

The Development of the English
Masque, Showing its English
Origin

by Benjamin Franklin Stelter

1909

Submitted to the Department of English of the
University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Master Thesis

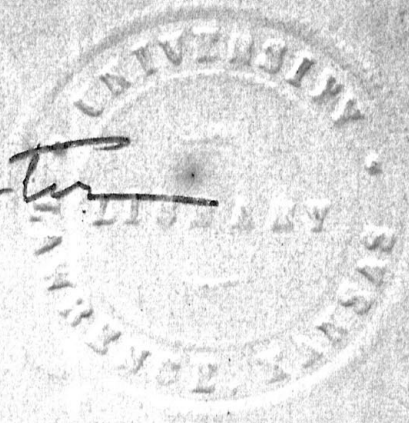
Stelter, E. F. 1909

English

Development of the English
masque. showing its English
origin.

1909

Stetter





THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH MASQUE

showing

its English origin.

by

Benj.F.Stelter.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH MASQUE.

It has been only during the last quarter of a century that the English Masque has received its due share of attention in the study of English literature. Before this time it was by no means an unknown field but was looked upon as a sort of court phenomenon, - a by-gone amusement of the nobility - which came from foreign sources and took on English literary features, rather than as a distinct type of English literature. For some two centuries of its career the masque was in jeopardy of coming down to us to-day only in court records and of being considered of little more importance to literature than an early sword dance or Hock Tuesday performance. Under the Tudors the literary side had begun to develop somewhat, but it was after the Stuarts were on the throne that the efforts of one man raised the masque from a mere magnificent spectacle and dance and first showed its literary possibilities. And, fortunately, it fell into the best of hands. Jonson, the man of ideals, who never hesitated to cross the demands of a petulant age, was of all men the one to take the sixteenth century performance and develop it into the distinct literary form found later.

The true origin of the masque seems closely shrouded in a vast field of antiquity from which, springing from no one knows just where arose the great number of games and sports common to and inherent in the Teutonic races. When it makes its first recorded appearance it is apparent ~~that~~ it from the description and the frequency with which it is recorded as appearing later that it is no new thing. To all appearances it had existed for some time perhaps in courtly circles or only with its introduction here did it receive mention which has come down to us.

The earliest record which is conclusive evidence of the existence of some kind of performance resembling the later mask is to be found in the court records of the time of Edward III. This monarch celebrated Christmas of 1348 at Guildford with what is known as the "ludi domini regis" which clearly shows by the properties required that it was essentially a mask. Among other things the records call for "eighty tunics of buckram of various colours, forty two visours 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" (1) together with various fantastic animal heads as masks. The two years following similar disguisings took place at Otteford and Merton. (2) Although these disguisings lack many of the features of the later fully developed performances designated by the term "masque", from what we know of them it is safe to draw the conclusion that they formed an important part of the Christmas celebrations in the fourteenth century and that some of ~~th~~ them were of a character similar to ~~the~~ what was later called a "disguising", "mask", "or "masque".

~~far as sometimes, as is evident from the next noteworthy recorded per-~~

(1) - Collier I, 22; cited in Evans, Brotanek, and Soergel.

(2) - See Brotanek pp. 2 ff.

Sometimes as is evident from the next noteworthy recorded performance of 1377, the performers rode to court on horse to entertain the royal personages with dumb shows and dancing. In this year one hundred thirty citizens rode from Newgate to Kensington on Sunday before Candlemas with torches and music "disguised and well horsed in a mummerly" to entertain Prince Richard, later Richard II. Forty eight were disguised as squires, forty eight as knights, one as Emperor, one as Pope, twenty four as cardinals, and ten or twelve followed unwillingly masked as negroes, - an element retained often till the seventeenth century. (1) Arrived at the Hall they are welcomed by the Prince and in pantomime they make known their desire to throw dice with him and always arrange it so that the Prince wins the throw. After this the Prince and others of the court dance with the maskers and it is important to notice that the maskers also danced a prepared dance, for "the Prince and Lords danced on the one part with the mummers, who did also dance". In 1401 the Emperor of Constantinople visited England and the King held a Christmas celebration at Eltham in honor of his visit. Twelve noblemen and their sons rode to Eltham and celebrated "in a mumming". According to Stowe (2) this celebration was undoubtedly similar to that of 1377. These performances were clearly dumb shows whose principal aim was to surprise and please the royal spectators through the strangeness and splendor of costume and to maintain a dance with them. This dance, moreover, played an important part as it does later in all "disguisings" and "masks". It is noticeable, however, that there was no speech in these so-called mummings, for in the first the maskers showed by a pair of dice their desire to play with the Prince.

A word will not be out of place this early as to the terminology employed to designate these performances. The ACCOUNTS OF THE EXPENSES OF THE GREAT WARDROBE OF KING EDWARD III, Archaeologia XXXI, 43, (3) records the performances of 1347 to 1349 as "ludi domini Regis" and the expression occurs again in the accounts of Richard II (Prince Richard of 1377) in 1389. A similar one, "ludi Natalitiorum" (4) occurs in 1440 for a masquerade at the court of ~~Hen~~ Henry IV. The formal visitations on horseback spoken of above were commonly called "mummings", but later this term is used synonymously with "disguising". This word seemed to include a considerable number of various forms of masquerades during the reign of Henry VII and Henry VIII. Usually they presented nothing more, however, than a dance and various fantastically costumed characters, and they usually occurred at the performance of an interlude or formed an important ~~part~~ feature of Christmas or Shrovetide festivities.

