bodye. 24

Mary moder, after thin Sono
Vp thou steyist, with hym to wones;
The angelo worn glad quan thou were come
In celi palacio. 25

Marie, for hat saw(te) ioye wan pou from erpe was tan,
In-to pe bliss of heuene with angellees mani an,
& i-set bi sweto theau in sol & flesch & ban, 26

... bu was til heuen broght,
be iuus pe socht and fand pe noght, 27

In solempe wyse assumptyd wyth a songe
Of cherubyn, thy forthe ioy to atteyne,
was bi body and thy sowle angellys amonge,
unto thy son browte vp yn febus wayne,
wher persons three yn 0 god sytte corteyno. 28

The Canticles of the Old Testament received mystic interpretation
by Patristic and mediaeval Churchmen, especially by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who allegorized the Old Testament in order to gloss over the carnal stories found therein and to connect it with the Gospels. The fourth and seventh chapters of the Canticles were thought to be prophetic of the Virgin and her mystic union, during her Assumption, with God the Son. Reference to Mary as the spouse of the Christ was a commonplace among mediaeval Churchmen, who found this idea in their office books in the antiphon, "Voni sponsa Christi." In a fifteenth century manuscript, there is a sermon for the Feast of the Assumption in which the simple
preacher comments on a text from the Song of Songs: "Quam pulchra es, et decora carissima in deliciis."

Thyse wordes in latyn were said to oure lady of goddes own nouþhe, and ben thus mucho to say in Inglish to your understandynge--"thou most gracious in plesaunce, how comly art thou of persons, of what bowte of sowle!" In thiso wordes ben moved 4 questions, the wiche toucheth oure lady. The first is of hur comlynes--Quam pulchra; the second is of spirituall bowte--decora; the third is of goostly delites--deliciis; the fourte is of her charito--carissima.

Poems were written about Mary, the Bride of the Christ, in which phrases and imagery from the Canticles were used. Such a one is Ryman's, in which the Christ says to His Mother:

Come, my dere spowse and lady free;  
Come to thy Sonne in heven blis,  
For why next me thy place shal bo;  
Iam veni, coronaberis.

Come, my myelde dove, into thy cage,  
With joye and blis replete whiche is,  
For why it is thyne heritago;  
Iam veni, coronaberis.

Thou art alle fayre, my spowse most dere,  
And apette of cynne in the noon is;  
Com for Liban, to me appere;  
Iam veni, coronaberis.

Thy stature is assimylato  
To a palmo tree and thy bristes  
To grapes, spowse immaculate;  
Iam veni, coronaberis.

Off alle clonnes I am the floure,  
The felds wherof thy pure soule is;  
O virginall floure most of honoure,  
Iam veni, coronaberis.
Thy blessed body was my bower;
Wherefore my blis thou shalt not mys,
And alle seintes shalle the honoure;
Iam veni, coronaberio. 32

Another song of the Son of God to Mary is based on the Canticles:

Surge mea sponsa, so swete in syzte,
And se by some in sete full shene!
Thow shalte a-byde with by babe so bryzte
And in my glorie be, & be called a qwene.

Cum, clene Crystall, to my cage.
Columba mea, I pe calle,

ffor macula, modur, was neuur in pe,
ffilia syon, pu arte pe flowre!

Tota pulcra es to my plesynge,
My modur, princes of paradys!
A watur full swete of pe shall sprynge,
Thow shalt seyn my ryztes ryse.
The welle of mercy, modur, in pe lyys
To brynge py blessed body to blysse.
And all my seynetes shall do pe seruyse,

Veni, electa mea, to myn an hyse,
Holy modur & mayden mylde,
On sege to nytte me byc,

Vox tua to me was full swete
Whene pu me badde; 'babe be stylle'.
ffull goodly goneoure lyppes mete,
Wyth bryzte braunches, as bloome on hyll.
ffauus distillans pat wente wyth wylle
Oute of py lyppes whene we dode kyss.

Veni de libano, pu lylye in launcho,
That lappes me louely wyth loulyng songe:

Pulora ut luna, pu bero pe lambe,
As soone bat shyneth moste clere.
Veni in ortum neum, powlyy damne,
To smelle my spyses & erbes in foro.
My place ys pryte for pe plenero,
ffull of bryzto branchoes & blomes of blysse.
Cum now, modur, to by derlyngg doro,
Veni coronaberis.

Que est ista so vortuus,
That is celestyal for oure mokennesse,
Aurora consurgens gracuous,
So benynge a lady of wyne bryztnesse,
That ys pe colour of kynde clennesse.
Regina cel, bat noeur shall myss.
Thus enpeth pys songe of gret awetennesse,
Veni coronaberis. 33

In a late "Salvo Regina," the Virgin herself speaks:

Vox dilicta is in her eero,
Thus she saide, transite ad me,
Fulfilled I am with felicito,
Com to my weddyng and so my fest,

As a spouses to hir husbond, thus am I cled.

As feyre as moone and sterre in the west
Amonges al flouros I lode the daunce

Thus with my spouse I am thi content,
I may rule the kynges guest,
And spoke myself in the parlement,
Maria Virgo assumpta ost. 34

It has been said that if one theme may be held to typify and sum up
the popular religion of the Middle Ages, it is the Coronation of the
Virgin. The Virgin was accorded hyperdulia, the highest degree of
veneration accorded to saints, as distinguished from latria, worship due
to the Divinity alone, when she became Regina Cel, Domina Mundi, and
Emporatix Inferni. Her Seven Heavenly Joys, as distinguished from her Terrestrial Joys, did not make their appearance in England until the fifteenth century.

The Son of God crowns His Mother, who kneels at His feet, with a priceless, jeweled diadem:

With a corona of Heavenly stones clear,
Gemeys of worthe, of parfit hoolynesse,
Of Rychase and beawte most entiere,
For poy transcended alle oper in noblesse; 38

The Virgin is then enthroned beside her Son:

Thus was she sett CELESTIALLY
and Joyned in Ioyes with Cryst IHU
In a paail powdryd with clene perry,
With SAPHIR, shineyg bryght and blew.
Ther-to full of pacience and of vertu,
ful pure in peerle hire Clotnyng was.
All Ordrys of Aungellys singing new,
'BENEDICTA SIT SANCTA TRINITAS.'

Hire ORYENT hoor lay ovir the nokko
To comforte vs in our CAPACITE.
Allo Ordrys of Aungellys bowyd at a bekke,
And fyl to this flour of fair felicite.
Crownyd she is in hire bonignyte,
A scoptre in hand seyntly sho has, 39

Appon his fadir right hand hir son may scho see,
And pe honde haly cast vn-to pam bathe belde. 40

Gauo the modyr of cryst iesu,
So gracuous and ful of vertu
That for thi holynosse
So highe arto nowe in dignite
Thow sitteste next the trinite
In grete honowre and blyse. 41

Precius prynces perles of pris,
Thy bowr ys next the Trynyte. 42

Next pe some zou hast a sote,
I-glorified blisfulli.
And thus we saddely bolewe,
But how, openy descriuo
He may no ping erpeli. 43

The Virgin then reigns over the angels and saints in Heaven, the mortals
on earth, and the fallen angels in Hell:

In heuen bo worschopyn angels myzth and daye,
In orpe bo honowrereb alle cristennon laye,
In helle bo drereth fundos alle pat bepe offe
fowle arraye, 44

O pou, ladye of ladyes alle,
ffor by worpy names three:
Cwene of heuen bo saintes calle,
And lady of his worlde pou be.

O Emparyse of helle, by name is koupe
To bo loye of al man-kyndo. 45

Heil pou kynges feir Cite,
Walled wel a-boute,
Wip angolos pat in heuene bo
I-kept, wip mony a route;
Wip riche stonez wunderly
Of vertuos pou art by-set: 46

Thyn ys alle heuon court redy at pyn heste,
byn ys here alle holychorch bope by west and este,
byn ys every cryston man in erthe bope mest and
leste, 47

O fayro ladye of angolles floure,
In prophet and patryake deseyre,
Dyaderno of Martre and confessour,
Beaute of virgines a sainte in focro. 48

Thow myrthe of martiris, sweeter than cytollo,
Of confessouris richest donatyyf,
Unto virginis thesterne aurcolle, 49

O apowesse most dore, most bryght, most clere,
In heuon quero hauynge no pore. 50

From his ancille he made the maistresse
Of heveno and erthe, . . . . . . . . 51
Edi boe þu, heuene quono,
folkes freure & engles blis, 52

Hailli oamly cristell cleir
Abous þe ordouris nyne,
Ala blith as bird on breer, 53

Haile! pyniale precious in heuyn be right, 54

Haylo bo þu nowei most worthy flovre
That ouer was vppone þe grounde,
Sfor þu arte emprys of þe heygthyst tovro
That ouer yetc was I-fond.

In þat hipo plæce þu hast hovnower,
As þu arte worthy, of fre & bond,
Sfor þor ys Ioy with-ovte dolovro,
And blyse ouer-more I vndure-stondo. 55

Thy dwolling is in worthy wounys,
Exaltyd into þat hove solum. 56

Hayll bo þu,quen of grot honour!
Our lord þi hert has fild wyth grace.
Of mode & Ioy þu bors þo flour
þu pas all santis bo-for gods face.

