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A STUDY OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY MASQUE.

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## PART 1.

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### INTRODUCTION.

The Masque as represented in England was a dramatic performance occupying a position midway between a pageant and a play. Its nucleus consisted in the dances, with which were combined as subsidiary adjuncts lyric poetry, declamation, and dialogue in a spectacle characterised by magnificence of presentation. Little histrionic talent was required in the performers, the only necessity on their part was that they should be noble in appearance, richly dressed, and dignified in movement. The authors of such representations were the poet, dance-master, mechanist, scene-painter, and milliner. Thus the masque was specially suited for amateur performance, while the expenses incurred in its production made it a form of amusement accessible only to the rich.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the above that its main appeal was not to the intellect, but to the eye and the ear; it delighted by its dances, by the gorgeous scenery and dresses of the performers, and by its brilliant tableaux in which monsters, fairies, witches, satyrs, gods of Olympus were represented with every kind of musical accompaniment. "The Masque of Blackness", first of the series produced by Ben Jonson, and written for the Queen in 1605, will serve to illustrate

1. See Appendix A for typical expenses.

these remarks:-

The scene was a landscape of small woods sloping down to the sea, whose waves "seemed to move and in some places the billows to break". On the shore were six tritons, "their upper parts human save that their hairs were blue, as partaking of the sea-colour: their desinent parts fish, mounted above their heads": these furnished the music "made out of wreathed shells". Behind them were seated two "seammaids for song", between whom "two great sea-horses, as big as the life, put forth themselves". On one of these was seated Oceanus in human form, "his flesh blue, his robe sea-green, his head grey and horned, crowned with a wreath of sea-grass, a trident in his hand. Niger, his son, in the form of a negro decked with pearl, rode the other horse". These induced the Masquers, which were twelve nymphs, negroes, and the daughters of Niger, "attended by so many of the Oceanæ, which were their light-bearers". They were accommodated in a shell "made to move on those waters, and rise with the billow". To all this "was added an obscure and cloudy night-piece that made the whole set off". The approach of Oceanus and Niger is heralded by a song, and in answer to Oceanus' question why Niger has come so far west, the latter replies that his daughters are dissatisfied with their colour, which they have heard is due to Phaeton's error in driving his father's chariot, and that they are seeking a land whose name ends with "Tania", where they



have learned their beauty will be restored. Aethiopia, the moon, then appears in the sky, and makes known to Niger that he and his nymphs have come to the right land, Britannia, and bids him surmon his daughters ashore. Then follow the dances, interspersed with songs by the tritons and sea-maids, after which "they took their shell ....and went out to the accompaniment of a full song".<sup>1</sup>

From this it will be noticed how all was arranged to lead up to the dances of the Masquers.

The poet's part in the production was to supply the lyrical element in the above, and to furnish some explanation of the Masquer's appearance as negroes; accordingly he made use of the fable of Phaeton, which also serves as the induction of the Masquers. But his province is quite secondary to that of Inigo Jones, who provided the scenery and costumes, and also to that of the inventor of the dances and composer of the music.

The Masque was an occasional piece, designed for immediate and as a rule transitory effect, and addressing itself to a particular audience. It was the chief court amusement during periods of festivity, and it was seldom that a Masque went through more than a single performance. Its composition did not arise from the need felt by the poet to give voice to his feelings or to express the images of his imagination.

1. Ben Jonson's works edited by Gifford.

The suggestion came to him from an external source, and he had to set to work to compose something falling in with the suggestion. <sup>1</sup> For example in the "Masque of Blackness" the "device" was the outcome of the Queen's desire that the Masquers should be negroes. The occasion frequently determined the direction ~~of~~ the poet's fancy should take: if the festivity took place at Christmas or New Year, it was his duty to make the invention suitable to the season: if intended for a wedding celebration, it might take an appropriate form, and probably conclude with an epithalamium <sup>2</sup> (as for example Jonson's Hymenaei composed for the wedding of Earl of Essex 1606): if intended as a compliment to the person for whom composed, flattery and personal allusion were largely employed. Thus in Daniel's "Vision of the Twelve Goddesses", written in honour of the consort of James I, she is referred to in the following words:- "The <sup>e</sup>Deities ...descending in the majesty of their invisible essence upon yonder Mountain, found there the best, (and most worthily the best) of Ladies, disporting with her choicest attendants, whose forms they presently undertook, as delighting to be in the best-built temples of beauty and honour; and in them vouchsafed to appear in this manner, being otherwise no objects for mortal eyes."<sup>3</sup>

1. The English Masque (Dowden) in xix cent: Magazine Vol.46 page 102.

2. Dowden.

3. Daniel. Works edited by Grosart.



Forced thus to move in narrow limits to suit special tastes, the author must, above all things, not be lacking in novelty; and he is bound to satisfy curiosity, (where in one sense everyone knows what is coming from the conventional structure of the Masque); and to please by originality, without permitting himself to be original except at the risk of impairing the symmetry of the programme. So far therefore as the literary side of the Masque is concerned, a successful result can only be achieved by a writer of unflagging and ever-alert power of invention; of quick perception of association between the actual and the imaginary; and of a learning never at fault in bringing allegorical figures or symbolical situations to bear upon the desired effect. The whole device must be joyous, yet it might have a certain seriousness of beauty; it might admit of lofty thoughts but not of tragic emotions. Its ideal was one of grace rather than greatness, and if anything of horror or fear was to be introduced, it must be as a foil to the beauty of the Masque itself.<sup>1</sup>

Jonson's "Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue" will illustrate the foregoing points. The first scene is laid on Mount Atlas, "who had his top ending in the figure of an old man, his head and beard all hoary, and frost, as if his shoulders were covered with snow; the rest wood and rock. A grove of ivy at his feet, out of which, to a wild music of cymbals, flutes, and tabors, is brought forth Comus, the

1. Dowden.

"god of cheer", or

"The Bouncing Belly,

First father of Sauce, and deviser of jelly:

Prime Master of Arts, and the giver of wit,

That found out the excellent engine, the spit;

The plough, and the flail, the mill, and the hopper,

The hutch, and the boulder, the furnace, and copper,

The oven, the baven, the mawkin, the peel,

The hearth, and the range, the dog, and the wheel;

He, he first invented the hogshead and tun".

There follows an Antimasque of bottles and tuns,  
after which Hercules appears to inquire the meaning of the  
rites:-

"What rites are these? breeds earth more monsters yet?

Antaeus scarce is cold .....

Whose feast? the Belly's! Cornus! and my cup

Brought in to fill the drunken orgies up,

And here abus'd; that was the crown'd reward

Of thirsty heroes; after labour hard.

Burdens and shames of nature, perish, die.

For yet you never liv'd, but in the sty

Of vice have wallow'd and, in that swine's strife,

Been buried under the offence of life:

.....

These monsters plague themselves, and fitly too,

For they do suffer what, and all they do.



But here must be no shelter, nor no shroud

For such: sink grove, or vanish into cloud".

At which the Antimasque and grove vanish, while Pleasure  
are Virtue are discovered sitting on the mountain with the  
musicians at their feet. Hercules sleeps, and a second  
antimasque of pignies dance round him, "when suddenly being  
awaked by the music, he roused himself, and they all ran into  
holes". Mercury descends from the mountain to crown  
Hercules with a garland of poplar.

"Now", he says,

"The time's arriv'd that Atlas thee of, how  
B'unalter'd law, and working of the stars,  
There should be a cessation of all jars  
'Twixt Virtue and her noted opposite  
Pleasure; that both should meet here in the sight  
Of Hesperus, the glory of the west (i.e. James)  
The brightest star that from his burning crest  
Lights all on this side the Atlantic seas,  
As far as thy pillars, Hercules.  
See where he shines, Justice and Wisdom placed  
About his throne, and those with honour graced,  
Beauty and Love. ....  
..... this night  
Virtue brings forth twelve princes have been bred  
In this rough mountain, and near Atlas' head,  
The hill of knowledge".

The mountain opens, and the Masquers descend, led by Daedalus. The dances follow, after which Mercury calls them to the mountain again with the following song:-

"An eye of looking back were well,  
Or any murmur that would tell  
Your thoughts, how you were sent,  
And went  
To walk with Pleasure, not to dwell.  
  
These, these are hours by Virtue spared,  
Herself, she being her own reward.  
But she will have you know  
That though  
Her sports be soft, her life is hard.  
  
You must return unto the Hill,  
And there advance  
With labour, and inhabit still  
That height and crown,  
From whence you ever may look down  
Upon triumphed chance.  
  
She, she it is in darkness shines,  
'Tis she that still herself refines,  
By her own light to every eye;  
More seen, more known when Vice stands by:  
And though a stranger here on earth,  
In heaven she hath her right of birth.



There, there is Virtue's seat:

Strive to keep her your own;

'Tis only she can make you great,

Though place here make you known".

"After which they danced their last dance, and returned into the scene, which closed, and was a mountain as before".

A few practical directions on the management of Masques are given by Bacon<sup>1</sup>, and may be taken as a specimen of the taste of the intellectual contemporary at the time of their maturity. He is of opinion that "Since princes will have such things, it is better that they should be graced with elegance, than daubed with cost". He states dancing to be "a thing of great state and pleasure" when accompanied by vocal music, but figure dances he regards as "childish curiosity". He regards transformation scenes as "things of great beauty and pleasure" so that the changes be conducted "quietly and without noise". He would have plenty of light, and such costumes as would harmonize best with the display of light. He recommends dialogue in song, and in the chorus antiphonal singing as producing a peculiarly <sup>pleasing</sup> effect. According to his notion, the Antimasque should be short, and the characters should be specially chosen as fitting, e.g. angels should be excluded as not comical enough, and demons or giants as too hideous.

A study of Jonson's Masques will show that the best effects were obtained by following such suggestions as

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1. Essay on Masques and Triumphs (Bacon).

these.

The Masque, as we have it in a literary form, extends over a period of about forty years: with the outbreak of the Civil War its history comes to an end. When the theatres were re-opened after the Puritan rule was over, the demand for scenic display burst forth with renewed vigour. Its attractions were transferred to the Theatre, at which the King was a constant attendant. Court performances were therefore no longer necessary; and as for dancing, frequent balls, whether masked or otherwise, helped the Whitehall of Charles the Second to forget the more formal and stately performances of a bygone age, so the Masque disappeared for ever.

The Masque previous to the Seventeenth Century.

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Though the success of the Masque in its maturity was largely due to foreign influences, it has a claim to an English pedigree,<sup>1</sup> and its essential dance in Masquerade was a favourite amusement of European courts from early times. Such performances were probably in the first place the outcome of Roman invasion, and have their origin in the annual orgies of the Saturnalia<sup>2</sup>. These Masquerades are found to have developed in countries of Roman conquest as France, Italy, Spain, side by side with the growth of the Masque in England, but the latter is the only one which aspired to occupy a rank in literature. In France, though represented by such writers as Marot, Saint Gelay, Ronsard, Jodelle, Desportes, the Masque is only accessible in fragments which are difficult to connect together. Similarly in Italy and Spain, the

1. Chambers' Mediaeval Stage 1 pp. 400, 401, 402.  
Evans' English Masques Introduction p.XI.  
Cambridge History of English Literature 11 p. 330  
Jusserand. A Literary History of the English People,  
1 p. 456.  
Ward. History of the English Drama 11 p. 387.  
Castelain. Ben Jonson l'Homme et l'Oeuvre p.623.  
cp. B.Jonson's Masque of Augurs:- "Disguise was the  
Old English for a Masque, Sir".

2. Encyclopedia Britannica.



Masques remain in disjointed pieces, and never form any work of importance. In this country it had the advantage of a patron of learning, to whom it was a particularly attractive amusement; and was produced by a poet of great power, whose talent was fitted to succeed in such compositions, and who had the praiseworthy habit of doing with all his might whatever his hand found to do. On the contrary, in the Continental countries instanced the Masque concerned only writers of second water, or authors like Moliere, who attached to it merely secondary importance <sup>1</sup>.

The earliest forms of the Masque were the old English customs of Mumming and Disguising. In 1333 the sister of Edward III was married to the Earl of Guelderland, and in a manuscript of receipts and payments on that occasion mention is made of a "lusum in camera sua". From the following extract it seems probable that the reference is to a game of chance, afterwards called "Mum-chance", in which the princess lost her money.

"Lusum in camera. Eccelmo Dalmaund servienti  
Regis ad arma, per denarias per ipsum solutas  
diversis locis, per diversas vices, diversis servien-  
tibus librantibus Drae E. pro luso in camera sua"11/ 2

This is the earliest instance of ~~mumming~~ extant in England. In 1348 "Lusi" were exhibited at the Christmas festivities of the Court of Guildford, and from the following enumeration must have been of a dramatic character.

1. Castelain p. 622.
2. Collier. Annals of  
the Stage 1 p. 14

There were required "Eighty tunics of buckram of various colours, forty-two visions of various similitudes; that is fourteen of the faces of women, fourteen of the faces of men with beards, fourteen of the heads of angels made with silver; fourteen mantles embroidered with the heads of dragons; fourteen white tunics wrought with heads and wings of peacocks; fourteen heads of swans with wings; fourteen tunics painted with eyes of peacocks; fourteen tunics of English linen painted; and as many tunics embroidered with stars of gold and silver".<sup>1</sup>

Costumes provided for such "ludi" would most naturally be used by the performers in something of the nature of a dance, and they form the first instance in the long line of development which culminated in the glories of the Masque of Ben Jonson.<sup>2</sup>

Such mummings or disguisings were frequently denied the common people, and Orders of the City of London issued 1334, 1393, 1405 forbade a practice of going about the streets at Christmas - "ove visere ne faux visage", and entering the houses of citizens to play dice. In 1417 mumming is specifically included in a similar prohibition. But the disport they denied the common people, the rulers of the city kept for themselves as the traditional way of paying compliment to a great personage. Such a visit was made to Richard II at Candlemas 1377.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. <sup>Collier</sup> Ibid: 1 p. 15

<sup>2</sup>. Chambers 1 p. 393

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid: 1 p. 394.



"At ye same time ye Comons of London made great Sporte and solemnity to ye yong prince; for upon ye Monday next before ye purification of our lady at night and in ye night were 130 men disguisedly aparailed and well mounted on horsebacks to goe on mumming to ye said prince, riding from Newgate through Cheape, where many people saw them with great noyse of minstralsye, trumpets, cernets, and shawmes and great plenty of waxe torches lighted and in the beginning they rid 48 after ye maner of esquires two and two together clothed in cotes and clokes of red say or sendall and their faces covered with vizards well and handsomely made: after these esquires came 48 like knightes well arrayed after ye same manner: after ye knightes came one excellent arrayed and well mounted as he had bene an emperour: after some hundred yards came one nobly arrayed as a pope, and after him came 24 arrayed like cardinals and after ye cardinals came 8 or 10 arrayed and with black vizardes like devils nothing amiable seeming like legates, riding through London and over London Bridge towards Kenyton wher ye yong prince made his abcad with his mother and the D of Lancaster, and ye Earles of Cambridge, Hertford, Warrick, and Suffolk and many other lordes which were with him to hould

the solemnity, and when they were come before ye mansion they alighted on foot and entered into ye haule and sone after ye prince and his mother and ye other lordes came out of ye chamber into ye haule and ye said mummers saluted them, shewing a pair of dice upon a table to play with ye prince, which dice were subtilly made that when ye prince shold cast he shold winne and ye said players and mummers set before ye prince three jewels each after other: and first a balle of goulde, then a cupp of gould, then a gould ring, ye which ye said prince wonne at three castes as before it was appointed, and after that they set before the prince's mother, the D of Lancaster, and ye other earles every one a gould ringe and ye mother and ye lordes wonne them and then ye prince caused to bring ye wyne and they drank with great joye, commanding ye minstrels to play and ye trompets began to sound and other instruments to pipe etc. And ye prince and ye lordes densed on ye one syde, and ye mummers on ye other a great while and then they drank and tooke their leave and so departed toward London".<sup>1</sup>

Noticeable in the above extract is the processional character of the mumming, the disguised persons riding in state to the King's Palace. Such a procession took place before the

1. Chambers p. 394 quoting Harleian MS.



"Masque of Grayes Inne and the Inner Temple", written for Court in 1613 by Francis Beaumont. The Masquers "Set forth from Winchester House towards the court about seven of the clock at night. This voyage by water was performed in great triumph: the gentleman-maskers being placed by themselves in the King's royal barge, with the rich furniture of state, and adorned with a great number of lights placed in such order as they might make the best show. They were attended with a multitude of barges and gallies, with all variety of loud music, and several peals of ordnance; and led by two admirals".<sup>1</sup>

On the previous night the performers of "Chapman's Masque of the Middle Temple and Lyncolnes Inn" arrived by a gorgeous land cavalcade, which consisted of a "vanguard" of 50 gentlemen and their footmen followed by the antimasque of baboons mounted on asses and accompanied by torchbearers. Then came the musicians decked in feathers as Indians followed by the Masquers more resplendent in feathers as befitting "Virginian Princes", each accompanied by his torchbearer and two grooms as Moors, and mounted on horses correspondingly rich in trappings. Last came a triumphal chariot on which were seated Capriccio, Eunomia the "Virgin Priest of the goddess Honour together with Phemis her herald", and on the highest seat Honour and Plutus, "a show at all parts so

1. Beaumont. Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn, Introduction.



novel, conceitful, and glorious as hath not in this land-----  
been ever before beheld". 1

The use of music and torches remains a necessary adjunct to the Masque till its decay. In the height of its popularity the Masquers have their torchbearers, and a band of musicians generally hidden among the scenery, is always in attendance.

Mention is made of "eight or ten arrayed and with black vizards like devils nothing amiable": in such personations as these is the germ of the Jonsonian antimasque.<sup>2</sup>

The mummers themselves are (presumably) silent throughout. They "saluted" the assembly, and "shewed" the dice. Similarly in the Masque the silence is kept up, the declamation or dialogue being the part of the "presenters". This view is supported by a contemporary glossary, which translates "mumynge" by "mussacio vel musatus" = mumming or keeping silence, and gives a cognate word "mumyn as they that noyt speke mutio".<sup>3</sup>

Lastly, all the mummers have "vizards" or masks.

In this account we have the earliest instance of the presence of the chief adjuncts of the Masque, viz: Music, torches, vizards, disguises, dances, and silence.

1. Chapman, Masque of the Middle Temple & Lincoln's Inn Introduction.
2. Cambridge History II 332.
3. Chambers I 396

A preferable derivation however, having the support of Skeat is that mumming comes from the old Dutch "mommen" = to mask (mom = a mask).  
cp. Low German "mummeln" = to mask, whence German "vermummen" = to mask.

Before the 15th Century and during it "disguising" and "mumming" were not synonymous terms, the latter being included in "pleyes" and "entrellides" under the generic name of the former.<sup>1</sup> When disguising was used in the limited sense of a kind of indoor pageant, as in 1501, there is still a distinction between them. The mumming consisted one entry of masquers, and its chief characteristics are the dicing and the silence of the actors. There is however, no dicing but dancing in the disguising, batches of performers follow one another frequently and hold conversation. (" They commened together as the fashion of the maskes is)". This distinction is further supported by a pamphlet entitled "choyce chance and change" 1606, in dicing, being both Masquers and mummers".<sup>2</sup> In the 16th Century the two terms are used somewhat indiscriminately, but by 1622, the date of the ~~the~~ production of the Masque of Augurs, disguising must have become antiquated, and considered equal to the term masking.

The development of the mumming or disguising in a literary direction was probably due to John Lydgate, several of whose poems are stated by his collector Shirley to have been written for mummings or disguisings. Their titles are as follows:-

"A letar made in wyse of balad by daun John

Lydgat brought by a pursyvaunt in wyse of .....

1. Chambers 1 394
2. Reyher. Les Masques Anglais p. 20



Momers dysguysyd to fore the mayne of london  
 est feld upon the twelffthe nyght of cristmasse"  
 "A lettar made by John lidgat for a mommynge  
 whiche the gold snythes of london shewyd before  
 Eestfyld the mayr on candylmas day at nyght  
 this letar was presentyd by an ~~Harold~~ callyd fortune".  
 " the devyse of amomynge to for the Kynge Henry the  
 sixte being in his castell of Wyndsore the fest of hys  
 crismasse holdinge ther made by lidgate. dame  
 John the munke of bury now thampull and the  
 fleure delys came first to the Kynges of fraunce  
 by myracles at reynes".  
 " Nowe foloweth here the maner <sup>of a bille</sup> by weye  
 od supplycation put to the Kynge holdinge his noble  
 fest of crystmasse in the castell of hartford as in  
 dysguysinge of the rude upplandishe people complayninge  
 on ther wyves with the boystrous answere of ther  
 wyves devysed by lidgate at the request of the  
 controwlore Brys slayn at louiers". <sup>1</sup>

The above are interesting as shewing the way  
 in which verses entered this kind of entertainment. The  
 first two were letters introducing the mummings presented  
 by the guilds of mercers and goldsmiths. The third at  
 Windsor is of the nature of a prologue describing a  
 "myracle" which the King is to see. The last is of a

more ambitious kind; the first part of the verses is spoken by a presenter, who points out the "upplandishe" complainants to whom he refers. The reply is in the first person, and was probably spoken by the "wyves" themselves, while the conclusion is a judgment delivered probably by the presenter in the name of the King.<sup>1</sup>

This is the first instance of dialogue in a disguising, but dialogue speeches and songs are common in the fully developed mummings of the later Tudor court, where the disguising begins to show a part of the brilliance it acquired in the Stuart period.

