CHARACTER-TREATMENT
IN THE
MEDIAEVAL DRAMA

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BY

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"Ars utinam mores animumque effingere possit!
Pulchrior in terris nulla tabella foret."
Martial, Epig. Lib. X, 32-5.

"Let us have the mind and the mind's workings, not the remains of earnest thought which has been frittered away by a long dreary course of preparatory study, by which all life has been evaporated. Never forget that there is in the wide river of nature something which everybody who has a rod and line may catch, precious things which every one may dive for."—"The Gem, February Number."

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PREFACE

A word on the nomenclature to be used in this Essay. It will be understood from the purpose in view that we are engaged with the beginning of an art-form, and consequently are long antecedent to the date of precise terminology and defined technique. The drama with which we have to do is in its formative period, in process of growth. It is obvious, then, that terms, which have a very definite meaning when speaking of the classical drama, must be employed loosely, and in some instances, merely analogically, when reference is to early and imperfect forms. The classical terms "tragoedia" and "comoedia" are not normally applicable to the religious play until the Renaissance influences come in toward the end of the fifteenth century. In fact their Mediaeval sense, as Mr. Chambers notes (The Mediaeval Stage, Vol. II, p. 103,) implies nothing distinctly dramatic. Cloetta, in the first volume of his work on the history of Mediaeval and Renaissance literature (Komödie und Tragödie im Mittelalter) has collected and analyzed in historical order, descriptions of comedy and tragedy which have little in common with Aristotle's definitions. Few if any of the Mediaeval authors that the historian cites can be said to have in mind the purely professional or academic connotation of the words in the sense that Aristotle had; rather it was with the popular or analogical import of the terms that they were concerned. Chaucer's familiar reference in the *Miller's Tale*, for instance, makes no pretention either to technical accuracy or completeness. Nobody would impute to Dante ignorance of the classical definition of tragedy and comedy, his analogical use of the words, however, may be taken as illustrative of Mediaeval usage generally. "Est comedia genus quoddam poeticae narrationis ab omnibus aliis differens. Differt ergo a tragoedia per hoc, quod tragoedia in principio est admirabilis et quieta, in fine sine exitu, foetida et horribilis . . . Comoedia vero inchoat asperitatem alicujus rei, sed ejus materia prospere terminatur, etc." Conformably with this distinction he called his own poem a *comedy* and the Aeneid a *tragedy*, (Cf. Inferno XX, 113; DuMéril, Les Origines Latines du Théâtre Moderne, pp. 32-33.) It will be well to bear in mind this breadth of meaning given the specific terms "tragoedia" and "comoedia," if one would understand in what sense such words as *drama*, *dramatist*, *poet*, *play*, *scene*, *act*, *climax*, *etc.*, are applicable to the Mediaeval playwright and his work.

