

Preface.

English Mysteries and Miracle-Plays.

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It is a fact not to be denied that for a considerable time — very little — not to say almost nothing at all has been done tending to afford a true insight into the progressive development of the old English drama. Almost all the English literary histories¹⁾ with which we are acquainted despatch the subject of the origin and first essays of dramatic art in a few words. Such of the English literary critics as occupy themselves specially with the historical development of the English stage content themselves with a chronological and analytical essay or else merely assure the reader as does Malone that „a minute investigation of the origin and progress of the dramatic art in England will scarcely repay the labour of the inquiry²⁾“.

In the first instance, how is it possible fully to appreciate the greatness of the genius of Shakspeare without thoroughly understanding how much the dramatic art of that king of poets owed to the poetry of earlier times, and how much it had filtered and borrowed therefrom? Surely Malone grounds himself on the dictum of Dryden, that Shakspeare found not, but created first the (English) stage³⁾. Yet, this assertion is only to a certain extent justified. If we must also confess that either before Shakspeare or in his time there was no poet of sufficient merit in the dramatic art whom Shakspeare could take for a model and a master, he must have at least learned the mechanism of the drama from foregoing plays. Amongst the mass of those of inferior order he found no doubt much matter which, stripped of its rude covering, contained a precious germ of priceless worth.

Apart from the influence that the stage of the middle age must have exercised over Shakspeare, the first dramatic essays in England, as in every other country, possess an intrinsic value not to be overlooked. Considered in a historic point of view — they serve in the records of civilization as faithful mirrors of past ages, in the history of literature, as the cradle and source of later historical dramas in England, in the history of language as the most precious relics of an era which is usually styled „the dull and dusky middle age“.

Consequently, we have not as we deem undertaken an ungrateful task in presenting to the reader first of all a picture as accurate as may well be of the earliest productions of dramatic art in England — that is to say the Mysteries and Miracle-Plays. As an appendix we take leave to present part of a mystery of the Towneley collection. It is our intention, should circumstances permit at a later period, to publish a similar essay — as a sequel to the present — on the Morality and further development of the English stage up to the time of Shakspeare.

In conclusion, we venture to plead a right to the indulgence of all who may perchance think of criticizing this our present short sketch, and the more so as we cannot apply to it the Horatian maxim: „Nonum prematur in annum“.

Corpus Christi Day 1867.

¹⁾ Even such works as Chambers' „Cyclopaedia of English Literature“ 2 vol. London 1858 and Craik's „Compendious history of English Literature“ 2 vol. London 1866 treat the subject of the commencement of the English stage in a manner altogether superficial and stepmotherly.

²⁾ Historical account of the rise and progress of the English stage, p. 2.

³⁾ In the dedication to his translation of Juvenal, 1692.

English Mysteries and Miracle-Plays.¹⁾

An essay

by

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— *Res antiquae laudis et artis
Ingredior, sanctos ausus recludere fontes.*

In England, as likewise throughout all the countries of Europe where Christianity had taken root — the earliest dramatic representations were derived from sacred history. Each piece revived some different event in biblic history — some marvellous circumstance in the lives of the saints — some mystery — some miracle²⁾. Their common origin and subsequent development are to be traced to the liturgy of the Church wherein we find the first dramatic elements in the responses, in the verses alternately chanted by the ministers and the assistants, in the pictorial and pantomimic representation of the most striking events of sacred history. Such representations performed by the ministers of the Church served not alone to add a new solemnity to its pomps, but even more particularly to animate

¹⁾ As authorities in the compilation of this treatise we have consulted: P. Collier, *The History of English Poetry to the time of Shakespeare*, London 1831, 3 vol. — Th. Warton, *The History of English Poetry*. London 1824, 4 vol. — E. Malone, *Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage*. Basil 1800. — W. Hone, *Ancient Mysteries described*. London 1823. — Mariott, *A Collection of English Miracle-plays or Mysteries*. Basil 1838. — Ph. Hawkins, *The Origin of the English Drama*, 3 vol. Oxford 1773. — Ebert, *Die englischen Mysterien*. In the „*Jahrbuch für Romanische und Englische Literatur*“, 1. vol. Berlin 1858. (An elegant and well written treatise well worthy the reader's attention). — K. Hase, *Das geistliche Schauspiel*. Leipzig 1858. — Towneley *Mysteries*, published by the Surtee Society, London 1836. — *Ludus Coventriae*, a collection of Mysteries, formerly represented at Coventry on the Feast of Corpus Christi, published for the Shakspeare Society by Halliwell, London 1841. — *The Chester Plays*, a collection of Mysteries founded upon scriptural subjects, and formerly represented by the trades of Chester at Whitsuntide, published for the Shakspeare Society by Thomas Wright, London 1843, 2 vol. —

²⁾ The difference between the two principal species of ancient sacred drama is not clearly defined by English critical historians. Warton, Percy, Hawkins, Malone etc. designate them under the general title of *Mysteries*. Collier, in the work above cited condemns the expression and will only admit the designation *Miracle-plays*. Moreover others — for example Mariott — employ the expression *Miracle-plays* or *Mysteries*. Regarding the derivation of this latter word various opinions prevail. It is generally traced to the Greek *μυστήριον*. Yet Wackernagel will have it take root from the Latin *ministerium* (viz. *divinum*) which is truly more in accordance with the original liturgical application of the scriptural play. To this latter hypothesis the French orthography of the word *mystère* cannot be well admitted as an objection — since *mystère* changes into *mistère* and besides may have been derived from a vicious root.

the devotion of the faithful, and facilitate their comprehension of the Latin service. From the union of two such elements the one essentially harmonic, the other plastic in its nature arose the drama — the musical drama, so nearly akin to the so styled opera.

For the representation of these pieces the festivals of Easter and Christmas were selected, when they were recited in the church as a part of the liturgy. The subject of these sacred dramas as the resurrection, the passion, the adoration of the magi etc. is altogether founded on holy writ. The text is taken from the Bible, to a certain extent literally; but consists partly of hymns and prose, the latter interspersed with recitato chant, the piece having been almost entirely set to music — though not all turned into verse. The different localities in which took place the actions in the piece were also figured in the churches. Thus, for instance in the Easter-play, the action commences from the house of Pilate, the jews solicit him to send out watchers to the tomb; Pilate accordingly sets a guard on the sepulchre which is visible in a different part of the church; then, after the resurrection of Christ, the soldiers, awaking from their slumber and finding the place empty return to Pilate within view of the spectators. In a third place, farther off, the merchant displays his store of spices, the two Marys purchase, etc.

These purely liturgical plays at first all composed in the Latin language were to be found in the middle ages, every where the Catholic religion was established, they even maintained their ground for a long period of time after the sacred pieces in the vulgar tongue to which they had given rise were first performed, and whilst these latter presented to a show loving public — outside the precincts of the church the same subjects, but considerably extended, and with the addition of various unscriptural and profane elements.

The question whether these liturgical mysteries, which indicate the first progress of the serious drama of the middle age are due to England or if otherwise they are to be attributed to the influence of France, depends upon the circumstance if their existence in the former country can be discovered during the first half of the eleventh century — previous to the Norman conquest¹⁾.

The next phase in the development of the sacred drama in England is the miracle-play or representation of the miracles and martyrdom of saints²⁾; this representation of miracles was the affair of the people as well as of the clergy. All corporate bodies, more especially trades and guilds, schools, attorneys, lawyers, scribes had their particular patron saint. This, we can easily conceive, so far as regards clerical corporations, and such as may be styled semi-clerical corporations. These latter societies specially constituted with a view to the exercise of christian charity — among the members particularly — were formed of such persons who by their social position stood without the range of the other corporations. Nevertheless, many members of the trades and guilds belonged to some pious association.

All these corporate bodies without exception had their particular annual festivals, among which as we may well imagine that of the patron saint held the first rank. On that day — as is still the

¹⁾ None of the English literary historians has treated the matter of the Mysteries and Miracle-plays under this original aspect. Percy alone makes mention of them in his „Relics of ancient Poetry“ vol. I p. 105 as follows: „They were probably a kind of dumb shews, intermingled, it may be, with a few short speeches; at length they grew into a regular series of connected dialogues, formally divided into acts and scenes“.

