

The English Masque **Felix E. Schelling (1908)**

HAD Ben Jonson never lived, the English masque would scarcely need to be chronicled among dramatic forms. For despite the fact that mumming, disguising, and dancing in character and costume were pastimes in England quite as old, if not older, than the drama itself, it is to Jonson that we owe the infusion of dramatic spirit into these productions, together with the crystallization of their discordant elements into artistic unity and form. Generically, the masque is one of a numerous progeny, of more or less certain dramatic affiliation. Specifically, a masque is a setting, a lyric, scenic, and dramatic framework, so to speak, for a ball.¹ It is made up of "a combination, in variable proportions, of speech, dance, and song;" and its "essential and invariable feature is the presence of a group of dancers . . . called masquers."² These dancers — who range in number from eight to sixteen — are commonly noble and titled people of the court. They neither speak nor sing, nor is it usual to exact of them any difficult or unusual figures, poses, or dances. Their function is the creation of "an imposing show" by their gorgeous costumes and fine presence, enhanced by artistic grouping, and by the aids which decoration and

1 Soergel, Die englischen Maskenspiele, 1882, p. 14: "die Maske war anfänglich nicht mehr als ein improvisirter Maskenball."

2 Evans, The English Masque, 1897, p. xxxiv.

scenic contrivance can lend to the united effect. On the other hand, the speech of the masque, whether of presentation or in dialogue, and the music, both vocal and instrumental, were from the first in the hands of the professional entertainer, and developed as other entertainments at court developed. The masque combined premeditated with unpremeditated parts. The first appearance of the masquers with their march from their "sieges" or seats of state in the scene, and their first dance — all designated the "entry" — was carefully arranged and rehearsed; so also was the return to the "sieges" or "going cut," and this preparation included sometimes the preceding dance. The "main," too, or principal dance, was commonly premeditated, as in Jonson *Masque of Queens*, where the masquers and their torchbearers formed in their gyrations the letters of the name of Prince Charles. Between the "main" and the "going out," two extemporal parts were interpolated, the "dance with the ladies" and the "revels," which last consisted of galliards, corantos, and la voltas. It was in the development of the "entry" and the "main" that the growth of the masque chiefly consisted.

The masque will thus be seen to be distinguished by very certain limitations. Its nucleus is always a dance, as the nucleus of the "entertainment" is a speech of welcome, and that of the "barriers" a sham tournament. Jonson employs these terms with exactitude; but it is not to be supposed that either before

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1 Cf. with Jonson *Masque of Queens, his Entertainment of the Two Kings at Theobalds, and his Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers*. Gifford, Jonson, vi, 469; and vii, 103 and 147. See, also, Bacon's accurate use of these terms, *Essays*, ed. Wright, 1887, 156-158.

or after Jonson's time was the term 'masque' used with precision. To most of his predecessors and contemporaries a masque meant any revel, masking, or disguising, from a visit such as that of Henry VIII and his courtiers in mask to the palace of Wolsey, immortalized by Shakespeare,¹ to imaginative, mythological interludes like Heywood's *Love's Mistress* or Dekker and Ford's *Sun's Darling*. Indeed, even belated moralities such as the *Microcosmus* of Nabbes were included among masques. In a full recognition of the precise significance of the term masque, we may deny that title, with Soergel and Brotanek, to Milton's beautiful *Comus*; because the dancers and actors are here probably the same persons and not divers as in the true masque.² But in view of the looseness of the employment of the word as a term in its day, and the intimate relations of the masque in origin and growth with the numerous *ludi*, disguisings, mummings, and other like entertainments, its predecessors, the subject may be considered here with some latitude, and in no absolute neglect of the various congeners that accompanied it.

It has been customary time out of mind to regard the masque as an exotic by-form of the court entertainment, come out of Italy and introduced to the court of Henry VIII as a choice novelty;³ and much dependence has been placed on a quotation from Hall, wherein we learn: "On the daie of the Epiphanie at night, the kyng with XI other went disguised, after the maner of Italie, called a maske, a

1. *Henry VIII*, 1, iv.

2. Soergel, 78; Brotanek, "Die englischen Maskenspiele," *Wiener Beiträge*, xv, 1902, p. x.

3. Soergel, 12.

thyng not seen afore in Englande."¹ But there is little that seems novel in the description that follows, nor anything that differs in any material respect from other descriptions of like proceedings by Hall, both before and after; unless it be, as has recently been pointed out, a new element of dancing and conversation between the masquers and selected spectators.² Brotanek explains that the novelty in this case was in the costume, not in the form of the entertainment. Cunliffe finds the novelty that impressed Hall in the circumstance that the masquers "desired the ladies to daunce," and that the masquers and spectators "daunced and commoned together." As to the foreign influence suggested, these authorities likewise fall apart; Brotanek claiming that it is to France rather than to Italy that we should look for analogues to the later masque; Cunliffe offering many early Italian analogues of Tudor mumming, disguising, and dumb shows.³ But we need not here look so far afield. The masque in the height of its development falls into two readily distinguishable and contrasted divisions, the first, performed by costumed but unmasked personages, in nature dramatic; while the second, presented almost wholly by the masked and professional

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participants, is lyrical and musical. Brotanek finds the model for the first in the costumed speeches of welcome and farewell which were offered

1 Hall, *Chronicle* (1548), ed. 1809, p. 526. This was in the third year of Henry's reign, 1512.

2 Brotanek, 64-68; Cunliffe, "Italian Prototypes of the Masque and Dumb Show," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xxii, 1907, pp. 140-156. Chambers, i, 401; and *ibid.* 391, on the early connection of the masque with the Feast of Fools, and the exuviae worn by the rout of "worshippers at the Kalendae."

3 Brotanek, 283-302.

Queen Elizabeth on her numerous progresses into the provinces of her realm. For the second he takes us back to the masked visitations and dances which had formed a popular variety of courtly amusement from the days of King Edward III downward.¹ Nor does he deny the complex influences of riding, procession, pageantry, and holiday revels in offering models, precedents, and suggestions to this most graceful and effective of dramatic by-forms.

Interesting as is the subject, none of these origins of the true masque concerns us here, or we might assign to John Lydgate, about 1430, the credit of giving a literary bias to the mumming of his time; trace disguisings into early Tudor days, tell of the rich and elaborate pageantry which sometimes accompanied them there; and dilate on the rejoicings of Christmas, New Year, Twelfth Night, Candlemas, Shrovetide, and May Day, all regarded as naught without masking and disguising.² Nor did the maskings of Elizabeth's earlier days differ so much in kind as in degree, although the queen added to the occasions for these shows by her frequent progresses into the provinces, where her nobility vied with her civic entertainers, each to outdo the other in novelty and cost.

If definite points in the development of these forerunners of the masque must be named, one was certainly the elaboration of the Earl of Leicester's devices on the famous occasion of his entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth in 1575.³ For this

1 *Ibid.* 138.

2 On the mummings of Lydgate, see Brotanek, 305; and *Anglia*, xxii, 364; and above, p. 74; and see, especially, the pageants on the betrothal of Prince Arthur and Katharine of Aragon, 1501, *Shakespeare Society's Papers*, i, 47-51.

3 Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, 418-526; and Schelling, *Gascoigne*, 63-71.

purpose some half dozen poets were assembled, among them Gascoigne, Hunnis, and Mulcaster, and the literary and even the dramatic elements were no less a matter of forethought than the feasts and the fireworks. Three years later, when her majesty was entertained at Norwich, we find Thomas Churchyard using comedy as a foil, interspersing amongst his songs and speeches a "dance with timbrels," and "a heavenly noyse of all kinde of musicke," besides employing the device of a canvas cave to effect the sudden appearance and disappearance of nymphs in unexpected places, all of which suggests the grand ensemble of poetry, music, dancing, and stage carpentry in which the later triumphs of Jonson and Inigo Jones were soon to consist.¹ Sir Philip Sidney, too, had his part in the

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development of dramatic elements in the entertainment and the "barriers" or tournament. In 1578, as the queen was walking in Wansted Garden, Leicester's seat in Waltham Forest, she was regaled with a lively little pastoral idyl, *The Lady of May*, in place of the customary formal speech of welcome. Here was dialogue in prose and contest in song, comic relief in Master Rombus, the pedant, but no dancing.² *The Lady of May* is a pastoral, for such was the mode of the moment, and Sidney rode always on the crest of the wave of his time. No less a step in advance were the sumptuous devices accompanying the mock tournament of 1581, likewise referable to the taste and inventive talents of Sidney. The barriers and entertainment thus advanced; the development of the true masque was to come later.