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

Hayll! weassell full of all godnes,
All heuenele courte dos þi byddyng
& worchypes þo wyth gret suotnes,
On quen of all wyth-oute irkyng. 57

Be gladdo, goddis spouse brixt,
þat þeuest þor grotter list
To þe heuenele place
þan euir dede sunne on erbe horo
When hit was brixtis and most clere
In þo midday space.

Be glad, of vortuea vessel alene,
To whom obeip as riȝt quene
þe court of heuon on hyȝe,
And worshiped wpoute stynying
þorwe þankinges and bo blessing
And endles melodio. 58

The princes of angelis in Ierachie,
The beaute of blessed seyntes so hige,
Passyng also by alle clergye
A dignitate munorum. 59
In the early thirteenth century, "A Good Orison of Our Lady," or, to use its original title, "On God Ureioum of Uro Lefdi," was written by a gifted monk, probably named John, who claimed to have found this "English lay." The "Munuch" may possibly have had a Latin source for his poem. The poet, employing the Anglo-Saxon alliterative line and adding ond rhyme, wrote in the East Midland dialect. This elegiac poem in 171 lines has all the exalted mystic fervor that characterizes the Paradise of Dante, the Urbs Sion Aurea of Bernard of Cluny, and the Pearl of the unknown Middle English poet when it tells of the Happy Land where the Blessed Mary is Queen and her Son is a King of kings.

The poet commences his work by offering his services to the Virgin:

Cristos milde moder soynte marie,
Mine liues leome, mi leouo lefdi,
To be ich buwo & mine knoen ich boie,
And al min heorte blod to be ich offrie.
Bu ort miro noule liht & mine heorte blissse,
Mi lif & mi to-hope, min heale mid ivisse.
Ich ouh wurpie be mid alle mine mihte,
And singgo be lofsong bi daie & bi nihte.
Vor bu me havest iholpen a wole kunne wise
And ibrouht of helle in-to-paradise,
Ich hit ponkie be mi leouo lofdi,
And ponkie walle be hwulo pet ich liuo. 65

He comments on the fact that all Christian men should so honour the Virgin and should sing a hymn of praise, a "lofsong," to her:
The poet tells of Mary's high position over all women on earth and in Heaven, and of the honour they give their Queen:

 pu ort briht & blissful ouer alle wummon, 
 and god pu ort & gode leof ouer alle weomen; 
 alle maidene wore wurpene be one, 
 Vor pu ort hore blistene bi-uorun gode trone. 
 nis no wumun iboron bot be ho iliche, 
 no non por nis pin ofning wip-inne heouoriche, 67

Her throne is high above the Cherubin and she sees her Child surrounded by the Seraphin:

 Heih is bi kinstol on-uppe cherubine, 
 Bi-uoren píne leouo sune wipinnen seraphine. 68

All the angels make melody as they contemplate her happy face:

 Murie dreameb angles biuoren píne onsene, 
 Pleieb & sweieb & singeb bitweone; 
 Swupe wul ham likieb biuoren be to beonne, 
 Vor heo nouer ne beop sead bi weir to isonne. 69

No one can fully understand the bliss of the Virgin, who holds Heaven itself in her power:

 pine blisse ne nei no wiht understonden, 
 Vor al is gode riche an-under píne honden. 70

She makes kings of all her friends and she gives them royal robes, crowns, gold rings, and eternal rest.
Lilies and roses, symbolic of the virgins and martyrs, bloom everlastingly in that fair Garden:

There, one perfumes the place with a golden censer, while, amid the joy of angels, the waters of eternal life are poured out to Mary’s followers:

They are clothed in white silk raiments and they wear jeweled diadems.

The Christ reigns over them, and their joy is impossible to describe:
Song wip-ute soorwe & sib wip-ute uihte,
Mid han is murrehe moniulod wip-ute teone & treio,
Cleo-beames & gone inough, liues wil & eche pleie. 74

The poet then praises the Queen, who, after her dear Son, is the comfort of men and angels:

Swote Godes moder, softe meiden & wol icoren,
þin iche neuer nee neuer more no wurb iboren;
Moder þu ert & meiden clean of alle laste,
puruhht uoi & holi in englene reste.
Al englene were & alle holic þing
Siggeb ðe singeb þet tu ert liues wel-sprung,
And hoe siggeb alle þet þo ne wonteb neuer ore,
ne no mon þet þo wurbep ne mei neuer been worloren.
þu ert mire soule wip-ute leasunge,
Efter þine leose sune, louuest alre pinge;
Al is þe houene ful of þine blisse,
And so in al þos middel-card of þine mild-heartnesso. 75

We find elements which give evidence of French courtly love conventions and phraseology in the "An Orison of Our Lady" and in many other Marian poems written by mediaeval English poets. This so-called "erotic mysticism" is a subject which interests and puzzles many authorities of mediaeval English literature. Some scholars believe it is the outcome of the substitution of the love of the Virgin for that of mortal woman by celebato Churchmon. They say poems which display these elements are the result of a "medieval attempt at the sublimation of the sex instinct."

Others believe, and we are of this opinion, that it is the result, as is most other mediaeval religious poetry in the vernacular, of the transformation and sublimation of secular motifs, which are of an un-Christian nature, by Churchmon to religious ends. Owst says that in its first beginnings, the religious love lyric in England may have been a direct product of homiletic fervour, rather than a mild imitation of worldly
love songs, but, when the art of the _Chanson courtoise_ developed in England, this phrase of the Queen of Heaven in homily and sacred poems was definitely fostered by the Churchmen, especially by the Mendicant friars, to counteract the popularity of the trouvères secular love themes.

It has been said that the influence of the Provengal lyric came to England mainly through northern France during the second half of the twelfth century. This love poetry made its main contribution to English poetry through stanza construction and a few conventional thoughts and phrases of courtly love, although many of the features most characteristic of Provengal love poetry are not present in Middle English love poems written in honour of the Virgin. There is no technical vocabulary of love or psychological analysis of love's emotions or the thought of love as an ennobling service. The Middle English lyric poets were more direct in expression and more genuine in sentiment than were the trouvères.

The poets sometimes give the Virgin Mary the attributes that the French poets bestowed on their mistresses:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Iwasse, pat lady wyll yiff corage} \\
\text{Vnto here luffer for to be trewe,} \\
\text{And nouer to chunege her for no new.} \\
\text{Thys lady ys gentylle and moke,} \\
\text{Sho ys nover for to seke,} \\
\text{Tho her to grete her to smalle.} \\
\text{Ace y mo red pis endor day} \\
\text{by grene wode to xuche play,} \\
\text{mid horte y pohte al on a may,} \\
\text{Suetest of alle pinge.}
\end{align*}
\]
Lybe & ichou telle may
al of pat sueto binge.

his maiden is suete ant fro of blod,
briht & feyr, of milde mod,
alde neo mai don vs god
purh hire bysachynge; 85

Hoso bepen kep him, I-wis,
Of zor gret goodnesse & zor grace,
He scholde nouer wilne to don a-min,
He luste to lue in opor place. 86

A louely lyf to lokon vp-on,
So is my ladi, pat Emperys;
Il lyf I dar lye pere-vpon,
pat princess is poorees of pryis;
So feir, so elene, so good, so wys,
And perto trewe as any steel,
per nis no such to my douys--
Lor God, pat I love hire well 87

Y-blesydyd be ye in blode & bones!
Thy louoly lyppyys of bryghtnos
Lappe me fro longyng, lady, ones; 88

I Have nowe sette myne herte so hye,
My luff alone is one cone lente
the whicho is fayre, fecund© and fre,
the myldest© may that euor was monte.
She hase myne herte in yche degro,
She is so generus and so gentë,
And I hir chose for chastite
eternaly trowluff to tonte.
Hyr dulcede is indesinent
fPer she is rote of all recreauence,
Hyr frute is indesicient
to luff wyth-owte varyaunce. 89

The poet thinks continually of this paragon of women and he longs for
her passionately:

Upon a lady my love ys lente,
Withowten change of any chere,
That ys lovelly and contynent,
And most of my desyre.

Thys lady ys yn my herto pyghte,
Her to love y have gret haste,
With all my power and my mysthe,
To her y make nyne herto stedfast.

Therfor wylle y non other spowse,
Nor none other loves for to take;
But only to her y make my vowe,
And other to forsake. 90

Upon a lady fayre and bright
So hartely I have set my thought,
In every place, whereuer I light,
On her I thynk and say right nowght. 91

With al mi life y love that may,
Ho is mi solas nyght ant day,
My joie ant oke my beste play,
and oke my love-longyngs;
Al the betore me is that day
that ich of hire syngye.
Of alio things y love hire most,
My dayes blis, my nyhtes rest, 92

On hire is al mi lif ilong
Of hwan ich wule singe
And horion hire þer-among. 93

from petors-bourn in o morewenyng,
as y me wende o my playzyng,
on mi folio þe phto;
menen y gon my mournyng
to hire þat ber þe heuene kyng,
of meri hire byscht. 94

on a lody myn hope is,
moder ant virgyno;
we shulen in-to heuene blis
burn hire medicine.
betore in hire medycyn
pen any moed or any wyn--
hire orbes smullep sucte--
from catonas in-to dyuelyn
nis þer no leche so fyn
oure sorewos to bote. 95

A loue-lykyng is come to me
To serve þat ladi, qwen of blis,
Ay better and better in my degre,
þo lengor þat I liue, I-wis.