Their office in the first case is shown by THE NATURE OF THE ~~FOUR~~ FOUR ELEMENTS, an interlude of the reign of Henry VIII, in which added to the list of characters is the statement "Also yf ye lyst ye may brynge in a dysgysing" (5). As shown by "THE Booke of All Manners of Orders Concerning an Earle's House" (6) these "dysgysinges" were conducted according to set rules. Following an interlude the disguisers were generally led into the room by torch bearers and at their entrance the minstrels began to play. If there were women among the disguisers they were to dance first and then stand aside

(1) - Collier I, 26, quoting Stowe's "Survey of London" 1633, after Harlein Ms. 565

(2) - See note (1) above.

(3) - Cited by Brotanak PP3, ff.

(4) - " " " pp 115 ff.

(5) - Dodsley I, 5.

(6) - Collier I, 24.

while the men dance "suche daunces as they be appointed" and stand aside opposite the women. After this the Morris Dance is brought in and following it "the gentillmen----com unto the women and make their obeisance, and every of them take oon by thand" and daunce the "base dances", or the slow and stately dances, and the "round" dances and "measures" corresponding to the lively galliards and corantos of the later mask. The disguisers as ladies and gentlemen of the court resemble the later "maskers"; the morris dancers, who were professional, correspond to the professional dancers of the later antimasques and the order of dances is the same. In this description there is no hint of dialogue or speech although, as noted, there are present other fixed characteristics which appear later. So far the action has been mostly dancing, but in time dramatic tendencies find expression in words and stage machinery, the introduction of which seems almost simultaneous, the first being closely connected with the second through the miracle plays and moralities.

These furnished crude scenery and, what is more important, pageants which Ward defines as "properly applied to the moveable scaffolds on which both Miracle Plays and Moralities were originally represented; but it is also usual to confine it to moving shows devoid of either action or dialogue". With these moving shows which possessed some crude though real scenery, the disguising now affiliates itself.

There is an early excellent account of such affiliation in the Harleian Ms. 69(1) which describes the "banquets and disguisings used at the entertainment in Westminster Hall of Katherine, wife to Prince Arthur, eldest sonne of King Henry VII". This disguising "was conveyed and showed in pageants proper and subtile" which were brought into the hall to give the performance scenery. The first of these pageants moved in as in a castle on wheels in which were "disguised viij goodly and fresh ladyes looking out of the windows of the same" while in the four corner turrets four children sang "most sweetly and harmoniously". The second pageant was a ship from which descended Hope and Desire "in manner and form as Ambassadors from Knights of the Mount of Love" who woo the ladies "making their meanes and entreates as wooers and breakers of the matter of love between the Knights and the Ladies". They were unsuccessful, however, and "the said Ladies" who were "never minded to the accomplishment of any such request"-----"gave their small answeare of utterly refuse". Thus repulsed the ambassadors "shewed the said Ladies what the Knights would do for this" and withdraw to report to the knights. Then "incontinent came in the third pageant in likeness of a great hill of mountain, in whom there was inclosed viij goodly knights with their banners spread and displayed" and who storm the castle, and the ladies yielding to them, the whole ends with a dance between the knights and ladies, and in which others from those present in the hall joined. Here one finds dramatic elements in the action and also in the parley between the ladies and knights and in the singing of the children ~~after the~~. Originally in this combination of the disguisings and the pageant there was no speech but that the "small answeare" of the ladies is later (in 1515) a well developed parley while the songs of the children are easily recognised ~~as a later important feature. Brotenak cites (2) an important reference to spoken words in the same disguising. When the ship pageant enters "the masters of the shippe and their company, in their countenances, speeches, and demeanor, used and behaved themselves~~

(1)-Collier I, 58 and published in Shakespeare Society Papers for 1844, Vol. I, pp 47 ff.

(2)-Brotenak pp. 76 ff.

after the manner and guise of mariners.

Another source of speaking characters in the disguising comes from those which were distinguished by a great number of allegorical figures and allegorical subject matter. It was not to be expected that all the onlookers could understand the allegorical allusions and ~~their~~ applications and so a figure variously represented as "Fame" or "Report" "appareld in crymesyn satin full of tongues, setting on a flying horse with winges and feet of gold called Pegasus"(1) appeared (before the disguising) and explained the allegory. Such speeches occurred in 1509 at the crowning of Henry VIII when the "Lady Pallas presented the said persons ---- the said persons to the kynge's highness, besechyng the same to accept them as her scholars, who wer desirous to serue hym"(2) Again in 1517 in presenting the "Gardyn de Esperans" "Master Cornish showed by speech the effect and intent" of what followed. In 1571 a performance "had going before it a childe gorgeously decked for Mercury who uttered a speeche"(3) Speech, once introduced, became the element which was capable of the highest lasting development and through it the mask was preserved to become a literary species.

A favorite way of introducing the maskers in the time of Henry VII and Henry VIII was to draw in upon the stage a "mountain glistering by night as though it had been all of gold and set with stones"(4) or covered with trees. Such a mountain was of almost yearly appearance at Christmas during the two reigns mentioned above.

In 1514 Hall records(5) that "according to an old custom a mount called the rich mount was brought into the room". It is very probable that this attempt at scenery was taken directly from the early romantic disguising. It seems that the mountain which suddenly opened and poured forth splendidly arrayed maskers was very popular and hence one finds it influencing ~~the~~ some of the late productions and furnishing a bit of incontrovertible evidence in regard to the disputed point of the foreign origin of the masque. In all these performances the courtly, as well as the royal persons, took part, and because of the atmosphere in which they lived, the performances attained a high degree of splendor as shown by the HOUSEHOLD BOOKS OF AN EARLE.(6) No Christmas, New Year, or marriage celebration was complete without them. The first Christmas Henry VIII was on the throne "for certen plate of gold stuff" 45l. 7s. 2d, were expended and for silk 153 l. 7s. 5d. which at that time were no mean sums. Added to such expenses as the above were those of most magnificently decorated mountains covered with trees and flowers, castles with serviceable towers and battlements, and ships with masts and sails.

