

RIDDLES WISELY EXPOUNDED

A. a. 'A Noble Riddle Wisely Expounded; or, The Maid's Answer to the Knight's Three Questions,' 4to, Rawlinson, 566, fol. 193, Bodleian Library; Wood, E. 25, fol. 15, Bod. Lib. **b.** Pepys, iii, 19, No 17, Magdalen College, Cambridge. **c.** Douce, ii, fol. 168 b, Bod. Lib. **d.** 'A Riddle Wittily Expounded,' *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, iv, 129, ed. 1719. "ii, 129, ed. 1712."

B. 'The Three Sisters.' *Some Ancient Christmas Carols . . . together with two Ancient Ballads, etc.* By Davies Gilbert, 2d ed., p. 65.

C. 'The Unco Knicht's Wowing,' Motherwell's MS., p. 647.

D. Motherwell's MS., p. 142.

E. *Nursery Rhymes and Country Songs*, p. 31.

The four copies of **A** differ but very slightly: **a**, **b**, **c** are broadsides, and **d** is evidently of that derivation. **a** and **b** are of the 17th century. There is another broadside in the Euing collection, formerly Halliwell's, No 253. The version in *The Borderer's Table Book*, vii, 83, was compounded by Dixon from others previously printed.

Riddles, as is well known, play an important part in popular story, and that from very remote times. No one needs to be reminded of Samson, Œdipus, Apollonius of Tyre. Riddle-tales, which, if not so old as the oldest of these, may be carried in all likelihood some centuries beyond our era, still live in Asiatic and European tradition, and have their representatives in popular ballads. The largest class of these tales is that in which one party has to guess another's riddles, or two rivals compete in giving or guessing, under penalty in either instance of forfeiting life* or some other heavy wager; an example of which is the English ballad, modern in form, of 'King John and the

Abbot of Canterbury.' In a second class, a suitor can win a lady's hand only by guessing riddles, as in our 'Captain Wedderburn's Courtship' and 'Proud Lady Margaret.' There is sometimes a penalty of loss of life for the unsuccessful, but not in these ballads. Thirdly, there is the tale (perhaps an offshoot of an early form of the first) of The Clever Lass, who wins a husband, and sometimes a crown, by guessing riddles, solving difficult but practicable problems, or matching and evading impossibilities; and of this class versions **A** and **B** of the present ballad and **A-H** of the following are specimens.

Ballads like our 1, **A**, **B**, 2, **A-H**, are very common in **German**. Of the former variety are the following:

A. 'Räthsellied,' Büsching, *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, i, 65, from the neighborhood of Stuttgart. The same, Erlach, iii, 37; *Wunderhorn*, iv, 139; *Liederhort*, p. 338, No 153; Erk u. Imer, H. 5, p. 32, No 29; Mittler, No 1307 (omits the last stanza); Zuccalmaglio, ii, 574, No 317 [with change in st. 11]; Mündel, *Elsässische Volkslieder*, p. 27, No 24. A knight meets a maid on the road, dismounts, and says, "I will ask you a riddle; if you guess it, you shall be my wife." She answers, "Your riddle shall soon be guessed; I will do my best to be your wife;" guesses eight pairs of riddles, is taken up behind

* A grim kemp, an unco knight, asks nine riddles of a young man; all are guessed; wherefore the kemp says it shall go well with him. Kristensen, *Skattegraveren*, II, 97ff, 154f, Nos 457, 458, 724; V, 49, No 454. Also, Kristensen, *Jyske Folkeminder*, X, 2, 'Svend Bondes Spørgsmaal,' **B**.