In 1594, "betwixt All-Hollantide and Christmas," was celebrated at Gray's Inn the most elaborate

1 Nichols, *Elizabeth*, ii, 180-214.

2 *Ibid.* ii, 94-103.

"Christmasing" of English annals.¹ A "Prince of Purpoole," as he was called, was chosen to rule over the revels, and solemnly surrounded with all the insignia of mock royalty: nobles, counselors, officers, guards, family, and followers. Proclamations, the reception of foreign embassies, the levying of taxes, reception of petitions, creation of knights, even a trial—all were sagely parodied; and this stately fooling was interlarded with feasts, dancing, masking, and at least one play.² This last was "a Comedy of Errors, like to Plautus his Menechmus," played by "a company of base and common fellows," who were brought in as a last recourse when things were in confusion and going badly. Wherefore the night "was ever afterwards called the night of errors."³ But it is the masques of the *Gesta Grayorum* that claim our present attention. They are three: *The Masque of Reconciliation*, wherein was represented the friendship of Graius and Templarius, come to offer sacrifice together upon the altar of the Goddess of Amity; secondly, *The Masque of the Helmet*, a stately allegorical device in which Prince Purpoole's Knights apprehended Envy, Malcontent, and other "monsters and miscreants;" and thirdly, *The Masque of Proteus and the Rock Adamantine*, the composition of Francis Davison, compiler of *The Poetical Rhapsody*, and Thomas Campion, the musician and lyricist.⁴ This last was performed before the queen, who graced the

1 *Ibid.* iii, 262-352. The proceedings really continued until Shrove Tuesday, March 3, 1595.

2 *Ibid.* 279; and Ward, ii, 27 n.

3 Nichols, *Elizabeth*, iii, 279-281.

4 See *ibid.* iii, 281, 297, 309. On the externals of these Masques, see Brotanek, 340.

court of Prince Purpoole with her royal presence on Shrovetide evening, 1595. It opens with a "hymn in praise of Neptune sung by Nymphs and Tritons" attendant

on Proteus, who comes to fulfill a pact with the Prince made long since. An Esquire narrates in verse how the Prince, returning along the sea from his victory over the Tartarians, surprised Proteus asleep, and though the sea god assumed various fair and loathsome shapes, succeeded in holding him fast until he promised as ransom to remove the adamantine rock that lies beneath the arctic pole and to transport it whither the Prince might will, assured that "the wild empire of the ocean would follow the rock wherever set." But this is to be fulfilled only on condition that the Prince on his part bring Proteus into the presence of a power "which in attractive virtue" shall "surpass the wonderful force of his iron-drawing rock," the Prince offering that he himself and seven of his knights shall be inclosed within the rock as hostages. The upshot is obvious. Elizabeth's is the "attractive virtue" which draws all hearts. Proteus strikes the rock, and the knights, issuing forth, dance with the ladies their "galliards and courants;" and the performance ends with a second song, "the while the masquers return into the rock."

Space has been given to the description of this masque because it constitutes the type out of which the later masque was to grow. In both productions the structural order is song, dialogue, and the entry of the masquers, followed by the dances and the closing song. *The Masque of Proteus* well presents, too, the moment of surprise, so effectively to be employed in later times, when the rock opens at the stroke of the "bident" of Proteus and the masquers issue forth.

The entertainments of the latter years of Queen Elizabeth exhibit little that is novel or to any extent contributory to the history of the masque. With the accession of James came a new order of things. The worn and exacting old queen was succeeded by "the British Solomon," with his known penchant for learning and poetry; and the poets and scholars accordingly burst into a chorus of adulation. Nichols lists no less than three and thirty tracts in verse and prose, inspired by the accession and coronation of the new monarch and more than a score of "miscellaneous eulogistic tributes to King James and his family," most of them of the earliest years of his reign.¹ Daniel was early in the field with a lengthy *Panegyric Congratulatory* delivered at Burly-Harington, before James had reached London; and Jonson soon after devised the pageants of the royal welcome in the city and the "*Panegyre*" on the session of the king's first parliament.² But neither with these nor with the devices and pageants of his coronation and his progresses, which he continued after the manner of his predecessor, are we here concerned. For with the reign of James begins the speedy development of the masque, which soon outstripped in elegance, elaboration, and artistic value all other entertainments at court. The masques of the reign of King James are no less remarkable for their learned ingenuity than for their originality and splendor; for if the frivolous nature of Queen Anne of Denmark lent them vogue, the pedantry of her royal spouse often determined their character.

In A Particular Entertainment of the Queen and

1 Nichols, James, i, p. i.

2 Ibid. 121; Gifford, Jonson, vi, 433. Dekker seems likewise to have been concerned in these pageants.

Prince Henry at Althrope on their way to join King James, Ben Jonson struck, for the first time, that rich vein of poetic fancy which was to distinguish his more regular masques. His material, a satyr surprised in his haunts by the royal train and a dancing bevy of fairies, contained nothing new.¹ But the dramatic humor of the satyr's altercation with the fairies and their turning on him presaged the antimasque to come. The second masque on this occasion was a slighter affair, in which the old satirical figure of Nobody with the popular morris dance was utilized.²

The first true masque of the reign was Samuel Daniel's *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, presented at court by the queen and her ladies, January 8, 1604. One end of the presence chamber was fitted to represent a mountain on which was "the Temple of Peace, erected upon four pillars, representing the four virtues, that supported a globe of the earth." About this temple and on the mountain were grouped twelve goddesses and graces from "Juno, in a skycolor mantle embroidered with gold and figured with peacock's feathers," to Tethys, "in a mantle of sea-green, with a silver embroidery of waves and a dressing of reeds," presenting a trident. After an introduction in which Night awakens her son, Somnus, who is sleeping in a cave at the foot of the mountain, Iris descends, delivers a message and a "prospective" (surely a crystal rather than a telescope) to Sibylla, "decked as a nun in black upon white;" and Sibylla, viewing the goddesses as they successively descend in her glass, describes each in fitting verse. All having reached the floor, move in procession to the upper end of the hall

1 Ibid. 439.

2 Cf. *the old comedy of Nobody and Somebody*, printed in 1606.

before the throne, sing a song, and the dances, alternating with other songs, follow. The masque ends with a return of the masquers to their first position on the mountain.¹ In this masque of Daniel's we have not, as has been maintained, the earliest regular masque, for none of the elements that constitute it are wanting to the two masques of the *Gesta Grayorum* already described.² And, besides, with all its allegory, classical lore, costume, tableaux, music, and dancing, the production is void of the least vestige of drama. It was the author of the *Alchemist*, not the author of *Philotas*, who raised the masque to a place in dramatic literature, as it had been those tuneful lyrists, Campion and Davison, who first wrote an English masque in regular form.

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Jonson's career as an entertainer at court began, as we have seen, in the year of the accession of King James. It lasted until 1631, within a few years of the time of his death. During a period of some thirty years Jonson composed no less than nine entertainments, three "barriers," two antimasques, and three and twenty masques proper, these latter constituting more than twice as many as were written by all his competitors and imitators combined. Jonson contributed more than twenty masques to the thirty-seven of James' reign; Campion, Daniel, and perhaps Marston alone, writing more than one each among his rivals.³ Nor was Jonson's primacy in the masque grounded alone in the quantity of his work.

1 Grosart, *Daniel*, iii, 204.

2 Above, pp. 98-101.

3 The manuscript of the *Masque of Coleorton*, reprinted by Brotanek (328-337), suggests the possibility that some of the private masques of Jonson have perished. He paid no attention to his later works.

His masques are what Daniel's never were—dramatic,—what Chapman's failed to be—genuinely inventive,—what Townsend and Davenant strove for in vain, that is, supereminently poetic. In short, they were rivaled but once by Campion, and by Francis Beaumont, and once again by William Browne. Several classifications of the masque are possible. We might consider its form, with the growth and degeneracy of the antimasque. We might treat of the masque mainly with reference to its costly and gorgeous performance and the august occasions to which it lent its novel splendors; or we might turn our attention to its material and divide it, with Brotanek, into groups, mythological, astronomical, mythological-allegorical, allegorical-romantic, and allegorical-historical, did not the saving grace of humor forbid.¹ It is safest to tell the story of the Jacobean masque in simple chronological order.