It was at about this stage of development when the performance as a disguising ~~was at its height~~ of romantic, allegorical nature was at its height that a new element of some kind was apparently introduced from Italy. This is commonly supposed to be the "mask". There is a record in Hall's Chronicle(7) which furnishes the basis

(1)-Citing Soergel p.11.

(2)-Brotanak p77, citing Hall's Chronicle.

(3)-Soergel p17, citing Cunningham's REVELS ACCOUNTS p 15.

(4)-Collier Vol. I p 66.

(5)-Soergel p 11 citing Strutt's SPORTS AND PASTIMES p 162.

(6)-See Collier I, 39, 46, 49, 50, 76.

(7)-Collier I, 67 ff: cited by Brotanak p.65; Soergel p.13; and

for the belief that the Masque of Jonson's timewas of Italian origin. The passage in Hall Reads: "On the Daie of Epiphanie (1512) at night, the king with XI other wer disguised, after the manner of Italie, called a maske, a thynge not seen afore in Englande, thei were appareled in garmentes long and brode, wrought all with gold, with visers and cappes of gold, and after the banquet doen, these maskers came in, with sixe gentlemen disguised in silke bearyng staffe torches, and desired the ladies to daunce, some were content, and some that knew the fashion of it refused, because it was not a thynge commonly seen. And after thei daunced, and comoned together as the fashion of the Maskes is, thei toke their leaue and departed, and so did the Quene, and all the ladies".

Now the question which naturally arises is, if the mask was something "not seen afore in England", how did it differ from the disguising, or even if common to England, what new element comes Italy which caused Hall to write as he did concerning it? This has proved a stumbling block to many. Some, as Symonds, (1) accept the Italian origin unquestionably and many interpret it wrongly. Henry Morley found the novelty to lie "not in the disguising but in the fact that the persons disguised were the king and his gentlemen ~~of xxv~~ who opened a masqued ball". (2) Evans finds that if Hall "was not thinking more of the name than the thing" that probably the innovation lay in the peculiarity that "in one or two at least of the dances spectators were invited to join with the performers". This he says was afterwards an established practice in the masqued one of the regular dances of which was always executed by the maskers with partners of the opposite sex taken from the audience. Once sure of his point he immediately recedes from it and assumes that this need not have been imported from Italy or elsewhere but that it was nothing but a combination of the old-fashioned masquerade with the ordinary social dance, but with the attractions of a surprise party added. To Soergel the matter is simple. It had been the custom to introduce the "disguisings" either after the representation of an interlude or in combination with pageants, and in both cases it had been the custom for the gentlemen to dance with ladies if the latter took part in the performance. But, he says, "die Maske ging anders zu Werke; die Maskers uberraschten die Damen, die so zu sagen Zuschauer waren, forderten sie zum Tanze auf und unterhielten sich mit ihnen. Die Disguisings hatten das Ansehen einer theatralischen Vorstehlung; die Maske war anfanglich nicht mehr als ein improvisirter Maskenball". (4) Ward is of the opinion that the mask differed from the disguising in that the dancers wore masks as well as costumes. (5) It remained for Brotenak in his scholarly treatise to clear up ~~this matter~~ this difficulty. To him, in the light of further evidence than had been in the hands of others, the matter really was simple. He finds (6) that if Hall's ^{statement} be accepted that the mask was an entirely new Italian form, it conflicts with a previous statement of the same author, for he describes a festivity on Sunday before Shrovetide 1510 as follows: "On Shroue Sunday ----- the king prepared a goodly banquet ----- ~~Sudden~~ Sodaynly the king

(1)-See SHAKESPEARE'S PREDECESSORS IN THE ENGLISH DRAMA pp 317ff

(2)-See MASQUES AND ENTERTAINMENTS by Jonson, edited by Morley. Introduction p 1.

(3)- ENGLISH MASQUES p 21.

(4)- DIE ENGLISCHEN MASKENSPIELEN p.14.

(5)- HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRAMATIC LITERATURE I, 82.

(6)- DIE ENGLISCHEN MASKENSPIELE, p.64.

was gone. And shortly after, his Grace with the Erle of Essex came in appareled after Turkey fashion.----Next came lorde Henry, Erle of Wilshire, and the lorde Fitzwater----after the fashion of Russia --- and after them ----syr Edward Howard---and sir Thomas Parre appareyled after the fashion of Prussia or Spruce. The torch-bearers were appareyled in crymosyn satyne and grene, like Moreskates their faces blacke: and the king brought in a mommerye. And after ~~th~~ that the Quene, the lordes and ladyes, such as would, had played, the ~~xx~~ sayd mommers departed". (1) In another instance "there came into the room a drumme and a fife appareiled in white damaske-----than certayn gentelmen followed with torches----on their heddes hades----too the same of ~~hwe~~ ~~xx~~blewe Damaske Visardes. Then ~~the~~ after them came a certayne number of gentlemen ---. The King was one, aparayled all in one sewte of shorte garmentes ---all with visers. After them entered VI ladyes---their faces, neckes, armes and handes, couered with fyne plesaunce blacke: Some call it Lumberdynes, which is marvueilous thinne, so that the same ladyes semed to be nigros or blacke Mores----. After that the Kinges Grace and the ladyes had daunced a certayne ~~the~~ time they departed." (2) In the same year in the Chamber of the Queen Occurred a sort of popular folks-mask:---his grace therle of Essex, Wilshire, and other noble menne to the numbre of twelve, came sodainly in a mornynge into the Quenes Chamber, all appareled in shorte cotes, of Kentishe Kendal with hodes on their heddes, and hosen of thesame euery one of them, his bowe and arrowes, and a sworde and a buckler, like out lawes, or Robyn Hodes men wherof the Quene, the ladyes, and al other there were abashed, as well for the straunge sight, as also for their sodain commynge, and after certayn daunces, and pastime made, thei departed". (3) In one other instance, on November 14, 1510, another mask with torch-bearers, music, and dance was carried out and Hall records: "The King with XV other, appareled in Almayne Jackettes--with--vysers --came in with a mommery, and after a certayne time that they had played with the Quene and the straungers, they departed. Then sodainly entered six mynstrels--- and then folowed XIIIII persons. Gentlemen----bearing ~~the~~ torches, After them came VI disguised in whyte Satyn and grene---. Then part of the gentlemen bearing torches departed, and shortly returned after whome came in VI ladies. Then the saied VI men daunced with these VI ladies: and after that they had daunced a (4) season the ladies toke of the mens visars whereby they were knowen."

