

ELEMENTS IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE
MEDIAEVAL PLAY OF THE NATIVITY
IN RELATION TO THEIR FINAL FORM.

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ELEMENTS IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE MEDIAE-
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I

The Origin of the Modern Drama.

The Drama, both Ancient and Modern, had its origin in the religious observances of the people. The Greek Tragedy developed out of the feasts of Bacchus, the God of Wine, and from other pagan rites, and even in its highest excellence the religious significance was never lost sight of entirely. But with the breakup of the Roman World the drama began to decay. This decay was due not so much to the fact that the church condemned it, but because the desire for the vulgar and obscene had taken such a strong hold upon the people that it was impossible

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to produce true dramatic literature. Literature - the best literature - is the product of the soul of the people and unless this soul is centered about the highest ideals the works produced will be of a mean character. The home life of the Ancient Romans had become debased; their desire for excitement and sensation had caused them to forget the culture, which had been theirs, and filled them with the lower emotions of life, until not only the drama, but other forms of literature as well were destroyed.

Thus it was that for many years the World was without a dramatic literature.

However, there soon developed in the Catholic Church an order of service which contained many of the elements of the drama. The priesthood was not slow in recognizing the value which the drama might have for them in making the Mass more interesting and at the same time leave a deeper impression on the people. The Mass or Mystery developed into a very elaborate commemoration of the greatest of life's tragedies - the self-sacrifice

of Jesus Christ (1).

"In the wide dimensions," writes an eminent Protestant ecclesiastical historian, "which in course of time the Mass assumed there lies a grand, we are almost inclined to say an artistic, idea. A dramatic progression is perceptible in all the symbolic processes, from the appearance of the celebrant priest at the altar (Introit) and the confession of sins, to the Kyrie Eleison, and from this to the grand doxology (Gloria in Excelsis), after which the priest turns with the Dominus Vobiscum to the Congregation, calling upon it to pray (oremus). Next we listen to the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel. Between the two actions or acts intervenes the Graduale (a chant). With the Alleluia concludes the first act (Missa Catechumenorum); and then ensues the Mass in a more special sense (Missa Fidelium), which begins with the recitation of the Creed (Credo). Then again a Dominus Vobiscum and a prayer, followed by the Offertorium (Offertory) and, accompanied by further

(1) Davidson: "English Mystery Plays" p.6.

ceremonies, the Consecration. The change of substance - the Mystery of Mysteries - takes place amidst the adoration of the Congregation and the prayer for the quick and the dead; then, after the touching chant of the Agnus Dei, ensues the Communion itself, which is succeeded by prayer and thanksgiving, the salutation of peace and the benediction." •

Considering this in the light of a drama we find that we have an introduction or exposition of the cause - the readings, sermon and litany; a central action around which the other elements hang, the Immolation and Consecration - the Communion; and a close or completion - the Post-Communion. ***

In the doctrines of transubstantiation we have a great dramatic element.*** Even as far back as the first century the Eucharist was regarded as something more than mere bread and wine. It was very early surrounded

**Hagenbach: "Kirchengeschichte", Vol.II, 65-66.

***Ward: "English Dramatic Literature", Vol.I, 19.

****Davidson: "English Mystery Plays", p.13.

by mystery and the idea of the elements becoming changed into the Body and Blood of Christ soon became prevalent. The Communion must have been a moment of keen interest to the devout people of the early church. The prayers, chants and responses all leading up to the Consecration would tend to arouse the Congregation and awaken them to a realization of the significance of the Mystery of Mysteries - the change of substance. That was indeed a dramatic moment, especially when we consider how childlike were the minds of the worshippers. The priest, standing before the magnificent altar, led the people in the prayer for the quick and the dead, while they adored the elements which they believed had undergone a change. The awfulness of that scene on Calvary must have been brought before their minds with a new force and meaning; and this impression mingled with a feeling of their own sins would bring about a situation of true dramatic significance.

Though it is true that the dramatic elements were present to a more or less extent in this service, as long as it had remained just as it was the drama could not

have originated from it. But since the Mass was in Latin symbolism and mimetic action came to have an important part in the service. Even as early as the fourth century the special days in the church year were impressed upon the minds of the Congregation by a series of tableaux and in the early antiphonal singing we have that which later developed into the dialogue.

At some unknown epoch it became customary on festival occasions to add to the final syllable "a" of the Alleluia of the Gradual a series of joyous notes - jubili or neumae.* At first they were very simple and short but finally they became very difficult to execute, especially since it was done from memory. The priesthood seeing how much these additions helped to further the praise of God by giving a new beauty to the service permitted them to be amplified until it became almost an impossibility to remember them.

Because of this new influx of music in the

* Gautier: "Les Tropes", p.12.

Church many schools were established where not only singers were trained but the chants themselves were written. The two rival schools were those at Metz and L'Ecole soeur de Saint Gall; the former being founded by Pierre and the latter by Romain.* These schools continued to teach these new musical motives without words until the year 860, when a stranger came to the Abbey of St. Gall who had with him an "Antiphonaire" from the North. Here the vowel "a" was replaced by words - a text - the purpose of which was to fix in mind the notes, there being a syllable to every note. However, the words given in the "Antiphonaire" did not always have a value nor did they bear directly on the Lessons of the day. This work was carried a step further by Notker, a monk at St. Gall, who set words to the music which had a purpose. This certainly brought about a dramatic advance. Now the choir, perhaps, in the antiphonal singing told of the events which the tableaux represented. As yet no direct action or dialogue was present, but the Greek love for the Artistic

* Gautier: "Les Tropes", p.16.

and beautiful would not long be satisfied with a simple service, and it is but natural that the Amplification should be made first of all in the Easter and Christmas Masses. Therefore, they soon began to introduce individual members of the choir or priesthood to represent the characters.

The trope, which was one of the earliest means for amplifying the Mass, was a little prologue generally sung before the Gospel or during the Procession. Gautier defines a trope as the interpolation of a liturgical text which does not change the original text.*

In the Easter "Quem Quaerites" the liturgical drama was born. This became so popular that it gave rise to two very similar tropes - for Christmas and Ascension.

It is with the Christmas trope that we are chiefly concerned. This trope in its simplest and most ancient form is found at St. Gall, where it was an introit trope at the beginning of the third or great mass. It is nothing more than an amplification of the simple introit

* Gautier: "Les Tropes", p.2.

de Noel:

Hodie* Cantandus est nobis puer quem gignebat ineffabiliter ante tempora Pater, et eundem sub tempore generavit inolyta Mater. Interrogatir "Quis est iste puer quem tam magnis praeconiis dignum vociferatis? Dicoite nobis ut collandatores esse possimus." Responseo, "Hic enim est quem praesagus et electus symmistu Dei, ad terras venturum praevideus, longe ante praenotavit sicque praedixit: Puer natus est nobis absque nascentium ordine procreatus de virgine sine viri semine. Et filius datus est nobis, qui nos filios siu Parentis adoptivos fecit, carnem sumeus, quos et nominat fratres. Cujus imperium super humerum ejus, Deus quod Pater suo Misso in mundum nato et incarnato semper suum dat secundum carnem. Et vocabitur nomen ejus nomen quod exstat omne super nomen, quod supernae tremunt potestates, terra et inferus quod adorant et trepidant, Magni Consilii angelus. Ps Cantate Domino Canticum novum, quia mirabilia fecit, miro modo, cum de virginis utero ut homo processerat et ut Deus imperitat. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper, et in saecular saeculorum. Amen. Alleluia! Laus tibi, Christi, qui hodie cum magna luce descendisti. Dicoite, eia. Alleluia!***

* Gautier: "Les Tropes", p.102.

***The Introit de Noel is "Puer natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis; cujus imperium super humerum ejus: et vocabitur nomen ejus magni consilii Angelus." Gueranger The Liturgical Years Christmas, Vol.I, p.226.

From such a simple dramatic element as this we have just read the large Nativity plays arose.

The Priests, at first somewhat slow to approve of the drama, soon realized that they had in their hands a mighty force with which to hold the people and to further the interest of the Church; and from century to century, as its victories became more complete, its Cathedrals more beautiful and its ritual more pompous, the dramatic elements which had been lying there in the germ burst forth into those liturgical plays which form the basis of our modern Drama.

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II

Cycle de Noel.

The Christmas Cycle in its most developed form is the result of the uniting of several smaller dramatic events into a single drama, which, opening with the Prophetæ where the coming of Christ is discussed, takes up in their proper order the events surrounding the birth of Our Saviour - the scene with the Shepherds, the adoration of the Magi, and the Massacre of the Innocents which includes the Herod and Rachel plays, and the Flight into Egypt. We find throughout the individual Offices and the complete Mystery a parallel which denotes a close relationship between the two. In fact, the minor Offices were often taken as a scene in the drama without any great change having been made. At first the material which was used was chiefly that found in the Bible and Apocryphal Gospels. The Tropes were in prose and composed of Biblical phrases, but later Latin Hymns and Lyrics were introduced. This may be regarded as the

origin of the Secularizing of the Mysteries, for although at first the events as told in the Bible were closely adhered to, the vulgar element soon became a part of them and the church had in charge festivals and representations which led to its disgrace and later caused it to denounce the drama, which as a Modern form of Art had originated on its own Sacred Altar.

The Ancient Trope of St. Gall - "Hodie Cantandus", contained the germ of the future theatre for a direct outgrowth from it is the "Quem Quaeritis"* - the prose Trope of the Christmas Cycle which is the fundamental element in all of the Nativity Mysteries.

Interrogatio:**"Whom do you seek in the Crib, pastores, Speak?"

Respondent: "The Saviour, the Christ, the Lord, the Infant wrapped in swaddling cloth, of whom the Angel spoke."

** It occurs in 11th and 12th century tropers from St. Gall, Limoges, St. Magloire, and Nevers.

***Text in M. Lepet: "Le Drame Chretien an moyen Age."

"Here he is, this little child, with Marie, his Mother, of whom the prophet Isaiah prophesied a long time ago, saying: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son' - Go now and declare that he is born. Alleluia! Alleluia!"