him, and they ride off. **B.** 'Räthsel um Räthsel,' *Wunderhorn*, ii, 407 [429, 418] = Erlach, i, 439. Zuccalmaglio, ii, 572, No 316, rearranges, but adds nothing. Mittler, No 1306, inserts three stanzas (7, 9, 10). This version begins: "Maid, I will give you some riddles, and if you guess them will marry you." There are ten pairs, and, these guessed, the man says, "I can't give you riddles: let's marry;" to which she gives no coy assent: but this conclusion is said not to be genuine (*Liederhort*, p. 341, note). **C.** 'Räthsel-lied,' Erk, *Neue Sammlung*, Heft 3, p. 64, No 57, and *Liederhort*, 340, No 153^a, two Brandenburg versions, nearly agreeing, one with six, the other with five, pairs of riddles. A proper conclusion not having been obtained, the former was completed by the two last stanzas of **B**, which are suspicious. **C** begins like **B**. **D.** 'Räthsel-fragen,' Peter, *Volksthümliches aus Österreichisch-Schlesien*, i, 272, No 83. A knight rides by where two maids are sitting, one of whom salutes him, the other not. He says to the former, "I will put you three questions, and if you can answer them will marry you." He asks three, then six more, then three, and then two, and, all being answered, bids her, since she is so witty, build a house on a needle's point, and put in as many windows as there are stars in the sky; which she parries with, "When all streams flow together, and all trees shall fruit, and all thorns bear roses, then come for your answer." **E.** 'Räthsel-lied,' Tschischka u. Schottky, *Oesterreichische Volkslieder*, 2d ed., p. 28, begins like **B**, **C**, has only three pairs of riddles, and ends with the same task of building a house on a needle's point. **F.** 'Räthsel-lied,' Hocker, *Volkslieder von der Mosel*, in Wolf's *Zeits. für deutsche Myth.*, i, 251, from Trier, begins with the usual promise, has five pairs of riddles, and no conclusion. **G.** 'Räthsel,' Ditfurth, *Fränkische Volkslieder*, ii, 110, No 146, has the same beginning, six pairs of riddles, and no conclusion. **H.** J. H. Schmitz, *Sitten u. s. w. des Eifler Volkes*, I, 159; five pairs of riddles and no conclusion. (Köhler.) **I.** Alfred Müller, *Volkslieder aus dem Erzgebirge*, p. 69; four pairs of riddles, and no conclusion. **J.** Lemke, *Volksthümliches in Ostpreussen*, p. 152; seven riddles guessed, "nun bin ich Deine Frau."

Some of the riddles occur in nearly all the versions, some in only one or two, and there is

now and then a variation also in the answers. Those which are most frequent are:

Which is the maid without a tress? **A-D, G.**

And which is the tower without a crest? **A-D, F, G.**

(Maid-child in the cradle; tower of Babel.)

Which is the water without any sand? **A, B, C, F, G.**

And which is the king without any land? **A, B, C, F, G.**

(Water in the eyes; king in cards.)

Where is no dust in all the road? **A-G.**

Where is no leaf in all the wood? **A-G.**

(The milky way, or a river; a fir-wood.)

Which is the fire that never burnt? **A, C-G.**

And which is the sword without a point? **C-G.**

(A painted fire; a broken sword.)