I have cited these at some length to show that between all these and the new Italian mask there is really no difference. As in the Italian, here in two cases the masked ladies appear; the Robin Hood mask being in the daytime needed no torches. They seem to agree in all other important particulars. Now it is hardly probable that Hall made a mistake of two years for the Robin Hood scene indicates ~~is~~ that the whole is merely a continuation of the tendency first showing itself in the time of Edward III; for, as Brotanek points out, (5) the rule is that when a new species of literature or art is taken from a foreign source the imitation of it immediately following is close and slavish and only with time is the foreign form filled with national contents. By reference to the above citations, as well as earlier ones, it is readily seen that the solutions of the men already referred to are incorrect.

- (1)- Brotanek p.65 citing Hall fol.6 Henry VIII
- (2)- " p.66 " " " 7 " "
- (3)- " P.32 " " " 6 " " (1510).
- (4)- " p.66 " " " 8b " "
- (5)- " p.67.

One may find a final solution of the question in a passage from THE ACCOUNTS OF THE MASTER OF REVELS. In the introduction to "Letters and Papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII collected by J.S. Brewer, it is shown that Hall's sources were these same accounts. They read: "-----and for nyght of the Ephephany 12 nobyl personages, imparylled with blew damaske and yellow damaske long gowns and hoods with hats after the maner of meskelyng in Italy".(1) Now in thâs summary description of costuming, the mask is also denoted as "after the Maner of meskelyng in Italy", and to Brotenak this and Hall's notice "einzig und allein auf das Costum zu beziehen ist", (2) or the whole is to be understood as "sie waren gekleidet wie die Theilnehmer an einer italienischen Maske" and concerning this foreign costume Hall remarks "a thing not seen ~~in~~ afore in Englande". In the mask of 1510 Turkish, Russian, Prussian, and "shorte garmentes" were used, and here is a direct contrast between the "shorte garmentes" of those nationalities and the "garmentes long and brode" of the Italians.

Another difficulty, however, lies in the "some were Content and some that knew the fashion of it refused, because it was not a thing commonly seen". However, letting the phrase "a thing not seen afore" refer to ~~the~~ costume this also clears itself. When Robin Hood and his outlaws came into the Queen's Chamber (1510) "sodainly in a morning" ----- "the ladies and al other there were abashed as well ~~for~~ for the straungen sight as also for their sodain commyng". Likewise King Henry VIII is described as astonished at the famous shepherds mask of Wolsey which Shakespeare uses in Henry VIII (I,4) even though he knew about it before hand. Therefore these sophisticated court ladies who knew "the fashion of it" assumed the conventional surprise and at first refused to dance. Then Hall adds "and after thei daunced and commoned (communed) together as ~~in~~ the fashion of the maskes is, they toke their leave and departed, and so did the Quene and all the ladies". Beyond doubt this is a correct explantion, and the chance phrase of Hall, though long misunderstood, does not take the origin of the mask from English soil.

Meanwhile the disguising under its new name of mask, later written masque (beginning with Jonson's spelling) developes rapidly. The name, however, is only a new designation for an old form and comes from the French although it is there a comparatively young word (3) The first employment of the word as synonymous with "disguising" dates back to the beginning of the sixteenth century and had doubtless been in use even before Hall's employment of the term, (4) but from this time it occurs with some frequency. Collier (I,79) shows an employment of it in 1515; in 1518 (5) occurs "masking garments, or for disguisings" among which were "VII masking hats". In the second quarter of the century, it occurred so frequently that it needs no citations. The term "disguising", however, continued to be used parallel with this losing favor, however, but not entirely dropped for at least a hundred years after "mask" came into use. In "THE

(1)- Brotenak p.67, citing Brewer Vol. II, 1497. In the same, III, 35, is another "maskalyne after the manner of Italy" (This in 1519.)

(2)- p.68.

(3)- See Brotenak pp.119-127 and cf. with discussion of derivation of "mask" in Skeat's Etymological Dictionary and L.Wiener's in ANGLIA XXIII, 106.

(4)- See Brotenak p.120.

(5)- " " p.121, citing from LETTERS AND PAPERS OF HENRY VIII, II, 1517.

TALE OF A TUB (1633) Jonson has the following:(Preamble)"A Masque! What's that?" (Scri.)"A Mumping or a show, With vizards and fine clothes!"(1)(Clench) "A Disguise,neighbor, is the true word". In the MASQUE OF AUGURS(1622),however, he has a character say "Disguise is the old English word for a masque !(2) With the accession of the Stuarts (1603) Jonson's spelling of "masque" was in universal use and the change in the word form may be taken as a clue to the interesting invigoration and aggrandizement which he brought about in the literary element.