²⁾ The earliest notice of spiritual plays and dramas in general, in England, regards the representation of the „ludus de S. Katharina (quem Miracula vulgariter appellamus)“ as stated by Matthew Paris in his Vit. Abb. about 1240 — performed at Dunstaple before the year 1190 by the scholars of Geoffrey who afterwards became abbot of St. Albans. — In Stow's survey of London, 1599 another notice of the ancient spiritual drama is to be found, viz: *Lundonia pro spectaculis theatralibus, pro ludis senicis ludos habet sanctiores, representationes miraculorum, quae sancti confessores operati sunt, seu representationes passionum quibus claruit constantia martyrum.* Stow found this passage in the vita S. Thomae Becket by William Fitzstephen, composed between the years 1170 and 1182. The passage is of particular importance as showing the distinction between the two species of Miracle-plays.

usage with many corporations — was celebrated a solemn service; the corporations had moreover their own chapels, or at least altars consecrated to their respective patrons.

The festival commenced with the celebration of a solemn mass, during which was read the legend, which means the history of the sufferings and miracles of the saint, and as this legend constituted an essential part of the solemnity, — all being under the influence of the liturgic mysteries — it was quite natural to add dramatic representations of the life of the saint, his miracles and martyrdom.

These pieces, most probably in the first instance enacted with less of display and on a more circumscribed stage, within the precincts of the church, were subsequently represented in the halls. Between the different services took place most likely the dramatic representations. We are aware that at least in England it was much the usage to give at public banquets such dramatic „interludes“, which under circumstances were of a serious, religious nature.¹⁾ The circle of spectators at first limited to the members of the corporation, soon admitted those who were unattached to their association, and more especially from the time those festivals began to be held in the open air, by which means a part of the attendant expenses could be defrayed.

In the preceding explanation we have, it is true, in the absence of historical dates been obliged to take as our basis hypotheses which however are more or less founded on history.

That the development of the true miracle-plays in England preceded the emancipation of the mysteries, that is to say the dramas of Scripture history, two important facts tend to prove. In the first place, during the 12th. century in England there is no mention of any public representation other than that of the true miracle-plays — which are not only so styled but are moreover specially characterized as such in historic sources²⁾.

Secondly, in England, as not so in France, Miracle-play, or Miracle alone was the general term applied to the spiritual play³⁾ whilst, as we shall perceive, in the succeeding centuries the Mysteries held the first rank, so that, as the pure miracle-play is seldom thought of, not any one out of the number is still extant. Nevertheless, at an earlier period, they must have held the first rank. However, these miracle-plays which from the nature of the performance were from the commencement necessarily acted by the laity — not to speak of the pieces performed in the convents — were still less from their subject in unison with the ritual, and thus we can easily understand how they became emancipated from the divine worship. Thenceforth the passion for shows grew in propagation with the pretensions of the latter. The Miracles of the artisans were at least enacted in the language of the people. The consequence was as follows: the mysteries being now separated from the divine worship, though still maintaining some connexion with it, and taking an independent and wider range — were performed, not within, but outside the church, before its doors, on its grounds — on the parvis —, or in the parish churchyard, with the assistance of the laity, and in the unliturgical vulgar tongue. And thus did the mysteries at first lean as it were on the church, after quitting it, and continue for some time firmly bound to it, in the ideal and material sense of the term. We are still in possession of a French mystery of this period of transition⁴⁾ The Latin prose, taken literally from the Vulgate, is chanted at the most important passages — between the French dialogues — in the form as it were of attestations and acts of consecration. The church door represents the back ground of the upper scene, and is the passage for God, for him the church being the only place worthy to be reserved and set apart, as his sole appropriate stage.

¹⁾ At the Council of Constance, in the year 1417, the English fathers gave a mystery of the massacre of the Holy Innocents.

²⁾ See note 4

³⁾ The term mystery was according to Collier first employed by Dodsley, in the preface to the collection of Old Plays published in 1744. The Latin word commonly employed for this purpose in the infancy of the English stage was *ludus*. Cf. Fitzstephen „*Judos sanctiores Lundoniae*“ and Matthew Paris the „*ludum de S. Katharina*“.

⁴⁾ It is entitled „Adam“, published by Luzarche, Tours 1854.

As during the course of the 13th. century the burghers of England progressed each day in education, wealth and power, and the era of „merry old England“ — of which Shakspeare and Chaucer give their united testimony — dawned on the country, the Miracle-plays rose together with the fairs — being often cited together, as inseparable companions: now also the mysteries performed out of the church devolved on the laity.

In the middle of the 13th. century in a didactic poem by an ecclesiastic, the clergy were admonished under pain of sin not to take part in any public histrionic representation, except the pure liturgical Easter and Christmas pieces acted in the church — which circumstance proves the continuance of such performances; such shows as were performed in the churchyard, and „en les rues de citez or on the grenys“ were therein especially forbidden¹⁾. Nevertheless, the full and entire development of the spiritual play, thus emancipated from the service, was due to a church holiday — the feast of Corpus Christi, first introduced into the Catholic church in 1264 by Pope Urban IV, and afterwards fully established by Clement V, in 1311²⁾. On this solemnity, the Catholic church up to the present time displays all her splendour, and particularly so in a procession composed of both the clergy and laymen wherein the Sanctissimum is borne alternately by the ministers of the altar. In this ceremony took place all the corporate bodies — especially the guilds — for whom this church festivity being as it were a common holiday they emulated each other in the display of their riches and taste. Moreover, to give an additional lustre to the church-pageant, — besides the pictures and statues of the personages of holy writ and of the saints that were carried about in the procession — the holy Virgin Mary, wearing a silver crown, the four evangelists, the twelve apostles, Saint Margaret and Catherine, followed by eight virgins were represented in person — at first by ministers of the church, but subsequently by artisans. That to a ceremony of this nature representation of the spiritual play should succeed, we can easily conceive, the greater number of the actors in full costume together with the show-loving public being on the spot.

Thus we find that not alone in England, but in other countries, especially in Spain, the festival of Corpus Christi was precisely chosen for the performance of the spiritual play; in this latter country where this species of drama longest maintained its ground, it was acted under the form of the Auto Sacramental.

¹⁾ The passage which is to be found in the Anglo-French poem „Manuel de Peché“ — Robert Grossthead (Grossetête) who died in 1253 is supposed to be the author of this work — according to the translation of Robert de Brunne sets forth:

Hyt ys forbode † hym yn the decre
 Myracles for to make or se;
 For myracles, zyf * you bygyane,
 Hyt ys a gaderynt, a syght of synne.
 He may yn the cherche, thurgh thys resun,
 Play the resurrecyun;
 That ys to seye, how god rose,
 God and man yn myght and los ††,
 To make men be yn beleve gode,
 That he ros with fleshe and blode;
 And he may pleye wythoutyn plyght **
 Howe god was bore yn thole nyght,
 To make men to beleve stedfastly
 That he lyght yn the vyrgyne Mary.
 Zyf thou do hyt in weyys or grenys
 A syght of syune truly hyt semys.

† Forbidden. * If. †† Strength and weakness. ** Condition.

²⁾ An account of this feast is given in Bower's Lives of the Popes, VI. 268.

But there could be no doubt as to which of the two species of spiritual drama belonged the English Corpus Christi-plays of former times. On a festival, which in its origin was regarded as the triumph, so to speak, of the Cardinal point of Catholic belief over paganism and heresy, mysteries alone, and no miracle shows might well be enacted. But it was not deemed unseemly to give on this occasion a historic sketch of the development of Christianity from the creation of the world and the fall of Adam to the redemption by the death of Christ, with the resurrection — the consummation of that redemption —, the descent into limbo; and further — by anticipation, portraying the future — they finally gave the last judgment, a conclusion fully in consonance with the commencement of the representation. And thus, in this as it were church mirror of the life of man seemed arrested the revolutions of the wheel of time.