Which is the house without a mouse? **C-G.**

Which is the beggar without a louse? **C-G.**

(A snail's house; a painted beggar.)*

* **D 4**, What is green as clover? What is white as milk? comes near to English **A 15**, **C 13**, **D 5**, What is greener than grass? **C 11**, **D 2**, What is whiter than milk? We have again, What is greener than grass? in 'Capt. Wedderburn's Courtship,' **A 12**; What is whiter than snow? What is greener than clover? in 'Räthsel-fragen,' Firmenich, *Germaniens Völkerstimmen*, iii, 634; in 'Kranz-singen,' Erk's *Liederhort*, p. 342, 3; 'Traugemund-lied,' 11; 'Ein Spiel von den Freiheit,' *Fastnachtspiele aus dem 15n Jahrhundert*, ii, 555; *Altdeutsche Wälder*, iii, 138. So, What is whiter than a swan? in many of the versions of Svend Vonved, Grundtvig, iii, 786; iv, 742-3-7-8; Afzelius, ii, 139, etc.; and Sin is blacker than a sloe, or coal (cf. **C 15**, Sin is heavier nor the lead), Grundtvig, i, 240, 247; iv, 748, 9; Afzelius, ii, 139. The road without dust and the tree without leaves are in 'Ein Spiel von den Freiheit,' p. 557; and in Meier, *Deutsche Kinder-Reime*, p. 84, no doubt a fragment of a ballad, as also the verses in Firmenich. The question in German, **A 4**, Welches ist das trefflichste Holz? (die Rebe) is in the Anglo-Saxon prose Salomon and Saturn: Kemble, *Sal. and Sat.* 188, No 40; 204; see also 287, 10. Riddle verses with little or no story (sometimes fragments of ballads like **D**) are frequent. The Traugemund-lied, Uhland, i, 3, and the Spiel von den Freiheit, *Fastnachtspiele*, ii, 553, have only as much story as will serve as an excuse for long strings of riddles. Shorter pieces of the kind are (Italian) Casetti e Imbriani, *C. p. delle Provincie meridionali*, I, 197f. (Servian) 'The Maid and the Fish,' Vuk, i, 196, No 285, Talvj, ii, 175, Goetze, *Serbische V. L.*, p. 75, Bowring, *Servian Popular Poetry*, p. 184; (Polish) Wojcicki, i, 203; (Wendish) Haupt and Schmalzer, i, 177, No 150, ii, 69, No 74; (Russian) Wenzig, *Bibliothek Slav. Poesie*, p. 174; (Esthonian) Neus, *Ehstnische V. L.*, 390ff, and *Fosterländskt Album*, i, 13, Prior, *Ancient Danish Ballads*, ii, 341.

Russian. A ballad from Shein, *Ruskiya Narodnuiya Pyesni*, Plyasovuiya, Dance Songs, Nos 88, 87; 89, p. 233f, translated in Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 356, from Buslaef's *Historical Sketches of National Literature and Art*, i, 31, resembles very closely German A. A merchant's son drives by a garden where a girl is gathering flowers. He salutes her; she returns her thanks. Then the ballad proceeds:

'Shall I ask thee riddles, beauteous maiden?
Six wise riddles shall I ask thee?
'Ask them, ask them, merchant's son,
Prithee ask the six wise riddles.'
'Well then, maiden, what is higher than the forest?
Also, what is brighter than the light?
[3] Also, maiden, what is thicker than the forest?
Also, maiden, what is there that's rootless?
Also, maiden, what is never silent?
Also, what is there past finding out?'
'I will answer, merchant's son, will answer,
All the six wise riddles will I answer.
Higher than the forest is the moon;
Brighter than the light the ruddy sun;
Thicker than the forest are the stars;
Rootless is, O merchant's son, a stone;
Never silent, merchant's son, the sea;
And God's will is past all finding out.'
'Thou hast guessed, O maiden fair, guessed rightly,
All the six wise riddles hast thou answered;
Therefore now to me shalt thou be wedded,
Therefore, maiden, shalt thou be the merchant's
wife.*

So a Kosak: "I give thee this riddle: if thou guess it, thou shalt be mine; if thou guess it not, ill shall it go with thee." The riddle, seven-fold, is guessed. Metlinskiy, *Narodnyya yuzhnorusskiya Pyesni*, pp 363f. Cf. Snegiref, *Russkie prostonarodnye Prazdniki*, II, 101f. Also Romanov, I, 420, No 163 (White Russian).

Little-Russian. Three lads give a girl riddles. 'If you guess right, shall you be ours?' Golovatsky, II, 83, 19. Two other pieces in the same, III, 180, 55. (W. W.)

A king's daughter, or other maid, makes the reading of her riddles a condition of marriage in several Polish tales; it may be further stipulated

* 'Capt. Wedderburn's Courtship,' 12: What's higher than the tree? (heaven). Wojcicki, *Piesni*, i, 203, l. 11, 206, l. 3; What grows without a root? (a stone).

that a riddle shall be also given which the woman cannot guess, or that those who fail shall forfeit their life. Karłowicz in *Wisła*, III, 258, 270, where are cited, besides a MS. communication, *Zbiór wiadomości do antropologii krajowej*, V, 194, VII, 12; Gliński, *Bajarz Polski*, III, No 1; Kolberg, *Krakowskie*, IV, 204.