"Yes, we indeed now know that the Christ is born on the earth. Sing now of his coming, saying with the prophet:

"Puer natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis, cujus imperium super humerum ejus, et vocabitur nomen ejus magni consilii angelus (Is.IX, 6) Cantate Domino canticum novum, quia mirabilia fecit. (Ps.XCVII, 6) Gloria Patri, etc." *

Although this trope is very simple yet it is of vast importance for it contains a dramatic element, the dialogue. It is no doubt true that at first the words were sung antiphonally by the choir, as it was not until later that the individual voices sung the parts in representation of the characters. Nevertheless, it is dramatic and when a crib was placed near the altar with an

* The Introit for the third or Great Mass of Christmas.

image of the Virgin in it, and the choir went down the Main isle of the church toward the crib singing this trope, we have a real dramatic scene. It is not, however, an office in itself, for it is still a part of the service, being only an amplification of the Introit. However, when individual members of the choir and clergy began to represent the characters the scene was enlarged and became a distinct office.

A form of the *Officium Pastorum*, which was common during the twelfth and thirteenth Centuries, is found at Rouen and was in use there even as late as the year 1500.* A crib is made ready behind the Altar and an Image of Saint Mary placed in it. A boy on high, representing an angel, announces the birth of the Saviour to three canons who represent the Shepherds, saying to them "Nolite Timere, etc."; then the Gloria in Excelsis is taken up by many voices throughout the church. The Shepherds go toward the Crib, singing a Latin Hymn - "Pax in terris" - where they are met by "Duo Presbyteri dalmaticati quasi obstetricis." Then follows the old form of the trope -

* Text in Du Meril, p.147.

"Quem Quaeritis", and the Mass continues, "Pastores regant chorum".

Just where this scene of the Angel appearing to the shepherds originated is not known; but at the Cathedral of Nevers it was the custom at the Midnight Mass of Christmas to have a voice from on high say:

"Laetentur coeli coelorum, et exultet omnis orbis terrarum, quia hodie Christus de Vergine Maria natus est. Jubilemus omnes eum Angelis, clamantes et dicentes" - then the priest entones the "Gloria in Excelsis." * This might have been the beginning of the Scene with the Shepherds, for we know that this office was often given at the Midnight Mass.

The simplest version of the "Officium Stellae" is found at Limogés.** During the Offering the three Kings enter by the great door of the choir singing a

* Gautier, p.255

** Text in Du Meril, p.151.

prosula - "O quem dignis, etc." They show their gifts of Gold, incense and myrrh, - the first a sign of royalty, the second of divinity, and the third of mortality. Seeing the star they follow it to the Magnis Altar, where an angel tells them Christ is born, and, having offered their gifts, they return to the Sacristy singing the Antiphone:

"In Bethleem natus est rex coelorum."

At Rouen the "Office de l'Etoile" is much more developed, although the fundamental elements are the same.* On Epiphany, three clerks dressed as Kings come from three directions and meet before the altar. Pointing to the Star which is over the altar, the Primus Rex sings:

"Stella fulgori nimio rutilat."

Secundus Rex respondeat:

"Quae regem regum natum demonstrat."

Tertius Rex dicat:

"Quem Verituum olim prophetiae signaverant."

They kiss each other and sing: "Eamus ergo"

* Text in Du Meril, p.154.

and when this is finished the choir forms and the procession moves toward the altar. On the way they sing narrative passages of the coming of the three Kings and the story of Herod's Cruelty. When the procession reaches the nave the Magi hasten to the 'crib singing together: "Ecce Stella." There they are met by two priests in dalmatis representing the mid-wives who say;

"Qui sunt hi qui, stella duce, nos aduantes,
inandita ferunt?"

Magi respondeant:

"Nos sumus quos cernites, reges Tharsis, et Arabum, et Saba, dona ferentes Christo, regi nato, Domino, quem, stella deducente, adorare venimus."*

They approach the child and show their gifts. Then the oblations are made by the Kings and congregation. The Magi having prayed fall asleep and while sleeping an angel appears to them singing this antiphone:

* This is similar to the Offertory in the Mass for Epiphany: "Reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerent; Reges Arabum et Saba dona adducent; et adorabunt eum omnes Reges terrae; omnes gentes seruiant illi." Gueranger "Christmas" Vol. II, p.143. The "Stella" probably developed from a troped form of this offertory.

"Inpletu sunt omnia, etc."

When this is finished the Kings leading the Choir, the procession returns up the side aisle and the Mass continues.

In the Eleventh Century Mystery at Munich the scenes with Herod are actually represented instead of being sung by the Choir. It is not, however, in this play that Herod makes his first appearance upon the Liturgical Stage, but in a play found at Never where the scene between the Magi and Herod consists of only a few lines.

Magi:* Vidimus stellam eius in Oriente, et agnovimus regem regum esse natum.

Herodes: Regem quem queritis natum stella quo signo didicistis? Si illum regnare credites, dicite nobis!

Magi: Illum natum esse didicimus in Orienti Stella monstrante.

Herodes: Ite et de puero diligenter investigate, et inventum redeuntes mihi renuntiate.

But the Munich Mystery of "The Adoration of the
* Romania IV, 1.

Magi"* contains several dramatic advancements. In the first place it shows the beginning of the uniting of the different elements into one great drama. It is no longer an office, but rather a semi-liturgical mystery.

The play opens with the appearance of the angel to the shepherds, to whom he announces the glad tidings, and they determine to go to Bethlehem. The Magi then enter and meeting before the altar the first one says:

"Stella fulore nimio rutilat,"

Magnus secundus procedens:

"Quae regem regum natum monstrat."

Magus tertius procedens:

"Quem venturum olim prophetiae Signaverant."

Then after repeating "Eamus Ergo" they turn to a citizen and ask concerning the birth of the King.

The scene changes to Herod's Court where the messenger informs the King of the Magi.

Internuntius accurrens:

Salve, rex Judaeorum.

* Text in Davidson, p.50, also in Du Meril.

Rex:

Quid rumoris affers?

Internuntius:

"Adsunt nobis, Domine, tres viri ignoti, ab Oriente venientes, novilix natum regem quemdem quaerentes."

The messenger is told to bring them before the King and he does so. Then follows the scene with Herod in which the scribes search the scriptures concerning the prophecy of the coming of Christ. Armiger counsels Herod to permit them to go if they promise to return - and they leave. On the way they meet the shepherds, who are returning from the crib. The Magi hasten on until they meet the mid-wife. Then, having offered their gifts, they fall asleep and an angel appears to them and says:

"Impletu sunt omnia quae prophetia dicta sunt; ut viam remeatis aliam ne delatores tanti regis puniendi sitis."

It is the closing scene, however, which is of unusual importance, for it shows clearly what the next phase in the development of the drama would be.

The Scene is at Herod's court, where a messenger informs the King that the Magi have escaped.

Internuntius: Delusus es, Domine, Magi per
viam redierunt aliam.

Rex prosidiris: Incendium meum ruina extin-
guam.

Armiger: econtra: Decerne, Domine, vindicare
iram tuam extricto mucrone.

Rex gladium versans, reddit Armigero, decens:
Armiger o prime, pueros fac ense perire.

We see from this last speech of Herod's that the natural tendency would be to introduce a scene in representation of the Massacre of the Innocents.

There is at Orleans a Mystery* very similar to the one at Munich, but since it belongs to a later period, about the twelfth century, it is more developed both in scenes and from an artistic standpoint. There is a vast improvement in the style and the lyrical element has become very prominent. The opening with the Shepherds is extremely well developed for a scene in a Liturgical drama of so early a period. After the Angel appears to the Shepherds, telling them of Christ's birth, they not

* Text in Davidson and Du Meril.

only say: "Transeamus usque Bethlehem, ut videamus hoc verbum quod fecit Dominus et ostendit nobis;" but they actually journey to the crib, where they are met by "Duae Mulieres", and there the "quem quaeritis" scene follows. In the Munich Mystery this was not represented.

The scene, too, in Herod's court marks an advance in so much as it is almost entirely lyrical in its style. Herod's son is introduced in this play and when the King becomes angry the son tries to pacify him.

Herod having told the Magi to return to him after they have adored the child, they depart and on the way meet the Shepherds who are returning. When they reach the crib they are met by the obstetrices who say:

"Qui sunt hii qui, stella duce, nos adeuntes, inaudita ferunt?"

Magi: Nos sumus quos cernitis, reges Tharsis et Arabum et Saba, dona ferentes Christo nato, regi, Domino, quem, stella ducente, adorare venimus.

Obstetrices ostendentes Puerum: Ecce, Puer adest quem quaeritis. Jam properate et adorete, quia ipse est redemptio Mundi.

Magi: Salve, Rex Saeculorum,
Salve, Deus Deorum,
Salve, Salus mortuorum.

Tunc procidentem Magi adorent Puerum et offerant.

Primus dicat: Suscipe, rex, aurum, regis
signum.

Secundus: Suscipe myrrham, signum sepulturae.

Tertius: Suscipe thus, tu vere Deus.

Then falling asleep ^{and} an Angel appears to them and says "Impletu sunt" - and the Magi awaking thank God and say to the choir: "Gaudete, fratres; Christus nobis natus est; Deus homo factus est."

Then the Cantor begins the "Te Deum laudamus."

The last scene of the Munich Mystery prepared the way for the introduction of a new play - "The Massacre of the Innocents." It is not a direct outgrowth of the trope of the Introit on the day of the Feast of the Innocents, as the "Quem Quaeritis" was a direct outgrowth of the Christmas "Hodie Cantantus." The Introit of the Mass for that day is: "Ex ore infantium, Deus, et lactentium perficisti laudem, propter inimicos tuos."*

Gautier presents two examples of the troped form of the Introit.

1. Ex ore infantium, Deus, fecisti laudare nomen

* Gueranger: Christmas, Vol.I, p.314.

tuum, et lactentium perfecisti laudem. Triumphantes de hoste vipereo, florem aeternae virginitatis eos in coelesti gloria suscepisti propter inimicos tuos.

2. Pangite jam, pueri, laudes, et promite Christo. Ex ore infantium, Deus, nate Dei clemens, parvorum suscipe laudes et lactentium perfecisti laudem, qui tibi jam nati certarunt sanguine puro propter inimicos tuos.*

The simplest office is that of Saint Martial of Limoges;**but it is not, however, a direct outgrowth of the trope.