I have already given some attention to the introduction of words into the mask. From the "small answeare" of the ladies,the "Speeches" of those in the ship,the explanatory speeches to show "the effect and intent" of what followed,the mask often closely following an interlude or morality,developed and absorbed characteristics from these till speech was a necessity. Also to relieve the tediousness of the morality the mask was early introduced into the middle of a play,thus enhancing its susceptibility to absorb characteristics and accounting for the list of vices and virtues in the dramatis personae of gods and goddesses.However, speech once introduced to the extent that the poet was given an opportunity in the mask,the rapid development of this element was assured. Dialogue was early used between such characters as "Time","Place","Liberty" and "Constancy" which sprang from the influence of the allegorical era.

A good example of this comes from the time of Henry VIII, described by Hall in his CHRONICLE: "----then entered eight of the kings chappel with a song and brought with them one richly appareled: and in ~~his~~ likewyse at the other side ,entered eight other of the said chappel bringyng with them a nother persone likewyse appareled,these two persones plaid a dialog theeffect whereof was whether riches werex better than love and when they could not agre upon a conclusion they eche called in thre knightes ---- the ~~ix~~ six knightes fought a fair battail----then came an old man with a silver berd and he concluded that loue and riches bothx be necessary for princes".(3) Contemporaneous with the development of speech was that of song.

Thus far the development of the mask seems clear enough, but in reality referenceto it are all ~~meagre~~ meagre in details;and, although the performance of such plays is constantly recorded during the reign of Henry Viii,and notwithstanding the fact that they constituted a stock feature of Christmas and Shrovetide celebrations of Elizabeth's reign,occurring with perhaps less frequency from 1547 to 1558 under EdwardVI and Mary,yet full descriptions of them are rare. Evans,however,prints a full description of one which was to have been performed at an intended meeting between Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scotts,at Nottingham,1562(4)In it Pallas, Friendship,Disdain,and Discretion speak in verse,and hence one may conclude that they were not impromptu speeches. There were also songs"as full of harmony as may be devised".What is of more importance to notice here is that the poet and song writer are now essential and indispensable to the mask.

In 1572 George Gascoigne furnished a "device" for a celebration of a double wedding in the family of Viscount Montacute. Eight gentlemen provided themselves with Ventian garments and asked the author to "devise some verses to be uttered by an actor ~~wherein~~

(1)- Cunningham II,439.

(2)- Morley p.293.

(3)- Brotenak p.86, citing Hall,fol.157b,Henry VIII.

(4)- Evans p.XXIII in Introduction.

wherein might be some discourse convenient to render a good cause of the Venetian's presence". (1) Gascoigne turned out some 400 lines of unattractive, fourteen syllable verse, but the significance here is that a poet was necessary to the production of the mask, not only to furnish a prologue setting forth what should follow but weaving an action accounting for the whole. Complimentary verses to the Queen now begin to form a stock phase of Elizabethan masks, but judging from the two groups of maskers brought in by Jonson in "Cynthia's Revels" (1600), but little advancement had been made by the end of the sixteenth century in a dramatic direction; for here are typical, stereotyped masks introduced by "Cupid" as "Anteros" and "Mercury" as "a page." Dancing follows and there is no dialogue, while the lyrical element is also absent.

The accession of the Stuarts to the English Throne in 1603 marks the opening of a new era for the mask, and during the next forty years the old festive performance is almost recreated by combining it with highly developed forms of art and literature. This invigoration was largely due to the personal tastes of James I and the Queen who were not so parsimonious as Elizabeth had been and who indulged in the amusement more. Under their liberality the festivities at Whitehall far surpassed anything previous. In order to do this they employed the best dramatic writers, thereby turning their attention to mask writing, and developed the greatest stage architect of the age. Inigo Jones had seen the elaborate Italian masks and also the French Ballet which was the closest French analogue to the English production. Here, too, were employed elaborate stage effects as well as allegorical settings. The Ballet was longer, also, more formal, and was divided into acts, and, by the "entries" of dancers, into scenes. It was, in fact, a dumb show interpreted by speeches and songs. Both the Italian and French forms doubtless influenced the English in dancing and spectacular effects.

Jonson's MASQUE OF BLACKNESS (1605) may be taken as marking the beginning of the masque as an important literary form, and, as the term is often applied vaguely and loosely it may be well to designate the nature of the masque. Evans defines the term as applying to "a combination in variable proportions, of speech, dance, and song, but its essential and invariable feature is the presence of a group of dancers, varying in number, but commonly eight, twelve, or sixteen, called the Masquers". (2)

If any objection is to be raised to the definition it must be because it does not distinguish between the masque and the older form of "disguising", and because it overlooks the important element of scenery. The first objection is one not easily removed, for essentially the "masque" does not differ from the "disguising". The earlier form contains, in its elementary form, to be sure, all the important features of the later. In the masque they are farther developed and may be subdivided, but there is very little which is distinctly new. With its combinations of declamations, dialogue, lyrical passages, music, song, costume, decoration, scenery, and dance it is readily recognised as the old disguising. There is no law, except mere custom determining the proportion of these elements and perhaps but one thing to be emphasized - the dance always remained the central part of the whole. Those who took part in them, the masquers, never took any part in the speaking or singing; all they had to do was to make an imposing show and to dance.