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Cycle-species. A greater freedom and variety in the presentation of the Cyclic caste than in the earlier sanctuary scenes. Comparative tables to show the playwright's unity of design in the treatment of his theme. The tendency noticeable in the Liturgical drama of grouping cognate incidents around the central action is more evident in the work of the Cyclic writer. In the Cycles the points of dramatic interest centre in the historical facts of the Nativity and Crucifixion of our Saviour. Beyond the presentation of the historical events is the development of the idea of struggle between the powers of good and evil. The symbolism of the Cycles important in the treatment of the Biblical caste. The apologetic purpose of the author contributed to unity of purpose and distinctiveness of definition. Freedom of the playwright particularly with his uncanonical material. The structure and presentation of the separate scenes must not be dissociated from the larger view of the relation and interdependence of plays on one another. A study of character-treatment in this species of drama makes it appear that a complexus of influences have been at work in the reproduction of the Biblical personages. York Cycle representative of the English Cyclic series. Its dramatic value and historic interest. Opening pageant a tripartite play of 160 lines in all—a favorable specimen of the Mediaeval dramatist's power of contrast. The first three pageants of the York Cycle treat of the works of creation; the subsequent nine of selected topics from the Apocrypha and the Old Testament History. In these and those that immediately follow the foremost idea in the composer's mind is the redemption of fallen man and the lasting triumph of good over evil. The author's choice of subjects illustrative of this statement. The *Annunciation* and the *Visit of Mary* connects the Old Testament series with the New. The reference to prophecy to fill up the gap between the *Exodus* and the *Annunciation.* The importance of these connecting scenes to show the dramatic purpose of the writer. The intrinsic interest of the ten plays relative to the hidden life of Christ. The inference from their position in the arrangement of the Cycle. The enlivening admixture of sadness and joy, success and failure, characteristic of the ten scenes, analogous to the underlying conflict between the two great combatants. The variety of attitudes in which the spectator sees the hero before the climax an instance of the playwright's effort to realize the personality entire. In the choice and arrangement of material the author proves an independence of his sources. Assimilation of the matter; the logical rise in the action; discriminating management of interims; the silent logic of precedent action; the tragic literalness of the climax—instances of native dramatic ability. The treatment of the conspirators; the characters of Pilate, Caiaphas, Beadle, Soldiers, etc. Mary on Calvary. The climacteric nature of the *Harrowing of Hell.* The Marian plays—their complementary character. The Doomsday Pageant—an end to the strife between the righteous and the wicked An estimate of the dramatic worth of the York series of plays. The playwright's processes. The summed qualities of the respective characters reached not so much by the analysis of dominant motives as by multiplicity of external detail. Suggestiveness of these details. The oneness of mood and sympathy in actor and audience helpful to dramatic interests. The distinctness with which the figures are drawn. The celestial atmosphere which surrounds the figure of Christ in the Gospel; the poetry and sentiment so delicately expressed by the evangelists are literary rather than dramatic qualities. The human qualities of Christ rather than his divine attributes are emphasized by the playwright. The twofold life of Christ in the York series. Significance of illusion in bringing to light latent mainsprings of action. The effort of the playwright to bring into relief the living form of the central figure in the Cycle. Joseph and Mary. Advantages coming to

INTRODUCTION

The more criticism agrees that literature is the natural expression of life the more consistently does it urge that to understand an author we should fill around him, as fully as may be, the numerous contingencies which have influenced his conduct. It recognizes the determining power of an author's education and the part that current, popular ideals have in the formation of the most original temperament. It takes into account that subtle motive power which unconscious experiences possess in active operations of the mind. For it no detail is insignificant; the most reflexive movement of his times will clear up the author's thought far more vividly than pages of his text. Our judgment of a writer will be trustworthy in so far as we project ourselves into his surroundings and see life as he saw it. Otherwise our estimate of him will be merely impressionistic, and based on appearances, not evidence. All this is but a paraphrasing of what is rapidly becoming a literary axiom: Nothing between us and the author.

To say that in all cases it is useful to understand a writer's traditions and environment if we would duly appreciate his work, when it is question of a dramatic writer we must emphasize the necessity of this knowledge. Our knowledge of him in his dramatic relations and of his audience should be as intimate as possible. No art, no form of literature has so immediately for its motive the expression of life as the drama. Only the drama proposes to reproduce life, to hold the mirror up to nature.

However unprofitable the preparatory task may seem in itself, every effort that helps to build up the background of a great literary figure and to set the poet in his proper perspective, has importance. To begin the study of Shakespeare's plays without an understanding to some degree of the dramatic activity among his contemporaries and before his time would be to place a very positive barrier between us and the poet and so prevent an intelligent appreciation of his extraordinary worth. "To suppose," says Courthope, "that the single efforts of meditation in any one man could have invented a structure so comprehensive and various as the romantic drama, is the height of critical superstition; on the other hand, a knowledge of the manner in which Shakespeare drew

suggestions of dramatic action and character from his predecessors and contemporaries can only serve to heighten our admiration for the incomparable resources of his genius. . . . . The genius of Shakespeare is not well served by those who represent it as miraculous. For not only is injustice thus done to the lesser fellow-workers who contributed with him to the developement of his art, but the vastness of his own intellect and the grand balance of his judgement are not fully appreciated till they are seen in their relations to his surroundings."*

So much excellent and minute work has been done on the Shakespearean school that one would wish an equal zeal had been manifested toward the earlier pre-Elizabethan drama. Only within recent years has any interest been shown in the dramatic life and efforts of the four hundred years which preceded the sixteenth century. This long epoch in the life of the drama has been hurriedly passed over, writers speak most generally of it, and in their impatience to deal with the classic ages of Elizabeth and James, they give but scant attention to this earlier period. Much, comparatively, is now being done to reproduce the theatre of Shakespeare's ancestors from a social, historical and philological point of view. Certainly the value of these studies in orientating Shakespearean students can scarcely be over-estimated. The results of their labor give proof of what I am implying in these paragraphs, that much which is important in Shakespeare can not be adequately explained without reference to his remote antecedents. I find no author, however, the scope of whose work might engage him any more than incidentally with what forms the main purpose of these pages. My aim is to treat of the characterization, or perhaps, better said, the character-etching in the early English Drama.