*Daughter
of Niger*



*Torchbearer of
Oceania*



On January 6, 1605, the first of Jonson's masques, *The Masque of Blackness*, was acted at Whitehall. It formed part of Queen Anne's entertainment of the Duke of Holstein, her brother, and on the same day Prince Charles was created Duke of York. Moreover, the queen was herself one of the masquers, and had suggested to Jonson his subject, a masque of blackmoors.² On this hint the poet conceived the idea of twelve "negrotes" (the masquers), who appear in mid-ocean, ranged "in an extravagant order" on a floating concave shell, and attended by Oceaniae (the light bearers), by Niger, Oceanus, tritons, and other sea monsters. They are seeking a land, foretold by prophecy, wherein their darkened skins shall be changed to fairness. Britannia is that land, and the

¹ Brotanek, 182-222

² Gifford, *Jonson*, vii, 6.

miracle is wrought. Here for the first time is disclosed the scenic art of Inigo Jones, long to be associated with Jonson in such devices. In *The Masque of Blackness*, unlike what had gone before, a regular scene was set at one end of the hall representing "a landscape consisting of small woods," and this "falling," an artificial sea flowed in, "raised with waves which seemed to move. . . . The masquers were placed in a great concave shell like mother of pearl, curiously made to move. . . . and rise with the billows," and the horizon, on a level with the stage, was drawn by the lines of perspective.¹ Here was a step in scenic representation, the greatest of its time. Yet be it remembered that Jonson had already alluded familiarly to "a piece of prospective" in *Cynthia's Revels*, acted by the Children of Paul's at least three years before.²

Jonson's next effort was *Hymenaei, or the Solemnities of Masque and Barriers at a Marriage*, that of the young Earl of Essex to Lady Frances, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk. This is one of the most gorgeous and elaborate of entertainments and a departure from precedent in presenting a double set of masquers, the men as Humors and Affections, the ladies as attendants on Juno. In his prefatory words Jonson notes how "royal princes and greatest persons . . . [are in these shows] not only studious of riches and magnificence in outward celebration, . . . but curious after the most high and hearty inventions to furnish the inward parts: and those grounded on antiquity and solid learning."³ And accordingly

¹ *Ibid.* 6-9.

² *Cynthia's Revels*, Induction; and see above, p. 173.

³ Gifford, *Jonson*, vii, 45.

he embroiders his page with an elaborately learned commentary on the suggestions which he has gleaned from the classics, a practice which fell in alike with his own taste and that of his learned sovereign, and one which his rivals failed not to mark for the shafts of their wit.¹ *Hymenaei* is an allegory in which the Humors and Affections issuing from a microcosm or globe figuring a man, offer to disturb the rites at Hymen's altar, whereat Reason interferes. Thereupon Juno

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appears seated in state and splendor above the "rack" of the clouds, Iris and her rainbow beneath with the eight lady masquers, Juno's "powers," as they are termed. These descend from either side of the stage on floating clouds and, joining the Humors and Affections, are reconciled and the rites proceed. Features of this masque were the exceeding richness of the costumes, all described in Jonson's account;² the gigantic golden figures of Atlas and Hercules, supporters of the scene; and the surprising mechanism which managed the drifting and descending clouds, and caused the golden globe or microcosm to appear to hang in mid-air and turn on an invisible axle. Elaborate, too, were the music and the dances; and the lyrical excellence of the many songs rises to all but Jonson's highest level in the exquisite Epithalamion with which the whole masque concludes. The barriers of the next night included a novel device by which "a mist of delicate perfumes," that is of steam, obscured a part of the stage.³

1 See Daniel's strictures quoted below. Tethys' Festival, Grosart, Daniel, iii, 305, 306.

2 Gifford, Jonson, vii, 70-72.

3 Ibid. 75. This seems to have been a device of the Roman stage

In the following January, *Campion's Masque at Lord Hayes' Marriage*, no unworthy successor to *Hymenæi*, was acted before the king. As might be expected from a musician, *Campion* gives much attention in his description to the placing of instruments and voices with a view to the musical effect. "On the right hand of 'the skreene' were consorted ten musicians with base and mean lutes, a bandora, a double sack-bote, and an harpsichord, with two treble violins; on the other side somewhat nearer the screen were placed nine violins and three lutes, and to answer both consorts (as it were in a triangle) six cornets and six chapel-voices in a place raised higher in respect to the piercing sound of those instruments."¹ Forty-two instruments and voices supplied the music for this masque. The masque is of *Phœbus' Knights* turned to golden trees through the wrath of *Cynthia*. They are freed at last by *Night*, at the behest of *Hesperus*, and the trees sink out of sight, a knight clad in green taffety cut into leaves emerging out of each. But, proceeding to the *Temple of Night*, this habit is plucked off and all appear in resplendent caparison of carnation satin and silver lace.² *Jones* apparently was not the "architect" in this masque. The poetry of *Campion* is very tuneful and lyrical. The other masque of this year, presented at the *Earl of Huntingdon's* house of *Ashby* in honor of his mother, the *Countess*

1 (see Pliny, xxxi, 17), as it is of modern Wagnerian opera. Cf. also, Bacon, Of Masques and Triumphs: "Some sweet odours suddenly coming forth, without any drops falling, are . . . things of great pleasure and refreshment." Wright, Bacon's Essays, 157.

2 Bullen, Campion, 150.

3 Ibid. 162, 166.

of *Darby*, is a composite performance by *John Marston*, and none of it notable.¹

To 1608 belong two works of Jonson, *The Second Queen's Masque of Beauty* and that which celebrated Lord Haddington's marriage at court, called by Gifford *The Hue and Cry after Cupid*. The latter is a charming adaptation of the well-known *Idyl of Moschus*, so often amplified by the poets, and contains, besides a happy suggestion of the antimasque in "the Sports and pretty Lightnesses that accompany Love," a superb *Epithalamion*.² In February, 1609, was acted *The Masque of Queens*, and in it we note a new departure. "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, and have the place of a foil, or false masque; I was careful," says Jonson, "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 habit of hags or witches . . . should fill that part . . . as a spectacle of strangeness, producing multiplicity of gesture and not unaptly sorting with the current and whole fall of the device."³ Accordingly the scene was set, once more with the help of Jones, to represent "an ugly hell, which flaming beneath, smoked unto the top of the roof," and out of this came forth eleven hags "all differently attired," singing their

1 See Bullen, *Marston*, iii, 385.

2 Cf. *Shirley's Love's Hue and Cry*, and *Drayton's Crier*. Schelling, *Seventeenth Century Lyrics*, 231, and *Elizabethan Lyrics*, 195.

3 Gifford, *Jonson*, vii, 107.

incantations, followed by "a magical dance full of preposterous change and gesticulation."¹ This scene, the first true antimasque, is filled to overflowing with Jonson's recondite and curious learning, and strong with grotesque and virile poetry. For ingenious diablerie with all the horrid appurtenances of their wicked craft, these witches of Jonson are without comparison. Their relation to the witches of *Macbeth* and *Middleton* might be more difficult to trace than their diverse sources in the classics and in contemporary books on the black art. In the heart of the witches' dance the scene changes to a magnificent building, figuring the House of Fame, wherein were discovered the twelve masquers seated on a triumphal throne. And after a speech from "one in the furniture of Perseus expressing heroic virtue," the throne wherein they sat, "being *machina versatilis*, suddenly changed," and in place of it appeared "Fame, attired in white, with white wings, having a collar of gold about her neck," and described each masquer as she descended, arrayed as a famous queen of history, *Penthesilea*, *Thomyris*, *Boadicea*, and the rest, the last and most glorious being *BelAnna* (royal spouse of James), "of whose dignity and person the whole scope of the invention doth speak throughout."²

1 *Ibid.* 108; and cf. above, i, p. 361.

2 *Ibid.* 138. A minor ingenuity of this masque was the arrangement of the masquers at one time, "graphically disposed into letters and honoring the name of . . . Charles, Duke of York." *Ibid.* 144. In a later masque, *White Cupid's Banishment*, 1617, the words "*Anna Regina, Jacobus Rex*," and

"Charles P." were thus "graphically disposed." Bacon dismisses this subject with the words: "Turning dances into figures is a childish curiosity." "Of Masques and Triumphs," *Essays*, 156.