The part of the presenter is also noticeable as occurring for the first time, he reads the letters of introduction, and in the performance at Hertford shared the dialogue with the wives. In later Masques this personage becomes one of the characters of the scene, and is greatly developed by Ben Jonson; he is often a god of ancient mythology e.g. Mercury in the Masque of Lethe; or a virtue, as Heroic Virtue in Masque of Queens. His part however remains the same, viz: to introduce the Masquers, and to explain the costumes and setting. At a later date his part gave way to a scene of comedy. Many items of expenditure for disguisings occur in the

1. Chambers 1 398



household accounts of Henry VII, but there is a full description of only one entertainment, which took place in Westminster Hall in honour of the marriage of Prince Arthur with Katherine of Spain on November 18th 1501. The Hall was decorated for the occasion, and the audience consisted of the King, Queen, and leading nobles. When all was ready there entered a "most goodly and pleasant disguising, convayed and shewed in pageants proper and subtile": of which the first was a castle "right cunningly devised and sett upon certaine wheelles and drawne into the said great hall of fower great beastes with chains of gold". (The beasts were two lions, a hart, and an ibex).

In the castle were "disguised Vlll goodly and fresh ladyes looking out of the windowes of the same", while in the four corner turrets were "fowre children singing most sweetly and harmoniously". After having been drawn up before the King, the Castle was set on one side, and the second car entered. This was a ship with "her mastes toppes sayles her tackling and all other

1. E.g. Collier 1 44 quoting Household Book of Henry VI  
8 Henry VII Feb. 15th to Walt Alwyn in full payment  
for the disguysing made at Xmas £14:13:4.
- 9 Henry VII Feb. 13th to Jaks Haute in full payment  
of his bill for disguysings £13:10:6.
- 16 Henry VII July 23 to John Atkinson in full payment  
of his reckonings for the disguysings £34:17:4½.

appertaynances necessary unto a seemly vessel as though it had been sayling". On board was a Spanish lady.<sup>1</sup>

From the ship descended "two well beseene and goodly persons calling themselves Hope and Desire ...in manner and forme as Ambassadors from Knights of the Mount of Love unto the ladyes within the castle ... making their meanes and entreates as wooers and breakers of the maters of love between the Knights and Ladyes: the said ladyes gave their answeare of utterly refusall, and knowledge of any such company, or that they were ever minded to the accomplishment of any such request, and plainly denied their purpose and desire. The said two Ambassadors therewith taking great displeasure shewed the said ladyes that the Knights would for this unkind refusall make battayle and assault, so and in such wise to them and their castle, that it should be grievous to abyde their power and malice. Incontinent came in the third Pageant in likeness of a great hill or mountaine, in whom there was inclosed Vlll goodly knights with their banners spredd and displayed, naming themselves the Knights of the Mount of Love", to whom the Ambassadors delivered their message of refusal, whereupon the Knights "therewith not being content, with much malice and courageous minde went a little from the said Mount with their banners displayed, and hastely sped them to the rehearsed castle which they forthwith assaulted so and in such wise that the Ladyes, yielding themselves, descended from the castle, and submitted themselves

1. Cambridge History VI 332.



to the power, grace, and will of those noble Knights".<sup>1</sup>

The cars were removed and the Knights and ladies "daunced together divers and many goodly dances", after which they mouned their respective cars and were wheeled away.

This example introduces the pageant or car, which is capable of varied development. As the "device" becomes more gorgeous, the car cannot be drawn along - to draw it the length of the hall taxes the ingenuity of the carpenters, and finally it gives way to a fixed structure at the end of the hall, approximating to something like the modern stage, while the scenery still preserves its gorgeous character throughout the history of the Masque. Moreover, when the car is a ship or a "herbour" it requires some explanation, and an exposition of the car's device is added to the original dance of the Masquers<sup>2</sup>.

To be noticed also in the foregoing account is the development of the dramatic element from the dialogue in Lydgate's mumming at Hertford to the parleyings between the Knights of the Mount of Love and the Ladies of the Castle. Moreover as a fresh element, the lyrical, is represented by the songs of the children. Further insight into the nature of the time of Henry VII is afforded by regulations contained

1. Evans XVll.

2. Cambridge History VI. 333

in "A Booke of all manner of Orders concerning an Earl's house". The disguisers accompanied by their torch-bearers are to enter the hall to the sound of music: if there are women disguised they are to dance first, then the men. After this "the Morris to come in incontinent as is appointed if any be ordeyned. And when the said Morris arrives in the midst of the hall, then the said Minstrallis to play the daunces that is appointed for them. Then the gentlemen to com unto the women and make their obeisaunce, and every of them to take oon by hand, and daunce such base daunces as is apointed theym; and that doon, than to daunce such rounds as shall be appointed them to daunce together by the master of the revills".<sup>1</sup>

From this description it appears that still other characteristics of the Masque were established. The men and women disguisers correspond to the Masquers, and like them would be courtiers. On the other hand the Morris dancers would be professional actors, and correspond to the performers of the antimasque.<sup>2</sup> The order of the dances in the case of a double Masque, i.e. one of men and another of women, is preserved also.

During Henry VIII's reign Court amusements were placed on a more elaborate and expensive footing.

In the previous reign we meet with comparatively small charges for revels, but the disguisings in the

1. Evans XVI.

2. Evans XVI.



festivities of the first Christmas after the accession of Henry VIII cost no less than £584:19:7 for gold plate, silks, and apparel alone. In his predecessor's rule it is possible to distinguish two varieties of the Masque in Court festivities. Henry VIII delighted in a more or less impromptu kind of mumming, an instance of which is afforded by the Masque in Shakespeare's "Henry VIII", where the King and his train, in the disguise of shepherds break in upon Wolsey's banquet.<sup>1</sup> Hall gives the following account of this incident:-

"And when it pleased the King for his recreation to repayre to the Cardinalls house as he hadde dyvers tymes in the yeare there wanted no preparations or furniture. Banquets were sett forth with Maskes or Mummeries in so gorgeous a sorte and costly maner, that it was an heaven to beholde. There wanted no Dames or Damoisels meete or apte to daunce with the Maskers or to garnish the place for the tyme; then was there all kinds of musicke and harmony with fine voices bothe of menne and chyl dren. One tyme the King came sodainly thither in a Maske Wyth a dozen Maskers all in garmentes like Shepheards made of fine cloth of golde, and crimosin Satten paned and Cappes of the same, wyth Visars of good Visnomy, their haires and beardes eyther

of fine Golde-wyre silke or black silke, having fiveteen Torch-bearers besides their Drums and other persons with visars, all clothed in Satten of the same colour".

The party arrived by water, and guns of salute were fired, and chamberlains were sent to summon the noble strangers.

" Then went the Maskers, and first saluted at the Dames, and returned to the Moste Worthiest, and there opened their greate cuppe of Golde filled wyth crownes and other pieces of Gold, to whome they sette certaine pieces of Golde to caste at. Thus perusing all the Ladyes and Gentlewomen to some they loste and of some they wonne, and perusing after this maner al the Ladies they returned to the Cardinal with great reverence, powring downe all their Golde so lefte in their cup whych was above two hundred Dornes. At All quoth the Cardinall and so caste the Dice And wan them whereat was made a great noise and joy". The Cardinal suspects a "noble personage" to be among the maskers, and at length Henry makes himself known, and after changing his apparel, takes a seat at the Banquet.<sup>1</sup>

Side by side with this simpler kind of Masquing developed the formal disguisings of Henry VIII's reign, being set forth with great splendour.

1. Hall's Chronicle.

In 1510<sup>"</sup> against the 12 daye or the daie of the Epiphane, at nighte, before the banket in the hall at Rychemound, was a pageant<sup>4</sup> devised like a mountayne, glistering by nyght, as though it had bene all of golde and set with stones; on the top of the whiche mountayne was a tree of golde the braunches and bowes frysed with gold, spreding on every side over the mountayne with roses and pomegranetts: the which mountayne was with vices brought up towards the Kyng, and out of the same came a ladye appareilled in clothe of golde and the children of honour, called the Henchemen, which were freshly disguysed and daunced a Morise before the Kyng: and that done reentered the mountayne, and then it was drawen backe, and then was the Wassail or banket brought in, and so brake up Christmas".<sup>1</sup>

Such was Henry's passion for this kind of entertainment that in 1527 he had built a "House of Revel" called "the Long House", which was decorated by Holbein. Such pageants as "The ColldynArber in the Arche-Yerd of Plesyer"; "The Dangerus Fortress"; "The Ryche Mount"; "The Pavyllon un the Plas Parlos"; "The Gardyn de Esperans"; "The Schatew Vert". Such titles as these illustrated the kind of allegorical spectacles diversified with song and dance in which the Court took such delight.<sup>2</sup>

1. Collier 1 61

2. Chambers 1 400



With regard to the reigns of the remaining Tudors, the same difficulty is experienced as with that of Henry VIII. Though the performance of Masques is frequently recorded under Elizabeth, and more seldom under Edward VI and Mary, and though they form the stock features of Court entertainment and Royal progresses, descriptions in detail are very scanty. There is however a full narration of the scheme of three Masques forming a cycle intended for the Meeting between Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots at Nottingham 1562. The meeting did not take place, but the Masques seem to have been performed at Whitehall 1572.<sup>1</sup>

"Devices to be shewed before the Queenes Majestie by way of maskinge, at Nottingham Castell, after the meetinge of the Quene of Scotts".

The festivities were to last three nights, and the scheme for the first night's performance was as follows:

The Scene was the prison of Extreme Oblivion guarded by a warder Argus or Circumspection. A Masque of ladies to enter, first Pallas on an unicorn bearing a banner with a device of clasped hands surmounted by letters of gold "Fides".

Next the two Virtues Prudentia and Temperantia on a golden and red lion respectively.

Then to follow 6 or 8 ladies bringing in Discord

1. Evans XXIII.

and False Report as captives.

Pallas to declare to the Queen "in verse" that Prudentia and Temperantia have received permission from Jove that they may punish the captives as they think good. They have determined to commit/ them to the prison of Extreme Oblivion, and for their safe protection to give to Argus a lock "whereupon shall be - wrytten In Eternum", and a key "Nun-quan", then "the trompetts to blowe, and th'inglishe ladies .. to daunce".

On the Second Night Peace is to come in a chariot drawn by an Elephant ridden by Fryndeshippe to the castle of the "Court of Plentye"; nex t 6 or 8 ladies enter; Friendship declares "in verse" that the gods, appreciating the conduct of Prudentia and Temperantia, have sent Peace to be their companion. Two porters Ardent Desire and Perpetuity are assigned to the Virtues for their perpetual tranquillity. After a display of fountains of wines " th'inglish Lords shall maske with the Scottishe Ladyes".

On the third night a bear carrying Disdain, and a serpent bearing PrePencyd Malyce are to draw in an orchard of golden apples where 6 or 8 lady maskers are seated. Disdain is to declare "in verse" that Pluto objects to the imprisonment of Discord and False Report by Jupiter, and has sent his captain Prepencyd Malyce to demand their delivery, or that of



Peace.

Discretion and Valiant Courage (otherwise Hercules) enter, the former leading by the bridle the latter's horse Boldness, 6 or 8 Lords Maskers follow.

Discretion is to declare "in verse" that Jove has sent Hercules, who will be sufficient to overpower all the agents of Pluto. It will however go hard with him in fighting two such "Mervailous warriours" as Disdain and Prepenchyd Malyce unless Prudentia and Temperantia will give some sign that they will embrace Peace. In reply to a question as to how long Peace shall remain at the Court of Plenty, Prudence is to let down "with a bande of golde, a grandgarde of assure, whereuppon shall be wrytten in letters of gold "Ever" ". When Discretion inquires of Temperantia as to when Peace will depart from her friend, she shows "a girdell of assure studded with gold, and a sworde of stele, whereuppon shall be written 'Never' ".

Valiant Courage, armed with the grandgarde of Ever and the sword of Never is to do combat with Disdain and Prepenchyd Malyce. The former is to escape with his life, but the latter is to be slain "signifyinge that some ungodlie men maye still disdain the perpetuall peace made between those 11 vertues, but as for there prepenchyd mallice, it is easye troden under theis Ladyes fete.

After this shall come out of the garden the VI or VIII ladies maskers with a songe, that shalbe made hereuppon, as full of armony as maybe devised".<sup>1</sup>

From the fact that the speeches delivered by Pallas, Friendship, and Disdain were in verse, we may infer that the poet wrote them expressly for the occasion and that they were not merely impromptu utterances. The services of the poet were in fact becoming indispensable. Thus Gascoigne was applied to by Viscount Montacute to furnish a Masque for a double wedding about 1572. He writes:-

"There were eight gentlemen all of blood or alliance to the said Lord Mountacute, which had determined to present a Maske at the day appointed for the said marriages, and so far they had proceeded therein that they had alreadye bought furniture of Silkes, etc., and had caused their garmentes to bee cut of the Venetian fashion. Nowe then they began to imagine that, without some speciall demonstration, it would seeme somewhat obscure to have Venetians presented rather than other countrey men. Whereupon they entreated the Authour to devise some verses to be uttered by an Actor wherein might be some discourse convenient to render a good cause of the Venetians presence".<sup>2</sup>

1. Evans XXVI.

2. Ibid XXVII.

In response, Gasgoigne furnished four hundred lines of fourteen-syllable verse.

From the foregoing extract and from the account of the Masque which the Queen sent to Scotland in honour of the marriage of James VI consisting of "Six Maskers, six Torch-bearers, and of such persons as were to utter speeches", it is clear that it had become the custom to introduce the maskers in a formal prologue, which not only explained their characters, but also set forth the story accounting for their appearance.

Thus when the 16th Century hands over the Masque to the 17th, all its main characteristics are fixed and only await development in the hands of such a poet as "rare Ben Jonson".



## PART III.

### The Masque in the Seventeenth Century.

A new and final chapter in the history of the Masque opens with the accession of James I to the throne.

The splendour and magnificence of <sup>the</sup> Court festivities <sup>followed</sup> during the forty years which are unparalleled; the Masque was re-invigorated by a combination of literature and art unique in the history of either. This development was mainly due to the personal tastes of James and his Queen. The Masque, besides responding to the love of the Court for brilliance and display, in the hands of an author like Ben Jonson could be made to satisfy James's taste for classical learning in its innumerable references to ancient mythology. In its external features the Masque was not restrained by economical motives, and consequently its splendour was unequalled, as much as £1400 expenditure or about £6000 of our present money being frequently incurred in the production. In the literary part of such amusements, the court could command the services of some of the first writers of the period, while the greatest architect of his day, Inigo Jones, was engaged to provide the stage machinery and decoration.

The Masque of the 17th Century may be considered under two divisions:-

1. The Entertainment.
2. The Masque Proper.

The Entertainment, or "Masque out of doors",<sup>1</sup> is a slighter form of the Masque, and took the shape of some device employed to welcome the arrival of the sovereign or other notable stranger at the residence of the great. During the passage through the grounds surrounding the house, suddenly some mythological, legendary, or imaginary character would spring out of a thicket or other convenient hiding place, and would utter a speech of welcome to the visitor, or take part in a dialogue or song and dance with companion characters to the same effect. A continuation of the entertainment was often performed during or before and after dinner the same ~~Y~~night, while the conclusion was at other times reserved for a similar surprise in the grounds the next day, or on the departure of the guest. No scenery was needed for the out-door performance, hence it possessed greater dramatic possibilities than the Masque proper: for the indoor portion of the entertainment there is little difference in scheme and scenery from the ordinary Masque.

The origin of the entertainment is to be found in the pageants of the guilds of mediaeval times, which were the stock features of royal progresses, and were employed to welcome the royal visitors to that particular town.

For example, on 29th August 1393, Richard II made a state entry into London. The streets were decked with cloth of

1. Cambridge History VI xiii.



gold and purple, "sweet-smelling flowers" perfumed the air, figured tapestries hung from the windows. A variety of scenes arrested the King's advance. When the procession entered Cheapside there was to be seen an "admirable tower", out of which emerged a young man and a maiden who addressed the King and Queen and offered them crowns. At Temple Bar a forest had been arranged on the gate with various animals, serpents, lions, a bear, an unicorn, an elephant, a beaver, a monkey, and a tiger, "all of which were there running about biting each other, fighting, jumping". The forest and animals were symbolical of the desert where St. John had prepared for his ministry. At another stage an angel was let down from a roof to offer the monarchs a little diptych representing the Crucifixion, wrought in gold with stones and enamel, accompanying the gift with a speech.

Another such instance is afforded in the account of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth, of which Sir Walter Scott makes use in his novel of the same name. She was met at the castle gate by Hercules as a porter, who addressed her with verses of welcome composed for the occasion by Gascoigne. Further on, to the accompaniment of music, "a raft", so disposed as to resemble a small floating island, illuminated by a great variety



of torches, and surrounded by floating pageants, formed to represent sea-horses, on which sat Tritons, Nereids, and other fabulous deities of the seas and rivers, ~~made~~ its appearance upon the lake, and, issuing from behind a small heronry where it had been concealed floated gently towards the farther end of the bridge. On the island appeared a beautiful woman", clad in Eastern costume and attended by nymphs. On the approach of the island to the Queen, the lady, "in a well-penned speech, announced herself as that famous Lady of the Lake When she vanished "Orion, who was amongst the maritime deities, appeared on his dolphin".<sup>1</sup>

In another scene Elizabeth, on her return from hunting, was addressed by a savage clothed in leather, who took part with Echo in a long dialogue in praise of the Queen; deities and legendary characters also contributed speeches of welcome.

Another example of the entertainment in Elizabeth's reign is Sidney's "May Lady", composed for the Queen's visit to Leicester at Wanstead. This production is of interest in its probable influence on Jonson's "Penates".

The Masque proper is a continuation or elaboration of the progress noted in the preceding chapter. Before proceeding with its review in Jacobean times, it will be necessary, in order to follow up the succeeding developme

1. Kenilworth ch: XXX

to give an outline of the method of procedure in every instance.

A band of Masquers assume some impressive disguise, and arrive in a setting corresponding to their characters: the poet's duty is to use his imagination in composing some satisfactory explanation of the disguise and scenery. This consists of a dialogue between other characters, one of whom is the old "presenter", who is almost always gifted with supernatural power enabling him to cleave rocks and so forth, if not actually a god himself. At a suitable point in the dialogue, he appeals to the Masquers, who in this part of the performance have remained out of sight, to come forth. The scene changes, and they are "discovered" in some gorgeous and resplendent setting, brilliantly lighted. If they are gods they come down from Olympus, or descend from the heavens or clouds: or if they arrive as nymphs, in a shell drawn by sea-monsters; often a rock is cleft asunder and they advance from a "glorious bower", a "Mine of gold", or a fairy palace. The real business of the Masque now begins in the dancing. First the Masquers "dance their entry", and then "the main dance". This finished, partners of the opposite sex are chosen from the audience, and the "measures", or grave and stately dances follow. Then come the "revels", consisting of the more sprightly dances such as galliards and corantos, interspersed

with songs by other subordinate characters in various ~~series~~ <sup>habits</sup> such as of graces or satyrs, to the accompaniment of a variety of different musical instruments. Some admonition now warns the Masquers that it is time to depart, and after a concluding dance by themselves, they return to their hiding-place, and "the scene closes".

In the fully developed Masques, the brilliance of the performers and the beauty of their dances are thrown into relief by the antimasque. This consists of some sudden entry or entries of ridiculous or repulsive characters explained in a "presentment" of their own. For example witches of an antimasque contrast with the famous historical Queens in a Masque, monsters with knights, vices with virtues, and so forth. Capering and ridiculous dances follow, until they are driven to whence they came - generally a cave or hell, or some other dark home contrasting with that of the Masquers - by some good influence, who betokens the approach of the Masquers proper.

By far the most important writer of Masques in the 17th Century is Ben Jonson. He virtually invented and perfected this species of entertainment as we know it; he found out its literary possibilities; and had it not been for his efforts, it would have been of interest merely to



the court chronicler and the antiquary.<sup>1</sup>

To its elaboration he devoted his ingenuity and learning, his lyrical and dramatic gifts. Moral allegory classical mythology, English folk-lore all combined with realistic and satirical pictures of everyday life to ~~spe-~~ provide novelty, grandeur, and amusement. Remembering the narrow limitations to which as a Masque writer he was subjected, he displayed to the full the remarkable talents which he exhibits elsewhere, and indeed to this species he accorded the play of fantastic invention called for by the spectacular elements, but which he denied to his regular dramas.

"Le savant tragique", writes Castelain, "le comique apre et virulent s'y metamorphosent en un poete elegant, souriant, gracieux, presque badin. Sans l'erudition qui s'étale dans les notes et l'orgueil qui deborde jusque

1. The Manuscripts recording the performance of the Masque have an interesting origin. They were written by the poet for the benefit of those who were not present at the performance itself, or who were so entranced with the gorgeous scenery and dresses that they missed the effusions of the poet, or again for those who wished to keep fresh in mind the impressions they had received:

"When your eyes have done their part,  
Thought must length it in the hart" ..