So hertly I haue I-set my pouzt
Uppon þat buyrde of buyrdes best;
For al þauh I see hire nouȝt,
Min herte schal fully wip hire bo fest.

But þat swete worþli wyf,
Hire goodly louse þat I may geþo,
Al my loye wol turne to striþ,
And I may syke with wonges wete.
Whan þat I þonke on þat swete,
Me þinkeþ hit is so good a þouȝt,
I see to euori mon þat I meete:
'Gode, go wey, and let me nouȝt!'

Me langede nouere so sore, so sore,
To see my loueli ladi deere;
þif hoo norœ, we norœ but lore,
þat ladi lofsum most of lore.
And wite hit wol wip-outen woorœ,
When I þenk on hire semblant sad,
þer wol no wye mon blame me here,
þauȝ pat I go mariþ and glad.

Hoso lust not louse, lot hym be-loue,
For I wol holde þat I have hiþt;
þat lust schal no mon from me reue,
þat I nul louse my ladi briþt.
Louse, loue, do me riht,
Marie Mooner, Mayden alene,
In heuenes of þe to have a siȝt,—
Ladi, to þe my mons I menÞ! 95

She restyd in my remembraunce,
Day other nyght wher-so I bo;
It ys my specyall dalyaunce
for to remembyr hur beuþe; 96

He offers service to his Lady and he begs her merciful reciprocation of his love:

now, lady myno, þi eri inclyne
to þe þi scruitour. 97

Ryht godeþy, fressh flour of womanhode,
By lyeue Ioy, myn hertes plesane,
Example of truth and rote of godeþyode,
And veryly my lyues sustenance—
And, with al þo hool, feythful obeisance
That seruant can theynk or deuyse,
To you þat haue myn horte in gyuerance,
I rocomande in all my best wyse.

Quod H. Bowesper. 98

I wyll & shall Att my conyng
Sekon & seruen þat worpy thinges, 99

Every man delytyth hyly in his degree
Hym for to stand in his ladyys grace,
And i am one off them—i say for me—
That wyll be besy in euery maner place
Her for to serve benyngli & purchace
Her mercy, & ther-vpon a-byde
Unto deth me do satt a-syde.
[ Adler vm-to you, myn lady dore,
With humble hert & lowly observance
I yow beoseh & hyly yow requere
Me for to have in your remembrance,
Ych may me wele preserve & auavnce
The rathyre throw thys prayer that i make,
And to yow, good lady, my body I do betake.

Amen. 100

swete louedi, of me þu reowe
& hauo merci of þin kniht.

Leuedi milde, softe & swote,
Ic orie þe merci, ic am þi mon,
bope to honde & to fote,
on alle wise þat ic kon. 101

Iyne thogtes, lovedy, maketh me ful wan,
To the y orie ant calle, thou hero me for thi man; 102

Allas! unworthy I am both and unable,
To lófe such on, all women surmountyng,
But she moost benyng be to me mercyable,
That is of pito the welle and eko the spryng: 103

The author of "A Good Orison of Our Lady" speaks to the Virgin as a
pleading lover, but this does not make his poem less religious in
character:
Another poet writes a love letter to his Mistress:

Goe, lytyll byll, & doe me rocommendo
Vn-to my lady with godey countynaunce;
ffor, trusty mesangor, I the sonde.
Pray her that sche make puruyaunce;
ffor my love, thurgh her sufforaunce,
In her Bosomo desyreth to reste,
asyth off all women I love here besto. 105

Lydgate composes "A Valentine to Her that Excelleth All." He says that it is the custom with the men of England to chose a valentine in Cupid's calendar with "gret affeccion," but he choses a maiden who excells all women that ever lived, including Lucretia, Dido, Rosamounde, Alcesto, Modia, Helen, Cleopatra, Cresilda, Minerva, "Senobya," Rachel, Bathseba, the Queen of Sheba, and Saints Katherine, Margaret, Agnes, and Mary Magdalene. He comments of his choice of maidens:

I chase bat floure sipen goon ful yoore,
And euer yeore my choyse I shal renewe,
Upon pis day conforme it euermore,
Shoo is in loue so stedfast and so truwe;
- Who louepe hir best, hit shal him neuer ruwe,
  Yif such a grace vn-to his soort may falle,
Whame I have chose for she excellope alle. 106

One poet extends his worship of Mary to that of all honourable women:
In worchup of pat Hayden swete,
Kylde Marie, Moder and May,
Allo gode wymmen wol I grete,
pat god fende hem from voh afray;
With muche monske mote þei mote,
And wel worpe alle wymmen sy:
Al vr Bale þei may beote,
Serteynliche, I dar wel say;
And hose blameþ hem niht or day,
Wip Bale mot heorc tonge bolle.
I proue hit wel, ho-euer seip nay,
Of wymmen comen þis worlde wolde. 107
"The cult of the Virgin," it has been said, "is the most characteristic flower of medieval religion...." By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the cult of the Virgin was fully systemized. Scholastics of the twelfth century, from the orthodox St. Bernard to the not-so-orthodox Abélard, sang her praises. Adam of St. Victor wrote sequences exalting her above all created beings, and Albertus Magnus decided in her favour that the Virgin knew perfectly the seven liberal arts. The Cistercians called Mary their patroness, and they were soon followed in their special devotion to her by other religious orders. In England alone, there were famous shrines dedicated to the Virgin at Walsingham, Canterbury, Ipswich, and Evesham. Saturday, on which day the Office of the Blessed Virgin was recited in church, was considered Mary's day, and the Horæ, B.V.M., was said daily in her honour. On every battlefield for five centuries, the Virgin was there, leading both sides, as her name rang out above the clashing of steel and the blare of trumpets. She could command the attention of artisans, painters, and poets from Dante and Giotto to their inferiors. Today, there remains final proof of the Virgin's all important place in the hearts of mediaeval men in the plants which were named for her, the Lady Slippers, the Lady Fingers, the Virgin's Bower, and the Mary-buds.

The emergence of the Virgin from the silent figure of the Gospels to the resplendent lady of the high Middle Ages was the result of a powerful instinct. The people's sense of their need for a mediator between them-
solves and the Christ, who, by the thirteenth century, was thought of not as the loving Galilean, but as God the Son, a partner to God the Father in doling out punishment to the many and reward to the few with impartial justice on the Judgment Day, caused them to seek aid from the merciful Mother of the divine Mediator. As Eileen Power has said:

In organized theology and in the organized church the idea of a God of Justice sometimes overshadows the idea of a God of Love. Medieval theology was not a jocund art and the thought of that perpetual damnation, which all but the few had merited, was forever before its eyes. 10

Henry Adams beautifully states the case of the average God-fearing Christian of the Middle Ages:

Men were, after all, not wholly inconsequent; their attachment to Mary rooted on an instinct of self-preservation. They knew their own peril. If there was to be a future life, Mary was their only hope. She alone represented Love. The Trinity were, or was, one, and could, by the nature of its essence, administer justice alone. Only childlike illusion could expect a personal favour from Christ. Turn the dogma as one would, to this it must logically come. Call the three Godheads by what names one liked, still they must remain one; must administer one justice; must admit only one law. In that law, no human weakness or error could exist; by its essence it was infinite, eternal, immutable. There was no crack and no cranny in the system, through which human frailty could hope for escape. One was forced from corner to corner by a remorseless logic until one fell helpless at Mary's feet. 11

Elsewhere, this broad-minded New England Puritan says:

In the eyes of a culpable humanity, Christ was too sublime, too terrible, too just, but not even the weakest human frailty could fear to approach his Mother. Her attribute was humility; her love and pity were infinite. 12
The spokesman for the Middle Ages, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, says that the justice-minded Son will listen to His Mother's requests made for the benefit of those who pray to her:

Christ is indeed given as mediator to sinful man, recoiling in terror before God the Father; but the divine Majesty of Christ also awes the sinner, and he therefore seeks an intercessor with Him. Flee to Mary, whose pure humanity the Son also honours. The Son hears the Mother, the Father the Son; this ladder for the sinner is my whole hope.

For another reason, also, mediaeval man turned to his spiritual Mother for help. The mediaeval Church was basically a feudal institution in its organization, with its own intricate hierarchy and set of privileges. Above all, the man of the Middle Ages wanted individual privilege in his religion, and he thought he could not obtain this from an impartial Trinity under which all men were equal. Only the "Queen Mother" could give him this particular attention. She was then sought out by him when he thought that the feudal King would not tolerate the errors of his life. The Franciscan author of the fourteenth century Fasciculus Morum advises the sinner to seek the Queen Mother in time of trouble:

We ought to imitate the man who had incurred the king's anger. What does he do? He goes secretly to the queen and promises a present....So when we have offended Christ, we should first go to the Queen of heaven and offer her, instead of a present, prayers, fasting, vigils, and alms; then she, like a mother, will come between thee and Christ, the father, who wishes to beat us, and she will throw the cloak of mercy between the rod of punishment and us, and soften the king's anger against us.
Mary stood for faith and not for good works; she stood for love and not for justice. The medieval man felt that with her he always had a chance; he had only to believe in her and she would never forsake him. If she could not get him into Heaven by the gate of Paradise, she would get him in through a window of the Celestial Mansion, or, in extremity, through a hole in Heaven. She was the via coeli.