Among the Gaels, both Scotch and Irish, a ballad of the same description is extremely well known. Apparently only the questions are preserved in verse, and the connection with the story made by a prose comment. Of these questions there is an Irish form, dated 1738, which purports to be copied from a manuscript of the twelfth century. Fionn would marry no lady whom he could pose. Graidhne, "daughter of the king of the fifth of Ullin," answered everything he asked, and became his wife. Altogether there are thirty-two questions in the several versions. Among them are: What is blacker than the raven? (There is death.) What is whiter than the snow? (There is the truth.) 'Fionn's Questions,' Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, iii, 36; 'Fionn's Conversation with Ailbhe,' *Heroic Gaelic Ballads*, by the same, pp. 150, 151.

The familiar ballad-knight of **A, B** is converted in **C** into an "unco knight," who is the devil, a departure from the proper story which is found also in **2 I**. The conclusion of **C**,

As soon as she the fiend did name,
He flew awa in a blazing flame,

reminds us of the behavior of trolls and nixes under like circumstances, but here the naming amounts to a detection of the Unco Knight's quiddity, acts as an exorcism, and simply obliges the fiend to go off in his real character. **D** belongs with **C**: it was given by the reciter as a colloquy between the devil and a maiden.

The earlier affinities of this ballad can be better shown in connection with No 2.

Translated, after **B** and **A**, in Grundtvig's *Engelske og skotske Folkeviser*, p. 181: Herder, *Volkslieder*, i, 95, after **A d**.

A

a. Broadside in the Rawlinson collection, 4to, 566,
fol. 193, Wood, E. 25, fol. 15. b. Pepys, iii, 19, No 17. c.
Douce, ii, fol. 168 b. d. *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, iv, 130,
ed. 1719.

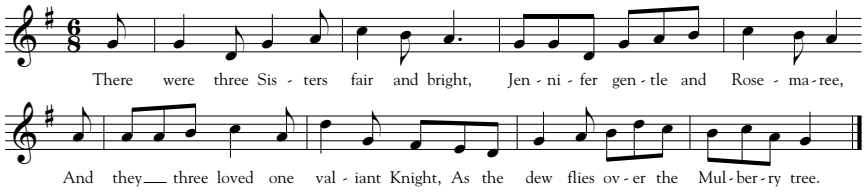
There was a La - dy in the North Coun - try, Lay the Bent to the Bon - ny__ Broom,
And she had love - ly Daught - ers three, Fa, la la la, fa, la la ra re.

A. d. D'Urfey, 1719–20, IV, pp. 129–32 (emended)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 There was a lady of the North Country,
Lay the bent to the bonny broom
And she had lovely daughters three.
Fa la la la, fa la la la ra re</p> <p>2 There was a knight of noble worth
Which also lived in the North.</p> <p>3 The knight, of courage stout and brave,
A wife he did desire to have.</p> <p>4 He knocked at the ladie's gate
One evening when it was late.</p> <p>5 The eldest sister let him in,
And pin'd the door with a silver pin.</p> <p>6 The second sister she made his bed,
And laid soft pillows under his head.</p> <p>7 The youngest daughter that same night,
She went to bed to this young knight.</p> <p>8 And in the morning, when it was day,
These words unto him she did say:</p> <p>9 'Now you have had your will,' quoth she,
'I pray, sir knight, will you marry me?'</p> <p>10 The young brave knight to her replied,
'Thy suit, fair maid, shall not be deny'd.</p> <p>[4] 11 'If thou canst answer me questions three,
This very day will I marry thee.'</p> <p>12 'Kind sir, in love, O then,' quoth she,
'Tell me what your [three] questions be.'</p> | <p>13 'O what is longer than the way,
Or what is deeper than the sea?'</p> <p>14 'Or what is louder than the horn,
Or what is sharper than a thorn?'</p> <p>15 'Or what is greener than the grass,
Or what is worse then a woman was?'</p> <p>16 'O love is longer than the way,
And hell is deeper than the sea.</p> <p>17 'And thunder is louder than the horn,
And hunger is sharper than a thorn.</p> <p>18 'And poyson is greener than the grass,
And the Devil is worse than woman was.'</p> <p>19 When she these questions answered had,
The knight became exceeding glad.</p> <p>20 And having [truly] try'd her wit,
He much commended her for it.</p> <p>21 And after, as it is verif'd,
He made of her his lovely bride.</p> <p>22 So now, fair maidens all, adieu,
This song I dedicate to you.</p> <p>23 I wish that you may constant prove
Vnto the man that you do love.</p> |
|--|---|