Such was the nature of the pieces enacted in England by artisans from the 14th century on Corpus Christi day: not unfrequently the performance lasted three days, counting from Thursday — on which day the festival always falls — till Saturday. Of a great influence on the development of these pieces, which are not to be likened to theatrical acts, but were perfectly harmonized elements of a composite whole — was the circumstance that all guilds — at least at the period of their installation wished to lend their aid to the representation: this indeed was considered as a point of honour by all corporate bodies.

Of these voluminous collections of Mysteries thus originating from the feast of Corpus Christi, but subsequently acted in some stated localities — as for instance at Pentecost¹⁾ regularly — on the occasion of other festivities likewise, either profane or sacred, — three are still extant, namely those acted at Chester, Coventry and in the neighbourhood of Wakefield; of one performed at York we have at least a complete programm. In order to become somewhat more conversant with the range of subjects embraced in those collections of Mysteries it will suffice to point out the titles of the several sections that compose it according to the order of the series²⁾. The following single pieces were acted: The Creation and the Fall of Lucifer; the Fall of Man. The Death of Abel. The Deluge. Abraham's Sacrifice. (Jacob and Esau). Pharaoh. Moses. (Balak and Balaam. The Prophets. — — Anne's Mary's Mother Pregnancy; Mary in the Temple; Her Betrothment; Caesar Augustus). The Salutation; The Visit to Elizabeth; (the Trial of Joseph and Mary). The Birth of Christ. The Shepherds' Offering. The three Kings. (Flight into Egypt). Slaughter of the Innocents. The Purification; Christ disputing in the Temple. — — The Baptism of Christ. (Nuptials at Canaan *. The Temptation. Transfiguration *. The Woman taken in Adultery). Lazarus. (Simon the Leper). — — (Christ's Entry into Jerusalem *). Conspiracy of the Jews. (Mary Magdalen). The last Supper. Christ betrayed. The Trial of Christ. Flagellation. The Dream of Pilate's Wife. Judas hangs himself *. Crucifixion. (Partition of Christ's garments). Descent into Hell. The Resurrection. The Apparition of Christ to the two Disciples. (Incredulity of Thomas). The Ascension. (Descent of the Holy Ghost. Election of Matthew. Burial of Christ *, Assumption, and Coronation * of the blessed Virgin. Antichrist. The Day of Judgment.

Such voluminous mysteries as consisted of thirty or forty sections or single pieces were from the 14th or more generally from the 15th century performed throughout England, not alone in the larger and more populous towns, but also in the country parts, where now and then numbers of communities joined and contributed to defray the expenses — and procure the actors. Besides the above named

¹⁾ The sacred dramas exhibited at Chester are called Whitsun Plays.

²⁾ The names of such plays as are not common to the four collections and evidently of a later date than the others are included within brackets, and those of York alone which of course are no longer extant, are marked with an asterisk.

towns, Dublin, Newcastle, Wymondham near Norwich, Lancaster, Preston and Kendall are specially named.

With regard to the performance¹⁾, it is above all essential to remark that the divers sections of the mysteries, in English styled pageants²⁾ were represented by various stated guilds³⁾ who were always the possessors of the whole apparatus for their play as: play-book, machinery, costume, and not unfrequently of the very stage. But on the other hand, they were obliged to meet all charges consequent on the representation. Yet it frequently so happened that the same simple plays, by reason of the attendant expenses, and also of the great numbers of the unisons in proportion to the plays — belonged in common to several corporations. Although most of the guilds, especially such as were considerable, carried out for succeeding centuries the same performance, yet the order was frequently changed. At first, for instance the cap-makers (cappers) in Coventry only contributed to the play of the belt makers; afterwards, in the commencement of the 16th century, they undertook that of the weavers, whilst these last bound themselves to a contribution in money. On the other hand the cap-makers were freed by the board of their guild from the contribution paid to the belt makers. Two years later the cap-makers took part likewise in the performance of the paper-makers and saddlers, because this latter guild from the diminution of its members could no longer sustain the expenses. Thus the cap-makers had the charge of two performances — in truth nearly akin to each other — that is to say the Ascension and Descent into Limbo. In the course of time what had been at first esteemed an honour and a pleasure — for many had grown burden. It had become an established law that in order to defray the charges each individual guild should in some way contribute its part. To this latter regulation, the statutes of the corporation obliged each of the unions under heavy penalty. The performance of these plays was justly regarded as the affair of all the citizens. The members of the trades unions in England were, as we are aware, the standard bearers of the town regiment.

So far as regards the distribution of the single plays, when these Corpus Christi pieces were at first produced — it appears to have been influenced — by the circumstances of trade or calling. Any — even to the most indirect — bearings of the subject on some particular calling, were taken into account in regulating the distribution of the parts. Especial care was had to furnish all implements adapted to the piece, so, for example: the play of the three kings or Magi as it was generally called, was in Dublin assigned to the goldsmiths, as the fitting ornaments of the kings, but chiefly their crowns should first be procured. So, likewise, in York, the last supper piece — in which the washing of the feet was an important part — was given to the bakers and water carriers, and the marriage of Canaan was acted by the vintners. Nevertheless the distribution of the plays was by no means similar in different places. The Deluge was represented in Dublin and also in York in two parts, the first was given to the carpenters — as the ark was to be constructed in presence of the spectators — and the second was assigned to the fishermen and seamen. In Dublin the first was given to the seamen and the second to the vintners, as in that city the piece had evidently a different purport, inasmuch as Noah's culture of the vine was included.

In this partition of the deluge piece the immaterial connexion was decisive, inasmuch as Noah might well be regarded as the first ship-carpenter, as likewise the first sea-captain, at all events as the first vintner.

Thus, every trade presented its piece on the boards; in the representation, as we shall see, the

¹⁾ The most authentic sources of information on this head are: in the first place the records of the city guilds, especially those of the board of the trade unions in Coventry. Of still greater weight are the ledgers of each guild (in the 15th. and 16th. century).

²⁾ For further information regarding the sense of the word „pageant“ see the succeeding pages.

³⁾ It must not be overlooked that often several trades formed a guild.

single pieces were played like acts one after the other. For the rule of the single play a contract of several years was entered into with a burgher, who received in return a certain yearly stipend. This manager was obliged, in the first place to procure actors. To him was confided the charge of the Manuscript of the play, termed the play-book, or „the book“ par excellence, or the „original“ together with the wardrobe; all which objects he was bound to deliver up in the same order, after the close of the play. Another office, that of the prompter was styled in the play bills as „the bearing of the book“ and the prompter himself was designated as the keeper of the book, frequently also as clerk¹⁾. At an earlier period a churchman would not improbably have filled the office, but scarcely so in the middle of the 15th. century²⁾. — Each single part of course was copied out; consequently new copies occur in the accounts. Although each successive year and for a long time the same plays were represented mostly by the same actors, yet before each performance several rehearsals took place. For the study of a new piece — a very rare event — five at least were requisite. On the occasion of the rehearsals, as also of the representation, the players were regaled at the expense of the guilds; the principal meat took place after the end of the performance; roast beef and goose, beer and wine were set before them, this last item only for those who had played the first, which here assuredly meant the longest parts. By the same rule, the remuneration was also regulated according to the length of the part. So, for example, in the play of the Passion acted by the smiths at Coventry, Pilate received most — 4 shillings. Herod with Caiphas each 3 sh. 4d, Annas only 2d sh. 2 and Christ himself („God“) 2 sh., and a like sum was given to each of his executioners who are here — as in other places — designated under the ill applied title of „knight“ (miles). — Even Satan had to divide the sum of one shilling and six pence with his colleague Judas.