Sub altare Dei audive voces occisorum, dicentium: "Quare non defendis sanguinem nostrum?" Et acceperunt diuinum responsum: "Adhuc sustinete modicum tempus, donio impleatur numerus fratrum vestrorum." Vidi

Lamentatio Rachel:

"O dulces filii, quos nunc progeni,
Olim dicta mater, quod nomen tenui?
Olim per pignora voco puerpera:
Modo sum misera natorum vidua.
Heu! mihi miserae, eum possim vivere,
Cum natos coram me video perdere
Atque lacerare, parum detruncare,

* Gautier, p.175

** Text in Gautier, p.168.

Herodes impius, furore repletus,
Nimium superbus perdit meos partus."

Angelus:

"Noli, Rachel, deflere pignora:
Cur tristari et tundis pectora?
Noli flere, sed gaude potius.
Tui nati vivunt felicius:
Ergo gaude!
Summi Patris aeterni Filius,
Hic est ille quem quaerit perdere
Qui vos facit aeternae vivere.
Ergo gaude."

This lament of Rachel forms the basis of the more developed Mysteries such as the one given at the Abbey of Fleury - sur - Loire in Orleans by the children who attended the school.

"To represent the Massacre of the Innocents, dress the children in white robes, and let them march through the monastery, joyfully praying to God and saying: 'Quam Gloriosum, etc.' Then the Lamb comes suddenly, bearing its cross, and it marches before them here and there, and they follow it, singing:

"Quam Gloriosum est regnum. Saviour, see your lamb, ruler of the earth, from the stone of the desert to the mountain of the daughter of Zion."

Meanwhile Armiger offers to Herod, seated on

his throne, a scepter, saying:

'Over the seat of David and over his Kingdom he rules, for he strengthens it and solidifies it in judgment and justice, now and in eternity.'

Meanwhile an Angel, appearing over the crib, counsels Joseph to fly into Egypt with Mary, calling him three times: "Joseph! Joseph! Joseph! Son of David."

Then he adds this: "Take the child and his Mother and go into Egypt, and remain there until I tell you to return. It is that Herod seeks the boy in order to kill him"(St.Mat.Ch.II, v.13).

Joseph departs, without Herod's seeing him, with Mary carrying the Infant, and he says: "Egypt, weep not, for your Saviour comes to you, your Saviour before whom hell will shake; he comes to deliver his people with the hands of strength."

Meanwhile Armiger announces that the Magi have returned into their own country by a different road from that which they had followed in coming, salutes the King, then says: "Eternal King, you are fooled, Domine; the

Magi have returned by another way." Then Herod, as if mad, draws his sword and attempts to kill him, but is prevented by his courtesan; then he becomes appeased and says: "I conceal under the ruins the fire of my anger." Now the Innocents, marching behind the lamb, sing these verses:

"Let us praise the Celestial Lamb for our Sacrifice,
 Let us adore in him the splendor of the father, the
 brightness of the Virgin.
 Let us offer our praises to the divinity of Christ
 resident in this figure;
 Although pursued in a thousand ways by Herod's Anger
 We will be saved by the lamb, that our death will
 unite with Christ."

Armiger advises Herod, saying: "Think, Domine, of the gratifying of your anger, and drawing your sword order that one kill all the boys! Perhaps, in this Massacre, the Christ also will be killed." Herod, giving to him his sword, says: "True, Armiger, make the boys perish by the sword." Meanwhile, as the executioners advance toward the group of children, the Lamb should move away; the Innocents salute on its departure singing: "Hail! Lamb of God, All hail to you who taketh away the sins of the world! Alleluia!"

Then the mothers implore the executioners:

"Pity! Spare the lives of our tender children!" When the children are lying dead on the ground, an angel appears on the elevated space and addresses them, saying: "Ye who are sleeping in the dust awaken and cry."

Infantis parentes: "Why do you not avenge our blood, O our God?"

The angel: Wait a little until the number of your brothers is complete."

Then Rachel arrives, together with two consolatrixes, and, bending over the boys, weeps while she sings:

"Alas, tender fruits of our heart, members which we
see rent!

Alas, sweet children, whom the rage of a tyrant has
destroyed,

Alas, neither pity nor your age has restrained him.

Alas, unfortunate mothers who are forced to see this!

Alas, what are we able to do? that we suffer not a
similar fate.

Alas, what thing can console us, is able to make

glad our sadness?

We have no joy, for our dear children were our delight."

The Consolatrioes prevent her from falling,

saying: "O Virgin Rachel, mother most sweet,

Weep not nor be sad for the death of these little ones.

Cease your sadness, rejoice instead of weeping

For your children live happy above the stars."

Rachel weeps:

"Alas! Alas! Alas!

How can I rejoice when I see these motionless limbs,

When a similar shock shakes my heart?

In truth the death of these infants produce a sadness

without end,

O Sadness! O ruined joys of the fathers and mothers!

O Sad Mourning! Shed a torrent of tears.

The flowers of Judea - sadness destroys the country."

Consolatrioes:

"Why weep, O Rachel, Virgin-Mother?

Thy beauty rejoices Jacob. Dry, O Mother, dry your

tears.

How you destroy the roses of your cheeks."

Then Rachel says: "Alas! Alas! Alas! You accuse me of wrongly weeping, when I have lost my boy who would have cared for me in my poverty, who would have defended against the enemies the field which Jacob had acquired for me, who would have rendered so many services to his senseless brothers, many of whom, alas, I have borne."

The Consolatrices, raising up the children: "Is it necessary, then, to weep that one who possesses the celestial throne by a frequent repeated prayer gives to those unfortunate brothers God's assistance?"

Rachel, falling on the bodies of the Infants: "My spirit is tortured by agony, my heart is troubled within me."

Then the Consolatrices carry Rachel out, and the Angel appears on the high and sings the antiphone which follows: "Suffer the little ones to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Arising at the voice of the angel, the children

enter into the choir singing: "O Christ! Quantum Patri exercitum invenis, doctus ad bella maxima!"

During this time Herod has departed, and his son, Archelaus, is put in his place, and seated on the royal throne. Then the Angel appears to Joseph in Egypt, saying: "Joseph, Joseph, son of David, return unto the land of Judea, for those who would kill the child are dead."

Then Joseph returns with Marie and the child; and as they go towards Galilee, he sings: "Joy, Joy, Joy, Virgin Mary, it is you alone who destroys the heresy in the entire world."

Thus the drama ends and the Cantor entones the "Te Deum Laudamus".

The little play grew rapidly into a more developed presentation of the Sacrifice and in the Munich play of the eleventh century we have an example of its later form. It opens with the Introduction of the Shepherds, - a short presentation of the appearance of the angel and their journey to the crib. Then the angelic messenger warns Joseph to flee with Mary and the Infant into Egypt. And

when this is accomplished, Herod's servant, Armiger, tells the king that the Magi have returned another way, and in his anger and fear Herod orders the massacre.

From this point on to the end of the play the lines are quite similar to those in the Orleans play given above. In fact, the same words are used, the order of the verse alone being different.

The play is in some respects simpler than the one at Orleans, in that its setting is not so elaborate, the children do not have so prominent a place, and the laments of Rachel are briefer. However, it shows the uniting of the two offices - the Pastorum and Innocents in one play; and this with the Stella forms a play which, with the exception of the Prophetic introduction, may now be considered complete.

The introduction dealing with the fall of man, his sinfulness; and God's mercy and kindness in sending his only son into the world to redeem mankind, forms a part of nearly all of the later Mysteries and had its origin in the pseudo-Augustinian "Lermo contra Judaeos Paganos

et Ananos de Symbolo", which was probably written in the sixth century. In many churches it was used as a lesson during some part of the Christmas season. It is written in more or less dramatic vein and probably in its later development was chanted antiphonally. There soon grew out of this sermon a distinct prophet play, which in time became a part of the Pastorum and Stella plays. Therefore in the Mysteries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which are not only representative of the ~~liturgical~~ complete evolution of the liturgical drama, but mark the transition period from the church to the guilds as well, we find that the Prophetæ has become a part of it.

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III

The Period of Transition.

The growth of the Liturgical Nativity play from the individual offices to the complete drama may be said to have reached its culmination in the middle of the thirteenth century when the Prophatae is used as an introduction to the united Stella and Pastorum. Parallel with the development in structure there has been a tendency toward secularizing the play. The simple offices could well be given in the choir of the church, but when they became more elaborate and when individual characters were introduced it became necessary to use the nave as well as the choir. Soon, however, the church was forced to give the more developed forms in the open air. The first plays which were taken out of the church were without a doubt Saint plays, because they would not be so closely connected with the Mass as the Christmas or Easter plays. The use of the lyric hymns tended to further this breaking away from the liturgy and with the introduction

of Herod a great opportunity was given for humor. The offices developed into such a form that they were not confined to any particular part of the Mass, and might be used either in the morning or evening. This removed from the little dramas much of the liturgical element.

The first steps to be made in the introduction of the vernacular were in the choral responses by the laity. The people were influenced now by the humor and ^{the} spectacular, while at first they had been impressed only with the religious significance. As the drama left the church much of the sacredness which characterized it was lost, and the laity began to give productions of their own. A drama which is characteristic of this period is the "Benedictbeuern" of the later part of the thirteenth century. It still retains much of the liturgical elements, and seems to be the result of the combining of several distinct offices. The Prophatae here has a prominent part and has one or two new characteristics introduced. The play, however, shows the highest development of the liturgical drama and marks the point on transition from the minor offices to the complete

Mysteries in the vernacular, of which the Corpus Christi plays of England are the best examples.

The play which is entitled the "Mystere de la Nativite du Christ"* belonged to the repertory of the "Scholares Vagantes" from Benedictbenern. In the prophetic introduction Augustine makes his appearance in "propria persona" for the first time. He is seated in the front part of the church and around him are the prophets Isaiah, Daniel, Sibyl, Aaron and Balaam. Each one gives his prophecy concerning the coming of the Savior and Balaam's ass is introduced.

Quinto loco procedat Balaam, sedem in asina, et cantans:

"Vadam, vadam, ut maledica^m populo huic".

Cui occurrat angelus evaginato gladio

"Cave, cave, ne quioquam aluid quam tibi dexero loquaris."

Et, asinus cui insidet Balaam, perterritus retrocedat, Postea recedat Angelus et Balaam cantet hoc: "Orietur stella ex Jacob."

* Text Du Meril, 187.

Then follows a long dispute between Augustine, an Archisynagogus and the prophets in which the boy bishop - Episcopus Puerorum, is introduced. After this the prophets retire and the stella proper opens with the salutation:

"Ave Maria, gratia pleua; Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulioribus; (St. Luc, Ch.I, v.23).