At the outset of an inquiry into the nature of character-treatment in the mediaeval drama it may be well briefly to determine what is connoted by the term "character" itself. The word is so

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* A History of English Poetry, Vol. II, chap. 11, pp. 131-132.

"Untaught, unpracticed in a barbarous age,
I found not, but created first the stage."

In putting these words into the mouth of Shakespeare's Ghost, Dryden was wrong, at least in principle; how much he erred in fact may appear later. Shakespeare did not create the stage, least of all did he create it as it appeared in the time of Dryden. "It was, in truth created by no one man, and in no one age; and whatever improvements Shakespeare introduced when he began to write for the theatre our romantic drama was completely formed and finally established." Cf. Collier, History of English Dramatic Poetry, etc., Vol. I, p. 9.

bound up with the names of Shakespeare's creations that, except for the many with whom the after-image of last evening's calcium-lit caste still abides in the memory, I fancy the term is so enshrined in some minds as to be altogether sacred to the Poet's persons. Indiscriminate usage, on the other hand, has so cheapened the word that in current speech it is quite devoid of a precise and accepted meaning. It is applied without qualification to the posture-maker and entertainer in the vaudeville, to the parts of the present-day drama, and to the heroes and heroines of Shakespeare. Whatever justification or sanction there may be for this inaccurate use of the word, it is certain that in its secondary and popular sense, the term character does not convey adequately the leading idea connoted by its primary signification.

In this essay I shall have to do solely with the primary meaning of the word — the meaning one attaches to it when he speaks of Shakespeare's persons.

"Shakespeare's mind, as Hazlitt has suggested, contained within itself the germs of all faculty and feeling, He knew intuitively how every faculty and feeling would develop in any conceivable change of fortune. Men and women — good and bad, old or young, wise or foolish, rich or poor, merry or sad, yielded their secrets to him and his genius enabled him to give being in his pages to all the shapes of humanity that present themselves on the highway of life. Each of his characters gives voice to thought or passion with an individuality and a naturalness that arouse in the intelligent playgoer and reader the illusion that they are overhearing men and women speak unpremeditatingly among themselves rather than they are reading written speeches or hearing written speeches recited. The more closely the words are studied the completer the illusion grows."*

It has been justly said that the unassailable supremacy of Shakespeare came not from technique but from the unerring precision with which he interpreted thought and emotion. On his insight into the laws that govern the will and feelings of mankind, as well as in the intuitive knowledge of the prerogative of human personality and the sanction of human conduct — on this basis, all readers perceive, that the greatness of his power in character-treatment rests. But in the drama before Shakespeare's time do not like ideas seem to occupy the playwright's attention? Shakespeare

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* Sidney Lee, A Life of Shakespeare, p. 356.

is called by Sepet "the direct heir of the mediaeval playwright."* And the Poet's work is said by M. Jusserand to be "the highest expression of the dramatic spirit of the Middle Ages."† With due allowance for its embryonic and infantine condition, I think that without overreaching facts any more than is implied in the text, or, at least, in the evident motive of the playwright as may be legitimately inferred from collateral sources, one will find that the earliest English dramatists labored, instinctively no doubt, to plant on the stage those very root-principles that took shape slowly and irregularly through the successive efforts of after-workers.

From the beginning the drama sought to give expression, first, to the religious aspirations of the people in supplementing the ritual services. This may be called the Liturgical drama. Next, it presents in a measure, the ethical history of mankind, the origin of evil, its relation to good, and the struggle between both powers relative to the human race—this is perceptible in the Cycle-scenes. And, lastly, the same ethical idea, whose origin and life was shown in the preceding drama, is now brought into closer relation with the individual man so that he is no longer a passive, though all the while the deeply interested spectator of the struggle, but is become the very centre of the activity, and, with him rests the issue of the conflict between the rival forces of good and evil—this was the argument of the Moral plays. Under these three heads, The Liturgical Drama, Biblical Cycles, and Moral Plays, one may see, I think, the distinguishing spontaneities of childhood, not yet lost in the more self-conscious efforts of a later age. And just as in the history of the mind of a child no absolute time can be fixed at which a certain mental function takes its rise, so in the drama, which is to an extent organic in its evolution, no definite species or phase of dramatic growth can be assigned a particular epoch or function. Only in broad outline and by the widest generalizations can such periods and processes be marked off. For this reason, once the nature of Shakespeare's supremacy is understood one is naturally led to inquire if any of his distinguishing traits were noticeable in his ancestors. With the view of ascertaining one line of family resemblance, I propose to indicate in the earliest attempts at dramatic expression in England the playwright's effort to present on the stage the activity of the human faculties—reason, will and per-