In the liturgies, the Virgin's mediation was recognized in the early Christian centuries. The first instance of a recorded individual invocation to the Blessed Virgin occurs in the prayers of Ephraim Syrus (d. 378). Gregory Nazianzen (d. 389) tells how Justina prayed to the Virgin for protection against the amorous youth, Cyprian, who later was converted to the Christian faith and became a great leader of the Church.

In the beginning of the fifth century, the veneration of saints was accepted by all, and Mary, by reason of her singular relation with the Lord, soon became the chief of advocates for man to the supreme Mediator, Jesus Christ. Justinian I implored Mary's intercession with God the Son for the restoration of the Roman Empire. His general, Narses, like the knights of the Middle Ages, was unwilling to go into battle until he had secured her protection. The "Ave Maria" prayer, which came into general use in the thirteenth century as a standard formula for prayer, was composed of passages from the Angelic Salutation and the Visitation. The "Sancta Maria" portion of this prayer, however, was not officially added to it until 1508. The first order concerning the use of this prayer was issued by Odo, Bishop of Paris, after 1196. The followers of Wycliff recognized the validity of this prayer, as we find in a Wycliffite adaptation of the catechism:
Men gretyp comunly oure lady goddy a moder
and we suppose pat his gretyage sauyys many a man
For we take as be-loue, pat sche ys blyssyd in heuen.
And crist wyll do at hyr prayynge among al olyr scyntys.
And bow we trow pat nor Crist no sche
will do for man but yt be resonable.
and men pat ben worthy to be holpyn.
And so now men triste to be holpyn fully in suche prayr. 23

Throughout the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries,
the English Marian poets proclaimed Mary's willingness to hear and to
pray for the penitent who would call upon her for mercy and aid, and
her Son's willingness to please His mother:

Suppose all Santys our synfull prayer
contempne,
Thyne eres are opyn at our request; 24

Of all thi frendos sche is the flowr,
Sche wyll the bryng to thi honowr;
Mary to kall thou hast colowre,
Asay, asay. 25

Our tryne to moyne, and go betweyne,
As humile Oratric. 26

when synful mon ho makis his mon
To him þu art treu as ston in wall 27

Y-blessyd be þou, maide mylde,
gue sompor es unica
by-twene mankynde & þo chylde;
avo domina. 28

In counseil art þou boest: And trowest in euiri node,
To sunfol mon ful prest: In saumple of good dode: 29

Ihu, ware noght þy mercye were,
My gude ware noght worthe a bene.
Through mouyage of þat mayden meres,
þat modyatur is made in men. 30

Blyssede be þat trewulfe so meke and so mylde,
Sekir and stedfaste and stabill at assaye;
When we hafe wrothede þer thre loues with oure
werkis wilde,
þe ferthe in gracious and gude for to helpe aye.
And care wepys for our sake with hir eghne graye;
Scho es euer full of grace, ells were we by-gylede,
Scho wynnes with hir wypynge many faire praye
To kepe. 31

By hir mekenes she is a meane
That we shalle come to heven quere. 32

A frond speoyall for all mannes neede, 33

She is rody bothe day and nyght
To yeldc our cause to God Almyght, 34

Hoder, if bou by sone will praye
pat neuer no sawll call be schente.
fforsotho by sone will noght saye naye—
It was his awon commandememts; 35

Iwis by wil Ho schal nowh[t] worne
But graunt be by bone ful zerna. 36

And though pat praye / may his tongue noght,
Yit holpe is he / thurgh cry of hertes thoght. 37

Chaucer was especially impressed by the Virgin's eager help for sinful
man. It was to him a mark of her "gentillesse":

Lady, thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humylitee,
Thor may no tongue expresse in no science;
For somtyme, Lady, or men praye to thes,
Thou goost biforn of thy benyngnyteo,
And getest us the lyght, thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us unto thy Sonne so doore. 38

Assembled is in thee magnificence
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich pitee
That thou, that art the sone of excellence
Not only helpest hem that prayen thes,
But often tymes, of thy benyngnyteo,
Ful frely, or that men thyn help biseche,
Thou goost biforn, and art hir lyves leche. 39

I wot it wel, thou wolst ben our socour,
Thou art so ful of bountee, in certeyn.
For, when a soule falleth in errour,
Thi pitee goth and haleth him ayoin.
Thanne makest thou his pees with his
soveroyne,
And bringest him out of the crooked strete. 40
We han noon oother melodye or glee
Us to rejoyse in oure adversitee,
He advocat noon that wole and dar so preye
For us, and that for litel hire as yee,
That helpon for an Ave-Marie or twye. 41

Queen of comfort, yit when I me bithinko
That I agilt have bothe him and thee,
And that my soule is worthi for to sinko,
Allas! I caityf, whider may I flee?
Who shal unto thi Sone my mene beo?
Who, but thiseluff, that art of pitce wolles?
Thou hast more reuthe on oure adversitee
Than in this world might any tongue tell.' 42

Soth is that God ne grantoth no pitoo
Withoute thee; for God, of his goodnesse,
Foryiveth noon, but it like unto thee.
He hath thee maked vicaire and maistresse
Of al this world, and eek governourse
Of heveno, and he represoth his justise
After thi wil; and therforo in witnesse
He hath thee corowmed in so rial wise. 43

The fourteenth century "Quia Amoro Langueo," which is pervaded with
mystical "love-longing," tells of the Virgin, who weeps when men do not
seek her aid:

In a tabernacle of a touro,
As I stode musyng on the monse,
A crowned quono, most of honour,
Aperod in gootly syght ful sono.
She made compleynt thus by hyr one,
For mannes soulo was wrapped in wo:
'I may nat leve rankynde allone,

Quia amoro langueo.

'I longe for bue of man my brother,
I am hys voketo to voyde hys vyce;
I am hys moder—I can none other—
why shuld I my dere chylde dispyce?
Yef he me wrathe in diverse wyse,
Through fleshes froelte fall me fro,
Yet must we rewe hym tyll he ryse,

Quia amoro langueo.
I byd, I byde in grete longyng,
I louo, I loke when man wol craye,
I pløyne for pyte of peynyng;
walde he aske mercy, he shuld hit haue.
Say to me, soule, and I shall saue,
Byd me, my chylde, and I shall go;
Thow prayde me never but my son forgane,
Quia amore langueo.

*Hodor of mercy I was for the made;
Who nodeth hit but thow all-one?
To gete the gracce I am more glade
Than thow to ask hit; why wylt pou noon?
When sayd I may, tol no, tyll oon?
Forsoth never yet, to frende no foo;
When pou askest nought, ben make I moone,
Quia amore langueo.

*Nowe man, haue mynde on me for-euer,
loko on by loue bus languyshyng;
late vs never fro other dissuere,
Myne holpe ys byne oune, crepe under my wyng;
Thy syster ys a quene, by broper (ys) a kyngo,
Thys heritage ys tayled, sone come per-to
Take me for by wyfe and lerne to synge,
Quia amore langueo. *

One form of prayer especially popular in the Middle Ages was that
in which the Virgin is exalted as the Maria Stolla, the Star of the Sea.
The Blessed Virgin guideth helpless man through the tempestuous sea of
this world, as the pole star guideth sailors at Sea. A cleric explains
this imagery to his readers:

There ys a starre called the shypmannes starre, that standeth
stable in oo place of the fyramente, and therby shypmen know
in the nyghte, to what costes they drawe, and to this starre
our lady ys lykened, for they that are in tempestes of
trybulacyon, or in nyghte of temptacyon in thys world: yf
they loke, & pray to oure lady; she wyll dresse ther wayes
to the haunen of holth...Thow mary shypmannes starre, shynynge
with a meruelous lyghtes lode vs from the swallow of dothe,
vnto the kyngdom of heuon. *
He says the name of Mary means "Star of the sea," or "enlightened," or "Lady." This idea that Mary's name means "Star of the Sea" comes from the Virgin's Hebraic name, "Miriam," which means "star":

Mary is as moche to saye as Sterre of the see, or lyghthened, or lady. For all that ar hero in the see of byttornesse by penance for theyr synnes, she lodyth to the haun of helthe.

In John Lydgate's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, translated from the French of Guillaume De Guileville, the monk thinks of the words of St. Bernard, who popularized the idea of the Maria Stella:

Yiff bytter ffelle wyndos off temptacion assaylle the, yiff thow falle, by any ffroward aventure, vp-on the Contagyous Rokkys of Tribulacion. Beholde the bright glad sterre off the see, and make thyn Invooacion and thy prayer vnto that blysfull Mayde, our Lady saynt Marye.