Concerning the costume, — so far as regards many first and important parts — this admits of being determined with a certain degree of accuracy, especially in Coventry, if we comprise the entries made in the books of the guilds during the 15 th. and 16 th. centuries. However, we find therein in the course of succeeding years only solitary dates, though not rarely many together, because the respective guilds were already provided with the wardrobe suited to their play, before the books handed down to us were commenced, and consequently purchased afterwards only some single articles, to replace such as were worn out. Thus, to cite an example, in some given year a new coat is procured for Pilate, in the next a hat. But various articles must not unfrequently be repaired, and are thus several times mentioned to that effect. These last cited statements, which frequently return, prove quite clearly that the same costume was generally preserved for centuries, a supposition fully borne out by the entries — perfectly corresponding — of the sums expended for the same piece and the same part — at distant intervals, in the course of long succeeding years. We must further remark that these costumes in the first instance, not arbitrarily selected — being in a great measure imaginative in process of time became more and more established and so to speak, stereotyped in this religious and sacred performance. Yet in truth this does not apply to all, but to the greater number of characters, in particular those of the New Testament. The costumes of these having been originally imitated from the painted marble statues of the church should the more maintain their resemblance to their models, as many of these latter were carried about in the procession on Corpus Christi day. The costume of Christ, of the high priests Caiphas and Annas, of Herod, Pilate, of the executioners („torturers“), of the angels and devils is chiefly what can be fixed with most accuracy, but, from these we can draw a conclusion as to the wardrobe of the others³⁾.

Some other matters relating to the equipment of the actors must be particularly noticed. Masks

¹⁾ Even so late as Shakspeare's time, this theatrical functionary was styled besides prompter also book-keeper or book-holder.

²⁾ That proves already the paltry sum — 12d — voted for this office.

³⁾ For more precise information on this matter see Ebert in his treatise as before cited.

were used for many parts, as we know for certain was the case in Coventry in the part of Satan and that of Herod; such as were not masked embellished, or more properly speaking, painted their faces. The faces of the „black souls“ were dyed black. The introduction of masks into these pieces in England is very ancient; they were much used in the miracle-plays in the middle of the 13th. century. Further, the early use of the peruke which we likewise find on the Shaksperian stage is not unworthy of interest.

We now come to the construction of the stage. When the Mysteries had become completely detached from the church, they were performed on the market places of the towns, or else in order to have a wider scope, in a green field without the town; the representation took place — by reason of the vast crowd of spectators — on a scaffold. In case of want different localities were limited on it. But from the time where those collective Mysteries were played, a whole range of scaffolds became necessary, which being placed near each other, the public, after the close of the exhibition passed on to the next scaffold to assist at the succeeding piece; sometimes for a single play a pair of scaffolds was requisite, and thus the actors passed to and fro from one to the other. Between the spectators and the scaffold was a free space — called the middle place; this was as it were the street to the players. In certain parts of the scaffold separated from the rest were frequently contrived houses, divided into apartments. These were, as we may well suppose open in front to the view of the public, so that all that passed within could be distinguished. But, on the other hand, a side wall with a door or gate separated this locality from the rest of the stage. As we may well suppose, any thing like deep shadowy perspective, curtains, and decorations was out of the question; all what the stage wanted in depth, it gained in the vastness of its extent, and in place of metamorphoses, the players might be seen passing from one scene to the other. It appears that recourse was but rarely had to the ideal illusions of painting; besides all was represented in a manner palpable and corporal, though symbolically. — Hell was in these English Mysteries of a much inferior importance than in later accomplished spiritual plays of the French; in general it was only made use of, where the subject conformably to tradition required its participation; only in that case Hell was represented by some particular locality, as for example, in the Fall of Adam, the Descent into Limbo, the last Judgment. In the Descent into Limbo, the principal stage was appropriated to this purpose. Here were to be seen the gate of hell, next limbo, lastly the interior of Hell, in which a pit led under the stage. In the other pieces, where hell is produced — as for instance in the last Judgment — it was represented under the stage by its entrance alone — the „mouth of Hell“, the demons finally dragging thither the wicked or black souls. — The performance of the Corpus Christi plays in the towns was characterized by this peculiarity — each single play without exception had its own special stage, which set on a six-wheeled waggon could be moved towards any given point in the town, where the different plays were performed in succession, according as the waggons arrived. They commenced, for instance before the house of the mayor; the first play being there ended, they proceeded to the next point — let us suppose — to the end of the street, before the house of an alderman; and whilst the first play was being there acted anew, the second was given before the mayor's house. And so on — in the same order with the others, till, within a short space of time, there were performances at the same moment in almost all parts of the town. As we may imagine, the places where these street exhibitions took place were specially fixed, and it was moreover forbidden under a heavy penalty to interrupt the order by exhibiting in any other place. These Thespian cars consisted of two stories, the upper open represented the stage, the lower hung round with curtains answered the purpose of a wardrobe; the centre place was in the street, as may be learnt from the stage direction of such a piece: „here Erode ragis in this pagond, and in the strete also“. The chief Thespian car, adorned with banners and colours was

- 20 In brightness, in bewty; therfor he hym degrade;
Put hym in a low degre soyn after, in a brade,
Hym and alle his menye, wher he may be unglad
For ever.
Shalle thay never wyn away,
- 25 Hence unto domys day,
Bot burne in bayle for ay,
Shalle thay never dyssever.
Soyne after that gracious Lord to his liknes maide man
That place to be restord even as he began,
- 30 Of the trinite bi accord, Adam and Eve that woman,
To multiplie without discord in paradise put he thaim,
And sithen to both
Gaf in commaundement,
On the tre of life to lay no hend,
- 35 Bot yit the fals feynd
Made hym with man wroth,
Entysyd man to glotony, styrd him to syn in pride;
Bot in paradise securly myght no syn abide,
And therfor man fulle hastely was put out, in that tyde,
- 40 In wo and wandreth for to be, in paynes fulle unrid
To knowe,
Fyrst in erth, * and * sythen in helle
With feyndes for to dwelle,
Bot he his mercy melle
- 45 To those that wille hym trawe.
Oyle of mercy he hus hight, as I have hard red,
To every lifyng wight that wold luf hym and dred;
But now before his sight every lifyng leyde,
Most party day and nyght, syn in word and dede
- 50 Fulle bold;
Som in pride, ire and envy,
Som in covetous and glotyny,
Som in sloth and lechery,
And other wise many fold,
- 55 Therfor I drede lest God on us will take venjance,
For syn is now alod without any repentance,
Sex hundreth yere and od have I, without distance,
In erth, as any sod, liffyd with grete grevance
Alle way;
- 60 And now I wax old,
Seke, sory and cold,
As muk apon mold
I widder away;
Bot yit wille I cry for mercy and calle,
- Noe, thi servant, am I, lord over alle! 65
Therfor me and my fry shal with me falle,
Save from velany, and bryng to thi halle
In heven;
And kepe me from syn,
This world within; 70
Comly kyng of mankyn
I pray the here my stevyn!
Deus. Syn I have maide all thyng that is liffand,
Duke, emperour, and kyng, with myne awne hand,
For to have thare likyng, bi see and bi sand, 75
Every man to my bydyng should be bowand
Fulle fervent;
That maide man sich a creatoure,
Farest of favoure,
Man must luf me par amoure, 80
By reson and repent.
Me thoght I showed man luf when I made hym to be
Alle angels abuf, like to the trynpte,
And now in grete reprufe fulle low liges he,
In erth hym self to stuf with syn that displeesse me 85
Most of alle;
Venjance wille I take,
In erth for syn sake,
My grame thus wille I wake,
Both of grete and smalle. 90
I repente fulle sore that ever made I man,
Bi me he settes no store, and I am his soferan;
I wille destroy therfor both beest, man, and woman,
Alleshalle perishles and more, that bargan may they ban
That ille has done. 95
In erth I se right nocht
Bot syn that is unsoght,
Of those that welle has wrought
Fynd I bot a fone.
Therfor shall I fordo alle this medille-erd 100
With floodes that shalle flo and ryn with hidous rerd,
I have good cause therto, for me no man is ferd,
As I say shall I do, of venjance draw my swerd
And make end
Of all that beris life, 105
Safe Noe and his wife,
For thay wold never stryfe
With me then me offend.
Hym to mekille wyn hastily wille I go,