The dances were of two kinds: - first, the stately figure ^{dances} performed by the maskers alone and carefully rehearsed before hand, and commonly designated as the Entry, the Main, and the Going-out dances; second, the Revels, or livelier dances such as galliards, corantos, and levaltos danced by the maskers with partners of the opposite sex chosen from the audience. The ~~audience~~ revels were not numbered

(1) - Evans p. XXVII

(2) Evans p. XXXIV.

among the regular dances of the program but were looked upon as "extras". They usually occurred after the Main and were kept up for a considerable time. Their number and position, however, were never fixed and sometimes they were preceded by a slower dance the "measures", also danced with partners, and sometimes as in the MASQUE OF QUEENS a special rehearsed dance by the masquers alone was interposed between the Revels and the Going-out.

The principal forms of masques are briefly shown in the following schematic representation:-

(1)- Simplest of the masques--Dialogue-(Dance, Song)-(Dialogue e-
song, speech)-Maskers come forward-(Song, dance, dialogue)-Closing
(Song, dance). (#)

(2)-A degenerate form of the above in which occurs--(dialogue
song)-(Speech, song, dance)-(Dialogue, song) -Masquers appear-(Song,
dialogue)-Masquers to places and dance-(song, dance, and closing
/Song, dance, speech/).

(3)- An extended form of the masque--(Song, speech, dialogue)
First Dance-(Speech/dialogue, song)-Second Dance-(Speech, dialogue, ~~song~~
song)-Masquers appear-(Song, dialogue)-Masquers to places and dance-
(Dialogue, song)-Closing (Song, Speech). (##)

The masquers, in gorgeous costumes often minutely described in the directions in the masques, originally wore masks but this was soon dispensed with as unnecessary. The writer must make their appearance as effective as possible by means of his "device" and the ~~the~~ maskers were kept concealed till the proper moment when they issued from all kinds of extravagant and extraordinary devices, as a "great conclave shell," "a glorious bower," or "descended from heaven," or from the "region of the moon". Thus the introductory part grew in importance till it was almost a small drama in itself. In one of the earliest examples of Jacobean masques, THE VISION OF THE TWELVE GODDESSES (by Samuel Daniel 1604), contains an opening little in advance of the old conventional type. There is no real dialogue and a "Presenter" (Iris) appears, describes the masquers in a long speech of rhymed stanzas, and they enter. Contrast with this Jonson's MASQUE OF BLACKNESS (1605) which appeared hardly twelve months later. Twelve masquers, daughters of River Niger are dissatisfied with their complexions and come to England to beautify themselves in the rays of the English sun. This is brought out in a dialogue between Niger, Oceanus, and the Moon; and thus a fiction is invented to give "motif" to the masque and hence the exposition, which is earlier set forth in set speeches, is brought about in a dramatic way.

Ere long, however, the court grew weary of long processions of gods, goddesses, and allegorical persons, demanded a change and, following the lead of the public stage where the gay and the grave were intermingled, the masque took on a less serious element. This found expression in the so-called anti-masque (1) which originally seemed intended only to relieve the introduction by a lighter element, and also to enhance what followed by contrast, thus making its significance the plainer. Jonson hints at this in his prefatory remarks to THE MASQUE OF QUEENS (1609) where he says: "--her Majesty (but knowing that a principal part of life, in these spectacles, lay in their variety) had commanded me to think on some dance or show, that might precede hers, and have the place of a foil, or false masque" (2)

(#)- Brackets indicate alternating forms or forms in combination.

(##)- The above are compiled from the many examples cited in Brotenak pp. 170-182.

(1)- See Brotenak pp. 139ff. for best discussion of the origin of the term, origin of the element, and its development.

(2)- Morley p. 102.

To fulfill this Jonson created twelve hags to offset the twelve queens following them. They represented "Ignorance", "Suspicion", "Credulity", & and "were differently attired; some with rats on their shoulders, some on their heads; all with spindles, timbrels, rattles, or other veneficial instruments, making a confused noise, with strange gestures".

The development of the antimasque proceeded similarly to that of the masque itself, only more rapidly. Its beginning was in the dance and it probably borrowed from comic performances of antics and tumblers at fairs and popular entertainments. In most cases, like the masque, the performers in the antimasque went through their parts in dumb show, but in a few instances dialogue was assigned to them. The best example of this is in the MASQUE OF QUEENS where the force of the antimasque is such that it ~~is~~ almost eclipses what follows. Other examples of the intermingling of the two are in Jonson's MASQUE OF OBERON and THE HUE AND CRY AFTER CUPID. These cases, however, are exceptions to the general rule. Just as the masque grew from a simple form to a more complex and extended one, so the antimasque assumed larger proportions and its encroachments on the masque became more and more serious. Taking on, as it did, popular features, the audiences were soon not content with only one but demanded at least two. Beaumont and Chapman in 1613(1) both began the custom of using two antimasques and after that they are the rule rather than the exception. Beaumont also added another feature in the commingling of various personages of mythological character and also of such as were proper for country sports.

Jonson, with an ever lofty ideal which did not admit of such a commixture, held out against the new custom till 1624 and then ridiculed it in NEPTUNE'S TRIUMPH. As a self-respecting artist he demanded something higher than the mere horse play which came in with the rural characters. In many of his masques, although the antimasque may be present in them, he often expressed open rebellion against them or perhaps couched his ridicule in the most subtle irony. In the MASQUE OF AUGURS Vangoose in introducing some by-play is questioned by the Groom of the Revels: "But what has this to do with our ~~an~~ Masque?" "O, Sir," replies Vangoose, "all the better vor an anticmasque, de more absurd it be, and vrom de purpose, it be ever all de better. If it go from de nature of de thing, it is de more art: for dere is art, and dere is nature, you sall see!" (2) In the dialogue in NEPTUNE'S TRIUMPH between the Cook and the poet the latter is made to say replying to the Cook's question of where the antimasque is, that they have none and "----I assure you, neither do I think them a worthy part of presentation, being things so heterogene to all ~~device~~ device, mere by-works, and at best out-landish things." (3) Again in TIME VINDICATED the "Eyed", the "Eared" & the "Nosed" demand of Fame something new to see, hear, and smell. Fame consents to their demands and the second antimasque of Tumblers, Jugglers, The Cat and The ~~Fiddl~~ Fiddle, and the like enter and drive out the first mentioned. Whereupon Fame, and there is much of Jonson behind it, satirically remarks:-

"Why now they are kindly used like such spectators
That know not what they would have." (4)

Jonson also tried to introduce into his masques the moral pur-

(1)- In a masque called "Written for the Marriage of Princess Elizabeth.