The Middle English poets also helped to popularize the idea of Mary as the Star of the Sea:

Hayle! so sterne, gods modyr holy,
pray þu þi swete son safe vs fro foly
þat walks in þis warld lyke vn-to þe so,
Ebtynge & flowynge ful of vanyte,
ffor to al wrecches þat wil for-sake þair syn
þow schymes as a sterne þain rody to wyn,
And ever-more rody for vs to pray
To gytt vs forgyfnes withouten delay,
Of al oure synmes & gret trespes
þat we hafo done both more & les.

O Sterne so brycht, þat gyfys lycht
til hewyne & haly kyrk,
þi help, þi mychyt grant vs ful rycht.
Raik throw þire clowdis dirk;
fra hol sa fel comwoy vs cleene.
ono þe, mare, pus most I myneo.

... O loode sterre of this [tempestuous] see,
In which we be fordryve with many a [waw]
And forpossed be Many aduersyte,
Besides the Maria Stella, the Marian poets thought of the Virgin as the moon, which reflects the light of the sun:

She is the lantern of eternal light to guide mortals to the way of Heaven and to give light to those in Limbo:

Be ovo froole flessh to forward lustis drawe,
Ageyne all such percylos lotte pi lyght a-dawe
On all thy peple that serve the of Intent,
And children of Adam, diseyyd be a serpent.

... Sterro of Iacob, ovo mynchovis to Releve,
Caste down thy streemys, thi servauntis to socowre
Ageyn blake nyghtis, ovo Esperus at Eve,
Day sterre A-morowe, for folkys pat labowre
Helpe that karybdis ovo vessell not devowre
With forward Eokkys, pat it be not to-Rent
Be noo false Troyans of the olde serpent. 50

0 sterne of sterneys with thi streemys cleere,
Sterne of the see, [90] to shipmen lyght and gyde,
0 lusty lemand, moost plesaunt to appere,
Whos bright beemys the clowdis may not hide,
0 way of lyfe to hem pat goo or ride,
Heven after tempest surrest as to ryve,
On me hauo mercy for thi loyes fryve. 51

She is the lantern of eternal light to guide mortals to the way of Heaven and to give light to those in Limbo:

Haylo be thow, lawmpe that euer ys lyghtand
To high, to low, to riche, to pore! 53

0 lanterne of eternall light,
By whome of Cristc we have a sight, 54

Dor kesse is moone where þu art meere,
0 glorious lanterne, euyro shynyng bright. 55
Haile lytter of lymbo were neuer sun chase, 56

She is the gate and stair of Heaven, the window of God's House, and the hole cut into Heaven:

O gate of lyfe, moder and wyfe,
O hope and trust of synners alle,
In angwische, wo, trouble, and stryfe
For thy comfort we crie and calle,
Botho olde and younge, both gret and small 57

pou art yat of heuene blisse 58

of heuene pow art pe sely yate. 59

Of grace is graunted pe po gate,
pat na gude will for-gete,
Heghly hendo, heuen gate,
pat syttes be-syde by sun sote, 60

pat thow to heuone / art the laddre & sterre
By which men elymben, blisse to receyue. 61

Hail wyndouwe of heuene-wowe, 62

als tow art wyndow of hewen mirth. 63

pow art in heuone an hole i-mad
porw which po senful porw-gep glad; 64

She is the source of mercy:

O quene of grace most payre of face,
Of alle solace lodyng the trace, 65

Sith of mercy thow berist the mace 66

Haile, scheltyrne schoures to schyelde, 67

Staf of confort and holpe to man is shee, 68

Thy pytse spryngeth, lady, as doth a welle, 69

To weri wandrid, the tente paviloun. 70

Maria, that art tryacle and medycine,
Salve for our soorys and our hurtys alle, 71
The prayers which were addressed to Mary by the poets rarely asked for temporal benefits. The poets were mainly concerned with obtaining remission from past sins and strength to resist committing sins anew. A few examples of these penitential-type prayers are:

Mi ponna is wild as is pe ro,  
ludo gratulante;  
ho werch et me ful muchel wo,  
illaque fauente;  
bote-yes he wolde me wende fro,  
ic wone myn horte breket atwo  
feruore;  
ic am loaist  
bo day ant maist  
dolore.

Swete leudei, flour of alle,  
were consolatrix,  
pou be myn help but i ne falle,  
cuntis reperatrix.  
mildest queine ant best icorn  
mist ant day pou be me form  
precantis;
yef mo grace
to see bi face
infantis.

bat i borou bi sweto bemo,
tutrix orphanorum,
met louen al pis worldes tene,
solamen miserorum,
ant to po, louedi, met i take
ant myno suunes al fur-sake
volente,
bat i no misse
of pis no bliss
possente. 79

Hodor of Mileo & maybe hendo,
ich po bidde as i con;
Ne let pu noht be world vs blendo
bat is ful of vro i-von, 80

Of be, faire lauedi, min orleisun ich wile
bi-ginnen,
bi doore swete suunes loue pu lere mo to winnen,
wel ofte ich aike and sorwe make, ne mai ich
neoure blinnen
bote pu, pruh bin milde mode, bringe me out of sunne.

Ofte ino soke merci, bin swete name ich calle,
mi flehs is foul, pis world is fals, pu loke pat
ich no falle, 81

Lentun-dayes, poi ben longe,
And nou weor good tyme to amende
bat we be-foren han do wronge.
pis world his no-ping as I wone;
In sorl tyme my lyf Is spend;
pis world is fals and pat I feel.
But Marie Hoder me amende,
A-Mis I fare and noping wel. 82

As careful caitifs & combred we crye,
Outlawes & outcastos, the sones of synne,
As the heiros of eue to thy pyte we proie,
Weilyng & wopyng, thy welthes to wynno.

In this dale of dolour dresse vp our dedes,
Holyest of halowes hyghe, the we praye,
Our spokor & our spye, specialy now spode vs,
Tume towards trespassours thin almesful eye. 83

Hoil be pou marie, glorioso moder hendo!
Mokehce & honoste, with abstynence, mo sonde,
With chastite & charite into my lyues eonde, 84
Alle owr mischeuis hauo in by syht,
In flesh frel we ben belokin;
Help! Lady, owr bondis were to-brokin;
Have reward vnto owr traual:
We arn beset with strong batayl,
Wip world, and flesh, and Feendis felle
Owr woo vnmethis noo tungo kan tello;
And of owr-self we ben nought strong
To suffrin pis batayle long;
ffor we ben feyntere þan þe flour
That wip þe wynd fadip his coloour.
Wip owr foomen for to fyht,
Of owr-self hauo we no myht;
ffor owr kynde is for more feynt
Than askis ben quan fyr is qweynt.
We wansin as þe snoun away,
We welkin as flour on wintris day;
Owt of þis world we wendin bare,
And turnin al into wirmis ware.
Owr lyf is ful of al syknesse,
Owr ded is ful of wrothchidnesse;
Syknesse and ded scoip nought,
Til orthe be to orthe brouht.
Therforo, Kodir of Merci,
Herkne to owr earful ory; 85

Help me, sweete ladi: And allo frendes myne,
And schild us hero from alle vr foss: And from helle-pyne;
Sweete ladi of houene: Schild us from worldus schame,
And from þe deucelis wyles: And from wikkedi fame,
Nomelico from dedly sunne: And from vilene,
And from alle-manner folk: Of wikked Cumpaignye.

In alio tymes, ladi: Bope day and niht
Help us, seinte Marie: Wip al þy meyn and miht.
I proye þe for my frendes: And eko also for me,
þat we moten here: Amenet beo þorw þe;
As meat vr soulo is nedful: And also to vr lyue,
Marie, mak hit so: Wip us, for þi Ioyes fyue.

Ladi, for myn Enemyes: I proye þe also,
þat heo in þis lyue: Noten her do so
þat heo nyuer in synne: Ne in wrappe dye:
Sweete ladi Marie: Herteliche I þe proye.

And for alle bulke: þat ben in cleene lyue,
I proy þo, Marie: ffor þi servesc fyue;
Eueró whil heore lyf lasto: þer-Inne þou hem holde,
Bope whil þei bon'jonge: And eke whil þei ben olde.
For alle po, ladi, i preye po: pat ben in dedly synne:
Suffre hem noure for no pìng: pat bei dye per-Inne;
Swole ladi harie: Heem wisse euer and rede,
And do hem amenden, ar bei dyen: heero .hoore misdode. 86

The petitioners ask for protection against the Devil and his company
at their hour of death:

O ladye, my sight most fayle
At pe blanesse of my deth;
My soule pane behovepe wayle
ffor deaute of tonge & broth.

O howe myne herte pane wol qwake
ffor emys to laye peire lyno!
Now ladye, for by childes sake,
Nowe helpo me, ladye, pat same tyne.

O glorious ladye ful of grace,
vowh nowe sauf to helpen me
And to withstonde peemys face
And to destroye peire gret poweste.

O ladye, come pat dreadful houre
Whane derk depe shall m'tassayle,
And beo to me sikur sokoure
pat alle pe feondes of me shal fay[3]e. 87

To be i crie & calle, to be i make my bed;
þou be in stude & stalle per i draue to dod;
Let me neuere falle in hondes of pe qued. 88

At myn endyng þou stonde by me,
When I schal hepen founden & fare,
When þat I quake and dreadful be
And alle my synnes I rewe hem sare;
As euer my hope hap ben in þo,
þenke þer-þe, louedi, & helpe me þare
For loue of þat sweete tre
þat Ihsou spraddo his bodi bare. 89

at min endin-day
þe warliais þai wil be her
fort (þ) take þar pray.