p. 4 (a little before: How that me semys to sit in throne p. 3). 20. degrade = degraded. 21. in a brade, in an instant. 24. win away, go away, escape, cf. 560, 561. 26. bayle, bale, misery. 27. dyssever, depart, often used as an intransitive verb, like the *ofr.* *desseverer*. 34. hend = hand; properly the plural of *hand*. 36. hym *ac. that gracious Lord*. 40. wandreth, sorrow, trouble, suffering, often combined with *wo*: In drede, *wandreth* and *wo* p. 202. unrid, unwieldy, heavy, grievous. 42. and, *in MS.* The particles *and* and *in* seem to be often confounded in the edition of the *Town. Myst.* 44. melle, meddle, interpose, *ofr.* *wester, meller, medler*. 46. hus = *us*, hight, promised. 48. leyde = *tede*, man. 52. covetous and glotyny, covetousness and gluttony. 53. alod = *alowed*, allowed. 57. distance, dispute. The formulae *without distance* signifies nothing else but *withouten pay*. 63. widder, wither, comp. *ags.* *vedrjan*, tempestatem sortiri vel serenam vel turbidam *Benson*. 66. my fry, my seed, cf. 177. *shal* . . . *falle*. These words are alike a relative phrase. 76. bydyng and *bydyng*, bidding, as 381 and p. 2, 36, 38, 128 etc. beside *byddyng* p. 65, 69 etc. 92. Bi me he settes no store, he puts no value upon me. 94. that bargan may they ban. The word *bargan*, like the *ofr.* *bargagne*, *bargaine*, is used here in a general sense. In the Scotch language *bargan* is often employed for *struggle, controversy, fight* etc. 97. unsoght. There are several attempts to explain this word in the glossary to the edition of the *Town. Myst.*, as *by disturbed, disordered, foul, unseeet? un-sighed for, lamented. Unsoght* = unsoUGHT, perhaps the contrary of *to seche*, may signify *frequent, common*. 99. a fone, a few. 101. rerd, roaring, noise, cf. 233. 107. 108.

- 110 To Noe my servand, or I blyn, to warn him of his woe,
In erth I see bot syn reynand to and fro,
Emang both more and myn, ichon other fo
With alle thare entent;
Alle shall I fordo
- 115 With floodes that shall floo,
Wirk shall I thaim wo,
That wille not repent.
Noe, my freend, I thee command, from cares the
to keyle,
A ship that thou ordand of nayle and bord ful well,
120 Thou was alway welle wirkand, to me trew as stele,
To my bydyng obediand, frendship shalle thou fele
To mede.
Of lennthe thi ship be
Thre hundreth cubetts warn I the,
125 Of heght even thirte,
Of fyfty als in brede.
Anoynt thi ship with pik and tar without and als within,
The water out to spar this is a noble gyn;
Look no man the mar, thre chefe chambers begyn,
130 Thou must spend many a spar this wark or thou wyn
To end fully.
Make in thi ship also,
Parloares oone or two,
And houses of offyce mo,
135 For beestes that ther must be.
Oone cubite on hight a wyndo shal thou make,
On the syde a doore with slyght be-neyth shal thou take,
With the shal no man fyght nor do the no kyn wrake.
When all is doyne thus right, thi wife, that is thy make,
140 Take in to the,
Thi sonnes of goode fame,
Sem, Japhet, and Came,
Take in also thame,
Thare wifes also thre.
145 For all shal be fordone that lif in band bot ye,
With floodes that from abone shal falle, and that
plente;
It shalle begyn fulle sone to rayn uncessantle,
After dayes seven be done, and induyr dayes fourty,
Withoutten fayle.
150 Take to thi ship also
Of ich kynd beestes two,
Maylle and femaylle, bot no mo,
Or thou pulle up thi saylle.
For thay may the avaylle when al this thyng is wroght;
- Stuf thi ship with vitaylle, for hungre that ye perish 155
nocht,
Of beestes, foulle, and cataylle, for thaim have thou
in thoght,
For thaim is my counsaylle that som socour be soght,
In hast;
They must have corn and hay,
And oder mete alway. 160
Do now as I the say,
In the name of the Holy Gast.
Noe. A, benedicite! what art thou that thus
Tellys afore that shalle be? thou art fulle marvelous.
165 Telle me, for charitie, thi name so gracios.
Deus. My name is of dignyte, and also fulle glorius
To knowe.
I am God most myghty,
Oone God in trynyty,
Made the and ich man to be; 170
To luf me welle thou awe.
Noe. I thankthe, Lord, so dere, that wold vowch sayf
Thus low to appere to a symple knafe;
Blis us, Lord, here, for charite I hit crafe,
The better may we stere the ship that we shalle hafe, 175
Certayn.
Deus. Noe, to the and to thi fry
My blyssyng graunt I;
Ye shalle wax and multiply,
And fille the erth agane, 180
When alle thise floodes ar past and fully gone away.
Noe. Lord, homward wille I hast as fast as that I may;
My [wife] wille I frast what she wille say,
And I am agast that we get som fray
Betwixt us both; 185
For she is fulle tethde,
For litille oft angre,
If any thyng wrang be
Soyne is she wroth.
Tunc perget ad uxorem. 190
God spede, dere wife, how fare ye?
Uxor. Now, asever myght I thryfe, the wars I thee see;
Do telle me belife where has thou thus long be?
To dede may we dryfe or lif for the
For want. 195
When we swete or swynk
Thou dos what thou thynk,
Yet of mete and of drynk
Have me veray skant.

never . . then, never . . nor. 110. or I blyn, before I cease. 112. more and myn is used beside more and les, cf. 282. ichon other; other is to be taken as dative case: each foe to the other. 113. the to keyle, to keel, cool, assuage thee. 119. that thou ordand = that thou ordan, (ordayn), that thou ordain, put in order, prepare. Cf. A ship he bad me ordagn 313. In our Mysteries we find the infinitive ordan p. 167, 172, 182 300; thence: I ordan p. 96, thus ordans he p. 78, and ordand as preterit p. 249 and as past participle p. 19, 61, 179, 213; besides the infinitive ordagn 313, ordayn p. 47. 121. obediand, obedient. So we write instead of obedience MS; obediand, ofr. obedient, corresponds to forms as servand etc. 126. brede, breadth; ags. broedo, broed, laitudo. 128. out to spar, to shut out. 129. mar, hinder, thre chefe chambers, three chief chambers. They are opposed to the parloures oone or two 133. In the same way verse 285 is to be restored. Our edition presents the following version: Thre ches chambre, thay ar welle maide. The glossary p. 334 explains this passage as follows: three chambers piled one upon another. 138. wrake, mischief, ags. vrack, poena, malum. 143. thame, them. hame MS; hame = home is improper; thame = thaim is especially frequent in the Scotch language. 146. from abone, from above. Cf. When that I do com downe . . in clowdys from abone p. 196. 148. induyr = indure, endure, cf. endure 287. 156. foulle, fowl. 163. benedicite! see Chaucer I, 6669. 183. frast, generally fraist, inquire, try, ask, appears always here with a: My servand