For the first of these were written the detailed descriptions of scenery and costume prefaced to every Masque. cp: Daniel in his preface to Tethy's "Festival": "It is expected that I being in the business should publish a description and forme of the late Maske".

dans le texte, sans l'eloquence vigoureux qui <sup>m</sup>Marque les discours et les traits satiriques qui viennent de ~~temps en~~ <sup>temps</sup> relever ces éternelles louanges, on douterait souvent que les Masques aient été écrits de la même main qui le Catalina et l'Alchemiste".<sup>1</sup>

The very names of his Masques reveal their strangeness and variety. There is a Masque of Blackness answered by a Masque of Beauty, a Welsh Masque, an Irish Masque, a Masque of Queens, of Lethe, of Augurs, of Time. At one time the poet brings back the golden age; at another he takes us to the Fortunate Isles, or the World discovered in the Moon; now he sports with satyrs and shepherds; now leads the dances of the fairies; now makes his Masque the vehicle of moral lessons.

Jonson began his career as a Masque writer with the composition of five entertainments, the first of which is his contribution of three tableaux to the pageants, which lined the streets of London on the occasion of the Coronation of James I. The tableaux furnished by Jonson at Fenchurch, Temple Bar, and in the Strand show great ingenuity on his part; they are exactly in the vein of the old pageants of welcome exhibited by the craft guilds: classical deities and personages combine with personified abstractions, to

1. Castelain p 629.



Jonson's hands have a rapid and musical rhythm exactly suiting the character of the mischievous satyr.

The chase of the deer by Lord Spencer's eldest son in the role of a hunter brings the first scene to an end.

It is light and pleasing, being managed with much ingenuity and dexterity on the part of the author.

On the following Monday, the entertainment was to have been continued in a Morrice dance of clowns presented by Nobody, "but <sup>by</sup> ~~ex~~ reason of the throng of the country that came in, their speaker could not be heard".<sup>1</sup>

The final scene was a "parting speech which was to have been presented in the person of a youth .... but by reason of the multitudinous press was also hindered".

In the Penates Johnson follows the same method. It is described in the folio as "A Private Entertainment of the King and Queen on May Day in the morning at Sir Wm Cornwallis's House at Highgate 1604".

At the gate the royal party is met by the Penates, who recite some verses of welcome, spoilt however by their fulsome flattery. Mercury accosts them, and leads them to the bower of Maia, who, after a "song in three parts", by Aurora, Zephyrus, and Flora, welcomes them in verses, of which Gifford says:- "There is scarcely to be found, in the compass of English verse, a piece of equal brevity, that for richness, melody, elegance, and

1. The Satyr Gifford VI 450.



taste can be compared with this gay lyrical effusion".<sup>1</sup>

As an example of Jonson's productions in a fanciful vein, they are one of the best though not without fault, and escape that tendency to heaviness which is characteristic of his verse, being attributable to his thoroughness, and consequent overdoing of the subject in hand.

"If all the pleasure were distill'd  
Of every flower in every field,  
And all that Hybla's hives do yield,  
Were into one board mazer fill'd;  
If, thereto, added all the gums,  
And spice that from Panchaia comes,  
The odour that Hydaspes lends,  
Or Phoenix proves before she ends;  
If all the air my Flora drew,  
Or spirit that Zephyre ever blew;  
Were put therein; and all the dew  
That every rosy morning knew;  
To make one sweet detaining hour,  
Were much too little for the grace,  
And honour, you vouchsafe the place.  
But if you please to come again,  
We vow, we will not then, with vain,  
And empty pastimes entertain  
Your so desired, tho' grieved pain.

1. Gifford VI 463.

"For we will have the wanton fawns,  
 That frisking skip about the lawns,  
 The Panisks, and the Sylvans rude,  
 Satyrs, and all that multitude,  
 To dance their wilder rounds about,  
 And cleave the air, with many a shout,  
 As they would hunt poor Echo out  
 Of yonder valley, who doth flout  
 Their rustic noise. To visit whom,  
 You shall behold whole bevvies come  
 Of gaudy nymphs, whose tender calls  
 Well-tuned unto the many falls  
 Of sweet, and several sliding rills,  
 That stream from tops of those less hills,  
 Sound like so many silver quills  
 When Zephyre them with music fills".

In the second scene Pan offers each of the party  
 wine from a fountain in the garden, addressing to  
 each guest verses referring to their characteristic  
 traits. E.g. He says of the King:-

" Sure either my skill, or my sight doth mock,  
 Or this lording's look should not care for the smoc  
 And yet he should love both a horse and a hound,  
 And not rest till he saw his game on the ground".

He thus alludes to the King's love of the chase.

In his address to the Queen he refers to her Danish

extraction in rather broad humour:-

"Since a god is your skinker:

By my hand, I believe you were born a good drinker.  
They are things of no spirit, their blood is asleep,  
That, when it is offer'd them, do not drink deep".

Much merriment was doubtless excited by such audacity, but the humour of the remaining addresses is lost, since we are not acquainted with the individual characters.

The use of a fountain from which wine flows is a common feature of the entertainment from its earliest times. For example in one of the pageants in Cheapside on the occasion of the Coronation of Richard II, a fountain of wine was playing.

"The Entertainment of the two Kings of Great Britain and Denmark at Theobalds, July 24th. 1606" consists of an eight lined speech made up of alternative Latin hexameters and pentameters. Latin epigrams were hung on the walls.

"The Entertainment of King James and Queen Anne at Theobalds when the House was delivered up, with the possession, to the Queen, by the Earl of Salisbury the 22nd May 1607" is an example of the inside entertainment, and approaches very closely in its method to the Masque proper. The genius of the house has heard.



a rumour that he must change his lord, and is sad at the news. Mercury bids him not despair and the scene changes from "a gloomy obscure place" to a "glorious place figuring the Lararium". Within, "as farther off in landscape, were seen clouds riding, and in one corner a boy figuring Good Event attired in white, hovering in the air, with wings displayed. At the other corner a Mercury descended in a flying posture, who spake to the three Parcae". From their "book of adamant" Clotho reads how it is decreed, that his services should be transferred to the Queen. Glowing tributes to the sovereigns follow.

Noticeable in this entertainment in its close relation with the Masque is the contrast in the scenic effects - "the gloomy obscure place" and "the glorious place" as suiting the sadness of the genius, and his contrasted joy when the message of the Fates was known. It differs however in the absence of the dances.

The Masques proper written by Jonson may be classed under three divisions, viz:-

- (a) The purely fanciful Masque, most of which examples belong to his earlier productions.
- (b) The satirical Masque, which connects itself with the full development of the antimasque.
- (c) Three examples of "Barriers", an outcome of the

jousting of mediaeval times, in which a tournament takes the place of the usual dances, and for which no elaborate scenery, or transformations, or preceding antimasque are required.

On Twelfth Night 1605 Jonson presented his first Court production, "The Masque of Blackness", a description of which has already been given in chapter 1. In its method it marks no advance on previous productions; though its general conception is exceedingly fanciful and ingenious, its execution is but mediocre: the heroics are awkward, and the rhymes often harsh. E.g.:

"The Sacred Muses' sons have honoured  
And from bright Hesperus to Eous spread".

or

"Sound, sound aloud  
The welcome of the orient flood".

The addresses of Oceanus and Niger are stiff, and though in the form of question and answer cannot be called dialogue. The arrangement of the songs is admirable, but as poetry they give way to succeeding productions and also in interest.

The black nymphs are commanded by Aethiopia to bathe in the ocean to restore once more their beauty;

"So that, this night, the year gone round,  
You do again salute this ground;  
And in the beams of yond' bright sun  
Your faces dry".

Three years elapsed however before the sequel  
"The Masque of Beauty" was presented by the Queen's  
order on Twelfth Night 1608.

Januarias is introduced complaining of the non-  
appearance of the nymphs:-

"Twice have I come in pomp here, to expect  
Their presence; twice deluded, have been fain  
With other rights my feast to entertain:  
And now the third time, twin'd about the year,  
Since they were look'd for, and yet are not here".

Boreas explains their absence, and Vulturmus  
immediately announces their arrival.

The "presentment" has still a stiffness in the  
speeches, but is more artistic than that of the previous  
Masque of Blackness in its conception. The introduction  
of January, and of the Winds Boreas and Vulturmus as  
messengers is peculiarly happy.

In 1606 Jonson was requisitioned to contribute  
something in honour of the marriage of Robert Earl of  
Essex, and Frances, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk.  
He produced "Hymenaei or the solemnities of Masque  
and Barriers", which was "magnificently performed on  
the eleventh and twelfth nights from Christmas, at  
Court". Jonson gives us a Roman wedding in all its  
details. The Masque is characterised by its dignified



and lofty conception, and by its vigorous style. It ends with an epithalamium in stately metre, but its details are at times indelicate to modern ears, and its expression is not an example of Jonson's best style, at times indeed he is even coarse.

On the ensuing night the Barriers took place, in which Truth and Opinion with their followers fought, on the question as to whether a single or married life is the better.

Truth: "I challenge thee, and fit this time of love,

With this position, which Truth comes to prove

That the most honoured state of man and wife

Doth far exceed the unsociate virgin-life".

Opinion. "I take the adverse part: and she that best

Defends her side, be Truth of all confest".

The next Masque which Jonson contributed was the "Hue and Cry after Cupid", which celebrates the marriage of John Lord Ramsey, Viscount Hadington with Lady Elizabeth Ratcliffe, daughter to the Right Honourable Robert, Earl of Sussex. The performance took place on Shrove Tuesday 1608.

This Masque is the best of its kind in the language,<sup>1</sup> and one of the most beautiful from Jonson's pen. Venus has descended from Heaven to find Cupid who has run away His description given by the graces is vivid, and in a

1. Cambridge History VI Xlii.

few lines Jonson presents his whole portrait.

"Beauties, have ye seen this toy,  
Called Love, a little boy,  
Almost naked, wanton, blind;  
Cruel now, and then as kind;  
If he be amongst you, say?  
He is Venus' runaway.

.....

He hath marks about him plenty:  
You shall know him among twenty.  
All his body is a fire,  
And his breath a flame entire,  
That being shot, like lightning, in,  
Wounds <sup>the</sup> ~~his~~ heart, but not the skin".

These "amoebaean stanzas" says Swinburne, "have more freedom of movement and spontaneity of music than will perhaps be found in any poem of the same length, and by the same author."<sup>1</sup> The following stanza he considers "magnificent":-

" At his sight, the sun hath turned,  
Neptune in the waters burn'd;  
Hell hath felt a greater heat;  
Jove himself forsook his seat:  
From the centre to the sky,  
Are his trophies reared high".

In the next verse he spoils the effect by the

1. Swinburne. A Study of Ben Jonson p 49.

"anatomical particularity which too often defaces his serious verse with grotesque if not gross deformity of detail":-

"Wings he hath, which though you clip,  
He will leap from lip to lip,  
Over liver, lights, and heart,  
But not stay in any part;  
And, if chance his arrow misses,  
He will shoot himself, in kisses".

"No one but Ben or a follower would have introduced liver and lights into the sweet and graceful effusion of lyric poetry".<sup>1</sup>

Cupid is found, and he, his mother Venus, Hymen, and Vulcan all combine to honour the festivities. The latter has been employed under the Red Cliff forging a sphere in honour of the ceremony, and at the right moment the cliff opens, and is seen to contain the Masquers as the signs of the zodiac.

An Epithalamium sung by Hymen's priests to the accompaniment of music performed by the Cyclops, Vulcan's workmen, concluded the piece. This epithalamium has the same indelicacies that mar the Masque of Hymen, but it is a more noble lyric, and its lofty and stately music paves the way for the more wonderful music of Milton.<sup>2</sup>

1. Swinburne. p 49.

2. Cambridge History VI xiii.



Then follows in 1609 the finest of all Jonson's Masques, "The Masque of Queens celebrated from the House of Fame; by the most absolute in all State and Titles, Anne: Queen of Great Britain". His "argument" is "a celebration of honourable and true Fame, bred out of Virtue" and is intended for the flattery of the Queen. The charm of the piece lies in the wonderful and masterly conception of an antimasque of witches, in which Jonson shows a vigorous and fertile imagination, as well as a deep, extensive learning managed with great ease, and applied to the purpose of the scene with equal grace and dexterity. In the witches he incarnates the Vices, in contrast to which the Virtues shall shine the brighter. The latter are impersonated by the famous and virtuous queens of history, who in their dwelling in the House of Fame have heard of:-

"The glories of Bel-Anna, so well told  
Queen of the Ocean: how that she alone  
Possess all virtues, for which one by one  
They were so famed: and wanting then a head  
To form that sweet and gracious pyramid  
Wherein they sit, it being the sov'reign place  
Of all that palace, and reserv'd to grace  
The worthiest queen",

they have chosen her to fill it.

This portrait however is much inferior to that of the witches. The Masque closes with a song in praise of Virtue and Fame, which strikes a deep note, and utters universal truths.

"Who, Virtue, can thy power forget,  
That sees these live and triumph yet?  
Th<sup>1</sup> Assyrian pomp, the Persian pride,  
Greeks glory, and the Romans' dy'd:  
And who yet imitate  
Their noises, tarry the same fate.  
Force greatness all the glorious ways  
You can, it soon decays;  
But so good Fame shall never:  
Her triumphs, as their causes, are for ever".

"This piece" says Swinburne, in a torrent of enthusiasm, "is a marvellously vivid and dexterous application of marvellous learning and labour, which distinguishes the most splendid of all the Masques, as one of the typically splendid monuments or trophies of English Literature, and has apparently eclipsed that equally admirable fervour of commanding fancy, which informs the whole design, and gives life to every detail. The interview of the witches is so royally lavish in its wealth and variety of fertile and lively horror, that on first reading, the student may probably

do less than justice to the lofty and temperate eloquence of the noble verse and prose which follow".

Passing over the speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers composed for his investiture as Prince of Wales on June 4th 1610 and presented the next day, remarkable for their fusion of legend and history in stately verse, we come to the lightest and most fanciful of Jonson's Masques, replete with fairy lore, viz: The Masque of Oberon, in which he again makes use of the vivacious Satyr of the Entertainment bearing the same name. Accompanied by Silenus and a troop of his brother-Satyrs, after a delay which is occupied by the dance and witty dialogue of the antimasque, they at length obtain sight of Oberon (Prince Henry) and his fairy Knights. The dainty opening of the Masque in octosyllabics is particularly beautiful.

"The first face of the scene appeared all obscure and nothing perceived but a dark rock with trees beyond it, and all wildness that could be presented; till, at one corner of the cliff, above the horizon the Moon began to shew, and rising, a satyr was seen by her light to put forth his head and call

"Chromis! Mnasil! None appear?

See you not who riseth here?"

There is no answer. Then he winds his cornet, and at the third blast is answered by another Satyr, at which



"they came running severally to the number of ten from divers parts of the rock".

It is not the invention, but the expression in this Masque which is so charming; its value lies in the exquisite detail; from beginning to end there is nothing mediocre; all is filled with graceful products of the imagination set forth in the simplest expression. The realistic vein of Saxon genius combines with the elegance of Theocritus to furnish a fairy spectacle, only inferior to Shakespeare by the want, on the part of the author, of the latter's musical ear.<sup>1</sup>

"Love restored from Ignorance and Folly", performed during the Christmas festivities 1610-11 affords another instance of our author's wonderful fertility of invention, and variety of imagination.

Sphynx, representing Ignorance, has captured Cupid and "eleven daughters of the Moon", and will only set them free when Cupid shall discover the solution of her riddle, which is ingeniously made into a form compliment to the King. With the help of the Muses' priests the riddle is guessed, and Sphynx and her troop of follies are dismissed. The dances follow Cupid's release.

The use of heptasyllabic lines gives the Masque

1. Castelain <sup>678</sup>  
~~687~~.

a sweet and melodious simplicity: in conception ~~with~~ and workmanship it is inferior however to Oberon, a perfect example of the first kind of Jonsonian Masque.<sup>1</sup>

With "Love Restored", 1613, the second division of Jonson's Masques may be said to begin.<sup>2</sup> The interest is centred in the antimasque, in which he gives reign to satire, and sacrifices the poetical effect.

The Masque itself represents Cupid freed from imprisonment by Plutus, "the god of money, who has stolen love's ensigns; and in his belied figure rules the world, making friendships, contracts, marriages, and almost religion, begetting, breeding, and holding the nearest respects of mankind; and usurping all those offices in this age of gold, which Love himself performed in the golden age".

In the "Irish Masque" 1613 Jonson descends from the realm of poetical fancy and allegory to the world of reality, the actors being His Majesty's "own shubshects". Here again the interest lies in the portrait of the Irishman of the antimasque.

The Masque itself is flat, consisting of dances by Irish "gentlemen". Apparently there was no scenery, and consequently no usual transformation, but it is interesting in its contrast with the ordinary Masque of

1. See Division (a) p 47

2. " " (b) " "

gods and goddesses.

"Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists", 1615, shows the creator of Subtile has not exhausted his arsenal of ridicule, but has yet some shafts of satire left for professors of Subtile's art or Mystery".<sup>1</sup>

The whole situation hinges on the similarity between Mercury the god, and the Metal. "I am their creede, and their sublimate; their precipitate, and their unctuous; their male and female; sometimes their hermaphrodite; what they list to call me. It is I that am corroded, and exalted, and sublimed, and reduced, and fetch'd over, and filtered, and wash'd and wiped". The interest is wholly in the first part, in which the two antimasques, one of threadbare alchemists, and the other of imperfect creatures of their invention, provide the foil to the sons of Nature in the main Masque. The verses of the second part are heavy and have no spirit.

"The Golden Age Restored" takes us back again to the realm of fancy. It was performed on New Year's Night, and again on Twelfth night 1615, and was intended as a portrait of England under the rule of James I, when

"Astraea. Peace	Chaucer. And Strife.
Golden Age. And Love	Gower. And Hate
Ast. Faith	Lidgate. And Fear
Golden Age. Joys	Spenser. And Pain
Ast:Gol:Age All, all increase Ormes. All cease."	





And, you sustaining her, may know  
The Age still by her name.

Who vows, against or heat or cold,  
To spin your garments of her gold,  
That want may touch you never;  
And making garlands ev'ry hour,  
To write your names in some new flower,  
That you may live for ever".

In his choice of the Iron Age and its Evils for the antimasque, Jonson is glancing at the disaffected state of the country; and in the presentation of the poets as Masquers puts forth a plea, that when the land is in a settled state, literature, under the patronage of James, himself a classical scholar, and an author, may enjoy the regard which is its due, and its Masters the merit which is their right.

In his advocacy of the study of the old national poets we have a foretaste of Jonson's complaint in the "Discoveries" of the absence of critical power in his age, which was willing to commend as the "best writings" those "which a man would scarce vouchsafe to wrap any wholesome drug in",<sup>1</sup> also which objected to didactic aim.<sup>2</sup>

That he should regard the poets as the foremost

1. "Discoveries" Spingarn 1 17.

2. Ibid: 48.

servants of the Golden Age is characteristic of his lofty conception of poetry and the poet. Poetry to him is "The Queene of Arts": "the absolute mistresse of manners and neerest of kin to Vertue"; "a dulcet and gentle Philosophy which leades on and guides us by the hand to Action with a ravishing delight and incredible sweetness".<sup>1</sup>

The poet's conception of the Golden Age is elegantly set forth in lyrical dialogue, the versification of which "may be called sweet, an epithet seldom applicable to the solid and polished verse of Jonson"<sup>2</sup>.

"Pallas.	Already do not all things smile?
Astraea	But when they have enjoyed a while The Age's quickening power:
Age	That every thought a seed doth bring And every look a plant doth spring, And every breath a flower:
Pallas	The earth unplough'd shall yield her Pure honey from the oak shall drop, The fountain shall run milk: The thistle shall the lily bear, And every bramble roses wear, And every worm make silk.
Chorus	The very shrub shall balsam sweat, And nectar melt the rock with heat,

1. Spingarn: 51  
2. Swinburne 65.



Till earth have drank her fill:  
That she no harmful weed may know,  
Nor barren fern, nor mandrake low,  
Nor mineral to kill".

A modern poet, Shelley for example, would have treated a subject like the Golden Age with more grandeur of thought and severer grace; but such imaginative and sublime flights cannot be expected from either Jonson or his contemporaries. When a bramble <sup>bears</sup> roses, one must be satisfied, and not quibble over the quality of the scent.<sup>1</sup>

The Masque of Lethe is the shortest Jonson produced. It is described as "a Masque presented in the house of the right honourable the lord Hay, by divers of noble quality his friends; for the entertainment of Monsieur le Baron de Tour extraordinary ambassador for the French King, on Saturday, February 22nd, 1617". Jonson gives full play to his lighter genius and lyrical humour in a work of exceptionally simple plan, executed with graceful fancy. It takes the form of a satire on the love-poets of his time. Mercury is leading "certain imagined ghosts" towards the river Lethe where

"No more torments dwell

Than earth hath felt already in his breast;

Who hath been once in love, hath proved his hell".

1. Castelain. 702.

Lethe, "in the person of an old man" inquires "who or  
What fantastic shades are thses"?

Mercury            "They are the gentle forms  
                     Of lovers, lost upon those frantic seas,  
                     Whence Venus ~~sprung~~".

                     and have been

                     "Drown'd by Love

                     That drew them forth with hopes as  
   smooth as were

                     Th' unfaithful waters he desired them  
   prove.

Lethe                And turn'd a tempest when he had them  
   there?

Mercury            He did, and on the billow would he roll,  
                     And laugh to see one 'throw his heart away'!