To take þar pray,
also hi her say,
The poets sometimes paint vivid pictures of the Judgment Day, when sinful mankind will quake in terror of damnation:

Of sine and kar
ho meded ve bar,
wan he pollid pines sar.
to drupe and dar
we athe wel mare,
also for pe hondis doyt pe har,
wan we ponke hu wo sal far
wan he sal dem ve alle;
we sal haf nod pare
a-pan mari to calle 93

Biseich pino sono, asse he uel may,
pat he us alle yeme
Wonne he comit a domis day
Al folo forto demeH.
Wen huic mon for is owen dede
Sal þeir vnþorfungen meðe,
ful sore us may agrison.
Wen þour engles bemen blouit,
Let us him þenne to onowen,
On his rist hond arison.

Wonne ho scouit is wadis
þat reful beat to seine,
Help us, louedi, þe stunde
Wen he scouit is tenee.
"God, ye awariede in-to wo,
To pine þat sal lestyn 00.
I-Greipid hit was hou yore."
To loft up buven þat he solt to:
"Comit, ibosedo, in-to ro
þat lestyn sal owir mor."

126.
Hoccleve alludes to the story, found in the Marian legends of the Middle Ages, that the Virgin will help weigh the few good deeds of the sinner against his many bad deeds on the scales of justice if she is induced to do so:

Ful of swotnesse / helpe me to wyse
Agoyn the feend / bat with his handos twye,
And his might, plukko wole / at the balance
To wyse vs doun / kepe vs from his munsance;

The lesson of the Quatrefoil of Love, a homiletic lyric on divine love, is that Mary is all powerful, chiefly through her tears and prayers, while we are on this earth, but even she cannot save us at the Last Day if we neglect her help in this life. Before the stern Judge, the Virgin is not, in this poem, the imperious queen that she is pictured in many other mediaeval Marian works, but she is the humble, gentle suppliant whose prayers and bribes are of no help against her righteous Son on that Day of Doom, and, at last, she herself is finally awed into silence:

We sail seke thedyr in sympill atyre,
Tremland and qwakande als lefe appon tree,
When all is vmbsett with water and fyro,
þer may no wrenke no no wyle wynse vs to flye,
When cryst es greued so sare ho es a grym syro,
So many a symfull wrocho als he sail þer see;
þan dare noghte his modir, þose scho wold gyff hyro,
Speke till hir dero sone, so dreadfull es hee,
pat day.

Alle þe halowes of houen
Sall þe still of paire steuen,
Dare þay noghte a worde neuene,
For na man to praye.

He rekkenys by resoune als clerkes rede,
He settis on his ryght hande pat he will saue,
Thoco wafull sychtis, þat may not þer spede,
Sal stande on his left-hande and wa sail þay haue
For ay.
Interesting, too, are the prayers of the poets for themselves and others dear to them. William of Shoreham offers a poem to the Virgin:

Have, lovady, thys lytel conge,
That out of sefool herte spronge;
Apons the feend thou make me stronge,
And yf me thy wysaynge;
And th3z ich habbe y-do th3 wrange,
Thou graunte me amondyne. 97

The blind and deaf John Audolay wrote his Christmas carols while he was ill:

as I lay soke in my langure
with sorow of hort & teore of ye
his caral I made with grot doloure
passio christi conforta me. 98

He pleas with the Virgin:

mare moder merceful may
ffor be ioyys pu hadist lady
Of bi sun fore me pu pray
passio christi conforta me. 99

After telling of the Annunciation, Henryson prays to the Virgin:

This prayer fra my spleno Is,
That all my werkis wikkittest
Thow put away, and mak mo chaist
Fra termagant that toyn Is,
And fra his cluke that kono Is; 100

The Scottish Chaucorion, Kennody, prays:
The scribe of John Marion, a follower of Lydgate, closes Marion's ABC to the Virgin by saying:

And for John Marion, the whiche sume tymo
Made pis litill Aboe and set it lyne be lyne,
As to his simple witte, while he was lying here,
So pray for hym and vs, myn hertes lady dere. 102

Lydgate prays for himself:

Graunt me thes thre, most excellent princess,
The first is this, I pray the nat disdeyne,
To have longthe of :if nat medlid with seeknesse,
Off worldly goodis graunt me also largesse,
Withouten striff, to Goddis prverence,
The third is that my soule, withouten distresse,
May come to the blisse where drad is no pestilence. 103

Lydgate prays that King Henry VI may have a good journey during the King's expedition to France in 1430:

Sancta maria, mylde medyatryce,
Avidi [hoc] rogantes seruulos!
Dey genityrux, to thy flovyrd de-lyce,
Pray for owre kyng where-so he goose.
O virgo virginum, letes hym never los,
That hath the kopyng of thy dowaro fre,
But be port and prynce yn hyss pvrposo.
   Saluvm fac regem domine. 104

There is a companion piece, "Mary, Take in Your Hand this Dread Voyage," to this poem by Lydgate, in which the king himself prays for protection
130

105

on his journey. Elsewhere, the poet prays for Henry and his mother, Queen Katherine:

With humble herto beseching pat virgyne,
Which is moost feyro, moost bountevous and goode,
To sixt Henry, his moder Kateryne,
To shoode hir grace, and to peyro noble bloode: 106

Finally, Lydgate wrote a famous petition to the Virgin for the care of his "worthi maister deere," Chaucer. Referring to Chaucer's translation of Do Guilleville's *ABC*, Lydgate, in his translation of the French poet's *Pelerinage de la vie humaine*, does not make a new translation of the famous Marian poem found in the French work, but, instead, he leaves space for Chaucer's *ABC*:

And touchynge the translacioun
Off thys noble Orysoun,
Waylom (yiff I shal nat feyne)
The noble poete off Bretayne,
My mayster Chaucer, in hys tymes,
Aftuer the Frenche he dyde yt ryme,
Word by word, as in substaunce,
Rght as yt ys ymade in Fraunce,
fful devoutly, in sentence,
In worowepe, and in reverenco
Off that noble hevenly quene,
Bothe moder and a mayde clono.
And sythe, he dyde yt vndertake,
ffor to translate yt ffor hyr sake,
I pray thys [Queene] that ys the beste,
ffor to bryng hys soule at reste,
That he may, thorugh hir prayers,
Aboue the storrys bryht and cloro,
Off hyr mercy and hyr grace
Apero affer'n hyr sonye fface,
Wyth seyntys ouere, for A memore,
Eternally to regno in glorye. 107

After reading these and many other orisons written to the Virgin Queen in the Middle Ages, we must agree with Eileen Power, who says,
after discussing the mediaeval legends of the Virgin:

The instinct of the people was a just one. If behind all the superficiality and irresponsibility of the miracles we look more closely at the Virgin of the middle ages, we shall perceive that she does represent the deepest and most essential side of the Christian religion, the insistence on faith, the power of love to blot away sin, above all the infinite mercy. 'Let him deny your mercy,' said St. Bernard, 'who can say that he had ever asked for it in vain,' and against her divine importunity her Son cannot remain stern. 108

Thus, the love Our Lady showed to her mediaeval petitioners was a counterpart of that love which once extended itself unto fallen women and publicans.
CONCLUSION

The enthusiasm of the Normans brought into English life a spark that gave added flame to the fire of Marian devotion, which had burned in English hearts from the time of the conversion of England from paganism. There is revealed in mediaeval poetry neither change in the nature nor in the doctrinal foundation of that devotion. The highest terms of praise given to Mary by the Middle English poets are no stronger than those already used by Cynewulf and the homilists of the Anglo-Saxon times. There is a real continuity of religious thought and literary expression that links the Old and Middle English periods together in their expression of the Virgin's attributes. The mediaeval poets did not change from the beliefs of their ancestors, but they gave a more manifold expression of their emotions than their predecessors had done. The poets honoured the Blessed Virgin with the tribute of hyperdulia, but they did not commit the sin of Mariolatry. Writers who claim that the Virgin was made a fourth part of the Trinity in the Middle Ages will find no support for their theory in the Middle English lyrics.

In that England which was Mary's dowry, men were eager to offer their gift of poetry to the Virgin. The English Marian poets of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries were not self-conscious literary artists. Primarily, they were the voice through which the religious sentiments of the whole society of that age were sounded. The poems which they produced expressed the collective, not the individual, attitude of the people towards the Virgin Mary. This attitude, as we have seen, was at once idealized and practical. Lord David Cecil
says of the works which were produced by these poets:

Such religious poems as we did produce in the Middle Ages seem at once closer to heaven and more firmly rooted in the earth than those of later times.

In general, the Middle English lyrics are characterized by a certain earnestness, warmth, and healthy vigour that give them a peculiar quality as opposed to similar Continental products of the same era. Whether the poetry of Mary is magnificent or dull, original or translated, exalted or weakly repetitious, the sincerity which prompted it can never be questioned. Despite technical faults found in many of the lyrics, nearly every poem is excellent as the expression of a mood and atmosphere. In the poems, we see with mediaeval eyes the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin.