- 200 *Noe*. Wife, we are hard sted with tythynges new,
Uxor. Botthou were worthi beclad in Stafford blew;
 For thou art alway adred be it fals or trew;
 Bot God knowes I am led, and that may I rew,
 Fulle ille,
 205 For I dar be thi borow,
 From even unto morow,
 Thou spekes ever of sorow,
 God send the onys thi fille!
 We women may wary alle ille husbandes,
 210 I have oone, bi Mary! that lowsyd me of my bandes;
 If he teyn I must tary, how so ever it standes,
 With seymland fulle sory, wryngand both my hands
 For drede.
 Bot yit other while,
 215 What with game and with gyle,
 I shall smyte and smyle
 And qwite hym his mede.
Noe. We, hold thitong, ram-skyt, or I shalle the stille.
Uxor. By my thryft, if thou smyte I shall
 turne the untillle.
 220 *Noe*. We shalle assay as tye, have at the Gille,
 Apon the bone shal it byte.
Uxor. A, so mary, thou smytes ille;
 But I suppose
 I shal not in thi det
 225 Flyt of this flett!
 Take the ther a langett
 To tye up thi hose!
Noe. A, wilt thou so? mary, that is myne.
Uxor. Thou shal thre for two, I swere by Godes pyne.
 230 *Noe*. And I shalle qwite the tho in fayth or syne.
Uxor. Out upon the, ho!
Noe. Thou can both byte and whyne
 With a rerd,
 For alle if she stryke,
 235 Yit fast wille she shryke,
 In fayth I hold none slyke
 In alle medille-erd;
 Bot I wille kepe charyte for I have at do.
Uxor. Here shal no man tary the, I pray the go to,
 240 Fulle welle may we mys the, as ever have I ro;
 To spyn wille I dres me.
Noe. We, fare welle, lo;
 Bot wife,
 Pray for me besele,
- To eft I com unto the, 245
Uxor. Even as thou prays for me,
 As ever myght I thrife.
Noe. I tary fulle lang fro my warke, I traw,
 Now my gere wille I fang and thederward draw,
 I may fulle ille gang, the soth for to know, 250
 Bot if God help amang I may sit downe daw
 To ken;
 Now assay wille I
 How I can of wrightry,
In nomine Patris et Filii
Et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. 255
 To begyn of this tree my bonys wille I bend,
 I traw from the trynnye socaure wille be send;
 It fayres fulle fayre, thynke me, this wark to my
 hend,
 Now blissid be he that this can amend; 260
 Lo, here the lenght,
 Thre hundreth cubettes evenly,
 Of breed lo is it fyfty,
 The heght is even thyrty
 Cubettes fulle streght. 265
 Now my gowne wille I cast and wyrk in my coate,
 Make wille I the mast or I flyt oone foote.
 A, my bak, I traw, wille brast! this is a sory note,
 Hit is wonder that I last sich an old dote
 Alle dold, 270
 To begyn sich a wark!
 My bonys are so stark,
 No wonder if thay wark,
 For I am fulle old.
 The top and the saylle both wille I make, 275
 The helme and the castelle also wille I take,
 To drife ich a naylle wille I not forsake,
 This gere may never faylle, that dar I undertake
 On one.
 This is a nobulle gyn, 280
 Thise nayles so thay ryn,
 Thoro more and myn,
 Thise bordes ichon.
 Window and doore even as he saide,
 Thre chef chambre, thay ar welle maide, 285
 Pyk and tar fulle sure ther apon laide,
 This wille ever endure, therof am I paide;
 For why?
 It is better wroght

I wille found and *frast* p. 36. 186. *tethde*, peevish, crabbed. 193. *belife*, quickly. 200. **we are hard sted**. *Sted, stad*, is used in a similar connexion as the compound *bested, bestad*: When they ar *fulle hard sted*, they sighe fulle styllle p. 100. That with the Jues he was *so stad* p. 286. Com-
 forthless are we *stad* p. 289. 202. **clad in Stafford blew** = *bet (betyn) blo* 426. The phrase „to be clad in Stafford blew“, contains an allusion to
 being beaten with the staff. The name of Stafford is used in many such respects. Cf. „Il a esté au festin de Martin baston“, he hath had a trial in
 Stafford Court, or hath received Jacke Drums intertainment. 205. *thi borow*, thy surety. 209. *wary* = *wery, curse*. 210. *lowsyd*, loosed,
 loosened. 211. *teyn*, vex, annoy. 212. *seymlant*, semblant. 218. **We**, here a very common word of exclamation, cf. 241. *We*, now p. 9. *We*, wherof
 shuld I tend? p. 10. 220. *as tye*, immediately. 226. *a langett*, a strap, thong, string. 228. **that is myne**. These words refer to the blow which
 Noah gives. 229. *Thou shal (viz. hare) lbre for two*. 230. *tho*, them, those. Cf. *Thou art perales of tho that ever yit knew I* p. 815. or *syne*,
 ere long. So the adverb *syne*, afterwards, is often joined to prepositions: *Abyde unto syne* p. 89, 101. 236. *slyke*, such. 238. **at do**, to do. 240.
ro, rest. 244. *besele*, busily. 249. *my gere*, mitools. *fang*, take. 250. *the soth for to know*. We put a comma before those words, as they
 contain only an intercaleted observation. *daw*, slaggard, foolish fellow. 252. *To ken*, to teach. 254. *wrightry*, the business of a wright, car-
 penter. 268. *brast* is used here as infinitive. *note*, business, office. 269. *dote*, dotard. 270. *dold*, = *dolled, dailed*, dull, stupid. 272. *stark*, stiff.
 Cf. the latin *rigidus*. 273. *they wark*, they ache, are stiff or sore. 279. *on one*, anon. 285. *chef. ches* MS., cf. *chefe* 129. For *ches chambre*

- 290 Then I coude haif thocht,
Hym that maide all of noght
I thank oonly.
Now wille I hy me and no thyng be leder,
My wife and my *meneye* to bryng even heder.
- 295 Tent hedir tydely, wife, and consider,
Hens must us fle alle sam togeder
In hast.
Uxor. Whi, syr, what alis you?
Who is that asalis you?
- 300 To fle it avalis you,
And ye be agast.
Noe. Ther is garne on the reylle other, my dame.
Uxor. Telle me that ich-adeville, els get ye blame.
Noe. He that cares may keille, blissid be his name,
- 305 He has for oure seylle to sheld us fro shame,
And sayd
Alle the world aboute
With flodes so stoute,
That shall ryn on a route,
- 310 Shall be overlaide.
He saide alle shalle be slayn bot oonly we,
Oure barnes that ar bayn, and thare wifes thre;
A ship he bad me ordayn to safe us and oure fee
Therfor with alle oure mayn thank we that fre
- 315 Beytter of baylle;
Hy us fast, go we thedir.
Uxor. I wote never whedir,
I dase and I dedir
For ferd of that taylle.
- 320 *Noe.* Be not aferd, have done, trus sam oure gere,
That we be ther or none without more dere.
Primus filius. It shalle be done fulle sone, brether,
help to bere.
Secundus filius. Fulle long shalle I not hoyne
to do my devere,
- Brether Sem.
- 325 *Tercius filius.* Without any yelp,
At my myght shalle I help.
Uxor. Yit for drede of a skelp
Help welle thi dam.
Noe. Now ar we there as we shuld be,
- 330 Do get in oure gere, oure catalle and fe,
Into this vesselle here, my chylder fre.
Uxor. I was never bard ere, as ever myght I the,
In sich an oostre as this.
In fayth I can not fynd
Which is before, which is behynd,
- Bot shalle we here by pynd, 335
Noe, as have thou blis?
Noe. Dame, as it is skille, here must us abide grace;
Therefore, wife, with good wille com into this place.
Uxor. Sir, for Jak nor for Gille wille I turne 340
my face
Tille I have on this hille spon a space
On my rok;
Welle were he myght get me,
Now wille I downe set me,
Yit reede I no man let me, 345
For drede of a knok.
Noe. Behold to the heven, the cataractes alle,
That ar open fulle even, grete and smalle,
And the planettes seven left has thare stalle,
These thoners and leynn downe gar falle 350
Fulle stout,
Both halles and bowers,
Castels and towers,
Fulle sharp ar these showers,
That renys aboute; 355
Therfor, wife, have done, com into ship fast.
Uxor. Yei, Noe, go, cloute thi shone, the better
wille thai last,
Prima mulier. Good mother, com in sone, for
alle is overcast,
Both the son and the mone.
Secunda mulier. And many wynd blast 360
Fulle sharp;
These flodes so thay ryn,
Therfor moder come in.
Uxor. In fayth yit wille I spyn,
Alle in vayn ye carp. 365
Tercia mulier. If ye like ye may spyn, moder,
in the ship.
Noe. Now is this twyys com in, dame, on my frenship.
Uxor. Wheder I lose or I wyn, in fayth, thi felowship,
Set I not at a pyn; this spyndille wille I slip 370
Apon this hille,
Or I styr oone fote.
Noe. Peter, I traw we dote,
Without any more note
Come in if ye wille.
Uxor. Thei water nyghys so nere that I sit not dry, 375
Into ship with a byr therfor wille I hy.
Fer drede that I drone here.
Noe. Dame, securly,
It bees boght fulle dere ye abode so long by