We have seen already above how Jonson, followed by other playwrights, had singled out Samuel Daniel, the accepted poet of the court, as the type of literary affectation, unoriginality, and coxcombry, and how that fastidious scholar and courtier had been satirized again and again on the London stage. We have also noticed both Daniel and Jonson as early rivals for the patronage of the new court.¹ The ten or a dozen years that had elapsed since Jonson first represented Daniel as Master Matthew and Fastidious Brisk had wrought a change in the relative positions of the two poets. Daniel, now one of the grooms of her majesty's privy chamber, had continued his epical and lyrical activity, had been chosen to write, as we have also seen, the first of the royal masques at court, and had reached his greatest success in his pastoral, *The Queen's Arcadia*, acted during the royal visit to Oxford in the summer of 1605.² But Jonson within the same period had become one of the foremost of the popular dramatists, and had supplanted Daniel as the accepted entertainer at court. Now in the very year of Jonson's popular triumph, *The Alchemist*, Daniel made a final attempt to regain his lost prestige at court, and elected to try to excel his younger rival in that rival's own chosen field. Jonson had never been unconscious of his own merit, nor loath to explain to the world how all his work "was grounded upon antiquity and solid learning," so that when he received a gracious command from Prince Henry "to retrieve the particular authorities to those things which I writ out of fulness and memory of my former readings," the delighted poet did not hesitate to embroider the margin of his *Masque of Queens* with

¹ Cf. above, i, p. 478; ii, p. 101.

² On this, see below, p. 156.

an erudite and most elaborate commentary. To this weakness of his rival Daniel alludes somewhat splenetically in the Preface to his Tethys' Festival, calling the makers of masques "ingeners for shadows" who "frame only images of no result," and deprecating the conduct of those who "fly to an army of authors as idle as themselves." And he thanks God that he labors not "with that disease of ostentation."¹

Tethys' Festival or the Queen's Wake was celebrated June 5, 1610, on the occasion of Prince Henry's creation Prince of Wales. It was the concluding solemnity of several days of royal ceremonial in which Jonson took his part as the author of the allegorical entertainment at the Barriers, where the Lady of the Lake, Prince Arthur, and Merlin all welcomed the heir to the British crown to the honors of the tilt and of knighthood.² For Daniel's masque Inigo Jones devised three changes of scene, a haven and castle with ships moving at sea, the golden and gem-studded caverns of Tethys and her nymphs, and lastly an artificial grove. Novel features were the rich golden settings for the scenes, the first made up of figures of Neptune and Nereus, on pedestals twelve feet high, embossed

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with other figures of silver and gold; the use of artificial fountains and the employment of a device of circles of moving lights which "so occupied the eyes of the spectators that the manner of altering the scenes was scarcely observed."³ Daniel's own invention included what he called an "ante-maske or first scene," the appearance of

1 Jonson's dedication to Prince Henry, Gifford, *Jonson*, vii, 104; Grosart, *Daniel*, iii, 305.

2 *Prince Henry's Barriers*, Gifford, *Jonson*, vii, 149.

3 Grosart, *Daniel*, iii, 315.

Zepherus and eight tiny naiads of the fountain, acted by the young Duke of York (later Charles I), then ten years of age, and eight little maids of the court; and "the main appearance of Tethys and her nymphs of the several rivers," who make offering to a tree of Victory. A novel departure was the later appearance of the queen and her ladies, this time in their own shapes. The incidental poetry is graceful and adequate, as was to be expected of the author of *Delia*, but the design is uncertain and the allegory incoherent. With a last thrust at Jonson and the professional aid which *The Masque of Queens* must have required, Daniel prides himself on the circumstance that "there were none of inferior sort mixed amongst these great personages of state and honor (as usually there have been), but all was performed by themselves with a due reservation of their dignity."¹

As may be supposed, the cost of these entertainments was often very great. Two contemporaries declare that Jonson's Masque of Blackness drew £3000 out of the Exchequer.² His Masque at the marriage of Viscount Haddington cost twelve gentlemen contributors each the sum of £300. But it seems that in both these estimates the cost of the entire entertainment, supper, and wines must have been included.³ The total cost of Jonson Love Freed from Ignorance amounted to £719 1s. 3d. Jonson received £40 of this sum "for his invention," Inigo Jones as much "for his paynes and invention,"

1 *Ibid.* 323.

2 Nichols, *James*, i, 468, 469.

3 *Ibid.* ii, 175. Cf. the expense of Lord Hay's masque in honor of the French ambassador in 1616, which cost, the supper included, £2200; and Bacon's expenditure of £2000 on the Masque of Flowers, 1613.

while Mr. Confesse, "for teaching all the dances," was paid £50. Boys who acted Cupid and the Graces received each two pounds; mere "fooles that danced, one pound."¹ If cost, then, be evidence of splendor, Daniel *Tethys*, reckoned at £1600, exceeded the cost of its immediate successor, just mentioned, by more than as much again. From a contemporary letter it appears that the court was not without its difficulties in raising the requisite ready money for these expensive revels; and the mention that the queen would spend but some £600 on two masques that year (1610-1611) seems to indicate an intention to retrench in this

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direction.² Whatever the facts, the next three masques of Jonson contain no such elaborate descriptions as to scene and costume, though each develops the dramatic possibilities of the antimasque. In *Love Freed from Ignorance* (December 15, 1610), Cupid, bound by Sphynx, is beset by the Follies and She-Fools and rescued by the Muses, who supply his bewildered godship with the answer to the Sphynx's riddle. *Oberon, the Fairy Prince* (January 1, 1611), opens with a vivacious antimasque between Sylvanus and several satyrs who gibe the sleeping Sylvans, guards of Oberon's temple;³ but less is made of fairy-lore than might have been expected of the author of *The Sad Shepherd*. Lastly, in *Love Restored* (January 6, 1612), Jonson boldly opens with a lively little piece of realistic farce in

¹ Collier, *Life of Jones*, II.

² John More of *Sir Ralph Winwood, 1610*, Nichols, James, ii, 371. One of these masques was certainly Jonson's *Love Freed from Ignorance*; the identity of the other is not certain. See Brotanek, 345.

³ For the date of this masque, see the discussion of Brotanek, 346.

which Robin Goodfellow satirically recounts the difficulties of a plain man's access to a masque. We have here a picture, doubtless only too true to the life, of the confusion and petty intrigues that attended a royal masque at Whitehall. Masquerado, who would "make them a show himself," is not impossibly Daniel once more; but the sketch is much too slight to make the identification at all certain. But one other masque belongs to this immediate period, the anonymous *Masque of the Twelve Months*, acted doubtless in January, 1612.¹ Here, after a humorous dialogue between Pigwiggen, a fairy, and Madge Howlet, the twelve spheres descend and call Beauty from her fortress, represented as a huge heart. From this, opening, there issues forth not only Beauty, but Aglaia attended by "the two Pulses." An antimasque of pages follows, a second "of moones like huntresses with torches in their hands," and a species of grotesque pas de seul by a personage called Prognostication. At length the masquers descend, arrayed to signify the twelve months, and "Somnus, hovering in the air," sings the final song. The variety of this masque, though it is not badly written, is its chief claim to consideration.

On November 6, 1612, Prince Henry died, and the makers of masques had cause to lament the loss of a liberal patron. Jones lost his surveyorship of the Prince's works, and went once more to Italy to pursue the wider study of art and architecture; and Jonson, despairing of immediate employment at

¹ Brotanek very properly rearranges the order of this masque as printed by Collier (*Life of Jones*, 131-142), so that the dialogue between Pigwiggen and Howlet comes first, the masque with which the manuscript opens following.

court, accepted the post of tutor to the son of Sir Walter Raleigh and traveled with his charge into France.¹ But the sorrow of James' court was

shortlived. Before two months had expired the court was agog with flutter and expectation of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Palsgrave, and masques were once more preparing and practicing.