                     Another sighing, 'vapour forth his soul';

                     A third, to 'melt himself in tears', and say,

                     'O love, I now to saltier water turn,

                     Than that I die in'; then a fourth, to cry

                     Amid the surges, 'Oh, I burn, I burn'.

                     A fifth laugh out, 'It is my ghost, not I'.

                     And thus in pairs I found them. Only one

                     There is, that walks, and stops, and shakes  
   his head,

                     And ~~shuns~~ the rest, as glad to be alone,

                     And whispers to himself, 'he is not dead'.

                     'No more are all the rest' retort the Fates, for

'Here all their threads are growing yet, none  
out! "

Mercury himself begins "to doubt, that Love with  
charms hath put

'This phant'sie in them ; and they only think  
That they are ghosts,

.....

Go bow into the reverend lake,  
And having touch'd these; up and shake  
The shadows off, which yet do make  
Us you, and you yourselves mistake'".

Here they all stoop to the water, and dance forth their  
antimasque in several gestures, as they lived in love:  
and retiring into the grove, before the last person be  
off the stage, the first couple appear in their  
posture between the trees ready to come forth, changed".

Mercury. "See, see, they are themselves again.

.....

Chorus      Return, return,  
Like lights to burn  
On earth  
For others' good ;  
Your second birth  
Will fame old Lethe's flood;  
And warm a world,  
That now are hurl'd



About in tempest, how they prove  
Shadows for Love".

The dances follow, after which Cupid agrees

"Never to force them act to do

But what he will call Hermes to"

i.e. which will be without Reason, and the Masque  
ends with a chorus

"All then take cause of joy: for who hath not?

Old Lethe, that their follies are forgot:

We, that their lives unto their fates they fit

They, that they still shall love and love with  
wit".

The "Vision of delight", produced in 1617, is not  
inferior to its title. It is a delicate and airy  
tribute to the Spring; the main Masque, in which the  
glories of the Spring are the Masquers, discovered<sup>e</sup><sub>A</sub> in  
the bower of Zephyrus, is written from beginning to  
end with a rare happiness of expression, which at the  
close is spoilt by a suggestion that all awakening  
Nature is due to the King's presence. Throughout  
Jonson attains a more than usually good effect by  
his command of metre; the introductions to the anti-  
masque, in octosyllabic and anapaestic measures, have  
a rapid swinging rhythm; the smooth and flowing verse  
of its graver parts would be worthy of Fletcher, except  
that his degree of music and of sweetness of melody

are wanting.<sup>1</sup> The worst fault however is the introduction of flat or stiff couplets in the best passages: for example the Song of Night opens and closes beautifully, but is spoilt in the middle by harsh inversion.

"Break, Phant'sie, from thy cave of cloud,  
And spread thy purple wings;  
Now all thy figures are allow'd  
And various shapes of things;  
Create of airy forms a stream,  
It must have blood, and nought of phlegm;  
And though it be a waking dream,  
Chorus Yet let it like an odour rise  
To all the senses here,  
And fall like sleep upon their eyes,  
Or music in their ear".

Such a fault of pedantic inversion is not the fault of the age but of Jonson individually - Marlowe, Lyly, Fletcher, Dekker could write songs quite free from this blemish. "There is no surer test", says Swinburne, "of the born lyric poet than the presence or absence of an instinctive sense, which assures him when, how, and where to use or abstain from inversion, and in Jonson it is utterly wanting".

"Pleasure reconciled to Virtue" was presented at Court on Twelfth Night, 1618, and apparently was a failure  
1. Swinburne 68.



Nathaniel Brent in a letter to Carleton says:-

"The Masque of Twelfth Night was so dull that people say the poet should return to his <sup>da</sup> trade of brickmaking".  
The first antimasque, a glorification of Comus or Sensual Pleasure, who at last yields to Hercules, has a greater degree than usual of broad Rabelaisian humour and energy. The Masque itself is the embodiment of flattery to the King and Court as Hesperus and the Princes of Virtue respectively:-

"but now

The time's arriv'd that Atlas told thee of, how  
B'unalter'd law, and working of the stars,  
There should be a cessation of all jars,  
'Twixt Virtue and her noted opposite,  
Pleasure; that both should meet here in the sight  
Of Hesperus, the glory of the west,  
The brightest star that from his burning crest  
Lights all on this side of the Atlantic seas,  
As far as to thy pillars, Hercules.  
See where he shines, Justice and Wisdom placed  
About his throne, and those with honour grac'd  
Beauty and Love. ....  
.....  
.....; Pleasure, for his delight  
Is reconciled to Virtue, and this night  
Virtue brings forth twelve princes have been bred

1. Castelain 710 n.



In this rough mountain, and near Atlas' head,  
The hill of knowledge; one, and chief of whom,  
Of the bright race of Hesperus is come,  
Who shall in time the same that he is be,  
And now is only a less light than he:".

The verses in praise of the dancing are pretty, sedate, and polished, but as a whole the Masque cannot be called graceful in composition because of its awkwardness of construction.

According to Jonson, the King, notwithstanding the opinion of the Court, "was so much pleased with the Masque *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* that he would see it again". Accordingly it was presented on Shrove Tuesday with another antimasque, "*For the Honour of Wales*", in which Jonson refers to the failure of the Masque at the previous performance.<sup>1</sup>

A break now occurs in the author's Masque writing. His journey to Scotland took place in 1618, and he was not in London again till May 1619. The new banqueting house at Whitehall was burnt down January 12th 1619; Queen Anne died in March; Jonson's quarrel with Inigo Jones was in progress. He produced no more Masques till January 6th, 1621, when the Court called on him again, and his admirable "*News from the New World discovered in the Moon*" was

1. See Works VIII p. 319.

the first of a series of eight Masques, containing some of his best work, and ending in 1625 before his paralytic stroke. During his absence in Scotland, a Masque had been composed, but was ill-received. "I have heard from Court", writes Drummond, "that the late Mask was not so approved of the King, as in former times, and that your absence is regretted".<sup>1</sup>

In the present Masque, the poet's journey to the Moon was probably suggested by his Scottish tour to which he refers in the antimasque.<sup>2</sup>

The Masque itself is of the simplest, consisting only of songs accompanying the dances of the Masquers who "descend from the region of the moon". The only note struck in the songs is one of flattery of the King, and Jonson, a paragon of dignity, goes to so ridiculous a length as to attribute to the King the power of endowing with perpetual motion those on whom he condescends to bestow his regard.

"For he

That did this motion give,  
And made it so long live,  
Could likewise give it perpetuity".

1. Drummond's Letters "to his worthy friend, Ben Jonson", quoted by Gifford VIII p. 324.

2. See Works VII 341.

"The Masque of Metamorphosed Gipsies", 1621, is the longest written by Jonson, and this is owing to the additions made to it at each performance before the King. Composed originally for the King's entertainment by Buckingham at his residence Burleigh-on-the-Hill, it was so favourably received that it was performed twice again, at Belvoir and at Windsor. The chief interest is centred in the telling of the fortunes of the King and Court: the personal allusions however are lost to us. It is much too long as a Masque, and its humour is coarse; but the compliments, the last songs, and certain other passages are well written.

E.g.           "Look, look, is he not fair,  
                   And fresh and fragrant too,  
                   As summer sky, as purged air,  
                   And look as lilies do  
                   That were this morning blown"

or again

2 Gipsy	"	His handmaid justice is.
3	"	Wisdom his wife.
4	"	His Mistress, Mercy.
5	"	Temperance his life.
2	"	His pages bounty and grace, which many prove.



- 3 Gipsy    His guards are magnanimity and love  
4        "        His ushers, counsel, truth, and piety.  
5        "        And all that follows him, felicity.

"The Masque of Augurs", presented on Twelfth Night 1622, is, as a whole, one of Jonson's feeblest. "It is", says Swinburne, "a monument of learning and labour such as no other poet could have dreamed of lavishing on a ceremonial or official piece of work". But this vast wealth of learning is quite out of place. Like the three following Masques, it is intimately connected with the events of the day; the Masquers "Augurs", recite favourable <sup>re</sup> passages of the future under the direction of Apollo; and Jove, appearing in heaven, ratifies them by his nod. Earth, suddenly rising, prays that "Jove will lend us this our sovereign long".

"Jove knocks his chin against his breast,  
And firms it with the rest".

This, we may imagine, was intended by the poet to afford comfort to the King in the midst of political turmoil. In conception the Masque lacks unity, the antimasques of bears and pilgrims having no relation with the main Masque, but this is probably intentional. The verse parts are flat and stiff, and where there is humour it is coarse and clumsy.

"Time Vindicated to Himself and to his Honours" was presented on Twelfth Night, 1623. Its main interest is in the pointed and personal satire of the antimasque. The Masque itself consists of two parts. In the first Saturn at the request of Cupid, frees from the shades of Hecate where they had been imprisoned

"certain glories of the time",

"As being fitter to adorn the Age

By you restored on earth, most like his own".

These are the Masquers. After the dances, the scene again changes to a wood, where Diana descends to Hippolitus, and explains her purpose in "keeping obscured" the "glories of the age", as a desire to train them in hunting and martial exercise; and the scene ends with a song in honour of James's favourite sport.

The introduction of another scene after the dances, shows the growing love of spectacle, and the appeal of the Masque merely as a series of pageants, with the consequently less important appeal of the poetry of the piece; but on the other hand, such an introduction often affords a more satisfactory ending to the Masque, which before often terminated rather abruptly with the warning of the morning star or dawn that it was time to desist, And yet, when not kept within strict limits, another scene tends to lengthen the Masque unduly. Jonson



employed this expedient first in the Masque of Augurs, where the earth rises to ask that Jove may allow a long life to James, and here it has quite an artistic effect. In all his remaining Masques Jonson found it necessary to introduce an extra scene to gratify public interest.

"Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion celebrated in a Masque at Court on Twelfth Night, 1624", deals with the return of Buckingham and Charles from Spain, after their unsuccessful attempt to win for the latter the hand of the Infanta. Its chief interest is in the references to the journey. It evinces want of unity in conception; and the antimasque has no ~~celebration~~ correlation with the Masque, probably again for the purpose of satire. The lyrics are in places graceful and melodious, but are too often spoilt by harsh inversion.

E.g.        "And all the heavens consent,  
              With Harmony, to tune their notes,  
              In answer to the public votes,  
              That for it up were sent".

The introduction of the commonplace tends also to mar the verses. Thus the song at the entrance of the Masquers:-

Porteus. "Ay, now the pomp of Neptune's triumph shines!"



And all the glories of his great designs  
Are read, reflected, in his son's return!

Portunus. How all the eyes, the looks, the hearts here burn  
at his arrival.

Sardan. These are the true fires  
Are made of joys!

Pro: Of longing!

Por: Of desires!

Sar: Of hopes!

Pro: Of fears!

Por: No intermittent blocks.

Sar: But pure affections, and from odorous stocks".

The same Masque, with a few slight alterations in the  
verse and with a new antimasque, is entitled

"The Fortunate Isles and their Union", <sup>was</sup> and performed  
at Court on Twelfth Night, 1625.

In both these Masques, Jonson had the opportunity of  
contemplating the sovereign as King of the ocean, a title  
dear to the heart of every Elizabethan. Both are  
illustrative of the growing importance of the archi-  
tect's part in the Masque, in their introduction of  
three scenes more than usual. For the first antimasque  
"all that is discovered of a scene, are two erected  
pillars, dedicated to Neptune". For the entry of the  
Masquers "the Island of Delos is discovered, the Masquers

sitting in their several sieges". The heavens opening, Apollo with Mercury, some of the Muses, and the Goddess Harmony make the music: the while the island moves forward. After the first dance, "the first prospective, a maritime palace, or the house of Oceanus is discovered". Following the Measures, "the second prospective, a sea, is shown", and after the Revels, "the fleet is discovered".

"Pan's Anniversary or the Shepherd's Holyday" is a Masque in pastoral setting. The scene is laid in Arcadia, and a shepherd with three nymphs celebrates "the yearly rites" which "are due to Pan".

To the latter, identified with James, they sing their hymns.

"Pan is our All, by him we breathe, we live,  
We move, we are; 'tis he our lambs doth rear,  
Our flocks doth bless, and from the store doth  
give  
The warm and finer fleeces that we wear.  
He keeps away all heats and colds,  
Drives all diseases from our folds;  
Makes everywhere the spring to dwell,  
The ewes to feed, their udders swell;  
But if he frown, the sheep, alas!  
The shepherds wither, and the grass".

The Masquers are "the best and bravest spirits of

Arcadia", and "are discovered sitting about the Fountain of Light, with the Musicians, attired like the Priests of Pan, standing in the work behind them".

The sweet simplicity of the whole is spoilt by the antimasques of Boeotians and Thebans who are introduced by A Fencer in prose speeches of bombast and "clownish ingenuity".<sup>1</sup> Their introduction prevents one of Jonson's prettiest Masques from ranking as a masterpiece.

This was presented 1625, and was the last James witnessed. The "argument" of "Love's Triumph through Callipolis", written 1630 at the command of King Charles, is a tribute by the poet to the "honour of his court, and the dignity of that heroic love and regal respect born by him to his unmatchable lady and spouse the queen's Majesty".

It is the most resplendent of all his Masques, and the interest of the composers seems to have been far more in the scenic arrangements than in the vocal parts. Callipolis, the City of Beauty, is cleansed from the hands of sensual lovers who have congregated there, and the triumph of "the perfect lovers" is celebrated by the classical deities, who preside over marriage ceremonies.

With "Chloridia", 1630, Jonson's Masques come to an end. The last-named is a graceful tribute to the

1. Swinburne. 73.



spring, and to the fame of Chloris the queen.

The combined effects of poet and architect in this Masque, as in the preceding one, must have been exceedingly pretty. The scene "consisted" of pleasant hills planted with young trees, and all the lower banks adorned with flowers. And from some hollow parts of those hills, fountains came gliding down; which, in the far-off landscape, seemed ~~to~~ all to be converted to a river. Over all a serene sky, with transparent clouds, giving a great lustre to the whole work; which did imitate the pleasant spring". Zephyrus and Spring come forth from the clouds, and begin the Masque with a song, after which Zephyrus disappears, and Spring descends to earth, where she is received by the Naiades with another song. A dwarf from hell ushers in the antimasque, *Aa* Tempest, which, after the dances, "by the providence of Juno, on an instant ceaseth", and the scene changes to the Bower of Chloris, who with her nymphs take the parts of the Masquers. Their approach is heralded by a graceful song:-

"Run out, all the floods, in joy, with your silver  
feet,

And haste to meet

The enamour'd Spring,

For whom the warbling fountains sing.

The story of the flowers,

Preserved by the Hours;

At Juno's soft command, and Iris' showers;

Sent to quench jealousy, and all those powers  
Of Love's rebellious war:

Whilst Chloris sits a shining star

To crown, and grace our jolly song, made long,

To the notes that we bring, to glad the Spring".

After the second dance, the "farther prospect of the scene changeth into air, with a low landscape, in part covered with clouds: and in that instant the heaven opening, Juno and Iris are seen; and above them many airy spirits sitting in the clouds". Juno and Iris sing in praise of Chloris. Then, "out of the earth ariseth a hill, and on the top of it a globe, on which Fame is seen standing with her trumpet in her hand; and on the hill are seated four persons presenting Poesy, History, Architecture, and Sculpture, who together with the Nymphs, Floods, and Fountains make a full choir; at which Fame begins to mount, and moving her wings, flieth, singing up to heaven". The final song ended, and "Fame being hidden in the clouds, the hill sinks, and the heaven closeth".

There remain two entertainments "Love's Welcome", at Welbeck 1633, and at Bolsover 1634, which were

composed for the Earl of Newcastle's entertainment of the King. In the second Jonson makes use of the theme of Eros and Anteros, which he had used previously in a Challenge at a Tilt. The other one is devoid of interest, but their cost of production amounted to as much as £20,000. 1

1. Castelain 749 n.



The Court soon grew weary of the eternal processions of gods and goddesses, and the allegorical personages became monotonous; accordingly a suggestion from the Queen resulted in Jonson's production of the antimasque, which by its less serious character should afford the necessary relief.

"And because her Majesty (best knowing that a principal part of life, in these spectacles, lay in their variety) had commanded me to think on some dance, or shew, that might precede hers. I was careful to decline, not only from others, but mine own steps in that kind, since the last year I had an antimasque of boys; and therefore now devised that twelve women, in the habit of hags, or witches, sustaining the persons of Ignorance, Suspicion, Credulity, &c., the opposites to good ~~fame~~, should fill that part; not as a Masque, but a spectacle of strangeness, producing multiplicity of gesture, and not <sup>unaptly</sup> ~~inaptly~~ assorting with the current, and whole fall of the device": 1 briefly the antimasque served, in every possible way, as a foil to the Masque. Nothing was more natural, than that a less serious element should be introduced to enhance the attractions of the Masque at a time, when the best results on the public stage were achieved by a mixture of grave and gay. The experiment was justified by its

1. Masque of Queens. Introduction.

success so long as the antimasque was kept within due bounds; but it required the high aims and severe restraint of a writer like Jonson to curb such extravagances, which, by their over-elaboration, were afterwards to prove fatal to the Masque as a work of art, and reduce it almost to the level of a pantomime.

The idea of contrast and of burlesque was however no new thing in the history of the Masque. Reference has been made <sup>1</sup> to the account of the mumming of 1377, where "eight or ten arrayed and with black vizardes like devils nothing amiable" are considered as the germ of the antimasque in their comic appearance, and in the contrast they afford to the splendour of cardinals and pope

The immediate predecessors of the antimasque were the Morris dances, an instance of the introduction of which into the disguising has been given <sup>2</sup> in the passage from "a Booke of all Manner of Orders concerning an Earl's House". As in the case of Morris dancers, the performers of an antimasque, similar to the presenters of the Masque proper, were professional actors. In the Fortunate Isles Merefool would have thanked Skelton and Skogan for their "shew" as "the first grace the company of the Rosycross hath done me".

"The Company of the Rosycross, you widgeon!" says Jowphiel, "the company of the players".

1. Part 11. p. 15
2. Part 11. p. 25



This spirit of contrast is kept up in the Masque.

In the projected Masques for the meeting of Elizabeth with Mary of Scots at Nottingham 1562, the Vices "Disdain" and Prepenoyd Malice" contrast with "Discretion" and "Valyant Courage". Later in Jonson's Satyr, this character provides an amusing element contrasting with the welcome of Queen Mab; use is made of the grotesque element in the introduction of "a Morris of clowns". In the Penates the amusing scene, in which Pan offers wine to the guests, contrasts with the stately welcomes of the Penates and of Maia.

The first definite step towards the antimasque is unconsciously taken in the Masque of Beauty, where the torch-bearers, "a multitude of cupids" wear a distinctive dress. Jonson gets still closer in Hymenaei, in which a "first Masque of eight men", personating the Humours and Affections attack the altar, and, rebuked by Reason, "retire amazed to the side of the stage". All that prevents these being ranked as an antimasque is the fact that they afterwards take part in the Masque itself.

The first example of the antimasque is furnished by the "Hue and Cry after Cupid", in which Cupid and his "Second Sports" execute "a subtle, capricious dance to as odd music, nodding with their antic faces,



with other variety of ridiculous gesture which gave much occasion of mirth and delight to the spectators". To this Jonson refers in his preface to the Masque of Queens as "an antimasque of boys". In all his succeeding productions every Masque has its antimasque.

The development of the antimasque proceeded on similar lines to that of the Masque itself.

Its starting-point was the comic dance, to which its name originally applied; but which, as in the case of the Masque itself was afterwards used to denote the whole dramatic growth which surrounded it.

In his early work the antimasques are of the same fanciful kind as the Masque proper. Of this kind Cupid's Sports in the "Hue and Cry", and "Love freed from Ignorance and Folly", are the simplest examples. The presenters, Cupid and the Sphynx respectively, are each persons of the main Masque, the thread of which is but slightly interrupted—only in fact by the introduction of a comic or lively dance. The most elaborate instance of Jonson's creations is the antimasque of witches in the "Masque of Queens". This, as it was his first fully-developed antimasque, is his best production. His conception of the witches and their ceremonies is a superb collection of all that classical and mediaeval writers have to say on the

subject moulded by an imagination at its height. In no other of his antimasques is Jusserand's metaphor so well illustrated, - that Jonson was a sponge, sucking out the best of everything, in order to squeeze it out again into his work.

The introduction of witches may have been prompted by the King's production of his "Daemonology", the object of which work was to inspire belief in the superstitions and charms said to be practised by witches at their nightly meetings.

To a public, for whom supernatural agencies were a reality, the present scene must have caused feelings of nothing less than horror.

Eleven witches suitably attired, decked with snakes and rats, carrying "spindles, <sup>timbrels</sup> rattles, or other beneficial instruments", enter from "an ugly Hell, which, flaming beneath", smoked into the top of the roof". They call up their, "Dame" with incantations, which powerfully convey the horrible thrill which was the soul of all witchcraft.

E. g. "The owl is abroad, the bat, and the toad,  
And so is the cat-a-mountain,  
The ant and the mole sit both in a hole,  
And the frogs peep out o' the fountain;  
The dogs they do bay, and the timbrels play,



The spindle is now a-turning;  
The moon it is red, and the stars are fled,  
But all the sky is a-burning:  
The ditch is made, and our nails the spade,  
With pictures full, of wax and of wool;  
Their livers I stick with needles quick;  
There lacks but the blood, to make up the flood.  
Quickly, dame, then bring your part in,  
Spur, spur, upon little Martin,  
Merrily, merrily make him sail,  
A worm in his mouth, and a thorn in his tail,  
Fire above, and fire below,  
With a whip in your hand to make him go".