likely is to be placed *chefe chambres*. 293. *leder*, lazy, sluggish. It is the oldengl. *luther, lither, lether*, pravus, nequam. 294. *meneye*, family. *neece* MS. The glossary to our Mysteries renders *neece* by *descendants*. 295. *Tent*, attend. 296. *Hens must us fle*. Thus we find in the Town. Mysteries often the objective case used instead of the nominative, especially with the verb *must* and imperatives: 338. *Fyrst must us crepe* and *sythen go p. 86*. *Hy us 316*. *Hast us p. 137*. *alle sam*, all together. 302. *garne*, yarn, anglos. *gearn*. *reylle*, reel, oldengl. also called *zarnewynedel, garweyn-dylle*. 304. *keille* s. 118. 305. *He has*. The arrangement of the words is not clear, even if we join: *he has to scheld us* etc, the following *and sayd* does not fit. We suppose that after *has* a past participle has fallen out, *seylle, seele, sele, ceylle, cele*, happiness, bliss. 312. *bayn*, obedient. 318. *dase*, am stupefied, frightened, *dedir*, tremble. 319. *ferd*, fear. *taylle*, tale. 320. *trus sam our gere*, pack up our goods. The word *trus* is often used absolutely for to start, to go: *Trus*, go we to rest p. 91. *Trus*, go we hynne p. 318; oldfr. *torser, trosser, trusser*, prov. *trossar*, it, *torciare*. 321. *dere*, damage, harm, hindrance, ags. *daru*, damnum. 323. *hoyne* = *hone*, delay, stay. 325. *yelp*, boasting, ostentation, ags. *gelp, gylp, gylp*, gloriatio, magniloquentia. 327. *skelp*, blow, stroke. 332. *bard*, barred. 333. *oostre*, inn. 336. *pynd*, shut up, confined; ags. *pyndan*, includere, 338. *skille*, reason. 340. *for Jack* etc. s. 220. 345. *let*, hinder. 347. *cataractes*, flood-gates, cf. 469. *Cataractae coeli apertae sunt Gen. 7, 11*. 350. *leynn*, lightning. *gar*, make. 357. *cloute thi shone*, clout thy shoes; ags. *scôb, scô pl. scôs*, caliga. 367. *Now is this twyys*, i. e. now it is the second time. 372. *Peter*, by St. Peter! 373. *note* s. 268. 375. *Thei* = *The*. 376. *byr* = *bur*, force, rapid motion. 377. *drone*, drown. 379.

- 380 Out of shyp.
Uxor. I wille not, for thi bydyng,
 Go from doore to mydyng.
Noe. In fayth and for youre long taryng
 Ye shal lik on the whypp.
- 385 *Uxor.* Spare me not, I pray the, bot even as
 thou thynk,
 These grete wordes shalle not flay me.
Noe. Abide, dame, and drynk,
 For betyn shalle thou be with this staf to thou styng;
 Ar strokes good? say me.
- 390 *Uxor.* What say ye, Wat Wynk?
Noe. Speke,
 Cry me mercy, I say!
Uxor. Therto say I nay.
Noe. Bot thou do, bi this day,
- 395 Thi hede shalle I breke.
Uxor. Lord, I were at ese and hertely fulle hoylle,
 Might I onys have a measse of wedows coylye;
 For thi saulle, without lese, shuld I dele penny doylle,
 So wold mo, no frese, that I se on this sole
- 400 Of wifes that ar here,
 For the life that thay leyd,
 Wold thare husbandes were dede,
 For, as ever ete I brede,
 So wold I oure syre were.
- 405 *Noe.* Ye men that has wifes, whyles they are yong,
 If ye luf youre lifes, chastise thare tong.
 Me thynk my hert ryfes, both leyyr and long,
 To se sich stryfes wedmen emong;
 Bot as have I blys,
- 410 [I] shalle chastyse this.
Uxor. Yit may ye mys,
 Nicholle Nedy!
Noe. I shalle make ye stille as stone, begynnar
 of blunder!
 I shalle bete the bak and bone, and breke alle in sunder.
- 415 *Uxor.* Out, alas, I am gone! oute upon the,
 mans wonder!
Noe. Se how she can grone and I lig under;
 Bot, wife,
 In this last let us ho,
 For my bak is nere in two.
- Uxor.* And I am bet so blo,
 That I may not thryfe. 420
Primus filius. A, whi fare ye thus? fader and
 moder both!
Secundus filius. Ye shuld not be so spitus,
 standing in sich a woth.
Tercius filius. These ar so hidus with many a
 cold coth.
Noe. We wille do as ye bid us, we wille no more 425
 be wroth,
 Dere barnes!
 Now tho the helme wille I hent,
 And to my ship tent.
Uxor. I se on the firmament,
 Me thynk, the seven starnes, 430
Noe. This is a grete flood, wife, take hede.
Uxor. Somethoght, as I stode, we ar in grete drede;
 These wawghes ar so wode.
Noe. Help, God, in this nede! 435
 As thou art stere-man good, and best, as I rede,
 Of alle:
 Thou rewle us in this rase,
 As thou me behete hase.
Uxor. This is a perlous case, 440
 Help, God, when we calle!
Noe. Wife, tent the stere-tre and I shalle asay
 The depnes of the see that we bere, if I may.
Uxor. That shalle I do fulle wysely, now go thi way,
 For upon this flood have we flett many day, 445
 With pyne.
Noe. Now the water wille I sownd,
 A, it is far to the grownd;
 This travelle I expownd
 Had I to tyne. 450
 Above alle hillys bedeyn the water is rysen late
 Cubettes fifteen, bot in a higher state
 It may not be, I weyn, for this welle I wate
 This fourty dayes has rayn beyn, it wille therfor abate
 Fulle lele. 455
 This water in hast,
 Eft wille I tast,
 Now am I agast,
 It is waynd a grete dele.

it bees, it is. Beside bees occurs *bese*, *beys*: He *bese* illo paide p. 7. Dysplesyd he *beys* p. 141. 381. bydyng s. 76. 382. from doore to mydyng. From the door to the dung-hill is in the country but a short way. 384. lik on the whypp. This expression may easily be explained as menace of blows in the low vulgar tongue. 386. flay, frighten, make flee. The word is even to be found in Shakspeare: I hope I shall not be flayed out of it *Wint.* T. 4, 3; ags. *flegan*, *flygan*, fugare. 387. drynk. Compare: He has done us grevance, [therefor] shalle he drynk p. 191. 388. to, till s. 245. 396. hoylle = hole, whole. 397. a measse of wedows coylye, a mess of widow's broth. She wishes death to her husband. coylye signifies here like *cole* in northern dialects a soup. My master suppys no coyle bot cold p. 18. 398. without lese, forsooth, in truth. *les*, *lese* = lie, dele penny doylle, deal penny-dole = deal out alms (to the poor). 399. no frese, no doubt. sole is rendered in the glossary *fly hall*; it seems to be permuted with *sale*. 401. leyd, lead. 402. thare, *thare* MS. 407. my hert ryfes. Cf. *My hart ryfys* p. 100. 408. wedmen, married people. emong, among. 413. blunder, trouble, confusion. 414. in sunder, generally in *sonder* p. 11, 149, 226. 418. ho, stop, cease; ags. *hangan*, *hôn*, pendere, suspendere. 420. blo, blue, livid; but *bleu* 201, otherwise here *blo*, *blou*; ags. *blou*, *bleou*, *bled*, caeruleus. 423. woth, danger, harm. 424. These . . . many a cold coth. The substantive is explained by *swooning*: *Cothe* or *swownyng*. The adjective *cold* seems to serve as corroboration, like *cruel* and others. 427. hent, take, ags. *hentan*, insequi. 437. rase, *rese*, *ras*, *res*, course, assault, tumult; ags. *roes*, *cursus*, impetus. 438. behete, promised. 439. perlous, perilous. 444. flett = *floten*, floated; ags. *flectan*, p. p. *floten*, fluere, natare. 449. to tyne, to lose. 454. lele, true. 456. tast, try. 459. cest, ceased, knyt, shut