Then Mary, having expressed wonder and amazement, consents to God's desire, and having withdrawn to the crib, with Joseph seated near her, the star appears and the choir sings;

"Hodie Christus natus est."

Elizabeth enters and saluting Mary says: "Benedictu tu in mulioribus" and she responds with the magnificat. The scene between Herod and the Magi is followed with the appearance of the Angel to the Shepherds where a new element is introduced, the dispute between the Devil and the Angel. The Angel appears and says:

"Shepherds, I announce to you a great Joy, etc."

As the shepherds make ready to depart the devil says to them:

"Do not think such things, simple rustics! These These are mere words without any truth. That the Divine One should rest in a crib is beyond belief."

Then the shepherds return to their work, but the angel says:

"Shepherds, search out the new born child in the crib and render up your pious homages to the Mother and to her Son. Let nothing stop you in this purpose. Let your devotions lead you to the divine crib."

Then the shepherds walk toward the crib, but the devil whispers in their ears:

"Simpletons! He lies in order to seduce you and to lead you away he puts all his falsehoods in verse and music."

The Shepherds are astonished and the one says to the others: "My brothers, do you hear what I hear? A voice speaks of the birth of the Holy Child; another on the contrary insinuates that this news is a lie." The angel says to the shepherds:

"Why do you not give your attention to the Messenger of Truth? Who is this fiend who seeks to turn you from the right way? Hold guard against the snares of the enemy. Go, the crib will show you the truth of my words."

The devil responds:

"O foolish band and wounded in mind! Can you be-

lieve that the hay and straw, food agreeable to cattle, serve as nourishment and a bed to the Holy One? If you believe it, you are very foolish."

A shepherd addresses himself to his companions:

"Hear, brothers, what a contradiction. Here I understand one thing, and there, one tells me the opposite. My simple soul, my spirit without culture is indeed perplexed how to choose between these advices."

Then all the angels appear and sing together:

"Gloria in Excelsis."

After hearing these voices, the shepherd says to his companions:

"To this song my soul arises. I feel in me a joy, a celestial music; let us go to the crib, and, with bended knees, adore the Son of God."

Then the shepherds approach the crib singing this antiphone:

"With the angel appeared a heavenly multitude."

After the song, they adore the Infant and return to their duties, but on the road are met by the Magi, who say:

"Sheperds, tell us, what have you seen?"

And the Shepherds respond:

"We have seen the child wrapped in swaddling clothes and we have heard the choir of angels praising the Saviour."

The Messenger having informed Herod that the Magi have returned another way, he orders the Massacre of the Innocents. The soldiers rush out to fulfill his command and the women sing lamentations over their dead children.

The closing scene of the play is in Egypt, where Joseph, having been warned by the angel, has fled with Mary and the Infant. Their arrival in Egypt is represented where they are met by the Courtesans of the King of Egypt and those of the King of Babylon; and when Jesus enters the temple the idols fall prostrate at his feet. The play closes with a curse against the Jews and a prophecy of the downfall of Jerusalem.

This is a type of the fully developed Liturgical drama which forms the basis for the complete cycles of Mysteries.

During this period of transition, which lasted from about 1250 to 1350, the drama gradually grew away

from the church and came more and more under the control of the laity. It is hardly possible that the clergy could long hold in their power the little scenes which had taken such a strong hold on the people. With the introduction of the vernacular the laity were often called upon to take part in the presentations, for the personal of the plays had become so large that it was necessary to use those who were not directly connected with the church. Then, too, much of the sacredness being lost it is but natural to suppose that professional players would attempt to give productions, not only in the Halls of the Upper class, but, to satisfy the demands of the general public, on the streets as well.

The germ of the modern theatre lay without a doubt in the Mass of the Catholic church, and to a certain extent it was possible for this dramatic element to grow until it culminated in the complete Liturgical Drama such as the Benedictbeuern, but it is hardly probable if this form of Literary Art had remained entirely in the control of the clergy, that it would have reached any further de-

velopment. It would have been hampered and confined by certain bounds, which although it often did overcome, could never be entirely eradicated. The sacred aspect would forever be the fundamental characteristic of the presentations, even though the humorous from time to time might seem more prominent.

So the best thing from the standpoint of Literary Art that could happen to the drama was to have it leave the control of that institution in which it had originated, and be taken up by the laity, who, having no limits either to the imagination nor to the ability of presentation, carried on its development to the great Mysteries as represented by the English Cycles.

In Italy, as well as in England, France and Germany, the origin of the Drama had been essentially religious, but the important phase of its later development is not the Mysteries, as was the case in the other countries, but the fact that it gave rise to new form of Musical and Literary Art - the Oratorio.*

* Bates, Vol. 4.

The Mysteries, which were now produced in England and France, were of the type which would appeal to the untutored mind of the common people, and took on a distinctly national aspect; so that in France we have a charm and naïvete peculiar to that race, and in England a blunt, and often rude, yet decidedly original and wholesome presentation of Biblical Scenes.

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IV

The Nativity Play in England - Its Origin and Sources of Development.

When we turn to the study of the English Drama - its origin and growth - we are able to trace no such gradual evolution from the Mass to the developed Mysteries as was the case in France, for during the Reformation there was a wholesale destruction of Liturgical Books. Therefore at the present the tenth century "Quem Quaeritis" from Winchester and the fourteenth century version from Dublin are the only examples that we have of the earlier forms of the drama.* It is no doubt true that the English Drama had a development similar to that in France, although it is hardly probable if the beginning was made before the Norman Conquest. Previous to this invasion we have nothing in our literature which points towards a dramatic form unless we consider the "passion of St.

* Chambers, Vol.II, p.107.

George" as such.*

The germ of the modern theatre, however, must have been present in the Liturgy of the English Church just as it was in the Mass of Continental Europe. But the Anglo-Saxon mind is not one that would readily use the sacred scenes of the Bible for dramatic purposes. It is too serious to have permitted, at first, a free interpolation of the Mass, nor would it without any outside influence have originated such practices. The Normans brought over with them that Spirit which is necessary for the development of the Religious drama in any country - a desire to bring before the minds of the common people a symbolism, which will be understood by them, and a seeking after the realization of the Sacred Scenes of the Narrative.** So with the conquest we have in England a Renaissance in Letters and Religion, which influenced the development of the Modern Drama.

In France it has been our purpose to show that the Drama as a Modern form of Art was a direct outgrowth

* Ward

** Courthope, p.395.

of the Mass, that its subjects were closely connected with the service itself and that the events surrounding the Birth and Passion of our Lord were among the first, if not the very first, to be represented. As a people they would not be so apt to have any sense of unfitness in thus prostrating the most sacred scenes. It is doubtful if the Anglo-Saxon would be willing to accept or allow any such free treatment of the Divine Office. The Normans probably introduced into the Mass certain of the simpler amplifications as the Winchester "Quem Quaeritis", but I do not believe that the mysteries pertaining to the Saviour were the first to be played in England, but rather that the material for the early dramas was drawn from the lives of certain Saints.* These legendary subjects would prepare the way for the others.

The first Miracle Play known to have been acted in England was in connection with a school at Dunstable about the year 1100. It is the work of a certain Geoffrey, a schoolmaster of that town, and was performed by his pu-

* ten Brink, Vol.II, p.2,3,4.

pils, the costumes being borrowed from the Abbey of St. Albans.*

It is in the church service, however, in England as well as in France that the Modern Drama arose and reached its highest development. The Norman desire for vivid and effective tableaux brought about the celebrating of the church Holy-days in a manner somewhat similar to Continental customs. The growth of the drama was much slower in England and Scotland than in any other country and it is not until the fourteenth century that we have any trace of the introduction of the vernacular into the Liturgical plays and then the writers hardly dared to break away from the Biblical Story. But after that period the Mysteries grew so rapidly and then secularization became so complete that they attained to a cyclical form

* Matthew Paris : "Vitae Abbatum"

"Legit igitur apud Dunestaphiam, expectans scholam S. Albani sibi repromissam; ubi quendam ludum de S. Katerina (quem miracula vulgariter appellamus) fecit; ad quae decoranda petiit a Sacrista S. Albani, ut sibi capae chorules accommodarentur, et obtinuit."

vit. Abb. ad Calc. Hister, Major.
Edit. 1640, tom. I, p. 56.

which far excelled that of France or Germany.

With the exception of the Winchester "Quem Queritis" we have not an example of the early Latin additions to the Divine Office. But we have no reason to believe that the liturgical drama after it had once been introduced was not common in England, for the Litchfield Statutes (1188-89) provide for representations of the "Pastores", the "Resurrectio", the "Peregrini" and those of York (1255) for the "Pastores" and the "Tres Reges".* The conditions excepting the lateness of origin were at first similar to those in France and we can imagine that there must have been a gradual development toward a higher form by the introduction here and there of a new scene or step which would mark a dramatic advance. Because of the loss of so many liturgical manuscripts, that which happened before the day of Corpus Christi is mere conjecture.

The earliest example of the Christmas play in England, which we have, is found in a Shrewsbury manu-

* Chambers, p.107.

script. It marks the beginning of the transition from the Latin into the vernacular and shows that there must have been a gradual development from the liturgical drama into the great cycles. The manuscript contains a single actor's parts in the "Pastores", "Quem Quaeritis" and "Peregrini". The "Pastores"* bears a close similarity to the York Shepherd's Play, not only in the lines that are spoken but in the gifts that the Shepherds offer. The "Pastores" is one of a number of individual plays which still retaining a part of their liturgical basis were performed in the church at that time of year which the drama celebrated. Therefore, we may suppose that there were a group of dramatic scenes surrounding the Crucifixion of Our Lord, and another group of which the Nativity was the Center. They were not as yet connected into cycles but were individual plays that had grown out of the service merely as an amplification in which the secular had been introduced.

The material used for these early dramatic productions as well as for the later cycles, which were only

* Text in Manley, Vol.I.

the result of the uniting of several distinct plays, was taken from the Old and New Testaments and from the Apocryphal Gospels or rather the somewhat varied legends which had grown out of these gospels and had come to hold a very important place in the minds of the people. Such a book as "The Three Kings of Cologne", which is an early English translation of the "Historia Trium Regum" by John of Hildesheim, shows how popular the legends were at that time. Nearly all the manuscripts of this book belong to the fifteenth century and many of them are still extant although the original text is lost. The story deals with the manner and form of the seeking and offering and also of the burying and translations of the three holy and worshipful Kings of Cologne - Jasper, Melchur and Balthasar. "From the Christmas Ballads and Carols* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we see that the imaginative scenes and incidents were often used. Then many of the incidents were taken from the writings of the church

* F.J.Child: English and Scottish Popular Ballads.