"At this the Dame entered to them, naked-armed, bare-footed, her frock tucked, her hair knotted, and folded with vipers; in her hand a torch made of a dead man's arm, lighted, girded with a snake".

She bids them "Relate to me what you have sought,  
Where you have been, and what you  
have brought".

One has been

"gathering wolves hairs,  
The mad-dogs foam, the adder's ears;  
The spurging of a dead man's eyes;  
And all since the evening star did rise".

Another "Choosing out this skull  
From charnel houses, that were full."



A third says

"A murderer yonder was hung in chains,  
The sun and the wind had <sup>hr</sup>sunk his veins,  
I bit off a sinew; I clipp'd his hair;  
I brought off the rags, that danced in the air  
and so on.

Their several contributions are buried, and they proceed

"to overthrow the glory of this night";  
and dancing to the recitation of more charms, invoke the  
"three-formed star, that on these nights  
Art only powerful, to whose triple name  
Thus we incline, once, twice, and thrice the  
same.

..... darken all this roof,  
With present fogs: exhale earth's rot'nest  
vapours,

And strike a blindness through these blazing  
tapers".

All their efforts are in vain, and at "a sound of loud music", the hags and their hell vanish before the approach of Heroic Virtue, the "presenter" of the Masque proper. This scene forms an interesting parallel with the witch scenes of Macbeth, to which Jonson owes his idea.

Shakespeare manages the lyrical rhythm with more ease, and in Macbeth the imagery has more colour, the

expression more vigour: but the incantation itself in Shakespeare is short, while in the Masque there is scarcely anything else. On the other hand, such a long scene of charms and ceremonies would be out of place in a play where action is necessary.

It was a most happy choice of Jonson's to fix on witches as a counterpart to the resplendent Queens of the main Masque; in fact the contrast between the characters of the Masque and those of the antimasque is sustained in no other Masque with such tenacity of purpose, nor is the balance between them so scrupulously adjusted.

The dramatic force of this antimasque quite eclipses the stately eloquence of the main Masque, which nothing but the magnificence of the spectacle and the skill of the dancers could have prevented from ~~going~~ giving the effect of an anticlimax.

The antimasque of "Oberon" is an equal masterpiece of our author's imagination in a lighter department of fairy lore. The Satyrs, as plain and homely fairies living in rocks, contrast with the brilliant troop of Oberon's Knights, issuing from their fairy palace. Yet it is not so much a foil or false Masque as an antemasque, lighter and less dignified than the main Masque, but in keeping with it rather than in



contrast. Nor is it in any true sense dramatic.

In "Love Restored" Jonson adopts a new plan with regard to the antimasque, replacing it entirely by a little scene of delightful comedy, in which prose makes its first appearance. Masquerado apologises for the non-appearance of any Masque; but "the rogue playboy, that acts Cupid, is got so hoarse, your Majesty cannot hear him half the breadth of your chair." Flutus enters as the real Cupid. He "will have no more Masquing; I will not buy a false and fleeting delight so dear: the merry madness of one hour shall not cost me the repentance of an age". Robin Goodfellow, the country spirit, overhears him, and enters, aghast at the news.

"How! no Masque"? and after all the difficulties he has had in getting to Court. He proceeds to relate his experiences, and in the picture Jonson puts before us all the crush and crowding, tricks, and pretences, which were part of the competition to get a place at the Court Masque.

Robin has been struck by a porter; pushed off a ladder by one of the guard; the carpenters have let a trap-door fall on his head. Then he became "an engineer, and belonged to the motions", but in vain; Then a musician, "but I could not shew mine instrument



and that bred a discord"; then "an old tire-woman";  
"a fine citizen's wife"; and "forty other devices",  
which all had the same result. "In this despair, when  
all invention and translation too failed me, I e'en  
w<sup>e</sup>nt back, and stuck to this shape you see me in of  
mine own, with my broom and my candles, and came on  
confidently, giving out I was a part of the Device".  
When Plutus continues his condemnation of these super-  
fluous excesses, Robin and Masquerado detect him to be  
an imposter, "Plutus, the god of money, who has stolen  
Love's ensigns". At this point the real Cupid enters,  
leading in the Masquers.

In all but three of his remaining Masques, Jonson  
employs a similar scene of satiric comedy, in which  
he tells of :-

"Deeds and language, such as men do use,  
And persons, such as comedy would choose,  
When she would shew the image of the times,  
And sport with human follies, not with crimes"  
The antimasque lent itself to dramatic development.

The Masquers were nobles, who might dance exquisitely,  
but who could not act probably. This fact is sufficient  
in itself to explain the impossibility of dramatic  
development in the Masque proper; but the fact that the  
antimasque was performed by professionals made development

in a dramatic direction easy. Further, the contrast between the two explains the impossibility of any coherence between the Masque and the antimasque when the dramatic element intruded. In the case of Jonson, this element gave him abundant opportunities for sketches of humorous characters, lightly and vigorously drawn, for which his dramatic genius peculiarly fitted him, thus ~~exchanging~~ <sup>enhancing</sup> the interest of the antimasque, which, as well as that of the Masque, lay neither in action nor in its semblance. Moreover, to the finest faculty of observation necessary to the delineator of characters, he added the power of abstracting what was essential to the type, and of reproducing it. When his characters speak, we are able at once to divine their true character: all express themselves in the style and language required to *make* us believe in the reality of their existence.

In the antimasques of earlier composition, Jonson's gaiety partakes more of grace, sprightly fantasy, or grotesque invention, in which there is no sting. In these later pieces he appears as a humorous critic of society, but the satire of these, though essentially the same as that of the comedies, is lighter, more fantastic, and less laboured, as becomes an entertainment.

The antimasque of the "News from the New World

Discovered in the Moon" shows the nature of the change, which had given the Masque an unexpected development, belonging, as it does, to both the fanciful and satirical kinds. It includes an amusing satire on the journalists of the day.

A Printer, a Chronologer, and a Factor of News eagerly surround two heralds, who are calling "News. News". The Printer will "hearken after them wherever they be"; he will "give anything for a good copy now, be it true or false, so it be news".

The Chronologer requires matter for ten quires of paper to complete his "great book, which must be three ream of paper at least". "I have been here", he complains, "since seven a clock in the morning to get matter for one page, and I think I have it complete; for", he adds triumphantly, "I have noted the number, and the capacity of the degrees here; and told twice over how many candles there are in the room lighted, which I will set you down to a snuff precisely, because I love to give light to posterity in the truth of things".

The Factor writes his "thousand letters a week ordinary, sometimes twelve hundred "....." "I have friends of all ranks and of all religions, for which I keep an answering catalogue of dispatch; wherein I have my puritan news, my protestant news, and my



pontifical news". But he will not trust to such printed news as, when sent to the shire in which whatever happened to which they refer, cannot be confirmed. When news are printed, he argues, they cease to be news. But the printer, holding the contrary, declares that many will only believe what they see in print, and for such he keeps his presses, and so many clerks "to bring forth wholesome relations, which once in half a score years, as the age grows forgetful, I print over again with a new date, and they are of excellent use".

The poet proceeds to make sport out of their credulity. The news are from the Moon, and in the account of it, the various branches of contemporary society are satirised in a few appropriate and epigrammatic sentences. All discourse there is in harmony.

"Factor. How do their lawyers?

1st Herald. They are Pythagoreans, all dumb as fishes, for they have no controversies to exercise themselves in.

Factor. How do they live then?

1st Herald. On the dew of the Moon, like grasshoppers, and confer with the doppers (anabaptists)

Factor. Have you doppers?

satire on the poet Middleton, informing the Chronologer that "your woman's poet must flow, and stroke the ear, and .....

'Must write a verse as smooth and calm as cream,  
In which there is no torrent, nor scarce stream.'

In 1619 Middleton had produced his "Masque of the Inner Temple, " an entertainment for many worthy ladies" and wrote of it "Being made for ladies, ladies understood. Perhaps however the satire is aimed at Campion, who, in his address to the reader at the end of his Masque at Lord Hay's marriage, 1607, had written

"A Ladies praise  
Shall content my proudest hope,  
Their applause was all my scope;  
And to their shrines properly  
Revels dedicated be,  
Whose soft ears none ought to pierce,  
But with smooth and gentle verse".<sup>1</sup>

In the "Discoveries", Jonson returns, in the ~~section~~<sup>satire</sup> dealing with Ingeniorum discrimina to the satire on "women-poets", describing them as "those which have no composition at all, but a kind of tuncing and riming fall in what they write. It runs and slides, and only makes a sound" .....

1. Evans 135 n.

This vein of personal satire is vigorously continued in "Time Vindicated to Himself and to his Honours", in the first antimasque of which production, the poet Wither is introduced as Chronomastix to make mirth for the Court groundlings in verse, in which Jonson skillfully parodies, <sup>his emphasis</sup> fatuity, platitudes, and numerous stop-gaps. The satirist's malevolence is too obvious however in his ridicule of Wither's "soft ambling verse", whose "rapture" at its highest possesses the gift of melodious and passionate simplicity which nature quite denied to Jonson. <sup>1</sup>

The Curious, the Eyed, the Eared, and the Nosed are waiting for "some great spectacle", which Time

"Means tonight

To exhibit and with all solemnity".

Eyes. "I spy it coming, peace!

All the impostures

The prodigies, diseases, and distempers,

The Knaveries of the time, we shall see all now".

Ears judges from the noise that "This room will not receive it", on which Chronomastix enters.

Chron: What, what, my friends will not this room receive?

Eyes. That which Time is presently to shew us.

Chron: The Time. Lo, I the man that hate the time,  
That is, that love it not: and (though in rhyme



I do here speak it) with this whip you see,  
Do lash the time, and am myself lash free".

Jonson is here alluding to Wither's work, "Abuses  
Script and Whipt". The succeeding lines are all a  
continuation of this strain of malice: *ibid.*

E.g. "To serve Fame  
Is all my end, and get myself a name".

On which Fame replies:-

"Tis infamy  
Thou serv'st, and follow'st".

The antimasque of mutes consists of admirers of  
Wither, and among them is a schoolmaster, who

"Is turning all his works into Latin,  
To pure satyric Latin; makes his boys  
To learn him; calls him the Times' Juvenal  
Hangs all his school with his sharp sentences;  
And o'er the execution place hath painted  
Time whipt for terror to the infantry".

In the antimasque prefixed to the Irish Masque,  
and in the antimasque "For the Honour of Wales", Jonson  
gives an amusing portrait of the lower class of  
natives of the respective countries, in language which  
illustrates their small knowledge of English pronunciation.  
The author possessed detailed knowledge of the  
characteristics of the lower order of society, such as

one picks up in travelling. But the humour verges on the coarse, and the scenes differ but little from low comedy.

This knowledge of human nature is also exemplified in the "Masque of Christmas", which presents an amusing picture of contemporary life in the portrait of the deaf old tire-woman, Venus, the mother of Cupid. She is a type of the uneducated, but loquacious and fussy woman, who is proud of her son, and can make herself at home anywhere. She will occupy any place, so that she may see her son act as Cupid, and the mention of his name gives her an opportunity for rehearsing the family history. In the kindness of his observation, he is with Shakespeare and Dickens in this little show. It was, perhaps, the knowledge that his work was to be acted by skilled professionals that inspired Jonson in this fascinating little sketch. <sup>1</sup> Though described in the title as a Masque, it is an antimasque, and, from a reference to Burbage and Heminge, was performed presumably by the King's players.

The Traveller and the Projector were frequent objects of satire in the Elizabethan age, <sup>2</sup> and in the Masque of Augurs Jonson combines both in the person of Vangoose. The tide of foreign <sup>travel</sup> began in the

1. Cambridge History VI xlii.

2. See Merchant of Venice 1 ii. Reyher 220 n1, 252 n11  
- 97 gives lists of instances

reign of Henry VIII, and was limited to the narrow circle of courtiers and gentry. It was regarded as a necessary element in the perfection of the courtly type; and, more than any other element, familiarised England with the achievements of the Renaissance. With the vast diffusion of Italian influence in the second half of the sixteenth century, a gradual evolution took place in the whole idea of travel; the type of traveller changed, and was exemplified in the dilettante pleasure-seeker, who travelled because it was fashionable, and returned to England with all the affectations and vices of the foreign country.

Especially censured were those "who, having gotten a fond affected phrase of speech, or some conceited toys in their habit, would be accounted great travellers"<sup>1</sup>.

Vangoose is introduced as such a traveller, and is dis-satisfied with everything at home. He considers the inventors of the Masque lack originality, but he will bring in "some dainty new ting dat never was ~~not~~ never sall be in de rebus natura; dat has never van de *materis*, nor de *forma*, nor de *hoffen*, nor de *voot*, but a mere *devisa* off de brain".

The antimasque of bears, though "excellent" in the opinion of the groom of the revels, is "noting". he can far surpass this, and satisfies his hearers' choice in an antimasque of pilgrims.

1. Einstein. The Italian Renaissance in England. 121.



From his language the groom takes him for a Dutchman." He is no Dutchman, sir". replies Notch, "he is a Britain born, but has learn'd to misuse his own tongue in travel, and now speaks all languages in an ill English".

It is not to be expected that a caterer for court entertainment during this period would omit the Puritans in the list of his satirical victims. Strangely enough however, Jonson leaves them to his successors, and only introduces them twice. In "Love Restored" Robin Goodfellow relates how he took the shape of "a feather-maker of Blackfriars", in order to gain admission to the Masque; "but they all made light of me, as of my feathers; and wondered how I could be a Puritan, being of so vain a vocation. I answered, "We are all Masquers sometimes".

A passing reference to Anabaptists as "doppers", inhabiting the moon, has been mentioned before in "News from the New World, the Moon".

Again, in the choice of pilgrims for the second antimasque in the Masque of Augurs, Jonson intends to cast a slight on the Puritan sect.

To the satire of the Alchemists and Rosierucians he devotes two whole antimasques. The latter sect came into England from Germany at the beginning of the

seventeenth century. Their creed was partly the same as that of the Alchemists. They were religious idealists, who could find only schism and controversy in the worship of the Church. Dissatisfied with what they held to be <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ sensuous materialism of Roman worship, these purists declared themselves Lutherans; but, instinctively in love with pantheism and the mysteries of intuitive knowledge, they became disciples of Paracelsus; and convinced themselves that they had found out the secret of all knowledge in a system of magic, which penetrated the interior constitution of things. Yearning vaguely for a more spiritual conception of life, they professed to be engaged in the alchemical reconstruction of the world by curing disease, and creating precious metals. Their love of Mysticism was gratified by uniting all such enthusiasts into a secret society to carry out the *magnum opus* under the symbol of the Rosy Cross.<sup>1</sup> Reference was made in "News from the New World" to their college being situated a mile from the Moon; and in the antimasque to the Fortunate Isles Jonson presents a scene of amusing ridicule in the gulling of Merefool, a votary of their order, by Johphiel, "an airy spirit and intelligence of <sup>Jupiter's</sup> ~~Jupiter's~~ sphere".

Merefool has been deserted by his brethren, though

he has carried out all their rules, greatly to his personal discomfort, and yet has not been enabled to call up any ghost, as he would wish. Jophiel brings him a message that the founder of the Order is dead, and has left his office to Merefool.

Now, he assures Merefool, he will be able, through the use of a mysterious tincture, to triumph over all nature. Noticeable in Jonson's ridicule at this point is his unconscious anticipation of the triumphs of modern science, similar to that of Bacon in the New Atlantis, though in an opposite spirit. Merefool will have the power to dive to the bottom of the sea, or

"Dispatch a business

In some three minutes with the antipodes

And in five more negotiate the globe over".

Even now, to satisfy his disappointment, Jophiel<sup>h</sup> will enable him to see whencesoever he will, and immediately the poets Skelton and Skogan appear as the presenters of an antimasque of popular characters from Mediaeval literature, including Elinor Rummig, from Skelton's ballad of that name; Doctor Rat, of "Gammer Gurton's Needle"; Long Meg of Westminster, and others.

Merefool believes confidently in his skill in calling up the ghosts, until he is dis-illusioned



by Joh<sup>h</sup>piel, who reminds him that they are the "company of the players".

In the antimasque to "Mercury Vindicated" Jonson ridicules the claims of the Alchemists to reproduce Nature. The scene is laid in the laboratory of "old Smug of Lemnos". Mercury, escaping from one of the furnaces, tells in an amusing speech, how he suffers from identification with the metal bearing his name, and relates a few claims of the Alchemists. "They will calcine you a grave matron .....and spring up a young virgin, out of her ashes, as fresh as a Phoenix; lay you an old courtier on the coals .....and after they have broiled him ~~with~~ enough, blow a soul into him with a pair of bellows, till he start up into his galliard". He proceeds to give instances of their creations, and the *materials* used.

E.g. for the lawyer:- "I saw.....put into one glass there, adder's tongue, titlebane, nitre of clients, tartar of false conveyance, *aurum* palpabile, with a huge deal of talk, to which they added tincture of conscience with the faces of honesty".

In Beaumont's "Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn," 1613, the practice was begun of introducing a second antimasque. Jonson follows suit in

"Mercury Vindicated", 1615, and henceforth it is the exception to find a Masque with only one antimasque. Popular taste was not however content with two antimasques, and in "Chloridia", there are as many as eight antimasque dances; which fact is indicative of the transfer of interest from the stately poetry of the main Masque to the subordinate appeal of the antimasque. Audiences also demanded the ridiculous element regardless whether or not it bore any relation to the main Masque. There was therefore a danger of the Masque resulting in chaos, but for the efforts of Jonson, who fell back on the scene of satirical comedy as a means of compelling the interest of his audience; and either by the wit of his comic invention, or by the truth of his comic characterisation, succeeded nearly always in rising above the level of mere farce. Though compelled to satisfy Court taste, he does not allow such antimasques as have no relation to the ideas of the main Masque to escape his satire. E.g. The groom in the "Masque of Augurs" fails to see what connexion the suggested antimasque of pilgrims has with the Masque itself. "Oh, sir replies Vangoose, "all de better vor an antickmask, de more absurd it be, and vrom de purpose, it be ever all de better. If it go from de nature of de ting, it is de more art".

And again in "Time Vindicated", Fame complains of such antimasques as would satisfy the Curious, who "only hunt for novelty, not truth", as "fit freedoms

For lawless prentices, on a Shrove-tuesday,  
When they compel the Time to serve their riot;  
For drunken wakes, and strutting bear-baitings,  
That savour only of their own abuses".

Jonson seems to have made his choice of subjects for an antimasque in a satirical spirit at times.

E.g. That of bears and pilgrims in "Masque of Augurs", and that of persons who come out of the cook's pot in "Neptune's Triumph": but in these instances, their "presentment" in a scene of satirical comedy, prevents the unsatisfactory effect resulting from their introduction by inferior writers, who neglect such a "presentment".<sup>1</sup>

To combine the contrasted motives of antimasque and Masque into one coherent scheme was the pride of the poet, and forms the chief claim to success in a writer of Masques. Here Jonson shows his mastery, and nowhere is the close connexion between most of his antimasques and main Masques more apparent than in the study of his moral and didactic aim.

- 1.. Compare Antimasque of baboons in Chapran's Masque of Middle Temple.  
And in Beaumont's Masque of Inner Temple.  
(second antimasque).



To Jonson the grace and charm of poetry was always secondary to the <sup>e</sup>wight of matter, solidity of meaning, significance, and purpose of the thing represented. The purpose of poetry to him is "to inform young men of all good disciplines; inflame grown men to all great vertues; keepe old men in their best and supreme state; or as they decline to childhood, recover them to their first strength;" and the poet is

"The interpreter and arbiter of Nature; a Teacher of things divine no lesse than humane; a Master in manners; and can alone, or with a few, effect the business of Mankind". <sup>1</sup>

Though the Masque is not the most suitable medium for moral teaching, Jonson frequently makes it the vehicle for the fulfilment of his didactic aim; and in this particular he approaches nearer than other writer of Masques to the aim of the mediaeval pageant, and of miracle and morality plays. Amusement and Instruction was not likely to be a popular combination with the pleasure loving courtiers of the Stuart period. King James, and his eldest Son, Henry, were however among the few exceptions, and their taste doubtlessly emboldened Jonson in the

1.. Dedicatory epistle to Volpone. Spingarn 1 . 12.

introduction of this element. He is probably thinking of them when, in his lofty preface to *Hymenaei* he declares that the Masque should have an underlying signification.

"It is a noble and just advantage that the things subjected to understanding have of those which are objected to sense; that the one sort are but momentary and merely taking; the other impressioning and lasting: else the glory of these solemnies had perished, like a blaze, and gone out, in the beholders' eyes. So short-lived are the bodies of all things, in comparison of their souls ..... This it is hath made the most royal princes and greatest persons ..... not only studious of riches and magnificence in the outward celebration or shew .... but curious after the most high and hearty inventions, to furnish the inward parts ... which, though their voice be taught to sound to present occasions, their sense or doth or should always lay hold on more removed mysteries".

In the preface to the "*Masque of Queens*", Jonson clearly formulates his purpose:- "I chose the argument to be 'A celebration of honourable and true Fame bred out of Virtue', observing that rule of the best artist (Horace) to suffer no object of delight to pass without his mixture of profit and example".