B

Gilbert's *Christmas Carols*, 2d ed., p. 65, from the editor's recollection. West of England.



- 1 There were three sisters fair and bright,
Jennifer gentle and rosemaree
And they three loved one valiant knight.
As the dew flies over the mulberry tree
- 2 The eldest sister let him in,
And barred the door with a silver pin.
- 3 The second sister made his bed,
And placed soft pillows under his head.
- 4 The youngest sister, fair and bright,
Was resolved for to wed with this valiant
knight.
- 5 'And if you can answer questions three,
O then, fair maid, I will marry with thee.

- 6 'What is louder than an horn,
And what is sharper than a thorn?'
- 7 'Thunder is louder than an horn,
And hunger is sharper than a thorn.'
- 8 'What is broader than the way,
And what is deeper than the sea?'
- 9 'Love is broader than the way,
And hell is deeper than the sea.'
- * * * * *
- 10
'And now, fair maid, I will marry with thee.'

C

Motherwell's MS., p. 647. From the recitation of Mrs Storie.

- 1 There was a knicht riding frae the east,
Sing the Cather banks, the bonnie brume
Wha had been wooing at monie a place.
And ye may beguile a young thing sune
- 2 He came unto a widow's door,
And speird whare her three dochters were.
- 3 The auldest ane's to a washing gane,
The second's to a baking gane.
- 4 The youngest ane's to a wedding gane,
And it will be nicht or she be hame.
- 5 He sat him down upon a stane,
Till thir three lasses came tripping hame.

- 6 The auldest ane's to the bed making,
And the second ane's to the sheet spreading.
- 7 The youngest ane was bauld and bricht,
And she was to lye with this unco knicht.
- 8 'Gin ye will answer me questions ten,
The morn ye sall be made my ain.
- 9 'O what is heigher nor the tree?
And what is deeper nor the sea?'
- 10 'Or what is heavier nor the lead?
And what is better nor the breid?'
- 11 'O what is whiter nor the milk?
Or what is safter nor the silk?'

[5]

12 'Or what is sharper nor a thorn?
Or what is louder nor a horn?

13 'Or what is greener nor the grass?
Or what is waur nor a woman was?'

14 'O heaven is higher nor the tree,
And hell is deeper nor the sea.

15 'O sin is heavier nor the lead,
The blessing's better nor the bread.

16 'The snaw is whiter nor the milk,
And the down is safter nor the silk.

17 'Hunger is sharper nor a thorn,
And shame is louder nor a horn.

18 'The pies are greener nor the grass,
And Clootie's waur nor a woman was.'

19 As sune as she the fiend did name,
He flew awa in a blazing flame.

D

Motherwell's MS., p. 142.

1 'O **what** is higher than the trees?
Gar lay the bent to the bonny broom
And what is deeper than the seas?
And you may beguile a fair maid soon

2 'O what is whiter than the milk?
Or what is softer than the silk?

3 'O what is sharper than the thorn?
O what is louder than the horn?

4 'O what is longer than the way?
And what is colder than the clay?

5 'O what is greener than the grass?
And what is worse than woman was?'

6 'O heaven's higher than the trees,
And hell is deeper than the seas.

7 'And snow is whiter than the milk,
And love is softer than the silk.

8 'O hunger's sharper than the thorn,
And thunder's louder than the horn.

9 'O wind is longer than the way,
And death is colder than the clay.

10 'O poison's greener than the grass,
And the Devil's worse than eer woman was.'