This is not the place in which to recount the extraordinary celebrations—the sea fights and fireworks, the royal passages, triumphs, and ceremonials—that accompanied this august event. Among them were three notable masques, not furnished by queen or prince as customary heretofore, but by lords of the court and gentlemen of the several inns of court, and vying in elaboration, if not in expense, with the royal masques themselves. On the evening of the marriage, February 14, *The Lords' Masque* of Thomas Campion was given, and the talents of Jones were once more enlisted. The scene was changed no less than four times, the last representing "a prospective with porticoes on each side which seemed to go in a great way."² Two antimasques appeared, the first of "franticks," the second of "fierie spirits," the torchbearers, and the masquers were stars and golden statues called to life. Campion's masque is full of graceful poetry, and must have been especially rich and novel in its music. On the following evening the gentlemen of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn assembled at the house of Sir Edward Philips, Master of the Rolls, and proceeded in mask in a grand procession of horsemen and cars triumphal, attended

1 Collier, *Life of Jones*, 14, 16; *Conversations with Drummond*, 21.

2 Bullen, *Campion*, 205.

by two hundred halberdiers in a show, "novel, conceitful and glorious," to the court at Whitehall. There they presented a rich and ponderous allegorical masque, "blind and deformed Plutus, made sightly, ingenious and liberal by the love of Honor," the composition of George Chapman, "Homeri Metaphrastes." Chapman's antimasques were of baboons and torchbearers, their torches lighted at each end. His masquers were clothed as "Virginian priests," called the "Phœbades," and the scene represented the heart of "a refulgent mine of gold," and again a vast and hollowed tree, "the bare receptacle of the baboonerie." Chapman is very indignant, in his Description, concerning "certain insolent objections made against the length of my speeches and narrations." Yet, with every esteem for Chapman's art, we cannot but sympathize, on the perusal of his masque, with the "vulgarly-esteemed upstarts" who appear to have dared thus "to break the dreadful dignity of antient and autenticall Poesie."¹

The Masque of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn had come to Whitehall by land; it was planned that the Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn should move up the Thames from Winchester House in a gallant flotilla, with lights, music, and peals of ordnance on the following evening. And this was partly carried out, though by reason of the crowd (albeit farthingales were forbidden the feminine spectators), and the fagged condition of the court, this masque was

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postponed until Saturday, February 20.² An unusual interest attaches to this production, as it was the composition of Francis Beau-

¹ See the poet's words, *Nichols, James, ii, 571, 572.*

² *Ibid.* 589, 590.

mont, and was aided and abetted in chief by Sir Francis Bacon, then King James' solicitor-general. Bacon's interest in such entertainments was of long standing, and we have seen him as far back as 1587, a student of Gray's Inn, devising "dumbe shewes" for a Senecan tragedy, while his familiar essay, *Of Masques and Triumphs*, from its allusions doubtless written soon after the events on which we are now engaged, is a complete epitome in little of the lore as to "these toys," as wisdom must ever term them.¹ As to Beaumont, it may be remarked that he wrote this masque as a member of the Inner Temple and about the time of his retirement from writing for the popular stage, a retirement not improbably due to his marriage with a lady of station. The Masque begins with an altercation between Mercury and Iris, messengers of Jupiter and Juno, in which each presents a rival antimasque; the main masque introduces the Olympian Knights to do honor to these nuptials on their way to revive the ancient Olympian games. A new departure is the habiting of both the antimasques, not "in one kind of livery (because that had been so much in use heretofore), but, as it were, in consort [that is diversely], like to broken music."² The setting presented nothing novel. Beaumont's lines are full of life and beauty. Nor is

¹ See above, p. 102; in 1592 Bacon wrote speeches for a Device presented to the queen when entertained by Essex at Twickenham Park; he contributed six prose speeches to the *Gesta Grayorum* in 1595 and in the same year wrote further speeches for the same earl's entertainment of the queen on the anniversary of her accession. Bacon was "the chief contriver" of Beaumont's masque, 1613; and the chief "encourager" of *The Masque of Flowers* in the next year.

² *Nichols, James, ii, 592.*

the dramatist wholly lost in the occasional poet. This was Beaumont's only masque.

In Jonson's absence Campion gained a brief vogue. He was called on by Lord Knowles to entertain the queen in the following April, on her progress, at Cawsome House, and joined a simple masque to many speeches and songs of welcome and praise.¹ And he furnished, too, the nuptial masque for the ill-starred union of Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, with the divorced wife of the Earl of Essex, December 26, 1613.² Here, again, the antimasque is made up of a variety of vices, winds, elements, countries, and other abstractions, and a grotesque dance of twelve skippers is inserted just before the conclusion. A feature of the setting, which was the work not of Jones, but of one Constantine de Servi, was a scene of London with the Thames, and the masquers departed on four "barges" that apparently floated away. "I hear little or no commendation of the masque made by the Lords that night, either for device or dancing," says the

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Lord Chamberlain, "only it was rich and costly."³ But Jonson had already returned, and furnished the sprightly little Challenge at Tilt for a further celebration of this marriage next day. Two days later, he furnished The Irish Masque, which is no more than a humorous dialogue between four Irish footmen in broken English followed by songs in praise of the king, sung by Irish bards. But it pleased the king and was ordered again for January 3. The final solemnity of Somerset's marriage was The Masque of Flowers, the work of three gentlemen of Gray's Inn, acted by

1 Bullen, *Campion*, 173.

2 *Ibid.* 211.

3 Nichols, *James*, ii, 725.

their fellows and discharged as to cost by Sir Francis Bacon, who was said to have expended thereon no less a sum than £2000,¹ The antimasque is a duel between Silenus and Kawasha (who appears to be the god of smoke) as to the superior worthiness of wine or tobacco, "to be tried at two weapons, at song and at dance," followed by the now customary dance of various characters, here realistically transplanted from the streets of London. The masque unites Winter and Spring in the celebration of this union, and a charm transforms a gorgeous garden laden with bloom into the group of masquers. "The masque ended, it pleased his Majesty to call for the anticke-mask of song and daunce, which was again presented; and then the maskers, [all of them gentlemen of the Inn,] uncovered their faces, and came up to the state, and kissed the King's and Queen's and Prince's hands with a great deal of grace and favor, and so were invited to the banquet."²

With the coming of the next New Year we find Jonson once more firmly established as the accepted writer of masques for the court; and for four succeeding years (1615 to 1618 inclusive) each January witnessed a masque of his at Whitehall; whilst one private masque and two independent antimasques (all within the same period) attest alike his activity and his inventiveness. Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists (1615) opens with a humorous scene in which that lithe deity escapes from the furnace of Vulcan. The antimasques are of "thread-bare

1 Chapman's Masque had cost Lincoln's Inn alone £1086 8s. 11d. See Dugdale, *Origines Juridiciales*, 1671, 286, for particulars of the assessments.

2 Nichols, *James*, ii, 745.

alchemists" and "imperfect creatures with helms of limbecks on their heads."¹ The Golden Age Restored (1616) is a beautiful fancy in which Pallas turns the Iron Age and his attendant evils to statues which sink out of sight. It is one of the most poetical of Jonson's masques. The [Anti] Masque of Christmas (1616) is a piece of drollery in which that jolly personage introduces his sons and daughters, among them Carol, Wassel, and Minced-pie. In it Cupid (who forgets his part)

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and his mother Venus, a deaf tire-woman, also figure. In *The Vision of Delight* and in *Lovers Made Men* (both 1617), Jonson returned to more normal forms. *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (1618) is of interest alike for the extraordinary scene in which Atlas is represented "in the figure of an old man, his head and beard all hoary and frost as if his shoulders were covered with snow;"² and from the opening entry of Comus, "the god of cheer or the belly," a personage who may well have conveyed a hint to an impressionable child of ten named John Milton. King James was so pleased with this masque that he ordered it repeated, like each of its three predecessors;³ and for the second performance Jonson wrote an additional antimasque which he called *For the Honor of Wales*.

But it was not alone at court that the masque continued to flourish. In January, 1615, William Browne of Tavistock, the tuneful pastoralist and lyric poet, furnished the Inner Temple with one of the most exquisite works of this kind, and the only masque from his pen.⁴ Aside from the beauty of its poetry,

1 *Gifford, Jonson, i, 237, 240.*

2 *Ibid.* 299.