He makes Fame the child of Virtue:-

"I was her parent, and I am her strength".  
And "At Fame's loud sound, and Virtue's sight  
All dark and envious witchcrafts fly the light".  
The lesson is plain; Virtue is all-powerful, triumphs  
over her foes, and lives in the mind of man. The  
Masque ends with the song in praise of Fame and  
Virtue already quoted <sup>1</sup>: "who Virtue can thy power forget?

To "Love freed from Ignorance and Folly" Jonson  
adds marginal notes to explain the allegory. The  
"eleven daughters of the morn", sun-worshippers, who  
are grieved "that they might not ever see him", set  
out under the conduct of Love for an island where they  
have heard

"He a palace, no less bright  
Had, to feast in every night  
With the ocean".

On landing they are all imprisoned by Sphynx  
and her troop of Follies, though Love has offered  
himself as their hostage. Their only chance of  
release is that Love shall solve a riddle which  
Sphynx propounds. At first he fails, but by the  
help of the Muses' priests succeeds ultimately.

"In Sphynx," says Jonson, "was understood  
Ignorance, who is always the enemy of Love and Beauty,



and lies in wait to entrap them". The journey, capture and riddle are explained in another note:-

"The meaning off this is, that these ladies, being the perfect issue of beauty, and all worldly grace, were carried by Love to celebrate the majesty and wisdom of the King, figured in the sun, and seated in these extreme parts of the world; where they were rudely received by Ignorance, on their first approach, to the hazard of their affection, it being her nature to hinder all noble actions; but that the Love which brought them thither, was not willing to forsake them, no more than they were to abandon it; yet was it enough perplex'd, in that the monster Ignorance still covets to enwrap itself in dark and obscure terms, and betray that way, whereas true Love affects to express itself with all clearness and simplicity". Continuing in this strain he explains that the wisdom of the Muses' ministers puts to flight Ignorance and Folly, and assists Love in actions of honour and virtue.

Again, The Golden Age Restored contains Jonson's ideal of national life, when under the rule of Justice and her train of didactic poets,

"That Justice dare defend, and will the age  
sustain".

"All virtues shall flourish, and the vices of the Iron Age shall cease. These Jonson incarnates in the antimasque the dancers being Avarice "grandame of all my issue;" Corruption "with the golden hands;" "Ambition, Pride, and Scorn, Force, Rapine, and thy babe last born Smooth Treachery".

There is a similar connexion between anti-masque and main Masque in "Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue" in which Jonson gives expression to the moral that Pleasure must be the servant of Virtue. The gross, homely Comus, the belly-god of Jonson, forms an interesting contrast with the dignified abstraction of Milton; and it is noticeable that Jonson supplies Hercules, the "active friend of Virtue", not Virtue herself, to match his Comus. The last song by Mercury, "an eye of looking back were well," 1 is a beautiful effusion in praise of the search for Virtue.

In Jonson's last period of Masque composition, this lofty ideal is again set forth in the <sup>preface to</sup> ~~Masque~~ "Love's Triumph through Callipolis". He remarks that

" All Representations,

especially those of this nature in court, public

1. See page 9.

spectacles, either have been or ought to be the mirror of man's life, whose ends ...ought always to carry a mixture of profit with them, no less than delight". Accordingly, the purity of English love, typified in the ~~natural~~<sup>mutual</sup> affection of Charles and his queen, is contrasted with its opposite, Sensual love, "in the persons and habits of the four prime European nations", France, Italy, Spain, and Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Besides these instances of moral allusions in the Masques, the single lines are to be noticed, where Jonson expresses always well, and often with epigrammatic terseness some universal moral truth, or gives some point of practical advice.

E. g. "Let narrow natures, how they will mistake,

The great should still be good for their own  
sake".

"They that are bred :

Within the hill of skill,

May safely tread

What path they will,

No ground of good is hollow".

"Man should not hunt mankind to death,

But strike the enemies of man;

1. Castelain 742.



Kill vices if you can:

They are your wildest beasts

And when they thickest fall, you make the gods  
true feasts".

Intimately connected with Jonson's moral and didactic purpose is his choice of abstractions as characters, a survival of the miracle and morality plays.

E. g. Reason is responsible for the celebration of a Marriage, Virtue and Fame join in praise of the Queen.

Jonson was however too shrewd an observer of human nature to rely altogether for his lessons on the bare antithesis of Virtue and Vice, however elevated and poetical the language and the setting. If Folly could be made to blush, she could also be made to wince, and a dreaded instrument, one in the use of which he was already experienced lay ready to hand for this purpose in satire, which he therefore employs in his antimasques.<sup>1</sup>

Through an antimasque or another scene is introduced at times into the Masque after the Revels, the dramatic action of the piece leads up to and has its climax in the entry of the Masquers. This is its purpose, and hence something more is

1 See page 88 *et seq.*

required to fill up the intervals between the dances. This is the function of the songs. They are mostly addressed to the Masquers, rehearsing their noble qualities, calling on them to take rest, or inciting them to fresh efforts, while the last song calls their attention to the morning star or breaking dawn, and summons them away. The management of the lyrics however, proceeds on no uniform rule, and while it is so contrived as to serve the foregoing purpose, the utmost variety prevails in the details. Sometimes the Masque opens with a song; occasionally the lyrical element is predominant throughout as in *Oberon* and *The Golden Age*, but more particularly in his later Masques as *Pan's Anniversary*, *Love's Triumph*, and *Chloridia*. In the Masque of *Lethe* and in the *Vision of Delight* we have a still further predominance of the lyrical element, both being sung "after the Italian manner stylo recitativo,"<sup>1</sup> as Jonson carefully tells us.

None of the songs in Jonson's Masque is unforgettable, but on the other hand they have no supreme excellence, and few rise above a mediocre level of adequacy.<sup>2</sup> Some excuse however must be made in that the songs between the dances necessarily lose

1. Gifford VII p. 274 n.

2. Cambridge History VI p. 12.

any effect of novelty, through their embodiment of the same ideas time after time. In other parts of the Masque, where not confined within such narrow limits, he gives us much better examples of his lyrical power. E.g. The beautiful address to Fire in the opening of Mercury Vindicated:-

"Soft subtle fire, thou soul of art,  
Now do thy part  
On weaker nature, that through age is lamed.  
Take but thy time, now she is old,  
And the sun her friend grown cold,  
She will no more in strife with thee be named.  
  
Look, but how few confess her now,  
In cheek or brow.  
From every head, almost, now she is frightened.  
The very age abhors her so,  
That it learns to speak and go  
As if by art alone it could be righted."

Also his praise of hunting in Time Vindicated, than which no song in all his Masques is finer:-

"Turn, hunters, then,  
Again.  
Hunting, it is the noblest exercise,  
Makes men laborious, active, wise,  
Brings health, and doth the spirits delight,



It helps the hearing, and the sight:  
 It teacheth arts that never slip  
 The memory, good horseranship,  
 Search, sharpness, courage, and defence,  
 And chaseth all ill habits thence".

Its ending is characteristic of the author:- "Man  
 should not hunt mankind to death" <sup>1</sup> etc:

Jonson often strikes a deeper note like this.  
 E.g. in the Masque of Beauty, the song after the first  
 dance:-

"So Beauty on the waters stood  
 When Love had sever'd earth from flood.  
 So when he parted air from fire  
 He did with concord all inspire.  
 And when a motion he them taught,  
 That elder than himself was thought.  
 Which thought was, yet, the child of earth,  
 For Love is elder than its birth".

Or Mercury's song at the end of Mercury Vindicated,  
 in praise of Virtue. Its ending is anticipative of the  
 similar song in *Comus*. <sup>2</sup>

In contrast with these and such songs are the  
 rollicking songs of Christmas in his Masque; and the  
 first chorus in *Pleasure Reconciled* - "Room, room for  
 the Bouncing Belly; <sup>3</sup> or the ribald ballad of *Wison*

1. See page III  
 2. " " 9.  
 3. " " 7.

in the Masque of Augurs; and the song of Cocklorrel in Gipsies Metamorphosed.

Noticeable in these lyrics is the rugged Jonson's delicate treatment of rural beauty. In Pan's Anniversary three nymphs strew the ground with flowers to the accompaniment of the following song:-

"Drop, drop your violets! Change your hues,  
Now red, now pale, as lovers use!  
And in your death go out as well  
As when you lived unto the smell.  
That from your odour all may say  
This is a shepherd's holyday"!

Here is no crabbed erudition, but rather a faint evanescent scent of Shelley's lines upon the violet.<sup>1</sup>

Or again from the Fortunate Isles take the following stanza, where Jonson strikes quite a modern note in the purest of language:-

"The winds are sweet, and gently blow,  
But Zephyrus no breath they know,  
The father of the flowers:  
By him the <sup>L</sup>vargin violets live,  
And every plant doth odours give,  
As new, as are the hours".

Such are the delights which Jonson provides "at his full tables", but they are a few songs among

1. Symonds 278.

many which have grave faults. At times even the slightest similarity of vowel sounds suffices for rhyme; E.g. "forget" rhymes with "feet", "harbinger" with "defer", "rod" with "abroad":<sup>1</sup> at others the arrangement of the lines is awkward, as in the song from *Pleasure Reconciled*, beginning "Ope, aged Atlas open then thy lap", and continuing in 10,10,10,2,2,10,6,6 2,2,4,4,4,4,2,4,6. Often the music of his verse is spoilt by harsh inversion, and at the times the subject is not worth the extravagant expressions in which Jonson embodies it. E.g. of the dances with partners of the opposite sex:-

"The male and female used to join  
 And into all delight did coin  
 That pure simplicity.  
 Then Feature <sup>did</sup> to Form advance,  
 And Youth called Beauty forth to dance,  
 And every Grace was by:  
 It was a time of no distrust,  
 So much of love had nought of lust,  
 None feared a jealous eye.  
 The language melted in the ear,  
 Yet all without a blush might hear  
 They lived with open vow.

1. Castelain 755.



Each touch and kiss was so well placed,  
They were as sweet as they were chaste,  
And such must yours be now".

It is liable to fall off in inspiration; often he begins a song with a thrill of true poetry, and after a few lines his wings droop, and the expression degenerates into commonplace, though his thought is still maintained on a vigorous and manly note.

In ~~an~~ ease of management and divine spontaneity Jonson's lyrics are inferior to those of Shakespeare and Fletcher, but they have a definite quality of their own. They fall below Spenser's heavenly music and Herrick's bacchic ecstasy, but no lyrics before them are so terse, so marked by dominant intelligence, so aptly fitted to the purpose. If they have not the exquisiteness of Shakespeare or Fletcher, it can hardly be expected from a writer of so different a mould. These lyrics, rather than Shakespeare's, struck the keynote of the Seventeenth Century; and we find, even in Milton's supreme handling of studied lyrical verse, at least as much of Jonson as of Shakespeare or Fletcher. <sup>1</sup>

Jonson's learning was quite unapproached by that of any contemporary <sup>dramatic</sup> poet, and it supplied him

1. Symond's Ben Jonson.

with an inexhaustible store of characters and situations to be incorporated into his Masques. He studied the classics under Camden, and acquired from him also a love of learning for its own sake. His reading comprised Greek philosophers, Roman historians and poets, and embraced in the latter class all the less known writers. Added to this was his knowledge of mediaeval Latin literature. He was ~~acquainted~~ acquainted with the Italian poets of the Renaissance, with the mystic researches of Agrippa and Paracelsus, and with the satire of Erasmus and Rabelais. He was also an admirer of his predecessors in English prose, and knew the drama from its beginning. In accordance with the tradition of the later Renaissance, he preferred to seek the material for the devices of his Masques in classical mythology, and for his choice of characters, he is ready to quote authorities. The elaborate notes which he appends to some of his Masques for this purpose are evidence of the extraordinary extent of his learning. He confesses in the dedicatory letter to Prince Henry prefixed to the Masque of Queens that "it hath proved a work of some difficulty to me, to retrieve the particular authorities (according to your gracious command, and a desire

born out of judgement) to those things which I writ  
out of fulness and memory of my former readings:"  
but that "now I have overcome it, the reward that  
meets me is double to one act: which is, that thereby  
your excellent understanding will not only justify  
me to your own knowledge, but decline the stiffness of  
others' original ignorance, already armed to censure".  
In the words of Dryden:- "He invades authors like a  
monarch, and what would be ~~left~~ theft in other poets  
is only victory in him". In all but four of his  
Masques he employs characters from classical  
literature, mythological or otherwise; and his situations  
include numerous episodes from the same source. His  
Hymenaei for instance shows his familiarity with the  
most minute details of a Roman wedding ceremony, and he  
combines this with the epithalamial hymns of Catullus.  
The same faculty for alchemising a scholar's knowledge  
into poetry is displayed at large in the antimasque  
of witches in the Masque of Queens. For this production  
Macbeth suggested the motive, and the whole of the writin  
on the black art ancient and mediaeval supplied the  
details.

The Graces' description of Cupid in the Hue and Cry  
is taken from an idyll of Moschus, and, though Jonson



adds some details of his own, his version remains in the spirit of the original.

In the antimasque to Neptune's Triumph, several fragments from the Attic play<sup>w</sup>rights are turned to account in a controversy between poet and cook on their respective arts. <sup>1</sup>

The Masque of Oberon is introduced by a dialogue ~~on~~ between Satyrs, Sylvans, and Silenus, starting from Virgil's Sixth Eclogue, and interweaving the mythology of Pan and Bacchus with that of northern fairyland. In the Masque of Augurs he turns to account the pious rites of Rome. He quotes innumerable passages in support of the most minute details. The following lines in the same Masque from Apollo's song are explained by four quotations from the classics:-

"Far-shooting Phoebus,<sup>\*</sup> he  
That can both he<sup>76</sup>art and heal,<sup>\*</sup> and with his voice  
Rear towns, and make societies rejoice;  
That taught the ~~Meuse~~ Muses all their harmony,  
And men the tuneful art of augury.<sup># //</sup>

So in the dress equipment of characters in Hymenai, the "saffron-colour'd robe" of Hymen, his wreath of roses and marjoram and "torch of pine tree", the torch of whitethorn, the spindle and distaff of the

1. Symond's Ben Honson.

camilli are all supported by references to classical authors, as are again the herbs and equipment of the witches in the Masque of Queens.

It must be admitted that allusions which required so much explanation to render them intelligible to the reader must have been quite lost upon the majority of spectators; and we are not surprised to find writers, whose scholarship was less profound, affecting to despise such recondite accomplishments. "Whosoever strives", says Daniel in the introduction to the Masque of the Twelve Goddesses, "to shew most wit about these Puntillos of Dreames and shows, are sure sick of a disease they cannot hide, and would fain have the world to think them very deeply learned in all mysteries whatsoever .....And let us labour to shew never so much skill or art, our weaknesses and ignorance will be seen, whatsoever covering we cast over it".<sup>1</sup>

Again in the Preface to the Reader prefixed to "Tethys Festival":—"And for these figures of mine, if they come not drawn in all proportions to the life of antiquity, (from whose tyrannie I see no reason why we may not emancipate our owne images), yet I know them such as were proper to the business and discharged those parts for which they served, with as good

1. Grosart 111 196.



correspondence, as our appointed limitations would permit". <sup>1</sup>

To his acquaintance with Agrippa and Paracelsus is due his satire on Alchemists and the black art; While to his predecessors in poetry his Masques owe several obligations. To Lyly and his Euphuism is to be traced their continual and often ridiculous flattery, and to the Morality plays his love of abstractions as characters. But there are also numerous suggestions and parallels between particular Masques and the compositions of the older poets. The opening episode in Pan's Anniversary where nymphs scatter flowers describing them, and singing a hymn in the god's honour was suggested by a similar episode in Love's Metamorphosis, <sup>2</sup> where four nymphs deck the altar of Ceres with garlands to the accompaniment of a song. <sup>3</sup>

The proclamation of Venus while searching for Cupid in the Hue and Cry is reminiscent of a similar proclamation of Diana while searching for Cupid in Galatea.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Grosart*  
~~Ibid~~ 111. 307

<sup>2</sup> Lyly. Love's Metamorphosis 1 ii.

<sup>3</sup> Reyher 140.

<sup>4</sup> Lyly. Galatea 111. iv.



In the same Masque, the forging of the sphere by Vulcan for Venus, and the song of Hymen's priests to the accompaniment of the Cyclops' music suggests Sappho and Phaon, where Vulcan at the command of Venus, forges Cupid's arrows to the accompaniment of a song.<sup>2</sup>

The fundamental idea in the Masque of Hymen was probably suggested by the allusions to the storming of the Fort of Reason, or the Castle of Temperance by the passions in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.<sup>3</sup>

Jonson's debt to Macbeth for his inspiration for the witches' scene has been already mentioned; his Robin Goodfellow of *Love Restored* is the same plain country sprite as Puck in *Midsummer Night's Dream*; and one cannot read *Oberon* without comparing it with the fairy element of the same play.

In the *Fortunate Isles*, the gulling of Merefool by Jochiel<sup>h</sup><sub>A</sub> <sup>4</sup> is similar to Ariel's conduct of the drunken crew in the *Tempest*, or to Puck's fooling of Demetrius and Lysander.

Peele, Lyly, and Shakespeare had drawn all that was possible from fairy lore, and in Jonson they found an apt pupil.

1. Lyly. *Sappho and Phaon* IV iv.
2. Heyer. 140.
3. Spenser. *Faerie Queene* II, iv, 34; IX, XII et suiv;
4. *The Fortunate Isles*.

In the Golden Age Restored and the Fortunate Isles reference is made to others of his predecessors. By his introduction of Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Spenser into his ideal Golden Age, Jonson shows the high estimation in which he held these writers. Mention has also been previously made of his introduction of Skelton and Skogan, and the ballad of Elinor Rummie, as further evidence of his knowledge of popular mediaeval literature.

Jonson is the most successful as he is the most prolific writer of Masques, and his achievements furnish evidence almost unsurpassed in its fulness as to the fecundity and versatility of his poetic genius. The inexhaustible variety of his Masques is their chief characteristic. With the classical basis of his plots he skilfully blends incidents of later legend and history. Only two Masques - The Triumph of Neptune and The Fortunate Isles - are similar in plot, and in these two he uses the same main plot with different antimasques. Nor does he ring the changes on a few characters from classical mythology. Saturn, Pallas, Diana, Hercules, appear only once; Jupiter, Juno, Vulcan, Apollo twice; Hymen three times; Venus four; and Cupid, upon whose influence all such amusements depend for their existence, only ~~eight times~~ <sup>1</sup>.  
~~1. Castelain 731.~~



eight times.<sup>1</sup>

But Jonson was, in the main, aided to such variety by the use of the antimasque, in the development of which his keen observation of men and manners bears fruit. He was student, tradesman, soldier, traveller abroad and at home, poet, dramatic author, and purveyor of Court amusement, so that the turns of speech, the manners and customs of all classes were familiar to him. This experience of life is responsible for his power of conception and reproduction of character, which in the Masques takes a humorous turn. No matter what condition of life he portrays, whether it be the affected courtier, the business man, the Puritan, or the representative of the working class: whether he is exposing the futility of the Alchemists' researches, or the foolishness of the Rosierucians' mysticism, all his pictures of life stand out in relief, are presented to the life, and there is not one line in his sketch either too many or too few. Whatever he did, he threw all his strength into it, and never allowed himself to be hampered by doubts as to the importance of any literary labour; and to this quality is traceable his Elevation and Definiteness of Purpose. No Masque-writer has shown a higher conception of his task. To please was

1. Castelain 751.



necessary, but mere transitory applause was never his goal. "It is a noble and just advantage that the things subjected to the understanding have of those which are objected to sense". <sup>1</sup>

Conscious of the sterling stuff of these compositions, he chafed at the precedence in popular esteem, which was naturally given to the architect on such occasions. He thought that the poet, whose invention was the soul of such splendid trifles, deserved the lion's share of fame; and without Jonson's work in this sphere, the Masque would be of but little value! those far more superb pageants of Florence and Venice are forgotten because they lacked the services of a sacred bard. This same thoroughness shows itself in his skill of construction and substantial strength of edifice. His productions have been compared to a solidly built house without the scaffolding<sup>re</sup> moved, <sup>2</sup> but the attainment of this quality is responsible for the two worst faults of his Masques, viz: excessive classical allusion, and abuse of allegory.

Not content with the employment of classical deities as representatives of Virtues and Vices, Jonson creates other characters of his own such as Peace, Fame, Folly, Virtue, Reason. The use of such abstractions

1. Preface to Hymenaei.

2. Courthorpe's History of English Poetry. Vol. IV.

is common to the several countries in which the Masque developed simultaneously, and for long was counted a beauty of poetical composition, whereas, in reality, it destroys all life.<sup>1</sup>

Another fault is the lack of elegance and grace in the composition of his works. Wherever argument or observation of life are necessary to be reproduced Jonson is at his ease, but in passages of fancy and imagination the effect is mostly only mediocre. The comparisons, images, and sentiments lack individuality, and are common to all the amorous and courtly poetry of the age. But in spite of these faults, Jonson's Masques are superior to the productions of all other writers in the same sphere. Though they may be superior to him in lyrics, they are inferior in any pleasantry, and the antimasque degenerates rapidly. They lack method in composition, whereas in Jonson there is always a kind of unity, and as a whole his Masques are better constructed than any others.