E

From Miss M. H. Mason's *Nursery Rhymes and Country Songs*, p. 31; sung in Northumberland.

There was a la - dy in the West, Lay the bank with the bon - ny broom,
 She had three daugh - ters of the best, Fa lang the dil - lo,
 Fa lang the dil - lo, dil - lo, dee.

Mason, 1878, p. 31. Also in Broadwood and Maitland, 1893, pp. 6-7.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 There was a lady in the West,
Lay the bank with the bonny broom
She had three daughters of the best.
Fa lang the dillo
Fa lang the dillo dillo dee | 9 'What is louder than a horn?
What is sharper than a thorn? |
| 2 There came a stranger to the gate,
And he three days and nights did wait. | 10 'What is brighter than the light?
What is darker than the night? |
| 3 The eldest daughter did ope the door,
The second set him on the floor. | 11 'What is keener than an axe?
What is softer than melting wax? |
| 4 The third daughter she brought a chair,
And placed it that he might sit there. | 12 'What is rounder than a ring?
'To you we thus our answers bring. |
| (To first daughter.) | 13 'Envy is greener than the grass,
Flattery smoother than crystal glass. |
| 5 'Now answer me these questions three,
Or you shall surely go with me. | 14 'Rumour is louder than a horn,
Hunger is sharper than a thorn. |
| (To second daughter.) | 15 'Truth is brighter than the light,
Falsehood is darker than the night. |
| 6 'Now answer me these questions six,
Or you shall surely be Old Nick's. | 16 'Revenge is keener than an axe,
Love is softer than melting wax. |
| (To all three.) | 17 'The world is rounder than a ring,
To you we thus our answers bring. |
| 7 'Now answer me these questions nine,
Or you shall surely all be mine. | 18 'Thus you have our answers nine,
And we never shall be thine.' |
| 8 'What is greener than the grass?
What is smoother than crystal glass? | |



- A. a. *Title.* A Noble Riddle wisely Expounded: or, The Maids answer to the Knights Three Questions.

She with her excellent wit and civil carriage,
Won a young Knight to joyn with him in marriage;

This gallant couple now is man and wife,
And she with him doth lead a pleasant Life.

Tune of Lay the bent to the bonny broom.

WOODCUT OF
THE KNIGHT.

WOODCUT OF
THE MAID.

c. Knights questions. Wed a knight . . . with her in marriage.

[6] a. Printed for F. Coles, T. Vere, I. Wright, and I. Clarke.

b. Printed for W. Thackeray, E. M. and A. M.

c. Licens'd according to Order. London. Printed by Tho. Norris, at the L[o]oking glass on London-bridge. And sold by J. Walter, in High Holborn.

In Rawlinson and Wood the first seven lines are in Roman and Italic type; the remainder being in black letter and Roman. The Pepys copy has one line of the ballad in black letter and one line in Roman type. The Douce edition is in Roman and Italic.

- A. 1¹. c, i' th' North: d, in the.

3¹. c, This knight.

5¹. a, b, c, d, The youngest sister.

7¹. b, d, The youngest that same. c, that very same.

7². a, with this young knight.

9². d, sir knight, you marry me.

After 10, there is a wood-cut of the knight and the maid in a; in b two cuts of the knight.

11². a, I'll marry. d, I will.

12¹. c omits in love. 12². b, c, d, three questions.

14¹. d, a horn.

After 15: a, Here follows the Damosels answer to the Knight's Three Questions: c, The Damsel's Answers To The Knight's Questions: d, The Damsel's Answer to the Three Questions.

17, 18. b, c, d, thunder's, hunger's, son's, devil's.

18². d, the woman.

19¹. c, those.

20. a, b omit truly.

21¹. b, c, d, as 't is.

- B. *The burden is printed by Gilbert, in the text "Jennifer gentle and Rosemaree." He appears to take Jennifer and Rosemaree to be names of the sisters. As printed under the music, the burden runs,*

Juniper, Gentle and Rosemary.