Fathers and Old English Homilies.*

Until the establishment of the Feast of Corpus Christi it is to be supposed that the plays of the Nativity had a development distinctly separate from those of the Passion. A uniting of several scenes into one play, however, was carried on in England in a way similar to that in France, but there was as yet no complete cycle.

In the year 1264 Pope Urban IV established the Feast of Corpus Christi**when he granted a pardon of a certain number of days to all those who attended the divine services held on the occasion. The Office was composed by St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, of whose teaching Hagenbach said that he sought to make the supernatural significance of the doctrine of the Church accessible to the natural intelligence, without at the same time in any way analyzing that doctrine into something natural or comprehensible.*** Because of the death of the

* Old English Homilies, E.E.T.S. 2nd Series 53.

** Collier, Vol.II, p.19.

In Bower's "Lives of the Popes", Vol.VI, p.268, the following account of the origin of the feast is given on the authority of St. Antonius, Archbishop of Florence:

"A priest, having spilt at Mass some of the consecrated wine, it appeared upon the corporal (that is

Pope in the same year the feast was not celebrated until fifty years later when under Clement V it was renewed. "The special features of the festival were a distinct proclamation of the Creed and an exhibition at four altars, after procession through the streets, of the Host - the symbol of the Mystery of the Incarnation."**** It was during this latter feature that the plays came to be represented. However, since there was no particular drama which celebrated the festival, those liturgical plays of Christmas

upon the piece of linen on which the chalice and host are placed by the officiating priest) like so many drops of blood. But Diestemius, Prior of the Benedictinis at Liege, tells us that the priest being staggered in his belief of the real presence, blood flowed from the host into the Chalice, and upon the corporale. The corporale being brought bloody as it was from Bolsena, where the miracle was supposed to have happened, to Orvieto, the Pope, after examining the priest and all who were present, was convinced of the miracle and thereupon appointed the solemnity of Corpus Christi to be annually celebrated."

*** Hagenbach, Vol. II, p. 425.

**** Ward, Vol. I, p. 44.

and Easter were given without the church walls. But the great importance which this feast came to have in the minds of the people and the time of the year at which it was celebrated - the Thursday after Trinity Sunday; therefore in June - gave a great impulse to the growth of the drama and the subjects now were taken from the Old Testament as well as the New.

The growing power of the Guilds and their desire to be represented at the Feast of Corpus Christ led to the uniting of these several distinct and separate plays into a Cyclical form, somewhat similar to the "Cursor Mundi." These Cycles mark not only the climax of the Liturgical play but the point of complete separation from the church as well. It was ^{because of} an attempt on the part of the clergy to bring back the drama to the control of the church that Corpus Christi was celebrated with so much pomp and splendor. The plays, however, attained to such a developed form that ~~if~~ it became an impossibility for them to be presented only by those closely connected with the church, so that it became necessary to call upon the laity for as-

sistance. When the position of the guilds became assured, they took over into their control the representations which, still retaining their fundamental liturgical characteristics, through the introduction of the secular and comic elements entirely foreign to the Biblical Scene, became in several instances a real drama.

It will be our purpose to show that fundamentally the English Nativity Plays have the same elements which were characteristic of the early Liturgical Scenes of the Cycle de Noel of France, and that whenever an entirely new feature is introduced such as the Scene in Heaven of the Coventry "Incarnation" or the Comic element in the Towneley "Shepherds", it is the result of the mere attempt on the part of the author to elaborate the Biblical Narrative and to give expression to a certain originality, rather than an intentional means of secularizing the drama. Then*, too, a gradual tendency toward the introduction of the Comic is noticeable in the Towneley and York Mysteries, while in the Coventry we find that the Comic

* ten Brink, Vol.II, p.234.

has given way to the Morality and that the scenes have lost much of their freshness and vigor. In other words, that the Coventry Cycle is an actual preparation for an introduction to the Moralities which later became an important dramatic form. The Allegorical fancy of the Age so marked in the writings of Milton and his contemporaries had already exerted an influence on the Literature.

The Cycles, which have come down to us in the most complete form, are the Chester, York, Towneley and Coventry. These Cycles, with the possible exception of the Chester, are of a necessity the result of the uniting of the plays of different authors into a form which was no doubt influenced by the "Cursor Mundi."

The Chester Whitsuntide plays have been the cause of much critical discussion. Warton and Collier assign the Chester Mysteries to Ralph Higden, compiler of "Polyoronicon." This theory is based upon tradition and from the fact that on the margin of MS. Harl. No. 2124 in the British Museum it is stated that Higden was thrice at Rome before he could obtain leave of the Pope to have them in

* Collier, Vol. II, p. 58.

the English tongue. Collier as well as many others have held the theory that the Mysteries are little more than translations from some old French Cycles that are now lost, and as an evidence of this the structure and language of the Nativity play was advanced. But Hemmingway* attempts to prove that the French influence was very little and was no stronger on the Chester drama than on those of any other Cycle. It is true that the structure of the play is very similar to the French method. There are no divisions between the "Annunciation, Visitation", "Joseph" and "Nativity Plays", but although this is not common in England it is present in the Shearmen and Tailors "Pageant of Coventry." The Roman scenes, the Temple of Peace, the Octavian, Sibyl, are thought to point to a French origin, but Hemmingway makes the statement that the same religious material would be accessible in all countries, and that Higden's journeys to Rome might have brought him in contact with these elements. The French speeches are, too, a source of controversy, but it is possible that they were

* Hemmingway Introduction.

added merely for refinement because the language of the English Court during this period was French.*

I incline, however, to the opinion that those plays are a direct outgrowth from the liturgical offices of the Church and not a translation from either a French or Anglo-Norman Mystery.** The purpose, therefore, of Higden's journey to Rome was to obtain the Pope's permission to give the plays in the English tongue — that is to introduce the vernacular into the liturgical drama. The Shrewsbury fragments are the earliest examples that we have of this new form. We may, therefore, believe that the permission once having been obtained the change was not long in being made and that all the distinct offices

* The last line of Octavianus's speech is in Italian for the sake of the rhyme.

** Davidson's theory is that the cycle is of Anglo-Norman origin. p. 130.

underwent a period of transition and finally were united into the Cycle.

From the standpoint of Literary Art the Chester Nativity Mysteries are extremely interesting, although they have little dramatic value nor any real literary excellence. Material was taken from many sources and introduced into the Biblical Narrative and this foreign element is often the most effective in the play, as seen in the Expositor's story of the Temple of Peace, which is perhaps the best constructed scene in the Nativity Mystery. The presentation is at all times diadactic, and it seems to be the purpose of the different authors to present an exhaustive exposition of the Biblical text with the aid of Apocryphal traditions. The Comic element although present in the Shepherds play is not the main characteristic of the Mystery.

This comic element is more pronounced in the York Shepherds' play, where the shepherds have a discussion over the song of the Angels; but the climax is reached in the second Shepherds' play of the Towneley

Cycle where the *Mak* interlude is introduced. This marks the first real plot in English dramatic literature, and the play may be regarded as our first English drama.

The York Cycle is a norm by which to compare and judge the other plays, since it follows very closely the Liturgical Drama, and much of its material is therefore drawn from the Bible rather than from the Apocryphal sources. The Towneley and York Plays have a very close resemblance to one another; in fact, many of the former plays were taken direct from the York Cycle.* As a literary expression of the life and customs of the time the Towneley plays stand high, for the originality of theme and of structure is excellent.

The Coventry Cycle is the product of purely external agencies, and shows clearly the process under which the cycle was formed. The matter is drawn from every conceivable source and placed side by side without any consideration of completeness or fitness. Not only is the Apocryphal used to a greater degree than in any of the other cycles,

*Hohlfeld's *Anglia*, Vol. II.

but the writings of the Church Fathers are worked into the scenes as well as the more strictly classical allusions. The element of humor so characteristic of the Towneley cycle has here given way to the morality, and what attempts at comicality are made only result in rude jokes and coarse dialogue. Although we no longer have a prophet to read the lines of the prologue, Contemplation takes his place, and the plays are already becoming Moralities.

As to the origin of the Coventry cycle the theory which seems to be the most plausible is the one advanced for the other cycles as well - that the four cycles are the result of the uniting of several distinct and separate offices of the church, which had undergone secularization by passing ^{through} a period of transition and that those individual plays which remain to us were at one time members of some cycle. The Coventry Mysteries have developed far from their original form, and as they now stand may ^{be} the work of one author. It is true that they seem to have no direct dependence upon the other cycles, yet fundamentally they have the same characteristics. Davidson* believes

*Davidson, p. 135.

that these plays rest upon church plays, that have their development at the hands of those closely connected with the ceremonial of religious life; and by this he accounts for the free introduction of the homiletic and Apocryphal elements. The frequent use of Latin verses would tend to bear this out. Nevertheless it appears to me that the plays for this very reason are a direct outgrowth of the liturgical mysteries, and after the change into the vernacular when the secular elements had been introduced they were collected from various sources into a cyclical form, by a writer who added much of the theological and moral elements which characterize the plays.

Whatever their origin may have been, they have lost that simplicity and rude homeliness which is the charm of the other cycles. The writing is restrained and lacks spontaneity and freshness.

There remains yet one other Christmas cycle to be mentioned, the ^aShermen and Taylor's Pageant or True Coventry.* It is made up of two very well developed plays - first the Annunciation, Nativity and Shepherds, followed

*Craig: E.E.T.S. 87 extra.

by the second which, opening with a dialogue between three prophets, treats of the Visit of the Three Kings, the Flight into Egypt and the Slaughter of the Innocents. The pageant is apparently the result of two crafts having united and acting their pageants the one after the other. This in a small degree is an example of the process by which the cycles were formed. These two plays, no doubt of separate origin, but both bearing a very close relationship to the liturgical dramas from which they have developed, became at some period united, yet each one retaining its individual and distinct characteristics.