3 *Brotanek, 351-353.*

4 *Entitled The Inner Temple Masque, and first printed in 1772.*

Browne's masque is distinguished by a coherence of plot almost unexampled among masques. The fable is that of Ulysses and Circe. The first scene—so Browne calls it—is the Sirens' rock, the second a grove on Circe's Island. One antimasque is appropriately the beast-men of Circe's transformation, another the maids that gather Circe's "simples." But it is not the beast-men that Ulysses transforms to their human shape with the wand of the enchantress, but his companions, the masquers, whom he arouses, asleep in a glorious enchanted arbor. Even metaphorically, Browne could not call his fellow Templars beasts, so the fable was sacrificed. Another private masque of this period was that presented on Candlemas night, February 8, 1618, at Coleoverton, by the Earl of Essex and his friends. The verse of this masque is fluent and not wanting in poetry. It was written under Jonson's influence, if indeed he is not the author of it himself, as Brotanek thinks.¹ *Cupid's Banishment* by Robert White was a ladies' masque presented to the queen at Greenwich in May, 1617; a like production, in which Lady Hay with eight others were to have appeared as Amazons, was "disliked and disallowed by the queen" in the following year.² On February 2, 1618, *The Mountebank's Masque* was acted at Gray's Inn and repeated before the king a few days later at court. This masque contains the lengthy drollery of a mountebank and one Dr. Paradox, but is not otherwise conspicuous. Fleay seems conclusively to have

1 *Brotanek, 218, and 353; also 328-337, where the masque is reprinted.*

2 *Letter from John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carlton, January, 1618, quoted by Collier, i, 409. No trace of this masque remains. See Fleay, ii, 343.*

answered Collier's ascription of it to Marston by showing that the masque forms part of the *Gesta Grayorum* of 1617, and that Marston belonged to the Temple.¹ So, too, Middleton's one Masque of the Inner-Middle Temple (otherwise *The Masque of Heroes*, January 1, 1619) offers nothing unusual save a coarse, if well-written, scene between Doctor Almanac and various Days of the year, fantastically set forth. A novel feature of the contemporary edition is a table of five principal professional actors, among which number are the playwright, William Rowley, and Joseph Taylor, successor to Burbage as the most important actor of the King's company.²

Late in 1615 Inigo Jones had returned from abroad to enjoy the reversion of the office of surveyor of the king's works, which he had long been promised and which had lately fallen in; and for some years we hear little of his employment in connection with the masque.³ He was busy with more important projects, building and designing for the king. Moreover, after the gorgeous heights which masking reached at the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth, there was a perceptible falling off in the expense and elaboration of these entertainments. To this period, too, belongs the breach between Jonson and Jones, which was certainly complete as early as 1619, in which year Jonson reported to Drummond that "when he wanted to express the greatest villaine in the world, he would

¹ Collier, *Jones*, i; Fleay, ii, 82, 344.

² *Historia Histrionica* (1699), ed. Dodsley - Hazlitt, v, 405.

³ Jones seems to have assisted Jonson in *Love Freed from Ignorance*, the Christmas antimasque in *Oberon*, *Neptune's Triumph*, and *Pan's Anniversary*, though Jonson acknowledged his share only in the last.

call him an Inigo."¹ The causes of this quarrel are not clear, and it was certainly patched up for a time, as Jonson and Jones collaborated in the masques of the last years of King James. Queen Anne died in March, 1619, and masques at court were intermitted for a time. But after his return from Scotland, whither he had gone afoot on his well-known pilgrimage in the summer of this year, Jonson took up once more his avocation as maker of court masques. Brotanek has assigned *Pan's Anniversary* or *The Shepherds' Holiday* to the king's birthday, June 19, 1620.² It is distinguished by its many beautiful lyrics, abiding proofs of the vital poetical spark in "old Ben." The New Year of 1621 was celebrated with a return to masking in the slight and fanciful performance, *News from the New World Discovered in the Moon*; and in August came one of the greatest of Ben Jonson's triumphs, *The [Anti] Masque of Gypsies*, celebrated at Burley-on-the-Hill, the seat of the favorite Buckingham, at Belvoir and at Windsor, each time to the exceeding delight of the king, and to the enrichment of Jonson by £100 and an increased pension. This masque is vulgar and ribald to a degree beyond any product of its class; but it is admirably vivacious and humorous as well. Like *Ignoramus*, and for a similar reason, it exactly fitted the royal taste, and is said even to have inspired the long dormant muse of his Majesty to the composition of

certain verses.³ In *The Masque of Augures*, acted in January and May, 1622, Jonson again made much of the vulgar, realistic present in antimasques of

1 Conversations, 30.

2 Brotanek, 357.

3 Gifford, Jonson, i, 453 n.; and see as to Ignoramus, above, pp. 78, 79.

"neighbors from St. Katherens," and Urson and his bears. *Time Vindicated*, of the next January, was given with unusual splendor, but one of the antimasques had degenerated into a dance of tumblers and jugglers. Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion, projected for January 6, 1624, to celebrate the return of Prince Charles and Buckingham from their futile and vainglorious trip into Spain for a royal spouse, was postponed again and again, and finally abandoned;¹ although much of its material was worked over into *The Fortunate Isles*, presented on Twelfth Night, 1624, to celebrate the betrothal of Prince Charles to Henrietta Maria.

From the foregoing sketch of the masque in the reign of King James several things are derivable. We have, first, the stubborn persistence of allegory, seldom well sustained, it is true, but none the less pervading. The allegorical nature of the masque is its oldest inheritance, one that comes direct from the time-honored practices of the morality. When we consider the stern grip of allegory on the literature of generations that had gone before, how its coloring of the drama was only one manifestation of a tincture that dyed in its vivid colors the religion, the architecture, and pictorial art of the time, the masque assumes a new interest as the last flicker of expiring medieval art.² The allegory of the morality was didactic; that of the masque eulogistic and artistic. The allegory of the morality was often intellectually subtle. That of the masque was simpler

1 Ibid. i, 451, Cunningham's note; and Brotanek, 359.

2 In pageantry such as that of the Lord Mayors' shows alone did this obvious allegory of old time persist any later. See Fairholt, Lord Mayors' Pageants.

and appealed—sometimes grossly—to the senses. The allegory of the Jacobean masque is rarely over-ingenious, and the use of the allegory of double relation,—like that of the Faery Queen and the dramas of Lyly,—in which a given story has alike a reference to abstract qualities and their concrete embodiment in certain well-known personages, had become practically a matter of the past. In a word, the ponderous and complete allegory of the middle ages, in which every item is figured forth with keen and tireless ingenuity, has been replaced by the delicate art of poetical suggestion, wherein allusion, hidden significance, and the force of subtle similitude are plain to the cultivated gentleman, an intimate in the charmed circle of the court, but a blank to ignorance and outside impertinence. It was the recognition of this that prompted Jonson's words in the *Masque of Queens*, where, excusing himself for not making certain of his personages "their own decipherers," he says: "To have made . . . each one to have told upon their

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entrance what they were and whither they would, had been a most piteous hearing, and utterly unworthy every quality of a poem: wherein a writer should trust somewhat to the capacity of the spectator, especially in these spectacles; where men, beside inquiring eyes, are understood to bring quick ears, and not those sluggish ones of porters and mechanics, that must be bored through with narrations."¹

A second characteristic of the masque is a profuse employment of classical material in its personages, its imagery, and allusion. This it shared with many other species of the drama, thus falling in with

1 Gifford, Jonson, vii, 113 n.

an all but universal mannerism of the age. Nor did the masque, despite the classical learning of its authors, hesitate to follow the popular drama in mingling satire, abstraction, and the personages of every-day life with the stately gods of ancient Greece and Rome. Jonson and Chapman are deep in their show of classical learning. Yet it was Browne who achieved the one thoroughly successful masque on classical story, his masque of Ulysses and Circe. And this is explained by a third characteristic of the Jacobean masque, its general lack of definite plot or design; and outside of Browne and Jonson, once more, its common want even of any certain central idea.

The scenic effects and contrivances with which these amusements of the court were staged have already been indicated by reference and example in the preceding paragraphs. It is notable that this outburst of display and ingenuity is referable to one man, Inigo Jones, and is only one of several activities in which he was famous in his time. On the other hand, as already made plain, the lyric and dramatic development of the masque was almost as solely Jonson's. The antimasque, as we have seen, was his invention, and he, nearly alone, attempted to preserve this feature from degeneracy into mere buffoonery and nonsense. From a foil to the masque which followed it, the antimasque became almost any light or farcical preceding scene and was actually described by Daniel as an "ante-masque." The later confusion of the word with "anticke-masque" further illustrates the degeneracy already alluded to.¹

1 Cf. the use of the word in The Masque of Queens, ibid.107, with Tethys' Festival, Grosart, Daniel, i, 311, and The Masque of Flowers, Nichols, James, ii, 739. See, also, Brotanek, 139-169.

When the idea of contrast was lost in the antimasque and that of mere diversion substituted, three changes soon took place: the introduction of a second — in the next reign, even of a third and fourth — antimasque;¹ secondly, a change from the group of characters of one kind, such as Jonson's witches or his satyrs or cyclops, to the medley of personages which we meet in Beaumont; and lastly the development of scenes of drollery in dialogue and the infusion into the antimasque of the element of satire. For this last Jonson and the taste of his

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master must be held largely responsible. But in *The Masque of Mountebanks* and in Middleton's *Masque of Heroes* as well as in Jonson's *Love Restored*, *Augures*, and *News from the New World*, the interest is chiefly of this kind; though Jonson alone wrote productions such as *Christmas* and *The Gypsies' Metamorphosis*, in which the antimasque has usurped all.