(2)- MASQUE OF AUGURS, Morley p.299.

(3)- Morley p.325.

(4)- Morley p.313.

pose present in his best comedies. He held that "All Representations especially those of this nature in Court, public spectacles, either have been, or ought to be, the mirrors of man's life, whose ends, for the excellence of their exhibitors (as being the donatives of great princes to their people) ought to carry a mixture of profit with them, no less than delight". (1) To this end he turned the antimasque as in the twelve hags in the MASQUE OF QUEENS, who as Ignorance, Credulity, Suspicion, & are discomfited by Heroic Virtue, and in so doing ~~did~~ he did not retreat from the principle that the masque should be a masque of purpose, and at the same time pampered the popular taste with the humorous. However, in his later days Jonson found it necessary to follow the prevailing fashion. Responding to the increasing demand for pantomime his CHLORIDIA (1631) has the antimasque divided into eight "entries". The popularity of this is shown by the fact that ten years later the antimasque often consists of no less than twenty entries. (2)

As already stated the object of the antimasque was to relieve the introduction by a lighter element and sometimes to lead up to or give "motif" to the masque, and when this was accomplished it had served its real purpose. Whatever more might follow developed from the popularity of the first. To further fill up necessary intervals between dances, and to rest the dancers, songs were introduced. These often were addressed to the masquers, calling upon them to rest or else to exert themselves to new efforts, perhaps calling attention to their good qualities and often in conclusion warning them of the approach of morning.

These songs are mostly of a lyrical quality and often give a charming grace to the whole. Jonson here shows great ^{talent} and grace, and many charming stanzas are to be found in his masques. His lyrical power was not of the highest order but he often displays a learning, coupled with ingenuity and creative vigor, which cannot be disparaged. He shows no great deal of real imaginative power, but was a genius in the inventions of fancy, and aided by true eloquence, he ^{often} attained a lyrical beauty of lasting power. One would naturally think that his learning would be a clog to lyricism in his masques, and doubtless at times it was; but on the whole it served him exceedingly well, giving him an inexhaustible store of figures and situations. He ransacked mythology and ancient and modern literatures till they were almost as familiar to him as his own writings and he knew more black art than its practitioners ever did. Naturally an erudite writer, he here found opportunity to give his learning full sway. Much of it must have been lost on his audiences, and his contemporaries scorned this habit, but it was a part of his nature to use ~~it~~ his whole strength at whatever he did and he threw his heart and soul into his work, defended the dignity of the masque, and refused to subordinate its literary side to external adjuncts.

I have given ~~six~~ this much attention to Jonson because he was practically the creator of the literary side of the masque and in order to know the product one must know the man.

Much as Jonson strove, however, to make the literary side of the masque the prominent one there still remained other important features, and chief among these was the spectacular presentation. Here Inigo Jones was the Jonson and as long as he lived he saw to it that stage carpentry was no mere adjunct. Jonson working with him was willing to recognise his worth, and at the end of HYMENAEI (1606)

(1)- In "To Make the Spectators Understand" which prefaces LOVES TRIUMPH THROUGH CALLIPOLIS, Morley p.361.

(2)- See Davenant's SALMACIDA SPOLIA printed in Evans pp. 229 ff.

he takes what he calls "modest occasion" to refer to the "merit and reputation of Master Inigo Jones----lest his --worth might accuse me of ignorant neglect from my silence".(1) Later, however, ~~they~~ differences arose between them and they ceased to work together. In his ensuing "Expostulation" with Inigo Jones" he thus protests against the neglect of poetry in the masque:

"Painting and carpentry are the soul of the masque,
Pack with your peddling poetry to the stage
This is the money-got mechanic age". (2)

It is needless to go into a detailed description of the revolution and its results which Jones brought about in ~~the~~ stage machinery and scenery for every masque of his time contains a more or less elaborate description of these elements. Jonson was right, ~~he~~ however, when he said, speaking of the decorative art connected with the masques, that others had furnished the bodily part and he ~~had~~ the soul. In the preface to HYMENAEI he says: "It is a noble and just advantage that things subjected to understanding have of those which are objected to sense; that the one sort are but momentary and merely taking, the other impressing and lasting: else the glory of all these solemnies had perished like a blaze gone out in the beholder's eyes. So short lived are the bodies of all things in comparison to their souls". (3)

In connection with Jones a word should be said in regard to the stage of the masques and the place where they were performed.(4) The place of the performance of the court masques was in the Banqueting-house at Whitehall and the season Christmas and Shrovetide, unless some particular occasion demanded them oftener and in other places. In 1619 this was burned, however, and the one constructed in its place was planned by Jones. In this the stage was not necessarily confined to one end of the hall, but often the mountain from which the gods and goddesses descended was at the lower end with perhaps a Temple located at some other point. Sometimes the lower end of the hall where the minstrel's gallery was located was occupied by the stage, while at the other end was "the state"- a platform, with a canopy, on which sat the King and Queen. Along both sides of the hall were ranged scaffoldings for the courtiers and others of rank, as well as a few of the citizens who eagerly contended for these places. The devising of appropriate scenery and the perfecting of the machinery to handle it was the work of Jones. Previously the curtain had been the means of enabling a change to be made and many ingenious devices were resorted to, as in one instance where the stage was arranged in two levels and the top one was revealed only when the inhabitants of the skies should appear. Often in front of and below the stage proper was a platform for the dancing of the special dances by the professionals hired for the purpose, while the Revels and dances in which the ladies and gentlemen of the court and the royalty took part were usually on the main hall floor.