With the Towneley Cycle the Mediaeval Mysteries reached the culmination of their growth in England, and from then on they began to decay. The Coventry Plays show a loss of many of the fundamental elements of the mystery by the introduction of so much theological and didactical material.

The Digby Mystery - "Herod's Killing of the Children" - is representative of this decay of the Mediaeval Mysteries. The verse is weak, the description dull,

and even Herod has lost his old time boastfulness and vigor and has become tame. From the Prologue we are informed that this feast is held in remembrance of St. Anne and her blessed daughter Mary. In their worship the play is presented, and "wherefore, of benevolens we pray every man to have us excused that we no doo." The poet goes on to say that ~~in~~ last year the "Joymaking of the Shepherds" and "The Coming of the Three Kings" was shown and that now they will play "Mary's Purification", and then Herod hearing of the three kings' departure, his anger and the Massacre of the Innocents.

"Frendes, this process we propose to paly as we can before you all, here in your presens, to the honor of God, our lady and Seynt Anne, beseaching you to give us peacable Audiens. And ye menstrallis, doth your diligens, and ye virgins, show some sport and pleasure, these people to solace and to do God reverence, as ye be appoynted; doth your

The comic element is introduced through Watkyn, a messenger of the king, who is anxious to be made a Knight but who has not the courage to come back with the mothers

of the Infants whom he is to slay.

"And thus I promyse you, that I shall never slepe,
but evermore wayte to fynde the children alone,
and if the moder come in under the benche I will crepe,
and lye stille ther tyll she be goon;
than manly I shall come out and his children sloon.
And whan I have don, I shall renne fast away.
If she founde his child dedd, and toke me ther alone,
be my feith I am sure we shuld make a fray."

But Herod will not make him a Knight unless he fights well, and this he promises to do; but he is threatened by the mothers whom he rebukes for complaining against the king's commands, and is finally beateh by them. (Here thei shall bete Walkyn, and the Knight shall come to rescue hym).

In the Epilogue the poet begs pardon for the shortoomings and promises that the fellows shall play the "Disputation of the Doctors", next year. N

"Now of this pore processe we make an ende,
thankyng you all of your good attendance,
And the next year, as we have purposed in our mynde,
The disputation of the doctours to shew in your presens.
Wherfor now, ye virgynes, er we go hens,
with all your company, you goodly avaunce,
Also ye menstralle, doth you diligens,
Afore our departyng give us a daunce."

The Final Form of the Nativity Play in England, its relation to the Liturgical "Pastorum" and "Stelle"; with a comparison of the York, Towneley, Chester, Coventry, and True-Coventry Nativity Mysteries with one another and with the Benedictbeuern Mystere, showing their common structure and sources of development.

The Nativity Mysteries of the York, Towneley, Chester, Coventry, and True-Coventry cycles bear a marked similarity to one another, not only in structure but often in phraseology as well. The events of the Bible Narrative are, as a rule, closely adhered to and the differences lie mainly in the fact that through the desire for originality new material was added.

In the preceding section a theory for the formation of the cycles was presented which holds true not only for the English plays but for the French Mysteries as well. It is, that the Drama has passed through certain stages of

development - that its origin was in the liturgy of the church where the offices were first presented; that there then followed a period of transition, during which the Latin gave way to the vernacular and new scenes and elements were introduced and that the final stage in the development of the Religious Drama was that of secularization, to which the English Nativity Mysteries belong. But it is possible, by showing the common framework, which exists between them ~~and their~~ and their close relation to the Liturgical offices, to arrive at the conclusion that they all must have originated from one source - the Mass.

It is true, however, that one or two scenes in the Nativity Mysteries can not be traced to any Liturgical origin, such as the scene generally referred to as "Joseph's trouble about Mary", but these events were added merely to complete the series after the cycles were formed.

The Benedictbeuern Mystere, whose close relation to the Liturgical offices cannot be doubted, will be used as a means of comparison between the English Nativities and the Latin Plays. The Benedictbeuern Mystere is the

result of the uniting of the several scenes surrounding the birth of Our Lord into one drama which still retains its Liturgical characteristics. By means of the comparisons, which follow, the common framework existing between the English Mysteries and this Liturgical Mystery is discernible and points to marked fundamental characteristics.

The "Ludus Coventriae" pageants, "The Birth of Mary", "Mary in the Temple", and "Mary's Betrothment" have no Liturgical basis and since they are peculiar to this cycle they will not be considered. These dramas are founded almost entirely upon "The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary", where in the opening chapters we are told that the story of Anna's Barrenness, Joachim's sorrow and journey; the Birth of Mary, her education and finally of her betrothal to Joseph. It is with "The Annunciation", therefore, that the first comparison will be made.

(The texts used are: the "Shearmen and Taylor's Pageant"; Dr. Craig's "Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays" E. E. T. S. E. S. Vol. 87; Miss Lucy T. Smith's "York Plays"; "Towneley Plays" Vol. 47 of Surtees Society; "Chester Plays" Shakespeare Society, Vol. 17; the "Ludus Coven-

triae" for the Shakespeare Society, and the "Benedictbeuern
Mystere in the Du Meril")

<p>Quarter of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Township of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Year of the Kingdom</p>	<p>The Kingdom of the Kingdom</p>
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<p>Quarter of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Township of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Year of the Kingdom</p>	<p>The Kingdom of the Kingdom</p>
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THE ANNUNCIATION.

<p>Quarter of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Township of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Year of the Kingdom</p>	<p>The Kingdom of the Kingdom</p>
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<p>Quarter of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Township of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Year of the Kingdom</p>	<p>The Kingdom of the Kingdom</p>
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<p>Quarter of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Township of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Year of the Kingdom</p>	<p>The Kingdom of the Kingdom</p>
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<p>Quarter of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Township of the Kingdom</p>	<p>Year of the Kingdom</p>	<p>The Kingdom of the Kingdom</p>
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True Coventry
Prologue by
Isaiah.

York
Prologue in
which the pro-
phesies are
related.

Towneley
Prologue by
Deus

Chester
No Prologue

Gabriel:
Hayle, Mare,
full of grace!
Our Lord God
is with thee.

Angel:
Hayle, Marie
full of grace
and bliss,
Our Lord God
is with thee.

Gabriel:
Haylle Mary,
gracyouse,
Haylle Madyn
and God's
spouse.

Gabriel:
Haylle be thou
Mary, mother free
full of grace
God is withthee.

Mary is troubled - - - - -

Mary does not
interrupt.

Mary is trou-
bled

Gabriel:
Dred thee no-
thing. . .
For thou schalt
conceyve upon
this ground.

Gabriel:
Ne drede thee
nought. . . .
Conseyve and
bere a child.

Gabriel:
Goodly lady
have thou no
drede. . . .
Thou shalle
conceyve. . .

Gabriel:
Marye, ne dread
thow nought this
case.
Thou mone
conceyve.

Mary:
Manis cumpany
knev I neyuer
yet.

mary:
I know no man.

Mary:
I can never
by man's syde.

Mary:
In synne no I
not worldly
wight.

Gabriel:
The Wholle Gost
in thee.
Behold Elizabeth

Gabriel:
The hally
gast in thee..
Lo Elizabeth

Gabriel:
The holy
gost shall..
Elizabeth..

Gabriel:
The holy gost
shall in. . . .
and Elizabeth

Mary:
As his one
hand-mayde..

Mary:
Goddis hand-
mayden lo me
here.

Mary:
I am his
madyne. . . .

mary:
Leeve that it
fallin such man-
nere.

CoventryBenedictbeuern

P r o l o g u e

Sources

The prologue is an outgrowth of the prophet play which arose from the Augustinian Sermon.

Gabriel: Angel:
 Heyl, fful of Ave, Maria,
 grace..... graita.....

Luke I, 28-38

Mary is troubled- - - - -

Gabriel:
 Mary in this take
 ye no drede.....
 Ye shall conceyve....

Mary:
 For knowyng of man I
 have none now.....

Mary:
 Quomodo
 fiet.....

Gabriel:
 The holy gost shall
 come.....
 And se Elizabeth...

Angel;
 Spiritus
 sanctus....

Mary:
 So here the hand-
 maiden.....

Mary:
 Ecce ancilla...

The Annunciation.

From this comparison it is seen that, with the exception of the Chester Mystery, the prologue serves as an introduction to "The Annunciation" and as a means of uniting the events of the Old and New Testaments. In the Chester play, however, the Roman Sibyl and other prophets appear during its presentation. The common theme running through this prophetid introduction is the idea of man's sinfulness and downfall, and that his redemption is to be through the Son of God. The Prologue is a direct outgrowth of the Prophet Play, which developed from the Augustinian Sermon. The relation between the Prologue and the Prophet play is especially clear when the "Prophetas" and the "Benedict-beuern" are compared. In the latter the introduction contains many of the fundamental elements peculiar to the "Prophetas" such as the appearance of the Prophets, each of whom gives his prophecy. The Prologues of the other cycles, while they have developed away from this fundamental idea, yet contain the prophecy of the Coming of Christ. The Coventry Introduction is extremely interesting, for a

new scene is introduced - the Council in Heaven, where the four daughters of God, Virtue, Truth, Mercy, and Justice, debate over the redemption of Mankind.

In the "Annunciation" proper there is a marked similarity in the framework of the plays of the different cycles, and they all follow closely the order as given in Luke I, 28-38. It is possible that the Liturgical "Annunciation" arose from the Response "Ave, Maria Gratia plena" etc, after the Lauds of the Mass on March 25,* when the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, Mary, was celebrated and found also in the office of the Blessed Virgin used during advent. However true this may be, in its early forms the Biblical phrases were very closely adhered to, and the play is nothing more than a dialogical rendering of the story as told in Luke I, 28-38. The Cividale "Annunciation" of the fourteenth century uses almost the identical words found the Scriptures.

The Annunciation.

Angelus: Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum,
benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Ne timeas, Maria, invenisti gratiam
apud Dominum.

*Breviarum Romanum", Pars Verna, p. 495.

Ecce concipies in utero, et paries
filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum.

Hic erit magnus et filius altissimi
vocabitur.

Et dabit illi Deus sedem David patris
ejus, et regnabit in domo Jacob in internum, et regni
ejus non erit finis."

Maria: Quomodo fiet estud, Angele Dei, quia
verum in concipiendo non pertuli.

Angelus: Audi, Maria, Virgo Christi, spiritus
sanctus supervenit in te, et virtus altissimi obum-
brabit tibi.