- 460 Now are the weders cest and cataractes knyt,
Both the most and the leest.
Uxor. Me thynk, bi my wit,
The son shynes in the cest, lo, is not yond it?
We shuld have a good feest were these flodes
flyt
- 465 So spytus.
Noe. We have been here, alle we,
CCC dayes and fyfty.
Uxor. Yei, now wanys the see,
Lord, welle is us!
- 470 *Noe.* The thyrd tyme wille I prafe what depnes
we bere.
Uxor. Now long shalle thou hufe, lay in thy
lyne there.
Noe. I may towch with my hufe the grownd
evyn here.
Uxor. Then begynnys to grufe to us mery
chere;
- Bot, husband,
- 475 What grownd may this be?
Noe. The hyllys of Armony.
Uxor. Now blissid be he
That thus for us can ordand.
Noe. I see toppys of hyllys he, many at a
syght,
No thyng to let me, the wedir is so bright.
- 480 *Uxor.* Thise ar of mercy tokyns fulle right.
Noe. Dame, * thou * counselle me, what fowlle
best myght,
And cowth,
With flight of wyng
Bryng, without taryng,
- 485 Of mercy som tokynyng
Ayther bi north or southe?
For this is the fyrst day of the tent moyne.
Uxor. The ravyn, durst I lay, wille com agane
sone,
As fast as thou may cast hym furth, have done,
- 490 He may happyn to day com agane or none,
With grath.
Noe. I wille cast out also
Dowfes oone or two.
Go youre way, go,
- 495 God send you som wathe!
Now ar these fowles flone into seyr countre,
Pray we fast ich-on, kneland on our kne,
To hym that is alone worthiest of degre,
That he wold send anone oure fowles som fee
- To glad us. 500
Uxor. Thai may not faylle of land,
The water is so wanand.
Noe. Thank we God alle weldand,
That Lord that made us.
It is a wonder thyng, me thynk sothle, 505
Thai ar so long taryng the fowles that we
Cast out in the mornyng.
Uxor. Syr, it may be
Thai tary to thay bryng.
Noe. The ravyn is ahungrye 510
Alle way,
He is without any reson,
And he fynd any caryon,
As peraventure may be fon,
He wille not away; 515
The dowfe is more gentille, her trust I untew,
Like unto the turtile for she is ay trew.
Uxor. Hence bot a litille she comys, lew, lew!
She brynges in her bille som novels new;
Behald! 520
It is of an olif tre
A branch, thynkes me.
Noe. It is soth, perde,
Right so is it cald.
Doufe, byrd fulle blist, fayre myght the befall! 525
Thou art trew for to trist as ston in the walle;
Fulle welle I it wist thou wold com to thi halle.
Uxor. A trew tokyn ist we shalle be sayvd alle,
For whi?
The water syn she com,
Of depnes plom
Is fallen a fathom,
And more hardely.
Primus filius. These floodes argone, fader, behold.
Secundus filius. Ther is left right none, and that 535
be ye bold.
Tercius filius. As stille as a stone oure ship is
stold.
Noe. Apon land here anone that we were fayn
I wold,
My childer dere,
Sem, Japhet and Cam,
With gle and with gam, 540
Com go we alle sam,
We wille no longer abide here.
Uxor. Here have we beyn noy long enoghe,
With tray and with teyn, and dreed mekille
woghe.

up. Cf. Et clausi sunt fontes abyssi et cataractae coeli Gen. 8, 2 Vulg. 471. my hufe, my ship. 472. to grufe, to grow. 477. can ordand, can
is circumscribing form as *gan*; as to the infinitive *ordand* see 119. 478. hyllys he, high hills. 479. let, hinder. 481. thou, *thi* MS. 487. tent =
tenth. moyne, month. 491. grath, haste. 495. som wathe, some pray, game. 496. flore, flown seyr, several. 509. to, till s. 245. 510. ahungrye,
perhaps a *hungrye*, so that *a* has the signification of *ay, ever*. 514. be fon, be found. 516. untew = *unto*. 517. lew, lew! seems to correspond
to the English *lo*. 528. ist = is it. 531. of depnes plom. In the glossary *plom* is rendered by *perpendicular*; *ofr. plom, plum*. 533. hardely, cer-
tainly. 535. that be ye bold = *therof be ye bold* p. 78. 538. stold = *stald, fixed, placed, set*. 541. all sam, s. 296. 543. noy, perhaps is to

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Both the most and the leest.

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500
yille of land,

le weldand,

505
thynk sothle,
ie fowles that we

510
rr, it may be

the ravyn is ahungrye

515

her trust I untew,
he is ay trew.

she comys, lew, lew!
m novels new;

520

525
e myght the befalle!
s ston in the walle;

old com to thi halle.
e shalle be sayvd alle,

530

argone, fader, behold.
ft right none, and that

535
be ye bold.
as a stone oure ship is

stold.
ne that we were fayn

I wold,

540

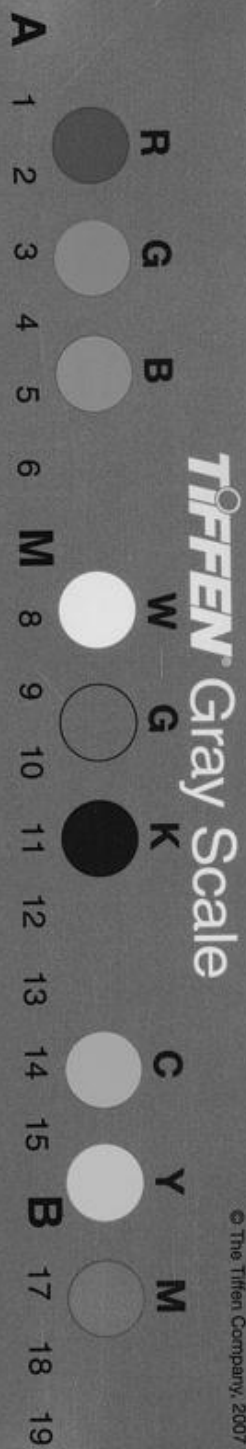
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noy long enoghe,
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545 *Noe.* Behald, on this greyn nowder cart ne ploghe
 Is left, as I weyn, nowder tre then boghe,
 Ne other thyng,
 Bot alle is away,
 Many castels, I say,
 550 Grete townes of aray,
 Flitt has this flowing.

Uxor. These floodes not afright alle this world
so wide
 Has mevid with myght on se and bi side.

Noe. To dede ar thai dyght prowdist of pryde,
 555 Ever ich a wyght that ever was spyde
 With syn,
 Alle ar thai slayn,
 And put unto payn.

Uxor. From thens agayn

May thai newer wyn?

560

Noe. Wyn? no, i-wis, bot he that myght hase
 Wold myn of thare mys and admytte thaym to
grace,

As he in baylle is blis, I pray hym in this
space,

In heven hye with his to purvaye us a place,
 That we,

565

With his santes in sight,
 And his angels bright,
 May com to his light,
 Amen, for charite.

write *noyed*. 544. *dreed*, endured, suffered (sc. *we have* 543). *woghe*. *wo*, ags. *wōh, wō*, iniquitas, perversitas. 546. *nowder* .. then s. 103. 551. *Flitt*, swept away, removed. 560. *wyn*, escape, s. 24. 562. *myn*, remember; ags. *myojan*, reminiscet.