Lastly, as to the Jacobean masque, it should be remembered that it remained, as earlier, only one form—though the most sumptuous—of the many entertainments in which the age abounded. The royal progresses continued, though more serious addresses had taken much of the function of the old allegorical welcome; and complete dramas, in Latin and English, pastoral or other, often supplied the place formerly occupied by the "entertainment." Prince Charles, like his brother, had his celebrations, though the tournament was becoming more and

1 In The Masque of the Twelve Months the antimasquers dance several times. Both Chapman's and Beaumont's masques of 1613 have two antimasques. Jonson apparently borrowed the device for the first time in Mercury Vindicated, 1615.

more a thing of the past.¹ It was in civic ceremonial that the entertainment, with its pageantry and allegory, its songs and speeches, still preserved the customs of old time. Of the Lord Mayors' Pageants, which were held yearly between 1580 and 1639, more than thirty remain extant and in print, the work of such well-known poets as Peele, Munday, Dekker, Middleton, and Heywood, nearly all of whom with Webster, Marston, and Shirley were the authors likewise of other monologues, dialogues, and speeches of welcome.² Indeed, Jonson's own little monologue, *The Masque of Owls*, discloses that his poetical activity in this kind was by no means confined to the statelier productions of the court.³ Besides this, the masque came more and more to influence the general drama, not only in setting and staging, but dramas enlivened with masque-like features became the favorites of the hour. A recent authority states that there are "distinct masque elements in sixteen" of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays.⁴ Middleton, Field, Tourneur, and others used the masque more or less organically in their dramas.⁵ In Shakespeare's comedies masking may be said to be almost a favorite device, from the Muscovite disguises, the pageant of the nine worthies,

1 Cf. Civitatis Amor, an entertainment by water, by Middleton, 1616; Bullen, Middleton, i, 267.

2 See Fairholt, Lord Mayors' Pageants, Percy Society, 1843. Greg, List of Masques, Pageants, etc., 1902, adds several titles to Fairholt's list.

3 This was acted before Prince Charles in 1624; Gifford, Jonson, viii, 454.

4 Thorndike, "Influence of Court Masques on the Drama," Modern Language Publications, n. s. i, 116.

5 Women Beware Women, No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's, Woman is a Weathercock, and The Revenger's Tragedy, all contain masking, as do Fletcher Maid's Tragedy, Maid in the Mill, and many more. See, also, Soergel's long list of plays in which masking occurs, 88-89. Shirley asks, in Love in a Maze (iv, 2), apropos of the masque,—

"What plays are taking without these

Pretty devices?

. . . Your dance is the best language of some comedies

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And footing runs away with all."

and the dialogue of Winter and Summer, all contained in *Love's Labour's Lost*, to the elves and fays of *The Merry Wives*, Hymen's Masque in *As You Like It*, and the more striking examples of the later plays.¹ Thus, besides the scene representing the historical masking of Henry VIII, this entire play was sumptuously staged to represent the ceremonials and pomp of court. *The Winter's Tale* contains an antic-dance of twelve satyrs; *The Tempest* a betrothal masque in which the familiar classical goddesses figure, besides an antimasque of "strange shapes." *Cymbeline* has thrust into its final act a dream (composite of ghosts and Jupiter, who "descends on an eagle") which nothing but a degenerate taste for such stage devices could justify or excuse.² An instance of direct borrowing from a masque has been alleged in the case of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in which a motley group of masquers, including a taborer, a bavian, and five wenches,—somewhat like the antimasque of Beaumont's *Masque of 1613*,—dance a morris.³ But neither this identification nor the theory which credits Shakespeare with borrowing the idea of the

¹ *Love's Labour's Lost*, v, i; *Merry Wives*, v, v; "*As You Like It*", v, v. On this topic, see, also, H. Schwab, *Das Schauspiel im Schauspiel*, 1896.

² *Winter's Tale*, IV, v; *Tempest*, III, i; IV, i; *Cymbeline*, V, v.

³ Littledale, ed. of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, 145, *Shakspeare Society's Publications*, 1876.

antic-dance of satyrs in *The Winter's Tale* from Jonson's *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, seems altogether warranted to those whose sensitiveness as to the eternal likeness of things is not developed into too serious a disproportion with their faith in the resources of genius.¹

There seems no reason to suppose that Jonson was superseded as the entertainer at court in the earliest years of King Charles' reign.² Masking was dropped for a season; but on its resumption, in 1631, Jonson is found once more in his familiar place. He had been ill meanwhile, and his years were pressing upon him. Charles had sent the old poet a gift of £100 in 1629, and in the next year employed him on *Love's Triumph through Callipolis*, which was performed with great splendor, January 9, 1631, the king himself heading the masquers in the rôle of Heroick Love. So successful was this masque that a queen's masque, *Chloridia*, was ordered to follow, and was acted by her majesty and her ladies late in the succeeding month. But this was the last of Jonson's masques. In both Inigo Jones had assisted. But the quarrel between Jones and Jonson, both of them now old and irascible, broke out anew, and, in the next year, Aurelian Townsend, a small poet and one time "son of Ben," was invited to supply the words to two inventions of Jones. These were *Albion's Triumph*, allegorically representing London and the English court, presented January 8, 1632, and *Tempe Restored*, relating the story of Circe and her lovers, February 14, following. Townsend's verses are graceful and far from devoid of merit, and

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1 *Thorndike, Masques, 118.*

2 *Gifford, Jonson, Memoir i, p. x.*

Jonson's unhappy attacks on Inigo did not include his coadjutor.¹ Jonson's quarrel need not concern us. He was ill, "confined to bed and board," deprived by his rival of his chiefest means of a livelihood. But the old lion was not yet dead, nor had all his patrons deserted him. On the royal progress into Scotland in 1633, Charles was sumptuously entertained by the literary Duke and Duchess of Newcastle at Welbeck in Nottinghamshire, and again in the summer of 1634, by the same hosts at Bolsover; and for both Jonson prepared the devices of *Love's Welcome*. In the latter the persistent old satirist dared to gibbet his foe once more as *Coronel Vitruvius*. And although both king and court must have wearied of this petty quarrel of two testy old men, there seems no reason to doubt that Charles was both forbearing and kind to the infirmities of his broken old poet.²

As for Jones, he proceeded on to his greatest triumphs of scenic ingenuity, marked in the two court masques of the year 1634. The first of these was *Shirley's Triumph of Peace*, given February 3, the most magnificent pageant ever perhaps exhibited in England, "a procession and masque in which the four inns of court united to honor their king and to show their detestation of the tenets of Prynne and such as thought with him, recently set forth in notorious diatribe, *Histriomastix*."³ The *Triumph of Peace* is

1 See *An Expostulation with Inigo Jones and the two epigrams that follow it. Gifford, Jonson, viii, 109-115.*

2 See the two letters of James Howell to Jonson on this subject, *Jacobs, Howell, 325, 376.*

3 *Dyce, Shirley, i, p.i. This masque was repeated by the king's command, February 11, in Merchant Taylors' Hall. A ballad on the procession preceding it is reprinted in Maidment Logan, Davenant, i, 324. And see above, pp. 88, 89.*

a monster masque, like for its size and the incongruous elements which its designers, in their search after novelty, saw fit to unite in it. The main idea seems no more than the descent of Peace and Law and Justice to do honor to King Charles and his queen. But about this are clustered no less than seven changes of scene from street, tavern, and forest to the sinking of the moon in an open landscape and the rise of *Amphiluche*, the harbinger of morning. There were eight antimasques, a rapid succession of character dances, of abstractions, birds, thieves, huntsmen, projectors, beggars, and what not. There were little scenes of humor and folly, a knight tilting at a windmill, four dotterels captured by mimicry, nymphs beset by satyrs; and at one point the carpenter, tailor, painter, and tire-women invade the scene in an unexpected bit of pleasantry. *Shirley* names more than twenty principal characters in a list prefixed as taking part, but the text discloses at least sixty more, besides musicians, torchbearers, and chorus. *Shirley's* verse and prose is abundantly adequate to the slender demands of such a performance. The scene, costume, and ornament was *Inigo Jones'*, the music that of *William Lawes*, the famous composer. A contemporary

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estimate gives the total cost of the masque to the four societies as "above twenty thousand pounds."¹

In less than a week the court gave a return masque to this of the inns of court, and Thomas Carew, the king's "sewer in ordinary" or cup-bearer, in association with Lawes and Jones, contrived *Cœlum*

1 B. Whitelocke, *Memorials of English Affairs*, 1682, p. 22; quoted by Dyce, *Shirley*, i, p. xxviii.

Britannicum, with eight changes of scene and as many antimasques. A feature of Carew's masque is the carping, cynical Momus, who speaks always in prose with a wit both searching and risqué. One of the antimasques represented a battle, marking a complete degeneracy from Jonson's conception of contrast, while "a prospect of Windsor Castle" was amongst the novelties of scene.¹ Carew's masque is often poetic in the lyrical parts; as compared with Shirley's it is lacking in dramatic instinct. As to form, Shirley's masque is chaos in activity; Carew's, chaos inert.