No doubt, juniper and rosemary, simply, are meant; Gentle might possibly be for gentian. In 2 H the burden is,

Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme:

curiously varied in I thus:

Every rose grows merry wi thyme:

and in G,

Sober and grave grows merry in time.

- C. 18. "Vergris in another set." M.

- D. MS. *before st. 1, "The Devil speaks;" before st. 6, "The maiden speaks."*



APPENDIX

Additional Copies

Rawlinson MS. D. 328, fol. 174 b., Bodleian Library.

I was unaware of the existence of this very important copy until it was pointed out to me by my friend Professor Theodor Vetter, of Zürich, to whom I have been in other ways greatly indebted. It is from a book acquired by Walter Pollard, of Plymouth, in the 23d year of Henry VI, 1444–5, and the handwriting is thought to authorize the conclusion that the verses were copied into the book not long after. The parties are the fiend and a maid, as in **C, D**, which are

hereby evinced to be earlier than **A, B**. The “good ending” of **A, B**, is manifestly a modern perversion, and the reply to the last question in **A, D**, ‘The Devil is worse than eer woman was,’ gains greatly in point when we understand who the so-called knight really is. We observe that in the fifteenth century version, 12, the fiend threatens rather than promises that the maid shall be his: and so in **E**.

Inter diabolus et virgo.

1 Wol 3e here a wonder thyng
Betwyxt a mayd *and* þe fovle fende?

2 Thys spake þe fend to þe mayd:
‘Beleue on me, mayd, to day.

3 ‘Mayd, mote y thi leman be,
Wyssedom y wolle teche the:

4 ‘All þe wyssedom off the world,
Hyf þou wolt be true *and* forward holde.

5 ‘What ys hyer þan ys [þe] tre?
What ys dypper þan ys the see?

6 ‘What ys scharpper þan ys þe þorne?
What ys loder þan ys þe horne?

7 ‘What [ys] longger þan ys þe way?
What is rader þan ys þe day?

8 ‘What [ys] bether than is þe bred?
What ys scharpper than ys þe dede?

9 ‘What ys grenner þan ys þe wode?
What ys swetter þan ys þe note?

10 ‘What ys swifter þan ys the wynd?
What ys recher þan ys þe kyng?

11 ‘What ys 3eluer þan ys þe wex?
What [ys] softer þan ys þe flex?

12 ‘But þou now answey me,
Thu schalt for soþe my leman be.’

13 ‘Thesu, for þy myld my3th,
As thu art kyng and kny3t,

14 ‘Lene me wisdome to answey here ry3th,
And schylde me fram the fovle wy3th!

15 ‘Hewene ys heyer than ys the tre,
Helle ys dypper þan ys the see.

16 ‘Hongyr ys scharpper than [ys] þe thorne,
Tonder ys lodder than ys þe horne.

17 ‘Loukyng ys longer than ys þe way,
Syn ys rader þan ys the day.

18 ‘Godys fesse ys betur þan ys the brede,
Payne ys strenger þan ys þe dede.

19 ‘Gras ys grenner þan ys þe wode.
Loue ys swetter þan ys the notte.

20 ‘Powt ys swifter þan ys the wynde,
Ihesus ys recher þan ys the kyng.

21 ‘Safer is 3eluer than ys the wex,
Selke ys softer þan ys the flex.

22 ‘Now, thu fende, styl thu be;
Nelle ich speke no more *with* the!’



2². Be leue.
 3¹. the leman. 3². theche.
 13². knyȝt seems to be altered to knyȝt.
 14². fold: Cf. 1².
 19². lowe.

Pollarde is written in the left margin of 22¹. and
 WALTERVS POLLARD below the last line of the
 piece.

['Inter Diabolus et Virgo' is printed by Dr Furni-
 vall in *Englische Studien*, XXIII, 444, 445,
 March, 1897.]



Findlay's MSS, I, 151, from J. Milne.

'What's greener than the grass?
 What's higher than the clouds?
 What is worse than women's tongues?
 What's deeper than the floods?'

'Hollin's greener than the grass,
 Heaven's higher than the clouds,
 The devil's worse than women's tongues,
 Hell's deeper than the floods.'