2

Jonson has been called a prose Aristophanes, and in his Masques he is certainly more Aristophanic than any other English writer. His serious lyrics have none of the splendour of the imaginative chorusses of Aristophanes, but on the contrary are Horatian in restraint and classical dignity; on the side of full-

1. Castelain 753.

2. Reyher 353 "Jonson n'est pas seulement un Labiche ou un Scribe qui aurait du style; c'est pour ainsi parler un Aristophane en prose". - 128 -

blooded humanity however, and of intense appreciation of life in the coarsest and commonest types, and of wonderful knowledge of contemporary men and manners, Jonson matches even Aristophanes. Moreover, in the rollicking energy of his lyrics of the gutter, and in his long prose harangues, the challenging insolence and swagger of the Aristophanic parabasis is more than suggested.<sup>1</sup>

The union of his vast learning, ingenuity, and creative vigour accompanied by beauty impart a lasting value to many of these inventions of his fancy, called forth, as they were, by a taste artificial indeed, but neither ignoble in itself, nor degrading to the poet, who ministered to its demands.

1. Cambridge History VI 362.



To Daniel belongs the distinction of having composed the first Court Masque ~~Masque~~ of the reign of James I. His Vision of the Twelve Goddesses, dedicated to Lucy Countess of Bedford, was produced 1604, and is marked by its patriotic purpose, viz:--

"to present the figure of those blessings which this mightie Kingdome now enjoys by the benefite of his Most gracious Majestie; by whom we have this glory of peace, with the accession of so great state and power".<sup>1</sup>

The conception of the Masque is characterised by its great care. It consists of a procession of classical goddesses, typifying the blessings of the kingdom, to the Temple of Peace, where they offer gifts, and Sibylla, the priestess, prays for their continuance. Daniel was of a reserved and sensitive nature, consequently he contrived to escape criticism by presenting the "Vision" as a dream, the senses of the audience being charmed by Sleep; "dreams are never in all points agreeing right with waking actions; and therefore were they aptest to shadow whatsoever error might be herein presented."<sup>2</sup> He defends his choice of the goddesses similarly, and quotes authorities for the personification

1. Dedicatory Letter.

2.

"

"

of Sleep and his mother Night.

In composition the Masque is stiff; there is no real dialogue, and the characters are merely introduced for the recital of set speeches. The characteristic of the verse is its quiet grace, but the lyrics are apt to be spoilt by enumeration and repetition.

E.g. "For we deserve, we give, we thank:

Thanks, Gifts, Deserts thus join the rank".

or "Whilst Gratitude, Rewards, Deserts,

Please, win, draw on, and couple hearts".

Drayton said of Daniel:-

"His rhymes were smooth, his metre well did close,

But yet his manner better fitted prose".<sup>1</sup>

This is true of this Masque. The poet has his chance only where Sibylla describes the goddesses with the aid of a "prospective". The two short speeches in prose by Iris the "presenter" are better than his verse, and are characterised by clearness, simplicity, and a current of pure flowing language.

It is interesting to compare it with even the first of Jonson's Masques, that of Blackness. The Vision is, in the main, a description of the Masquers. Jonson needs no description, for the audience is sufficiently prepared for their appearance by the story he sets forth. The difficulty of finding an

1. Of Poets and poesie.



adequate motif is thus solved by the invention of a fiction, the dramatic exposition of which fulfils all the requisite conditions, and set speeches such as that of the Sybil are no longer necessary.

Daniel's own opinion of the Masque was that "it was not inferiour to the best that ever was presented in Christendom".<sup>1</sup>

A second production, "Tethys' Festival or the Queens Wake" was presented in 1610 on the occasion of the Investiture of Henry as Prince of Wales. Messengers from Tethys, Zephyrus, and Triton, accompanied by a troop of "Naydes", make known the design of Tethys.

"t'adorne the day,  
With her al-gracing presence, and the traine  
Of some choice nymphs, she pleas'd to call away  
From severall Rivers".

The naydes from the antimasque, after which Tethys and her nymphs appear in a change of scene, surrounded by a strange combination of whales, dolphins, sea-horses, and cherubim.

Daniel adopts an original device in presenting a final and peculiar scene, "to avoid the confusion

1. Dedicatory Letter.



which usually attendeth the dissolve of these shewes": the Masquers return in their proper habit.

This Masque presents no advance on his former work, and in freeing himself from the tyranny of the ancients gives us a production of merely mediocre quality.

Daniel had not the necessary ingenuity in power of invention for a Masque-writer, nor had he the high aim and lofty conception of the poet's part which Jonson had. He is content to become the mere expositor in words of the architect's design. He humbly regarded his work as the requisite illustration of fair spectacles which passed away and were forgotten with the pleasure they afforded.

Masques are <sup>things</sup> wherein the only life consists in shew"; the writers are "Poor Imaginers for shadows and frame only images of no result"; their work is "the least part and of least note at the time of the performance thereof".<sup>1</sup>

The writer whose merits assign him the place next to Jonson as a Masque writer is Campion.

His "Maske in honour of the Lord Hayes and his bride" was presented on Twelfth Night 1607, and treats of the change of Apollo's Knights into their own shape again, having been turned into trees

1. Preface to the Reader prefixed to Tethys Festival.

by Cynthia for over-boldness with her maidens.

They then dance in honour of the marriage. Though yet the antimasque had not been introduced, there is a feeling of opposition in Cynthia's complaint of the loss of one of her virgins, and in the dance of the trees before their transformation.

In 1613 followed the most elaborate of his works, the Lords' Masque, presented on February 14th in celebration of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine. It opens with a piece of well-imagined symbolism; Orpheus obtains the release of Entheus' "Poetick furie" from imprisonment by Mania, whose "Franticks" supply the first antimasque. Entheus is the presenter of the main Masque, in which the legends of Prometheus are utilised. The Masquers are of both sexes; men transformed from stars typifying the fire stolen from heaven, and women of Prometheus' formation, whom Jove has turned into statues. The dances are interrupted by a "set piece" of elaborate splendour, from which "a high vast Obeliske dedicate to fame" is drawn forth by Sibylla, who prophesies prosperity to the wedded pair. Her speech is in Latin verse, and the gist is contained in the following lines:-

"Additur Germaniae

Robur Britannicum: ecquid esse par potest"?



His last Masque, presented on December 26th of the same year in honour of the marriage between the Earl of Somerset and the notorious Frances Howard, is a slighter piece, and in its conception Campion was manifestly influenced by Jonson's "Love freed from Ignorance and Folly". Four Squires as messengers bring news of the disasters which have happened to a body of twelve Knights from all quarters of the earth, who have assembled on the continent at the news of the wedding. They have been assailed by

"Deformed Errour, that enchanting fiend,  
And wing-tongu'd Rumour, his infernall friend,  
With Curiositie and Credulitie  
Both Sorceresses",

in their journey to England, and through the agency of these evils, six Knights have been taken away by lightning, and the remaining have been changed on landing to pillars of gold. These appear in their recovered shapes as Masquers, while the evils, winds, elements, and quarters of the globe supply the first antimasque, the second consisting of sailors.

The Entertainment of the Queen by Lord Knowles 1613 completes Campion's work in this sphere. The



texture of the piece is slight; the character of a cynic is introduced, who with little difficulty is won over to a proper state of mind by a traveller who provides the grotesque element, and in whom Campion satirises the affected traveller of the age. "For my owne part (I thank my starres for it) I have been laught at in most parts of Christendome".

In all his Masques Campion depends for his effect far more on Inigo Jones than does Jonson. The latter feels instinctively for some situation which he must explain, and which has in it a logical development involving some slight dramatic interest.

Campion merely adorns the stage-carpenter's ingenuities with beautiful songs and poetic recitative. In his treatment of the antimasque his want of dramatic apprenticeship shows itself; he was quite incapable of introducing any dramatisation, and one looks in vain for such delightful scenes as Jonson weaved into his Masque of Queens or News from the New World, or Mercury Vindicated etc. Where the latter knew the necessary degree of coherence that a Masque would admit of with advantage, Campion's plots are either slightly invertebrate or slightly complicated.

They abound however with lyrical gems, and the whole verse is of a high order of beauty. The

combination of Orpheus and Entheus to dignify the wedding ceremonies of the Princess Elizabeth is specially suited to *Campion's* Masques. He was himself a musician of no mean order, and wrote the music in addition to the words of his Masques. What he says of his "Ayres" is equally applicable to the former:- In these English Ayres I have chiefly aimed to couple my Words and Notes lovingly together, which will be much for him to doe that hath not power over both". <sup>1</sup> His songs are full of <sup>charm</sup> ~~colour~~ and grace, and lack the redundancy of phrase which tempted most of the lyricists of his day. They also show great freedom in choice of Metre, and rare elegance of diction. These characteristics are due to his musical ear, and the feeling for musical effect, which were also responsible for his fluidity of rhythm. As examples of the musical quality of his verse may be mentioned the first stanza of Orpheus' song in the *Lords' Masque*, beginning

"Come away: bring thy golden theft;" <sup>2</sup>  
 or the smooth and rapid rhythm of

"Advance your chorall motions now;" <sup>3</sup>  
 or again the longer metre of

"Dance, dance, and visit now the shadowes of our  
 joy". <sup>4</sup>

1. *Campion's Works* Edited by Vivian. p. LVii.

2. *Ibid* 92.

3. *Ibid* 93

4. *Ibid* 99.



In style Campion was one of the last of the Euphuists, but his Euphuism is of a refined sublimated type, which on analysis may be reduced to an unemphatic balance or antithesis in structure of sentence.

For example:-

"Flora hath perfumed it for you  
(Flora our Mistress and your servant)  
Who invites you yet further into her  
Paradise; shee invisibly will leade  
Your grace the way, and we (as our dutie  
is) visibly stay behinde". <sup>1</sup>

His balance of character is exemplified in his Masque in honour of Lord Hayes wedding, where Flora and Zephyrus correspond with Cynthia and Night. He gives an occasional illustration from natural history.

E.g. "Virginitie is a voluntary powre

Free from constraint even like an untoucht flower  
Meete to be gather'd when 'tis throughly blowne"  
or a rare moral touch

e.g. "Life is fullest of content

Where delight is innocent". <sup>3</sup>

In comparison with Jonson's Masques, Campion's show greater lyrical beauty and airy daintiness. There is not the tendency to overdo the subject and its

1. Entertainment at Caversham House.
2. Mask in honour of Lord Hayes.
3. Ibid



consequent heaviness in effect. Though inferior as a whole to Jonson, his plots are treated with a more liberal hand and with greater imagination. But the appeal of the poet is quite different. There is none of Jonson's underlying moral purpose in Campion's productions, he is content that his Masques shall satisfy the passing taste of his audience. Taking his Masques as a whole however, he is only prevented from equalling Jonson in that he wrote fewer of them.<sup>1</sup>

Jonson told Drummond that besides himself, only Fletcher and Chapman could write a Masque. We possess, however no indication of any attempt by Fletcher, and the single example which Chapman has left us, hardly bears out this assertion.

On the next night to that on which ~~Chapman's~~ Campion's Lords' Masque was presented, Chapman's Masque of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn was performed to grace the same solemnity. It is interesting for the resplendent procession of those taking part, from the House of the Master of the Rolls in Chancery Lane to Whitehall.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to Campion's, it is full of semi-dramatic matter, and of quaint, picturesque, yet fantastic detail, differing from the beautiful

1. Cambridge History VI 354.

2. See page 17.

detail of the Lords' Masque. It is founded on historical fact, viz: the attempt to colonise the newly-found Virginia in 1606, and Virginian princes are introduced as the Masquers from a mine of gold, in adoration of the setting sun. In obedience to Eunomia, the priest of the goddess Honour, around whose temple the scene is laid they transfer their

"Superstitious worship of these Suns,  
Subject to cloudy darkenings and descents".

to

"this our Briton Phoebus, whose bright sky  
(Enlighten'd with a Christian piety)  
Is never subject to black Error's night,  
And hath already offer'd heaven's true-light  
To your dark region".

The subject was a very suitable one for elaboration into a Masque, but Chapman cannot be said to have made the most of it. The lyrics are disappointing and commonplace. He chooses two of the best themes, sunrise and sunset, for sympathetic treatment, but quite spoils his attempts by the introduction of rather abject flattery of the King, making the sun merely an illustration of his greater light and power. Even when describing the mere phenomenon of nature



he quite fails:-

"Descend fair Sun, and sweetly rest,  
In Tethys' crystal arms thy toil;-  
Fall burning on her marble breast,  
And make with love her billows boil".

To compare this with Milton's description beginning

"Now came still evening on" is fatal to Chapman.

The verse all through is but mediocre; while the flattery which is made the purpose of the Masque hampers any development which might have been effected in incident.

Capriccio, a "man of wit" is the presenter of the first antimasque. He wears a pair of bellows on his head, and carries a spur in his hand, presumably "to show I can puff up with glory all those that affect me .....and...spur-gall even the best that contemne".

Satire on the Puritans is introduced in Plutus' reply to contemptuous invective:.

"Sinful? and damnable? What, a Puritan?

Those bellows you wear on your head show with what matter your brain is puffed up sir; a religious forger I see you are, and presume of inspiration from these bellows; with which ye study to blow up the settled government of Kingdoms".



Chapman's conception of the antimasque is quite different from Jonson's. In all other Masque-writers the contrast between the characters of the Masque and the antimasque is rarely kept up, and the latter is held to serve its purpose if it relieves the stiffness of the set dances by its less elaborate ones. But Chapman goes further. "Antimasque" he spells with an e - "Antemasque; and the prose dialogue he calls a "low induction"; the dance of his antimasque of baboons he says, "was antic and delightful". His conception of the antimasque makes it rather like the farce of the modern theatre.

His work was obviously influenced by Jonson. If 1612 be the date of Love Restored, it is probable that Chapman borrowed his semi-dramatic "low induction" from the opening scene in which Plutus and Robin Goodfellow figure. The cult of Phoebus corresponds to that of the sun in the Masques of Blackness and Beauty; and the moving island on which the Masquers have arrived is borrowed from the Masque of Beauty.

But Chapman differs from Jonson in that he is not fond of showing his vast classical learning. His Masque is instinct with the influence of the classics, but there are only three direct references, one to the changeable Proteus, another to the disasters

which befell Ulysses, and a third to the fate of Sisiphus. As an example of Chapman's style the Masque is defective. The conventional introduction of gods ~~is~~ and goddesses is apt to cause bombast; the flattery of the King often spoils an author's only chance of poetic ~~el~~ elaboration in the songs. Forced to submit to the narrow limitations of the subject, the poet's ~~part~~ merely depends upon ingenuity, and little scope is afforded for the display of poetic talent and power.

Beaumont's Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn was intended to follow on the next night i.e. 16th February, but owing to the King's fatigue it was postponed until the 20th. The Masquers arrived in an elaborate procession by water, just as the performers of the previous Masque by land. Jupiter and Juno join in celebration of the union of the two rivers Thamesis and Rhine, while Mercury brings down Jove's Knights to participate in the Olympian games which he has revived in honour of the marriage. The plot is flimsy, and the interest is centred in the antimasques presented by Mercury and Iris respectively. Beaumont points out that the first antimasque of Naiads, Hyades, Cupids, and Statues is "not of one kind, or livery (because that had been so much in use heretofore) but as it were in consort, like broken music".<sup>1</sup>

1. "The Device or Argument of the Masque". Evans 90.



This innovation tended still further to break up the Masque into a variety entertainment. For the second antimasque Iris "intoken that the match shall likewise be blessed with the love of the common people", bids Flora bring in "a May dance, or rural dance, consisting likewise not of any suited persons, but of a confusion or commixture of all such persons as are natural and proper for country sports".. Then the second antimasque "rush in, dance their measure and as rudely depart": the dancers represent a "Pedant, May-Lord, May-Lady, Serving-man, Chambermaid, a country clown or Shepherd; Country Wench; an Host, Hostess; a He-Baboon, She-Baboon; a He-Fool, She-Fool".<sup>1</sup> "The music", writes Beaumont, "was extremely well fitted, having such a spirit of country jollity as can hardly be imagined; but the perpetual laughter and applause was above the music.....It pleased his Majesty to call for it again at the end, <sup>all</sup> as he, likewise for the first antimasque; but one of the statues was by that time undressed".<sup>2</sup>

The words of the Masque are quite subordinate to the music and scene arrangement, but as poetry it is

1. Evans 95.
2. "



characterised by the grace and <sup>felicity</sup> facility of its style which is quite free from bombast and flattery; by the facility of its construction; and by the ease and grace of its diction. The dialogue throughout and the few short lyrics show the art of sweet expression in familiar language. He is at times very happy in phrases and epithets which seem to fall unconsciously from his pen:

E.g.

"Iris, we strive

Like winds at liberty, who should do worst  
Ere we return".

Or his simple but majestic description of Jove:-

"Whose eyes are lightning, and whose voice is thunder  
Whose breath is any wind he will; who knows  
How to be first in earth as well as heaven".

In 1617 William Browne of Tavistock produced for his law friends his Masque of the Inner Temple, which is the only one composed specifically for Court entertainment. In unity of conception the work surpasses all others of the Seventeenth Century. Browne chooses for his subject the episode of Ulysses and Circe,<sup>1</sup> a fable which lends itself admirably to the widely different <sup>e</sup>ffects of the Masque and antimasque. In his use of the story the author

1. Odyssey Ch. X.

combines that of the defeat of Acrasia in the Bower of Bliss by Sir Guyon, related by Spenser,<sup>1</sup> but alters each of his originals, or adds details of his own where it suits his purpose. He follows Spenser more closely, however than Homer. Like the former he employs some influence to act on the behalf of Ulysses, and Triton takes the place of the Palmer in the Faerie Queene.

"'Tis she (i.e. Tethys) whose favour to this Grecian lends, And to remove his ruine Triton sends".

The animals, comrades of Ulysses, and victims of Circe's enchantment, supply the first antimasque: they are of different kinds as in Spenser, and among them is Grillus, the Grylle of the Faerie Queene: they are discovered in a wood, whereas, in the Odyssey, all Circe's victims are pigs and inhabit a sty. Further, like Spenser's Verdant, Browne's Ulysses and his crew are discovered asleep under a tree: on the contrary in Homer, Odysseus does not succumb to Circe's charms. The setting, in which the Masquers and antimasquers are discovered, is a bower opening out of a woodland glade. Here Browne has evidently taken hints from the scenes through which Sir Guyon and the Palmer pass to the Bower of Bliss.

1. Faerie Queene 11 Xii.



The style of the work, like that of the pastorals, is simple, and well adapted to the setting of the piece. He shows great command over metre in the continual alteration of his always musical rhythms; the harmonious songs of the Syrens are charming: and here and there in the dialogue he adds some sententious phrase which gives a slightly deeper tone to the passage. In his description of the island of Aëtea he introduces pictures of his native county, and peoples them, as in his *Britannia Pastorals*, with fairy inhabitants.

"Yonde stands a hille crown'd with high waving trees,  
Whose gallant toppes each neighb'ring cuntrye sees,  
Under whose shade an hundred Sylvans playe,  
With gaudy nymphes farre fairer than the daye;  
Where everlastinge springe with silver showres  
Sweet roses doth increase to grace our bowres;  
Where lavish Flora, prodigall in pride,  
Spends what might well enrich all earth beside,  
And to adorne this place she loves so deare,  
Stays in some climates scarcely halfe the yeare.  
When, would she to the world indifferent bee,  
They should continuall Aprill have as we".

As well as the subject of the Masque, his style shows his study of Spenser in the very frequent use



of a final "e" mute, a double final consonant, or such archaisms as "tynde", "passine", and the continual "y" for "i": he follows him too in the <sup>te</sup>often stiff arrangement of his sentence, especially with regard to the position of the prepositional phrase, and in the use of explanatory epithets or phrases in brackets. Though similar in style, the Masque differs from the pastorals in its unity; the story is concise, and well thought out, whereas in the latter it is loosely constructed, and often the author seems not to know what to say next.

The finely-written enchantment of Circe, which drives away sleep from Ulysses, reminds one, says Warton, "of some favourite touches in Milton's Comus, to which itn perhaps gave birth. Indeed..... a Masque thus recently exhibited on the story of Circe, which there is reason to think had acquired some popularity, suggested to Milton the hint of *Aa* Masque on the story of Comus. It would be superfluous to point out minutely the absolute similarity of the two characters: they both deal in incantations conducted by the same mode of operation, and producing effects exactly parallel".<sup>1</sup> To the Masque Milton perhaps owed a few of his ideas. For example, the Passage on Circe and the Sirens agrees with Browne's

1. Chalmers English Poets. Vol. VI. Life of W. Browne.

similar idea:-

"I have oft heard

My mother Circe with the Sirens three

Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades

Calling their potent herbs and baleful drugs".

Browne takes the same liberty in making the Sirens companions of Circe and inhabitants of her isle.

Moreover, Echo sings in the Masque. Hence, and from one or two coincidences of expression such as "Circe daughter of the Sun", and Browne's "Mighty Circe, daughter to the Sun", the supposition that Milton read the Masque. In other details, however, common to Milton, Browne, and their common parent Spenser (e.g. in their employment of the beast-victims of Circe), it is difficult to fix upon Milton's original. This difficulty is enhanced by the fact that Browne's Masque was performed when Milton was only twelve, and that it remained in Manuscript till 1772.