To this year 1634 (September 29) belongs, too, the performance of Milton's *Comus*, an entertainment, masque-like in form, presented at Ludlow Castle before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales. This was not Milton's first venture in this kind. He had already furnished part of an entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield a year or two before and now known as *Arcades*.² It appears to have been Lawes' friendship that procured for Milton both of these opportunities to display his lyrical talent, as Lawes wrote music for both and personally superintended the performance of *Comus*. Milton's part in *Arcades* includes three lovely lyrics and a speech of the Genius of the Wood. *Comus* is a far more elaborate production, and, even if not in strict parlance a masque (from the circum-

1 *Ebsworth, Carew, 134 and 164.*

2 *The countess dowager, a patron of poets from Spenser to Milton, was the wife, by her second marriage, of Lord Chancellor Ellesmere. Sir John Egerton, his son by a former marriage, married Lady Frances Stanley, the countess dowager's daughter by her first marriage, and became Earl of Bridgewater. Thus Arcades and Comus were celebrations within the same family.*

stance that it does not clearly involve a ball nor contains masquers), marks in more than one respect a return to the simpler and purer conception of such entertainments in earlier time. *Comus* presents a coherent situation expressed in an obvious and well sustained allegory. *Comus* is not dramatic, as those who have seen it in revival must confess; but the beauty and pure elevation of its thought, its lyrical music combined with "a certain Doric delicacy," give force to the words of its earliest eulogist when he declares, "I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: *Ipsa mollities*."¹ Although staged with no such pomp as that which distinguished the masques at court in this year, *Comus* exhibits three changes of scene, a wild wood, a stately palace, and the

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exterior of Ludlow Castle, in the great hall of which the masque was given. The participants were by no means all new to such devices, for not only was Lawes the guiding spirit, but Viscount Brackley and Thomas Egerton, sons of the Earl of Bridgewater (who with their sister the Lady Alice acted the chief parts of Comus), had already appeared as actors in *Cœlum Britannicum*. Similar productions to Milton's in kind if not in degree of excellence are *The Spring's Glory*, a dainty and poetical trifle intended for the prince's birthday, May 29, 1638, by Thomas Nabbes, and *A Masque at Bretbie, on Twelfth Night*, 1639, by Sir Aston Cockayne, presented to his kinsman, the Earl of Chesterfield. *Spring's Glory* is no more or less a masque than *Comus*. Cockayne's is in no wise notable, and probably represents the average of many a private masque which wise if envious Time has suffered to perish or lie buried in those ungarnered fields,

¹ *Letter of Sir Henry Wotton to Milton, April 13, 1638.*

the muniment rooms of many an English ancient family.¹

It was in 1635 that William Davenant offered the court his first masque, *The Temple of Love*. Davenant had already made a reputation as a dramatist of promise, and was destined to carry the traditions of the earlier theatrical age into the post-Restoration period. *The Temple of Love* is Davenant's best masque, and seems an honest attempt to restore this much-abused and deformed variety of composition to coherence and reasonable limits. The theme touches on the affectation of the hour, Platonic love,² and tells how Divine Poesie has obscured from the unworthy the temple of chaste Love to reestablish it in all pristine glory through the influence of Indamora's (the queen's) beauty. The scenery, though reduced in variety and number of changes, was novel from its Eastern and Indian setting and costuming. The other masques of Davenant are not comparable to this. *Prince D'Amour* (February 24, 1636) was presented by the gentlemen of the Middle Temple in honor of Charles and Rupert, Princes Palatine, the nephews of the king. It is swift and direct in movement; and whilst the scenery was very sumptuous, the antimasques were reduced to two. *Britannia Triumphans* (January 7, 1638), presenting the glory of Britanocles, not without its slurs against his enemies, the Puritans, contains the original feature of "a mock romanza," with giant, dwarf,

¹ Two minor masques are *The King and Queen's Entertainment at Richmond*, and *Corona Minervæ*, both in 1635, the last not mentioned in Brotanek's list. See the reprint of the former by Bang and Brotanek, *Materialien zur Kunde*, ii, 1903.

² Cf. Davenant play *The Platonic Lovers*, and the treatment of the whole subject below, pp. 347, 348.

knight, and damsel, occupying the place of one of the antimasques, while the others were furnished by the ever popular humors of the street-folk of London. Lastly, *Salmacida Spolia* (January 21, 1640) a double masque, in which both Charles and Henrietta Maria took part, discloses the malicious fury of Discord,

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none too prophetically calmed by the wisdom of Philogenes, impersonated by the king. The antimasque contained twenty "entries," as they were now styled, some of them danced by three or two, or even by a single character. Brotanek has assigned to Davenant's another masque entitled *Luminalia*, presented by the queen and her ladies, February 6, 1638.¹ This is a production of no little fancy; nor does it fall below the graceful mediocrity of Davenant.² Be *Luminalia* whose it may, Davenant's work in the masque is direct, not particularly original, and decidedly unlyrical; though, with the ever-fertile and ingenious devices of Jones, evidently sufficient to please the none too exacting demands of a time in which serious-minded men, whether Cavalier or Puritan, were busied with affairs other than "toys."

This enumeration of English masques might be materially lengthened by stretching our period to include a few true masques that fall without it,³ by the identification of some few manuscripts recorded as masques in the lists and dictionaries of the drama;⁴

1 *"Ein unerkanntes Werk Sir William Davenant's," Anglia, Beiblatt, xi, 177.*

2 See *Fuller's Worthies' Library, iv, 117, 615, and 630, for some novel devices.*

3 *Shirley Cupid and Death, 1653; Jordan Fancy's Festival, and Howell Nuptials of Peleus and Thetis, both 1654, the last acted in Paris.*

4 See *Fleay's List, Chronicle, ii, 343; and the many cases in which Halliwell-Phillipps, Dictionary, appears to name masques by their personages.*

and by a looser employment of the term to include the dialogues and belated moralities which show direct influence of the masque in their inception or staging. The sum total of all these productions is by no means small; and they range from dramas such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,¹ or Dekker's *Old Fortunatus*, into which the masque-like quality has entered only in part, to complete mythological or allegorical plays such as *Lyly's Woman in the Moon*, *Nash's Summer's Last Will and Testament*, *Dekker and Ford's exquisite Sun's Darling* (1623), and *Heywood's beautiful Love's Mistress* (1634). More composite in its make-up is *Rowley and Middleton's The World Well Tost at Tennis* (1620), whilst pure allegory rules in *Shirley's Honor and Riches* (about 1631), and in the curious *Microcosmus* (1634) of Thomas Nabbes.² Some of these productions, such as *Heywood Pleasant Dialogues and Dramas*, "selected out of Lucan, Erasmus, Textor, and Ovid," and published in 1637, could not possibly have been intended for acting.³ Others were performed privately, and even in public, on occasions which demanded neither the restrictions of "the entertainment" nor the elaboration of the masque. Aside from *Love's Mistress* and *The Sun's Darling*, just mentioned, none of these quasi-dramatic productions are more beautiful or poetic than those of James Shirley, his *Triumph of Beauty* (1639), "a

1 *On the relation of this play to the masque, see Seorgel, 80-82.*

2 *On the relations of plays of this type to the masque, see ibid. 78-80.*

3 *Cf. the scene in Deorum Fudicium (Works of Heywood, vi, 250), in which Minerva is bidden doff her helmet and Venus her cestus, that Paris might judge unbiased by their magic powers*

spirited and elegant presentation of the old theme, the judgment of Paris,"and his Contention of Ajax and Ulysses (1640), immortal for the magnificent lyric, "The glories of our blood and state," with which it concludes. Finally, it seems altogether probable that a larger proportion of masques has perished than of some classes of the more regular drama. For masques were for the most part devised for private entertainment and by poets who lived less in the public eye, ephemeral productions of occasional literature which the world could well spare.

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