In contrast to the mediaeval Marian poets, the great poets of England in the following centuries were self-conscious men of letters. When they wrote an occasional lyric about the Virgin, they would use poetic diction and they would often employ complex imagery. Among the later English poets to write a tribute to the Virgin were: Milton, in his _Paradise Regained_, Donne, Jonson, Crashaw, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina and Dante Gabriell Rossetti, Francis Thompson, Hilaire Belloc and Kipling. Mary Lamb, a Protestant, perhaps has written the highest tribute to the Virgin found in English lyric poetry. In her brief "Maternal Lady with the Virgin Grace," she says:

Maternal lady with the virgin grace,
Heaven-born thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And of a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy sinless face
Men look upon, they wish to be
A Catholic, Madonna fair, to worship thee. 4

K. Cholmeley, in comparing the mediaeval with the modern poets who have written praises of Mary, says:

Medieval and modern, each praises in his own manner; the latter making, as it were, jewelled rosaries; while the former lay garlands of wild flowers at her feet. 5

How may we close more appropriately this thesis on mediaeval English Marian lyrics than by quoting a modern poem which sums up all that the Blessed Virgin meant to the Middle Ages? Frederick William Faber (1814-1863) is the composer of the lyric, "Our Lady in the Middle Ages":

I looked upon the earth: it was a floor
For noisy pageant and rude bravery—
Wassail, and arms, and chase, among the high,
And burning hearts uncheered among the poor;
And gentleness from every land withdrew.
No thought that beds of whitest lilies grew
All suddenly upon the earth, in bowers;
And gentleness, that wandered like a wind,
And nowhere could meet sanctuary find,
Passed like a dewy breath into the flowers.
Earth heeded not; she still was tributary
To kings and knights, and man's heart well-nigh failed;
Then wore the natural charities exhaled
Afresh, from out the blessed love of Mary. 6
NOTES

Introduction:

2. Ibid, pp. 19, 21.
8. Loc. cit.
11. William Henry Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 476f. His modern translation is:

"St. Mary, Virgin, mother of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, receive, shield, help thy Godric; embrace and bring him aloft with thee into thy kingdom of God. St. Mary, Christ's abode, pearl (cleanness) of maidens, flower of mothers, remove my sin, rule in my mind, aid me to reach to God Himself."

Chapter I:


19. Ibid., p. 218f.

20. Ibid., p. 219.


22. MacCracken, op. cit., p. 130

23. Ibid., p. 132

24. Mary Margaret Mallard, A Study of Middle English Marian Verse, II, 204.


30. Ibid., p. 117.


32. Ibid., p. 618.


34. MacCracken, op. cit., p. 269.


38. Ibid., p. 20.

39. Ibid., p. 25.
40. Ibid., p. 24.
42. Ibid., p. 45.
44. Robinson, op. cit., p. 194.
46. MacCracken, op. cit., p. 255.
47. Ibid., p. 300.
48. Ibid., p. 292.
49. Ibid., p. 256.
51. Ibid., p. 617.
52. Horstmann, op. cit., p. 74.
53. MacCracken, op. cit., p. 258.
55. Greene, op. cit., p. 137.
57. Ibid., p. 256.
59. Ibid., p. 40.
60. Ibid., p. 160.
61. Ibid., p. 161.
62. Ibid., p. 264.
63. Brown, XIII, p. 32.
64. Ibid., p. 42.
65. Ibid., p. 117.
66. Groome, op. cit., p. 143.
67. Ibid., p. 149.
68. Ibid., p. 150.
69. Ibid., p. 151.
70. Ibid., p. 152.
72. Ibid., p. 27.
73. Brown, XV, p. 41.
74. Ibid., p. 39.
75. Ibid., p. 45.
76. Ibid., p. 50.
77. Ibid., p. 54.
78. Ibid., p. 61.
81. Ibid., p. 74.
82. Loc. cit.
83. Ibid., p. 105.
84. Ibid., p. 26.
86. Loc. cit.
88. Ibid., p. 104.
89. Ibid., p. 105.
90. Horstmann, op. cit., p. 130.
91. Ibid., p. 127. nob-schaft—face.
92. Whiting, op. cit., p. 158.


95. Mallard, op. cit., p. 52. Malone (Works, IV, (1821), 118, as found in Sir Israel Gollancz, The Quatrefoil of Love, p. 29) says grey eyes in the Middle Ages were what we now call blue eyes.


98. Brown, XV, p. 43.

99. Greene, op. cit., p. 21. Greene, p. 359, cites three sources for explanation of "berōth the boll" and notes it was a common phrase denoting excellence.

100. Ibid., p. 154.


102. Ibid., p. 136.

103. Greene, op. cit., p. 152.


105. Loc. cit.


111. Ibid., p. 36.

117. Loc. cit.
118. Brown, XV, p. 27.
119. Eleanor M. Brougham, Corn From Olde Fieldses, p. 12.
120. MacCracken, op. cit., p. 235.
121. Ibid., p. 255.
122. Loc. cit.
123. Ibid., p. 235.
124. Ibid., p. 300.
125. Ibid., p. 256.
126. Greens, op. cit., p. 133. "This rose is set, arrayed, on a bush."
127. Loc. cit.
130. Greens, op. cit., p. 159.
131. Ibid., p. 163.
133. Whiting, op. cit., p. 155.
134. Greens, op. cit., p. 155
136. Ibid., p. 270.
137. Ibid., p. 269.
139. Greens, op. cit., p. 141.
Chapter II:
11. Thomas Wright, Specimens of Old English Carols, p. 44.
17. Ibid., p. 169.
18. Ibid., p. 183.
19. Ibid., p. 170.


22. Ibid., p. 171.


25. Carleton Brown, Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century, p. 44.


27. Loc. cit.


35. Brown, XV, p. 50.


39. Ibid., p. 171.

40. Wright, Halliwell, op. cit., p. 44.

41. Loc. cit.

42. Greene, op. cit., p. 169.

43. Brown, XIV, p. 76.
44. Chambers, Sidgwick, Early Eng. Lyrics, p. 112.
45. Brown, XIV, p. 45.
46. Greene, op. cit., p. 183.
47. Chambers, Sidgwick, Early Eng. Lyrics, p. 112.
50. Ibid., p. 296.
52. John 1:14.
55. Greene, op. cit., p. 191.
56. Ibid., p. 153.
57. Ibid., p. 166.
58. Ibid., p. 34.
59. Ibid., p. 36.
60. Cf. Judges 6:36-40--Fleece of Gideon
Ezekiel 44:12--Eastern Gate
Isaiah 45:8; Hosea 6:3; 14:5; Ecclesiasticus 24:42;
Psalm 72--Rain.

63. Ibid., p. 145.
64. Ibid., p. 39.
65. Ibid., p. 44. Greene, p. 364, says the poet, Ryman, attributed this simile to a Father who seems not to have used it. Perhaps Ryman is
quoting from a wrongly attributed source or, more probably, simply
seeking to give an impression of learning and authority. Greene, p.
357, says many theological writings employ this simile so it is impossible
to give a definite "source" for it. Augustine used it.

66. Ibid., p. 42.
67. Ibid., p. 36.
68. Brown, XIV, p. 49.
69. Greene, op. cit., p. 38.
70. Chambers, Sidgwick, "Fifteenth Century Carols," p. 73.
74. J. Orchard Halliwell, A Selection From the Minor Poems of Dan
John Lydgate, p. 98.
76. Charlotte D'Evelyn, Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ,
p. 56.
78. Ibid., p. 217. Cf. Paradiso, Canto XXXIII.
82. Ibid., p. 269.
83. Greene, op. cit., p. 147. Latin "triclinium"—a couch for reclining
at meals, p. 393.
84. Ibid., p. 151.
86. Ibid., p. 155.
85. MacCracken, op. cit., p. 286.
91. F. J. Furnivall, Political, Religious, and Love Poems, p. 82.
93. Ibid., p. 39
94. Ibid., p. 116.
95. Horstmann, op. cit., p. 63.
96. Ibid., p. 79f.
100. Horstmann, op. cit., p. 137.
103. Horstmann, op. cit., p. 73.
104. MacCracken, op. cit. p. 293.
105. Ibid., p. 259.
109. Ibid., p. 67.
110. Ibid., p. 74.
111. Ibid., p. 92.
112. Ibid., p. 136.
113. Loc. cit.
114. Ibid., p. 90


117. George D. Smith, The Teaching of the Catholic Church, p. 525.


120. Ibid., p. 57.

121. Ibid., p. 127. noder—snake.

122. Brown, XIV, p. 47.

123. Ibid., p. 54.


126. MacCracken, op. cit., p. 270.

127. Brown, XV, p. 120.


129. Greene, op. cit., p. 61.

130. Loc. cit.


133. Loc. cit.


135. Ibid., p. 135.

137. Brown, XIV, p. 43.
139. Greene, op. cit., p. 119.
142. Ibid., p. 302.
143. Greene, op. cit., p. 135.
144. Loc. cit.
145. Konrath, op. cit., p. 113.
146. Greene, op. cit., p. 184.
147. MacCracken, op. cit., p. 270f.
148. Ibid., p. 275.
150. Ibid., p. 270.
152. Ibid., p. 400.
153. Ibid., p. 186.