Excepting an anonymous Masque of Flowers, 1614, and the Masque of Heroes by Middleton, 1619, both of which are without interest except in their novel antimasques,<sup>1</sup> no more Masques are produced

1. The antimasque of the Masque of Flowers consists of the trial of a challenge sent from Silenus to Kawasha "that wine is more woorthy than Tobacco, and cheereth man's spirit more, the same to be tried at two several Weapor Song and Dance". Songs take the place of the usual dar for the first part of the antimasque, and the ordinary dance by other characters follows. Middleton has an amusing introduction ridiculing the popular belief in lucky and unlucky days: two antimasques follow, one of Candlemas Day, Shrove Tuesday, &c., the other of Good, Bad, and Indifferent days. 149 -



but by Jonson until after the latter's quarrel with Inigo Jones, on the production of *Chloridia*, consequent on Jonson's maintenance of the equality of the poet with the architect in importance. The immediate cause of the estrangement was the placing of the name Jones after that of Jonson on the title-page of *Chloridia*, thus:-

"The Inventors, Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones". Through Jones's influence at Court his former collaborator was henceforth ignored, while Townsend, Carew, Shirley, and D'Avenant became the purveyors of the Court Masques. To their introducer they all are exceedingly courteous, willingly yielding the palm to his mechanical skill. Townsend writes:- "The subject and allegory of the Masque with the descriptions and appearances of the scenes were invented by Inigo Jones".<sup>1</sup> The others also write in a similar strain. Such deference led Jones to remark sarcastically that "Painting and carpentry are the soul of the Masque".<sup>2</sup> Hence it is not surprising to find in these writers the poetic merit together with elaboration of the scenic element. Shirley lays stress on the decay of the Masque as a literary composition:-

"Things go not now

By learning; I have read, 'tis but to bring

1. Preface to *Temple Restored*.

2. *An Expostulation with Inigo Jones* Gifford VIII p. 111



Some pretty impossibilities, for antimasques,  
 A little sense and wit disposed with thrift,  
 With here and there monsters to make them laugh;  
 For the grand business, to have Mercury  
 Or Venus' dandiprat, to usher in  
 Some of the gods, that are good fellows, dancing,  
 Or goddesses, and now and then a song,  
 To fill a gap:-a thousand crowns, perhaps  
 For him that made it and there's all the wit".<sup>1</sup>

Townsend composed two Masques, Albion's Triumph and Temple Restored both 1632. They are replete with absurd flattery and gallantry. The theme for the second Masque is the fable of Circe, but, in comparison with Browne's beautiful version of the story, is a complete failure. The subject is taken from the "Ballet de la Reine" 1581, written by Baltazarin de Beaujoyeulx, and the author follows his original very closely, replacing some of the former characters by Stars, a probable reminiscence of Campion's Lords' Masque. Their interest is centred wholly in the elaborate staging.<sup>2</sup>

In 1633 appeared Fynne's Histriomatrix, in which he voiced the opinions of the Puritanical party on the Masque and drama in general. In it he complains of the immorality to which the Masques at

1. The Royal Master; quoted by Ward 111 p. 193 n 3.  
 2. Rayher 201.

court gave rise, and especially the participation of the Queen and her ladies in such theatricals in which dances and disguise were the chief amusement.<sup>1</sup>

In 1634 was performed before their Majesties Shirley's Masque "The Triumph of Peace" by the lawyers of the Inns of Court. Six antimasques were presented by Fancy, and the dancers were a motley crew, consisting among of others of drunkards, gallants, projectors, beggars, owls, &c.

That Shirley was conscious of the degeneracy of the Masque is evident from the quotation before cited,<sup>2</sup> but instead of reforming it, he is content to continue to gratify public taste for the elaborate antimasque, which however he seems to do in a demi-apparent spirit of satire.

"How many antimasques ha' they? asks Fancy, of what Nature?

For these are fancies that take most; your dull  
And phlegmatic inventions are exploded;

Give me a nimble antimasque.

Opinion. They have none, sir.

.....

Fancy. No antimasque!

Bid 'em down with the scene, and sell the timber,

1. Bayher 306.

2. See page 150



Send Jupiter to grass, and bid Apollo  
Keep cows again".

The Masque itself was designed as a rejoinder to the strictures of Prynne: Peace, Law, and Justice are represented as descending from heaven to pay their court to the King and Queen.

Fifteen days later *Coelum Britannicum* by Carew was performed. It is marked by a fervour of patriotism and personal devotion to the King and Queen, and answers the attack of the Puritans by the expression of the ideal condition of both Court and Kingdom under the Monarchs' rule. The plot which Carew weaves for this purpose is highly ingenious. The "exemplar life" of Charles and Henrietta Maria

"Hath not alone transfus'd a jealous heart  
Of imitation through your virtuous court,  
By whose bright blaze, your palace is become  
The envy'd pattern of this under-world;  
But the aspiring ~~fire~~ flame hath kindled heaven,  
Th' immortal bosoms burn with emulous fire,  
Jove rivals your great virtues, royal sir,  
And Juno, Madam, your attractive graces;  
He his wild lusts, her raging jealousies  
She lays aside, and through th' Olympic hall  
As yours doth here, the great example spreads".



Jupiter has determined to disband all the constellations, the stellified victims of his lust, "so to remove all imputation of impiety from the celestial spirits, and all lustful influences upon terrestrial bodies".

"Heaven is no more the place it was; a cloyster of Carthusians, a monastery of converted gods", continues Morus, and recites a list of new regulations in heaven, which are intended to compliment Charles and his queen on their chastity, temperance, justice, &c: The rejected stars as monsters and vices perform their parts in three antimasques, after which a free election is made to the vacant seats in the firmament. The claimants Wealth, Poverty, Fortune and Pleasure, who introduce themselves in their respective antimasques, are resolutely rejected, while the King, Queen, and courtiers are chosen. After an eighth antimasque of "Picts", the "natural inhabitants of this isle", the Masquers, "ancient worthies of these famous isles" perform the dances interspersed with songs by the three Kingdoms England, Scotland, Ireland. Then appear Religion, Truth, Wisdom; Concord, Government, Reputation; Eternity in a final scene of flattery to the Monarch.

Schelling aptly characterised this Masque as forming "chaos inert". It is much too long, and without the more important appeals to eye and ear is tedious. This is somewhat redeemed by the author's ingenuity, he introduces several contemporary political allusions into the speeches, and gives a high rhythmical quality to the lyrics. In Mercury's replies to the allegorical characters of the antimasques the blank verse is often of a high quality, but the succession of speeches one after the other gives the work a stiff artificiality and want of life.

A study of the Seventeenth Century Masque is not complete without mention of Milton's *Arcades* and *Comus*, but this is hardly the place for a detailed treatment of those works. It will perhaps suffice to consider them in their relation to the Masque proper. Both belong to the outdoor entertainment, a species which is akin to the pastoral, and pastoral resembles the Masque because by its conventions it is undramatic. *Arcades* is a fragment composed in 1634 for the entertainment of the Dowager Countess of Derby at Harefield, and consists of three songs and a single speech. It contains the germ of *Comus*, where the fragmentary conception is developed into a complete and



organised whole, in which the machinery of the Masque is employed for the poetical expression of a sublime moral idea. Like Arcades, Comus had its origin in the courtly and complimentary requirements of the occasion. It was an entertainment given in honour of the return to their home of two sons and a daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater, who in 1634, as President of Wales, was residing at Ludlow Castle. The parts were taken by the children of the Earl, and by Henry Lawes, the composer of the music. Lawes was in the service of the Countess of Derby, Lady Bridgewater's mother, and was a friend of Milton's. He probably enlisted Milton's services for the Masque, in which he himself acted the Attendant Spirit. It is well known that a story was current at a comparatively late date to the effect that the foundation of the work rests on a real incident. According to this tale the two brothers and their sister, being on their way to Ludlow from the house of some relatives in Herefordshire, were benighted in Haywood Forest. It cannot be doubted that Milton was indebted to the work of his predecessors and contemporaries. Taking the leading idea of Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess (as the genius of the wood in Arcades, and the Attendant



Spirit in Comus) he connected this with the return home of Lord Bridgewater's children, by employing for the plot of his Masque some of the incidents in the Old Wives Tale of George Peele, where two brothers and a sister falls into the power of an enchanter. Out of this he ~~evael~~ evolved the highly elaborate episode of the Enchanter, Comus, and his brutish rout; a piece of mythology in which many of the details are drawn from the story of Circe in the Odyssey, but many are the fruit of Milton's own fancy. The Lady, the representation of Purity in distress; the Attendant Spirit, the episode of Sabrina; the use made of the herb Haemony are all adapted from Fletcher's play. Milton may have been acquainted with Jonson's Pleasure Reconciled, in which Comus is one of the characters; but the former's dignified abstraction is very different from the rollicking and realistic belly-god of Jonson. The concluding lines of the Spirit's epilogue express the main idea of the poem:-

"Mortals that would follow me,  
Love Virtue. She alone is free:  
She can teach ye how to climb  
Higher than the sphery chime:  
Or if Virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her".

In its presentation, Milton keeps to the outlines of the fully-developed Masque. Cornus as presenter, and his attendant rout form as it were an antimasque; The country dancers who enter in the last scene correspond to the Masquers: and their dances are interspersed with two songs. He also employs changes of scene, but transformations are absent. The lyric portions are among the poet's noblest verse, and the dialogue rises at the climax of the moral interest to almost matchless beauty.

In this production, pastoralism takes the highest form it can assume, and Milton's genius has created a poem of the greatest originality. Its unity of conception and action is unbroken throughout, and nothing can be more skilful than the manner in which the beauty of the music and the romance of the scene painting are blended with antiquarian learning. Its atmosphere of literary pastoralism gives an ideal charm to the realities of English landscape and history.<sup>1</sup>

With D'Avenant, the last Masque-writer is reached, and his productions illustrate the concluding stage of decay in this species of amusement before its final disappearance. They are all flat, tame, and tedious,

1. Courthorpe 111. p. 392.



robbed of the adjuncts of scenery, costume, and music, in which D'Avenant recognised the main appeal of the Masque, and that his own share was but secondary. As a natural consequence his characteristics are the over-elaboration of the antimasque, and the succession of transformation scenes. In his first Masque, the Temple of Love, the antimasque consists of seven entries; in his last work, Salmacida Spolia, two antimasques, one with twenty entries, and their dancers comprise a perfect medley of characters. His style is characterised by his favourite quatrain, employed in Gondibert, a stanza which Scott criticises as "a stately and harmonious verse; a quality of poetry totally neglected by the followers of Cowley". He chose this metre because he "believed it would be more pleasant to the reader in a work of length, to give this respite or pause between every stanza....than to run him out of breath by continued couplets". His use of alternate rhyme, he says, adapts the words better to music; and "the brevity of the stanza renders it less subtle to the composer and more easy to the singers".<sup>1</sup> His Temple of Love was presented by the Queen and her ladies on Shrove Tuesday 1634, and the subject was Platonic love, a court fad, which had arrived with the Queen from France, where Margaret of

1. D'Avenant Works Prefatory Memoirs.



Valois had made it known, and had shown how licentiousness of conduct was compatible with its practice.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that D'Avenant did not believe in it, and knew too well its dangers and abuses. He dare, not however, attack it in a Masque, especially one in which the Queen was taking part. Hence he is careful to avoid expressing any opinion; and the Masque is a gay, discreet, and prudent little satire on the subject; merely a preliminary attack on what was soon to feel the full force of his powers in his Platonic Lovers, where, instead of ridiculing the practice, he exposes its dangers and abuses.

The Triumph of the Prince D'Amour is a slighter piece and was presented 1637, by the members of the Middle Temple for the entertainment of the Palatine princes, Charles Lewis and Rupert. During the performance the scene changes four times, and the only interest is in the second antimasque in which Love in European countries is satirised after the manner of Jonson's Love's Triumph through Callipolis.

Britannia Triumphans 1638 celebrates the great deeds of "Britannocles, the glory of the Western World". The dialogue between Imposture and Action previous to the antimasque contains reflections on the Puritans. The second antimasque takes the form of a mock romance,

1. Harrison. Platonism in English Poetry. p. 156.

and its purpose is to show the valorous exercise of the "Old Heroic Race". A giant is represented, against whom a Knight fights for his lady, and the whole scene is an amusing parody on the old romances. D'Avenant obtains exactly their style by his amusing archaisms and slang. E.g:-

"Then I perceive I must lift my pole,  
And deal your love-sick noddle such a dole,  
That ev'ry blow shall make such a clatter,  
*Men* ten leagues off shall ask Hah! what's the  
matter?."

Or by his interjections and alliterations:-

"But keep thy blustering breath to cool thy brot  
In the main Masque, *Fame* and *Galatea* combine to sing the King's praises. There are five transformation scenes. *Salmacida Spolia*, 1640, was the last Masque which Charles and his Queen witnessed, and it contains clear allusions to the unsettled state of affairs. Discord is represented as endeavouring to disturb the country, and calls up her three furies for the purpose; but their motions are charmed by the secret power of Wisdom (i.e. the King), and for his success in restoring calm, Pallas rewards him by sending down the queen from heaven.

All these tributes to Charles's justice and



virtue as King present a strange contrast to the land's actual state of disaffection. The same year the storm of rebellion broke, and on the following Twelfth Night and Shrovetide, the Banqueting Hall was enveloped in darkness and silence. In 1642 came the ordinance for the suppression of stage plays, and though not affecting the Masque directly, it now fell into disuse and became dead, though not before its time. The equilibrium between its various elements, so finely adjusted by Jonson had been lost, and it became merely a pageant; the poet's part had become nothing more than a connecting link between the various transformation scenes; pantomime had developed in the antimasque to the <sup>prejudice</sup> ~~produce~~ of the dances, and still more to the literary part of the Masque. Jonson's delightful scenes of comedy had degenerated; and, worse than all, the inspiration of its poets had failed.

But though dead itself, traces of the Masque remained. In the altered conditions of the public stage after the Restoration, its influence is palpable at once: to the Whitehall pageant of the previous generation may be ascribed an influence in the introduction of movable scenes and woman actors, by D'Avenant, primarily from France.



But chiefly its influence is felt in the development of the spectacular, at the expense of the dramatic element, which distinguished the two Patent Houses from the pre-Restoration stage. Early in its history the practice had been begun of introducing a miniature Masque into a stage play,<sup>1</sup> and when it was found that this hit the popular taste, the practice became more and more frequent. Then when the theatres were re-opened, the demand for scenic display burst forth with renewed vigour, and operatic additions were resorted to, to make even Shakespeare's plays attractive to a popular audience. We cannot therefore be surprised that no serious effort was made to revive the Masque after the Restoration.<sup>2</sup>

Its attractions gave way to those of the regular drama, to which the Court itself resorted; and consequently, like a child's plaything, it was laid aside for a fresh novelty.

1. An instance is afforded in *The Nature of the Four Elements* 1519, the title-page of which, after giving directions for the shortening of the piece if desired, provides that "also if ye lyst ye may bringe an a dysgysinge". In non-dramatic literature magnificent examples of the processional Masque are furnished by Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in the Masque of Seven Deadly Sins l iv, and the Masque of Cupid lll Xii; while in the drama Shakespeare's *Tempest* lv; *Henry VIII* i. 4; *Romeo and Juliet* l iv, v; Fletcher's *Women Pleased* lll lll; Shirley's *Cardinal* lll ii may be cited. Reyher p. 497 gives a complete list of plays containing Masques from 1588 to 1795.
2. Evans liv.

# APPENDIX A.

The Bill of Account of the Hole charges of the Queen's  
Maske at Christmas 1610<sup>1</sup>.

Imprimis, to Mr. Inigo Johnes as appeareth by his bill	238.16.16
Item to Mr Confesse, upon his bill for the 12 fooles	16. 6. 6
Item, to his taylor, for making the suits as appeareth by his bill	8. 0. 0.
Item, for 128 yards of fustian to lyne theire coats att 10 <sup>d</sup> the yeard	5. 6. 8.
Item, for 87 ownces of coper lace, at 18 <sup>d</sup> the ownee and 6 ownces at 20 <sup>d</sup> the ownee, used for the eleven preests gownes & hoodes, w <sup>th</sup> shoues & scarfs	7. 0. 4.
Item, for 24 yards of riband to beare their lutes at 12 <sup>d</sup> the yeard, & one dozen at 2 <sup>d</sup> the yeard	1. 8. 0.
Item, to the taylor for making those gownes & hoodes	4. 0. 0.
Item, to the 11 preests, to buye their silke stockings & shoues at £2 a peece	22. 0. 0.
Item, for 3 yards of flesh collered satten, for Cupids coat & hose at 14s the yard	2. 2. 0.
Item, for 26 yards of callice, to lyne the preestes hoods, at 20 <sup>d</sup> the yeard	2. 3. 4.
Item, to the taylor, for making and furnishing Cupids suite w <sup>th</sup> lace & puffs	1.10. 0.
	<u>308.14. 3</u>

S ma tot  
Rewards to the persons employed  
in the Maske.

Imprimis, to Mr. Benjamin Jonson, for his invention	40. 0. 0.
Item, to Mr. Inigo Johnes, for his paynes & invention	40. 0. 0.
Item, to Mr. Alfonso, for making the songes	20. 0. 0.
Item, to Mr. Johnson, for setting the songs to the lutes	5. 0. 0.
Item, to Mr. Thomas Lupo for setting the dances to the violins	5. 0. 0.
Item, to Mr. Confesse, for teaching all the dances	50. 0. 0.
To Mr. Bochen, for teaching the ladies the footing of 2 dances	20. 0. 0
To the 12 musicians, that were preestes, that sange and played	24. 0. 0.
Item, to the 12 other lutes that supplid, & w <sup>th</sup> played lutes	12. 0. 0.
Item, to the 10 violences that continually practized to the Queen	20. 0. 0.
Item, to four more that were added att the Maske	4. 0. 0.
Item, to 15 musicians that played to the pages & fooles	20. 0. 0.
Item, to 13 hobages & sack butts	10. 0. 0.
Item, to 5 boys that is 3 Graces, Sphynks & Cupid	10. 0. 0.
Item, to the 12 fooles that danced	12. 0. 0.
	<u>S ma tot 292. 0. 0.</u>

1. Cunningham Life of Inigo Jones.



Further received from the King's Wardrobe of  
Sir Roger Aston

Imprimis, of severall collered taffite, for 12 fooles & 3 Graces, 52 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> ells att 17s. the ell	44. 8. 3.
Item, of crimson taffite, for the 11 preestes amounting to 55 ells & Mr. Confesse his coats being in the number at 17s. the ell	46.15. 0.
Item, watched Satten, for the preestes hoods and gorgettes, 26 yards 3 quarters att 15s. the yeard	19.19. 9.
Item, of taffite sarsnett, for scarffs to girde their gownds, being 18 ells at 8d. the ell	7. 4. 0.
	<u>118. 7. 0.</u>
S ma tot	
Total charge	719. 1. 3.

(Signed) T. Suffolke E. Worcester



# APPENDIX B.

## Chronological List of Masques extant in print 1604-1640.<sup>1.</sup>

Date of P.	Author	Masque
1604	Daniel	The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses.
1605	Jonson	The Masque of Blackness
1606	Jonson	Hymenaei
1607	Campion	Masque in honour of the Lord Hay and his bride.
1607	Marston	Lord and Lady Huntingdon's entertainment of the Countess of Derby
1608	Jonson	The Masque of Beauty
1608	Jonson	Masque at the marriage of Viscount Haddington
1609	Jonson	The Masque of Queens
1610	Daniel	Tethy's Festival or the Queen's Wake
1611	Jonson	Oberon, the Fairy Prince
(1611)	Jonson	Love freed from Ignorance and Folly
(1611)	Anon.	The Masque of the Twelve Months
1613	Campion	The Lord's Masque
1613	Chapman	The Masque of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn
1613	Beaumont	The Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn
1613	Campion	Entertainment to the Queen at Caversham House
(1613)	Jonson	Love Restored
1613	Campion	Masque at the marriage of the Earl of Somerset
1613	Jonson	The Irish Masque
1614	Anon.	The Masque of Flowers
(1615)	Jonson	Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists
1616	Jonson	The Golden Age Restored
1617	Jonson	The Vision of Delight
(1617)	Browne	Inner Temple Masque
1617	Jonson	Lovers made Men
1617	White	Cupid's Banishment
1618	Anon.	The Masque of Mountebanks
1618	Jonson	Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue
1619	Middleton	The Inner Temple Masque or Masque of Heroes.
1621	Jonson	News from the New World discovered in the Moon.
1622	Jonson	Masque of Augurs
1623	Jonson	Time Vindicated to Himself and to his Honours
(1623)	Jonson	Pan's Anniversary, or the Shepherd's Holiday
1624	Jonson	Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion

Date of P.	Author	Masque
(1625)	Jonson	The Fortunate Isles and their Union.
1631	Jonson	Love's Triumph through Callipolis
1631	Jonson	Chloridia: Rites to Chloris and her Nymphs
1632	Townsend	Albion's Triumph.
1632	Townsend	Temple Restored
1634	Shirley	The Triumph of Peace
1634	Carew	Caelum Britannicum.
1635	Davenant	The Temple of Love
1636	Davenant	The Triumphs of the Prince d'amour
1636	Kynaston	Corona Minervae
1636	Anon.	The King and Queen's Entertainment at Richmond
1638	Davenant	Britannia Triumphans
1638	Anon.	Luminalia, or the Festival of Light
1638	Nabbes	A Presentation intended for the Prince's Birthday
1640	Cockayne	Masque at Bretley
1640	Davenant	Salmaeida Spolia.



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