Ideoque, et quod nascetur ex te sanctum
vocabitur filius Deo.

Et ecce Elizabeth, cognata tua, et ipsa
concepit filium in senectuti sua.

Et hic mensis est sextus illi que
vocatur steriles, quia non erit impossibili apud
Deum omne verbum.

Maria: Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum
verbum tuum.

The English plays are very similar to this Litur-
gical Drama, and their phraseology is in some passages merely
a translation, though a very crude one of course, of the
Latin Version.

The Governor
This letter is
Elizabeth
.....
To your
.....
.....

Elizabeth: King's Mary and the King of
for body.

THE VISIT TO ELIZABETH.

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

True Covertry
 This scene is
 missing.

York

Towneley

Chester

Mary:

Elizabeth myn
 owne oosyne.....
 To speak with
 thee of all myn
 kynne.

Mary: greets Elizabeth- - -

Elizabeth: blesses Mary and the fruit of
 her body.

Magnificat closes
 the play.

Mary:
 Magnificat
 anima.....

Mary:
 Magnificat....

Covertry
Marygreete
Elizabeth.

Benedictbeuern

Sources

LUKE I, 42-56.

Elizabeth blesses Mary and the fruit
of her body.

M a g n i f i c a t .

The Visit to Elizabeth.

This scene is not found in the Shearmer and Taylor's Pageant.

The material for this play is taken from Luke I, 42-56, and from "Protevangelium of James", chapter 12. The Magnificat is the central motive and is found in all the Mysteries. The scene probably originated as an introduction to the Magnificat, for the closing of the Cividale "Annunciation" shows the liturgical foundation for the play.

Elizabeth:

Salve chara, Deo grata,
tu saluo, sis beata,
Tecum sit et Dominus; benedicta tu in mulieribus; et
benedictus fructus ventris tui
Et unde hoc mihi ut veniat mater Domine mei ad me?
Ecce enim ut facta est vox salutationis tue in auribus meis, exultavit in gaudiis infans in utero meo, et beata es qua credidisti quoniam perficientur ea que dicta sunt tibi a Domino.

Maria: Magnificat anima - etc. Te Deum.

The Coventry has a new element by the introduction of the scene with Zakarias, whose dumbness causes Joseph much uneasiness. In a long conclusion Contemplation explains the origin of the "Magnificat" and the "Benedictus".

Otherwise than these ~~xxxx~~ few exceptions the plays are quite similar to the Latin drama quoted, and in the Chester Mystery the Magnificat closes with the "Gloria" - a fact which might point towards an earlier Liturgical form. It is in this play also, that ~~the~~ Elizabeth advises Mary to return to Joseph, which is given neither in the Bible nor in the Apocrypha.

Chapter

Joseph

York

1847

Joseph suggests Mary of indignity in his own opinion

of her whose child it is

Mary tells him that it is "God's and yours"; but Joseph

does not believe in his marriage

he leaves the house

JOSEPH'S TROUBLE ABOUT MARY.

The angel tells him that the child is the son of God

he returns and asks Mary's forgiveness

True CoventryYorkTowneleyChester

Joseph tells of
his betrothal.

Joseph suspects Mary of infidelity to him and inquires
of her whose child it is.

Mary tells him that it is "God's and Yours"; but Joseph
does not believe her and complaining of his marriage
he leaves the house.

The Angel tells him that the child is the son of God;
he returns and asks Mary's forgiveness.

CoventryBenedictbeuernSources

Joseph suspects
Mary and asks
whose child it
is.

This scene is
missing.

Protevangelium of James
chapter IX

Nativity of Mary VII.

Pseudo-Matthew X.

Mary:

This childe is
Gods and yours.

(Joseph does not
believe her and
complaining of his
marriage leaves
her).

The Angel appears to
him and tells him to
return.

"Joseph's Trouble about Mary".

The play concerning Joseph's trouble with Mary has no Liturgical foundation, nor was it ever so far as is known presented in the church, but probably developed after the secularization of the drama was nearly complete.. The simpler versions seem to be based on Matthew I, 18-28, but the more developed form took their material from the Apocrypha, where in the Nativity of Mary and the Protevangelium of James a very elaborate account is given.

It is with this Mystery that the secularization of the drama is noticeable more than in the case with either the "Annunciation" or "Visit to Elizabeth". These latter two adhere closely to the Scriptural Narrative, and do not employ the Apocrypha to any great extent. But there is very little to be found in the Bible concerning Joseph and his doubt of Mary's purity, so that it was necessary to look elsewhere for material.

The Mysteries, however, follow the same order of events; the variations being due mainly to the method of treatment. The York Play is unique in the fact, that

before Joseph has seen Mary he complains of his marriage and the folly of having married one so young.

In the Coventry Cycle the "Visit to Elizabeth" is followed by a pageant concerning "The Trial of Joseph and Mary". It is the only cycle in which this Mystery is present and is founded upon the narrative as given in the Protevangelium of James and Pseudo-Matthew. After a comical introduction, in which it is clearly intimated that the goodness of the playing was according to the liberty of the play, the story proper opens with the conversation between two slanderers. Mary and Joseph are brought before the court and bishop, and are both compelled to take the Test of Vengeance, from which they escape unharmed. A slanderer, suspecting some deceit expresses his dissatisfaction and is forced to drink the Cup of Vengeance. But he becomes frantic and begs for mercy. The Bishop and all present ask forgiveness of Joseph and Mary and the piece concludes with their congratulating each other.

<u>Greater</u>	<u>Lowland</u>	<u>York</u>	<u>First Country</u>
to be the way to the north the north the north	to be the way to the north the north the north	to be the way to the north the north the north	to be the way to the north the north the north

to be the way to
the north

THE NATIVITY.

to be the way to
the north
the north
the north
the north
the north
the north
the north

to be the way to
the north
the north
the north
the north
the north
the north
the north

True Coventry

On the way to Bethlehem they come to a stable where they must abide.

Joseph goes for help.

York

Joseph goes for light and fuel.

Towneley

This scene is missing.

Chester

Journey to Jerusalem- they enter the stable.

Joseph goes for help.

The Child is born and Joseph returns and adores Him

Scene of the midwives.

The Child is warmed by the breathing of the beasts.

Salome doubts Mary's virginity, her hand becomes paralyzed. It is healed by touching Jesus.

Mary and Joseph worship Him.

She adores Him.

CoventryBenedictbeuernSources

The journey.
Directed to the
stable by a
citizen who says
the city is filled
with strangers.
Joseph goes for
help.

Protevangelium of
James chapt. XVII- XVIII

Pseudo-Matthew
XIII.

The scene of
the midwives.

Chorus sings:
Hodie Christus
natus est....

Salome doubts
Mary's virgini-
ty, her hand
becomes paralyzed.
It is healed by touching
Jesus.

She adores Him
and promises to
reveal his birth.

The Nativity.

The process of secularization is very marked in these Mysteries, and although there is of necessity a difference in treatment the fundamental elements are the same. In the Towneley Cycle "The Nativity" is missing and its place filled by the First Shepherd's Play. It is probable that there was at one time a drama of the "Nativity" and that it was lost. The midwives appear in the Shester and Coventry Mysteries, the material for their appearance being taken from the Apocrypha.

It is interesting to note the different reasons why Joseph leaves the stable before the birth of the Child. In the Shearmen and Taylor's Pageant, the Chester and the Coventry he goes for help, while in the York, where the midwives do not appear, Joseph goes to get light and fuel.

The closing of the York Play, as well as the Nativity scene in the Shearmen and Taylor, is extremely naive and picturesque. Mary, fearing that Jesus is cold, has Him placed in the manger between two beasts who praise Our Lord.

In the Benediktbeuern a rubric covers the scene:

"Deinde Maria vadet in lectum suum quae eam de spiritu sancto concepit, et pariat filium. Cui assideat Joseph in habitu honesto et proluxa barba: nato puero, appareat stella et incipiat Chorus hunc antiphonarum. Hodie Christus natus est."

The English plays are only an expansion of this scene, into which secular elements have been introduced.

<u>London</u>	<u>London</u>	<u>York</u>	<u>London</u>
The shepherd and his dog and his sheep and his flock.	The shepherd and his dog and his sheep and his flock.	The shepherd and his dog and his sheep and his flock.	The shepherd and his dog and his sheep and his flock.

The shepherd and his dog and his sheep and his flock.

THE SHEPHERDS.

one - bell	one - collar	one - dog	one - sheep
one - spoon	one - bowl	one - bottle	one - glass

one - bell one - collar one - dog one - sheep

True CoventryYorkTowneleyChester

The shepherds
meet and have
a feast. They
see the star
and guess that
it is the star
of prophecy.

The shepherds
speak of the
prophecies.
They go to
find their
cattle.

The shepherds
enter and complain of the
cold and their ill luck.
They feast.

The angelic choir . The shepherds discuss the song.

They enter and make their gifts and adore the Infant.
one- a pipe. one- a broach. one - coffer one - bell
" - a hat. " -cobnuts. " - ball " - spoon
" - mittens. " - hornspoon. " - bottle " - cape

Mary blesses them. - - - -

CoventryBenedictbeuernSources

Luke II, 8-18.

The Angels
appear to the
shepherds. They
tell of the
prophecy and
discuss the
song.

The angel appear:
Magnum vobis.....

Scene of the devil.

They go to Jerusalem , enter and adore
mother and Infant.

The Shepherds.

"The Shepherds" appear in each cycle, while Towneley has two versions with a different development in each case.

The fundamental points common to each cycle are:

1. The discussion over the Gloria.
2. The Journey to Jerusalem.
3. The offering and adoration.

In the Shearmen and Taylor's Pageant, the York Towneley, and Chester plays, the opening of the Mystery is similar. In each case the Shepherd enters either prophesying or complaining of the weather. The comic element is introduced by various means; in the Chester through a wrestling bout, and in the Shearmen and Taylor's by means of a feast.

But it is in the second Towneley play that the greatest ingenuity is used and where the resulting mystery is our first real drama. The scene between Mack his wife and the three shepherds is based upon a plot with true dramatic merit.

Mak, a good-for-nothing fellow meets the three shepherds, who suspect him of being out to steal sheep, but he tells them that all men know him to be true and honest. He complains of his wife, whom he says does nought but eat and drink and bear children, and however rich he might be she would eat him out of house and home. Tired out from their work they lie down to sleep with Mak in the middle. He says a mock night-spell, but after the shepherds are asleep he repeats a spell so that they will not waken until noon.