Chapter III:

4. Schaff, op. cit., p. 431
14. Roman Dyboski, *Songs, Carols, and Other Miscellaneous Poems (Balliol MS 354--Richard Hill's Commonplace Book)*, p. 34.
16. Ibid., p. 131.
17. Carleton Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, p. 131f. "Maecor" refers to Floridus Maecor, the pseudonymous author of the hexameter poem, De Viribus Herbarum, regarded in the latter Middle Ages as an authoritative treatise on botanical science, p. 230. The French adopted the fleur-de-lys for their royal coat of arms because of its association with the Child Jesus. Later, after the English had van lands in France, and after the flower had been added to the English coat of arms, the fleur-de-lys became popular among Englishmen. (Mary Margaret Mallard, *A Study of Middle English Marian Verse*, I, 80). "Maecor was taught by Cato as to who sowed the seed of the fleur-de-lys. Mary, thou art like this flower; and thy son like its blossom."
20. Ibid., p. 35.
22. Ibid., p. 39.
23. Ibid., pp lxxviii-lxxxix. This fifteenth century carol is the closest translation found in the Middle English lyrics of St. Bernard's famous prose, "Laetabundus," p. lxxviii.
32. Ibid., p. 361.
35. Brown, XV, p. 54.
36. Ibid., p. 104.
38. Mallard, op. cit., p. 92f.
40. Émile Male, Religious Art from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century, p. 121.
41. Greene, op. cit., p. cxxvii.
42. Ibid., p. cxxxi.
43. Ibid., p. cxxix.
44. Ibid., p. 22.
46. Mary Margaret Mallard, A Study of Middle English Marian Verse, II, 277.
147. Greene, op. cit., p. 131.

148. Charlotte D'Evelyn, Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ, p. 3.

149. Greene, op. cit., p. 361.

50. Ibid., p. 30.


52. Bernhard Fehr, "Die Lieder der Hs. Add. 5665 (Ritson's Folio-Ms.)," Archiv, CVI, (1901), 276.


54. Brown, XIV, p. 84.

55. Ibid., p. 60.

56. Brown, XV, p. 5.

57. Brown, XIV, p. 91.

58. Ibid., p. 78.


60. Brown, XV, p. 7.

61. Greene, op. cit., p. 37. Greene, p. 363, wonders if Mary's song is the same as the Pardoner's song, "Com hider, love, to me!" (Canterbury Tales, General Prologue, l. 672). Knowing the character and tastes of the Pardoner, we imagine that the type of song he loved to sing was entirely different from one the blessed Mother Mary would be thought of as singing to her child. base--kiss.

62. Brown, XIV, p. 120.

63. Greene, op. cit., p. 38. collying--caressing.

64. Ibid., p. 75. coynt--quaint, charming.

65. D'Evelyn, op. cit., p. 5.


67. Ibid., p. 1f.

68. Ibid., p. 121.

69. Greene, op. cit., p. 50.
Chapter IV:

1. Yrjö Hirm, The Sacred Shrine, p. 390. "I read that she stood, (i.e., at the Cross) but I do not read that she wept."
2. Ibid., p. 389.
   James J. Walsh, A Golden Treasury of Medieval Literature, p. 98.


5. E. K. Chambers, English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages, p. 104.


7. Wescheler, Die romatischen Marienklagen, p. 101f., as found in Gerould, loc. cit.

8. Chambers, English Lit., p. 105f.


12. Felix Vernet, Medieval Spirituality, translated by the Benedictines of Talacre, p. 150.


15. Loc. cit.

16. Ibid., p. 391.

17. Ibid., pp. 391, 394.


19. Thien, op. cit., p. 85f. as found in Gerould, op. cit., p. 408.

20. Loc. cit.


21. Greene, op. cit., p. 120.
29. Ibid., p. 117.
30. Loc. cit.
33. Ibid., p. 124.
34. Ibid., p. 110.
39. Ibid., p. 36.
40. Ibid., p. 83.
41. Ibid., p. 77f.
42. Ibid., p. 87f.
43. Brown, XV, p. 152.
49. Greene, op. cit., p. 65.


52. Ibid., p. 145.

53. Ibid., p. xxxviii.

54. Brown, XV, p. 146.


59. Ibid., p. 1.

60. Hirn, op. cit., p. 381.


63. Morris, op. cit., p. 142.

64. Greene, op. cit., p. 124.


Chapter V:


5. Ibid., p. 105.


13. Rev. Charles R. Mulrooney, The Cultus of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Middle English Lyrics, p. 19. Carleton Brown (English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century, p. 179) notes that on the Continent the Joys of Mary were
regularly either seven or fifteen while in England the traditional number was five: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Assumption. In the fifteenth century, her Joys were increased to seven and sometimes to fifteen.


16. Carleton Brown, *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, p. 120.


20. Ibid., p. 417.


22. Loc. cit.

23. Loc. cit.


27. Ibid., p. 45.


29. F. R. Webber, *Church Symbolism*, p. 182.


34. Henry Noble MacCracken, "'Lydgatiana' (V. Fourteen Short Religious Poems)," *Archiv CXXXI*, (1913), 50.

41. F. J. Furnivall, Political, Religious and Love Poems, p. 146.
42. Greene, op. cit., p. 163.
43. Brown, XV, p. 60.
45. Brown, XV, p. 236.
47. Houser, op. cit., p. 322.
54. Ibid., p. 41.
55. Ibid., p. 45.
56. Ibid., p. 50.
57. Ibid., p. 57.
58. Ibid., p. 59.
59. Ibid., p. 61.
60. Ibid., p. 65.
61. Ibid., p. 64.


63. Loc. cit.

64. J. P. Oakdon, Alliterative Poetry in Middle England, p. 201.

65. Brown, XIII, p. 3. The Old English & has been changed by us to w and the s has been changed to p throughout the poem. These changes occur in the other poems throughout the thesis which incorporate the & and s.

66. Loc. cit.

67. Loc. cit.

68. Loc. cit.

69. Loc. cit.

70. Ibid., p. 4.

71. Loc. cit.

72. Loc. cit.


74. Loc. cit.

75. Ibid., p. 5.

76. MacCulloch, op. cit., p. 110.

77. Gollancz, Yoake, op. cit. p. xxii f.


R. M. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, p. 267.

79. Owst, op. cit., p. 16f.

80. Wilson, op. cit., p. 252.


90. *Ibid.*,

91. *op. cit.*, p. 159.


94. *op. cit.*.


96. Peterborough, in East Midland district; Caithness, north Scotland; Dublin, p. 245.


102. Wright, *op. cit.*.


106. *Ibid.*.

Chapter VI:


2. G. G. Coulton, Five Centuries of Religion, I, 142.


5. Coulton, op. cit., p. 142.


8. Adams, op. cit., p. 94.


10. Ibid., p. xii.


12. Ibid., p. 95.


17. Loc. cit.


19. Ibid., p. 485.


22. Loc. cit.


32. Greene, op. cit., p. 35.

33. Ibid., p. 155.

34. Ibid., p. 149.


39. Ibid., p. 247f.

40. Ibid., p. 618.

41. Loc. cit.

42. Ibid., p. 619.

43. Loc. cit.


46. Ibid., p. 78.

49. Ibid., p. 36.
50. Ibid., p. 206f.
53. Roman Dyboski, Songs, Carols, and Other Miscellaneouos Poems
54. Greene, op. cit., p. 143.
57. Greene, op. cit., p. 151.
58. Brown, XIV, p. 22.
59. Ibid., p. 55.
61. Furnivall, Hoccleve's Works I, 45.
63. Brown, XIV, p. 56.
64. Ibid., p. 54.
65. Greene, op. cit., p. 159.
66. Loc. cit.
68. Gollancz, Hoccleve's Works, II, 16.
69. Brown, XV, p. 52.
70. MacCracken, Minor Poems Lydgate, p. 257.
71. Ibid., p. 304.
72. Horstmann, op. cit., p. 57.
73. Ibid., p. 65f.
74. Brown, XIV, p. 46.
75. Ibid., p. 56.
76. Brown, XV, p. 50.
80. Ibid., p. 67.
81. Ibid., p. 111f.
82. Brown, XIV, p. 179.
83. Brown, XV, p. 46.
86. Mallard, op. cit., p. 64f.
89. Ibid., p. 123.
91. Ibid., p. 155.
94. Ibid., p. 37.
95. Furnivall, Hoccleve's Works, I, 52.
Mallard, op. cit., 261. H. Harvey Wood (The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson, p. 171) notes that "tormagant", the false god of the Mohammedans, was represented in the English miracle plays as a blustering bully. The word was not found in its modern sense of a shrewdish woman until ca. 1660. "Tormagant" is mentioned in Chaucer's Sir Topias tale in the Canterbury Tales.


104. Brown, XV, p. 196f. Brown, p. 335, tells the circumstances under which this poem was written. England was called Mary's dowry, Dos Mariao, Mary Margaret Mallard, A Study of Middle English Marian Verse, I, 7.


Conclusion:


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