Two other characters besides Jones were essential to the success of Jonson's masques. These were the composers of the music and the dance. Of the first, the chief composer was Alfonso Ferrabosca, son of an Italian composer. With Jonson he joined in the reaction against the efforts to create a more learned and pretentious class

(1)- Morley p. 58.

(2)- See Jonson's Works.

(3)- Preface to HYMENAEI, Morley p.58.

(4)- For full treatment see Brotenak pp.226 ff.

of music for the masque and was, rather, of a school that cultivated a light, easy monody. His lyrical airs often interspersed themselves in the masque to such an extent that a foreshadowing of the lighter opera was the result. In 1609 he published his "Airs", many of them set to words from masques and chiefly arranged for accompaniment of the song with lute and viol. The chief inventor of dances was Thomas Giles, aided by Jerome Herne. Much attention was given in those days to the invention of concerted pieces of dance apart from the more lively movements of such dances as the galliard which came from Italy through France. The dance of that time is now little known, however, and with it doubtless passed much of the best art of the masque.

With the outbreak of civil war in England the career of the masque came to an almost abrupt close. Its influence, however, was strong after the Restoration and to Whitehall may be traced many altered conditions of the public stage. Its influence is particularly marked upon movable scenery, employment of women actors, and especially upon the development of the spectacular at the expense of the dramatic. Early in the seventeenth century it had been found popular to introduce a miniature masque into a play and many authors as Fletcher, Shirley, and Shakespeare took advantage of it. (1) It was used in many ways and for various purposes, but it always remained as a mere expedient for ornamentation; often, however, weaving itself closely into the structure of the drama. With the reopening of the theatre after the Puritan rule there was a new demand for scenic plays and those staging the plays often resorted to stage effects to make them more popular. Furthermore, the revival of the masque was attempted by some writers but with the spectacular side of it going to the public stage and court balls taking the place of the dancing, the revival was not brought about.

Thus the masque springing up in a comparatively short time, reached a full maturity and splendor and suddenly declined and disappeared as one of the phenomena of the literary and artistic world. It is in a literary way that it holds its chief interest for us at the present time, yet this interest was really only incidental at the time of the masque and hence will not always bear too severe criticism. It is impossible for the printed version of these entertainments to give an adequate conception of the whole. The printed lines are only the skeleton and although the music may have been worthy and many of the lyrics really powerful and effective, the real poetry of the masque doubtless lay in the then fine art of dancing. Like the reputation of a Booth the masque lived in the mind and eye of those who beheld it and with the passing of these its reputation was relegated to a few lines—often only too lifeless. One must not forget, also, that the masque was never intended to be read; its whole fascination lay in the acting and the lines were but bare explanation of the action. Of course, this will not apply to the purely lyrical passages. Often, too, the pastoral beauties and true poetic eloquence and loftiness of thought in allegorical passages are bits of literature not easily or commonly surpassed. Jonson, alone, as the great writer of masques demanded something more than pure enjoyment, but here as in his comedies, such as one may admire, he still must

(1) - Fletcher - WOMAN PLEASED; Shirley - CARDINAL; Shakespeare - TEMPEST.

(2) - In connection with Jonson's attitude toward the masque one cannot help recalling his warning in "To the Reader" which prefaces the ALCHEMIST: "---beware at what hands thou receiv'st thy commodity for thou wert never more fair in the way to be cos'ned then in this age, in poetry, especially in plays: wherin, now, the concupiscence of jiggas and dances so reigneth, as to runne away from nature, and to be afraid of her is the only art that tickles the spectators."

see him a trifle out of the real tune of his age. Other writers disregarded this demand and perhaps Jonson did not live up to it consistently. The light hearted age demanded enjoyment for the sake of enjoyment-as an end in itself-and this found expression in the masque. Naturally the Puritans did not fall in with this view of life and with their rule passed the masque half as an expression of a former lightheartedness and half as a courtly fad.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brotenak, Rudolph - DIE ENGLISCHEN MASKENSPIELE, Wien and Leipzig, 1902.
- Chambers, E.K. - THE MEDIAEVAL STAGE, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903.
- Collier, J.P. - HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRAMATIC POETRY TO SHAKESPEARE AND ANNALS OF THE STAGE, London, J. Murray, 1831. 3 vol.
- Cunningham, Francis, editor of WORKS OF BEN JONSON, with Introduction, London, Chatto and Windus, 1897. 3 vol.
- Evans, H.A. ENGLISH MASQUES, New York. Chas. Scribner's Sons.
- Morley, Henry, editor of Masques and Entertainments by Ben Jonson, with Introduction, London. Routledge and Sons. 1890.
- Soergel, Alfred, DIE ENGLISCHEN MASKENSPIELEN, Halle, 1882.
- Symonds, John A., SHAKESPEARE'S PREDECESSORS IN THE ENGLISH DRAMA, London, Smith, Elder and Co. 1884.
- Ward, A.W., HISTORY OF ENGLISH DRAMATIC LITERATURE, London and New York, The Macmillan Co., 1889. 3 vol.
- Hazlitt, W. Carew, editor of DODSLEY'S OLD ENGLISH PLAYS, London, Reeves and Turner. 1874.

University of Kansas Libraries



3 3838 100532061