Then, having taken a sheep, he goes home where his wife upbraids him for his folly telling him that he will hang yet.

"So long goes the pot to the water that it is broken at last."

Gyll, his wife puts the sheep in the cradle and will pretend, if the shepherds should come to the house, that it is a new born child. So Mak returns to the shepherds who are still sleeping. Finally they awaken and missing one of their sheep they go to Mak's home. When they enter the house he is singing a lullaby, while Gyll

is lying on the bed groaning as if in pain.

They search the house but can find no trace of the sheep, and after saying good-by they leave; but one of the shepherds, sorry for having suspected Mak who as he supposed was innocent of any theft, returns to give a gift to the child. When he draws back the covering he discovers the sheep, but Gyll and Mak insist that it is their child, whose shape has been changed by some evil Spirit. The shepherds, however, are sure of his guilt, and they toss him in a blanket, after which the journey to Jerusalem is continued.

The introduction of such a theme naturally marks a period of distinct separation from the church. Yet with all this secular material there is an underlying structure which points toward a Liturgical origin.

Queen

Joseph

King

King Herod

Herod's army - Herod has a powerful army

The three kings
went to the Hill
of Beth

The three kings and Joseph
went to the Hill of Beth

Herod's messenger
told the kings

The messenger announced the arrival of
the three kings to Herod

THE MAGI.

The kings at Herod's court. The king told of their coming
and of the prophecy. The magi were surprised.

They promised to return after they have adored the Infant.

They set out, each with his caravan, and first one fell asleep.
The angel appeared to them and told them to return another
way.

True CoventryYorkTowneleyChester

(Prophetic intraduction)

Herod has a boastful speech

The three kings meet and journey to Jerusalem together.

The three kings meet at the Hill of Vaws.

The messenger announces the arrival of the three kings to Herod.

Herod's messenger meets the kings.

The scene at Herod's court, The kings tell of their coming and of the prophecy. The scriptures are searched.

They promise to return after they have adored the Infant.

They enter, make their oblations, and tired out fall asleep. The Angel appears to them and tell them to return another way.

CoventryBenedictbeuernSources

Herod has a
boastful
speech.

The three kings
meet and explain
their coming.

The three kings co-
ming from different
directions meet be-
fore the altar.

The messenger meets the kings and
informs ~~the~~ Herod.

The scene at Herod's court. The kings tell
of the prophecy.
They promise
to return.

They enter, make
their oblations,
and tired out fall
asleep. The angel
appears to them and tell
them to return
another way.

The Magi.

"The Magi" is found in all the five English cycles.

The points in common are:

1. The opening speech by Herod in which he boasts of his power and ability. This, however, is not present in the Chester.

2. The meeting of the three kings and a discussion of the prophecy and the appearance of the star. This scene generally forms the opening of the Liturgical Stella.

3. The scene between Herod and the three kings.

4. The Magi promise to return after they have adored the Lord.

5. They enter and make their oblations.

6. Being tired out they fall asleep and the angelic messenger warns them to return another way.

"The Magi" Mystery shows the influence of the Apocrypha and material from old English Homilies. These points, which are common to all the cycles are the funda-

mental characteristics of the Liturgical Stella.

Joseph

Pharaoh

Joseph

Joseph

Joseph explains
of his weakness
and says he must
rest; he tells
Joseph, Mary, and
to the child.

The Angel appears to Joseph and tells him that he must
flee to Egypt with Mary and the child.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Joseph tells Mary of the Angel's words.....

They consent to Mary's proposal, Joseph consents
to Mary's proposal, and they flee to Egypt.

True Coventry

York

Towneley

Chester

Joseph complains
of his weakness
and says he must
rest; he falls
asleep. Mary prays
to the Child.

The Angel appears to Joseph and tells him that he must
flee to Egypt with Mary and the Child.

Joseph tells Mary of the Angel's warning.....

Mary consents to go willingly. Mary complains and weeps. Joseph comforts Mary Mary con-
sents to go.

T h e y d e p a r t - - - - - - -

CoventryBenedictbeuernSources

Matthew II, 14.
 Pseudo-Matthew
 chapt. 17-18.

Angel warn Joseph to flee to Egypt - - - - -

Joseph a-
 wakens M^{ary}
 and tells her of the warn-
 ing.

It closes with the
 scene in Egypt.

The Flight into Egypt.

"The Flight into Egypt" is present in the five English Mysteries and in the Benedictneuern as well. By far the most elaborate setting is that of the Latin play, where in the closing scene Jesus's arrival in Egypt is represented.

Although there is much variation in the treatment of the theme, the fundamental framework is the same.

In the English Mysteries the points common to all are:

1. The appearance of the angelic messenger.
2. Joseph tells Mary of the warning.
3. The departure.

In the Shearmen and Taylor's, Joseph does not want to go, while in the York Mary complains bitterly of the journey and is scolded by Joseph. Mary in the Chester and Coventry consents to go, but in the Towneley she hesitates and weeps until Joseph comforts her.

Chicago Chicago Chicago Chicago

Heard is informed that the class
have returned from school

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS.

The children were all
killed (Heard's own
son is killed)

Heard is informed
that the children
were all killed
after the
massacre
of the
innocents
in
the
city
of
Chicago

True CoventryYorkTowneleyChester

Herod has a boastful speach- - - -

Herod is informed that the three kings
have returned home another way.

Herod orders the children to be killed. - - - - -

The soldiers carry out his commands. The women lament.
(Herod's own
son is killed.)

Herod learning that Jesus has escaped rides after him.	he is angry at the escape of Jesus. ^	He rejoices thinking that the Infant is killed.	Herod becomes sick and dies.
---	---	--	---------------------------------

(The Angel
tells Joseph
to return).

CoventryBenedictbeuernSources

Matthew II, 13.
French and Latin
Mysteries.
Cursor Mundi.

Herod is informed that the three
kings have returned home another
way.

Herod orders the children to be
killed.

The women lament.

The soldiers
are praised by
Herod. Feasting.

Scene wherein the
Devil and Death appear.

The Massacre of the Innocents.

This subject was very popular and is found among the early Latin Mysteries as well as among the French. In the Shearmen and Taylor's Pageant the songs of the mothers to their children just before the appearance of the soldiers form an effective scene.

First Woman:

I love my child wonderously sweep
And in my arms I do it keep
Because that it should not cry.

Second Woman:

That babe that is born in Bethlehem so meek,
he save my child and me from vilany.

Third Woman:

Be still, be still, my little child.
That Lord of Lords save both thee and me,
For Herod hath sworn with words wild
That all young children shall be slain.

The points common to the English Mysteries and to the Benedictbeuern are:

1. Messenger informs Herod of the escape of the Magi.
2. He orders the children killed.
3. They, the soldiers, carry out his order.
4. Lamentations of the women.

In the Chester Mystery, Herod dies, and after his death the angel appears to Joseph in Egypt and tells him to return. This is similar to the Orleans "Massacre des Saints Innocents". The Coventry play does not have the quarrel and fight between the Knights and Women and it closes with a feast, after which Death and the Devil appear. In the Shearmen and Taylor's Pageant, Herod learning that Jesus has escaped rides after him.

This play may have originated from the troped form of the Introit of the Mass for the "Feast of the Innocents", but it is doubtful, as the simplest Latin version of the Mystery has no direct relationship to the Introit.

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THE PURIFICATION.

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Tru8 Coventry
Weaver's Pageant

York

Towneley

Chester

P r o l o g u e

Anna and Sy-
meon prophesy.

Symeon bewails his age and prays that he may live to see
Jesus.

The Angel Promises this. - - - - -

Mary and Joseph prepare to go to the temple.- - - - -

The offering. Welcome of Symeon and Anna.

Nunc Dimittis.

CoventryBenedictbeuernSources

This scene is not represented.

Pseudo-Matthew
chapt. II, 22-39.

Symeon bewails
his age, prays
that he may live
to see the Infant.
The Angel promises

Mary and Joseph
prepare to go to
the temple.

The offering and
the welcome.

The Purification.

"The Purification" has no Liturgical foundation nor was it represented among the Latin Mysteries. The English plays are based on the fifteenth chapter of Pseudo-Matthew and Luke II, 22-29. The Weavers' Pageant and the York Mysteries open with a Prologue. In the former play it serves as a connection between this and the preceding scene, and is a review of the Nativity and Offering of the Three Kings. The York introduction explains the laws of the purification. Here and in the Chester Mystery Anna and Symeon prophesy.

The fundamental characteristics are:

1. Symeon bewails his age and prays that he may live to see Jesus.
2. The angelic promise.
3. Mary and Joseph prepare to go to the temple.
4. The Offering and Welcome.

The central Liturgical element of the play, if it can be said to have any, is the "Nunc Dimittis".

The Chester play has a scene peculiar to that

cycle. Symeon writes a "good woman" in place of a "maiden fair and clean shall conceive and bear a son". When he looks at the text he sees that it is written in red letters "a maiden shall" etc. Not wholly satisfied, however, he again changes it, only to find it in its original form written in letters of gold.

Conclusions.

1. The Modern Drama arose from the Altar of the Christian Church, where it originated from the amplifications, which were added to the already somewhat dramatic form of worship.

2. From the troped form of the "Introit de Noel" of St. Gall there developed the Officium Pastorum, while from the Offertory Sentence of Epiphany developed the Officium Stellae.

3. These two Offices became united into one play sometime during the eleventh century and necessarily ^{lost} through ^{this} their close relationship to the Mass.

4. By the introduction of Latin Hymns and lyric verses the plays were robbed of their Liturgical basis, and the way was prepared for the use of the vernacular.

5. The scenes surrounding the Birth of Our Saviour were during the twelfth century united into one play which now included a Prophetic Introduction, the Nativity, the Stella, the Herod and Rachel scenes.

6. This united play is characteristic of the period of transition. The Benediobeuern Mystere is an example of this type of play, and shows that it was made up of several distinct Offices.

7. The Drama in England had an origin similar to that in France and having passed through a period of secularization the several scenes were united into a cyclical form.

8. This cyclical form was influenced by the "Cursor Mundi" and the establishment of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

9. The common framework existing between the English Mysteries and their relation to the early Offices point toward one source of development - the Mass.

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