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* M. Sepet, "Le Drame Chrétien au Moyen-Age," p. 55.

† J. J. Jusserand, "Le Théâtre en Angleterre, etc." pp. 310-311.

ception,—as seen in their moral bearing on the individual's life in the light of mediaeval Christianity. This may help to show in what sense the Shakespearean play is the "highest expression of the mediaeval spirit"; and the relative distinctness and relief in which this presentment stands will enable us to form an estimate of the character-etching in the pre-Elizabethan drama.

A detailed history of the Mediaeval Stage, it would seem, should accompany any useful account of character-treatment in the beginnings of the English drama. The emphasis, accuracy and conciseness that a minute historical portrait would give to our ideas on this subject, no one will doubt. In no clearer form may the past be viewed than in the living picture which the full knowledge of details enables the historian to create. To study in detail the conventions of the stage, to watch in the laboratory of the playwright, to see the actors in their roles and notice effects on the spectators, this is but part of his work. The historian's further task is this; from the various multiplicity of ideas, impressions, representations and facts he has to sort, sift and combine till, as far as may be, he has reproduced in its wonderful unity and harmonious adjustment, as in a composite photograph, the multiform existence of mediaeval centuries. His primary purpose, says Brunetière, is not merely to have us understand the past, we must feel it as we do the actual present.*

Such an exhaustive history of the early English drama would include a history of dramatic characterization, but happily the converse is not so strictly implied. To explain the growth of character presentation in our religious drama will, however, involve some account of the beginnings of the theatre in England, of its religious growth, of its secular formation and of the many transformations of a religious nature that it underwent before its final and to some extent, immutable form in the works of the writers of purely secular plays. As confusion is often the outcome of an effort to be complete, if only typical plays be chosen one may hope to hold the various indices of character-treatment apart and in separating the essentials of character-growth from accidental influences, arrive at two or three inferences which if true for the typical dramas will be true to a degree of all the rest. By typical plays I would mean those plays that in some sort may be said to have resumed the past of the stage and are at the same time present witnesses to the

* L'Evolution de la Poésie Lyrique, Tome I, p. 4.

highest dramatic progress. There will be numerous plays, consequently, and still more numerous characters of which I shall have nothing to say for the reason that I deal only with what may be called the different dramatic crises in the long life of the mediaeval stage and because there are plays out of number which in motive, form and content are largely but imitations of a prevailing type.

Rather than group the material in a strictly chronological order under the several reigns, it is more convenient here to follow the logical order and study the treatment of the characters in the several species of the drama itself. This method enables one to indicate the birth, growth, perfection, decadence, and transformation of the respective species, and the final absorption of the mediaeval by the Elizabethan drama.

Without considering carefully its many phases one is likely to be mistaken in his estimate of the early pre-Elizabethan drama. This is particularly true from the view point of character-treatment. Whether we consider the modern drama a direct organic development of the mediaeval, or look upon the Italian drama of Renaissance as the source of the Elizabethan tragedy and comedy,* in either case we have what seems to be a native growth in power of character-presentation. The aggressive and venturesome originality in the treatmemt of old themes at different epochs, the constant efforts toward the adaptation of subject-matter with circumstances, and finally at the awakening of interest in Humanistic studies, the wholesale borrowings of incidents from abroad and the attempted application of Roman technique to this foreign material—in a word, from the monk to the classicist or theorist, the ever-varying attitude of the playwright toward his story marks a change in his characters. For a period longer than the centuries which separate us from the days of Shakespeare the subject-matter of the early drama was subtantially the same, consequently the necessary novelty and variety should come from the treatment of the familiar caste. From the beginning the dramatist understood the neccessity of a realistic presentation; often one would think he understood no other dramatic law. For him his presentation should be the reproduction of life and the more artfully and realistically he reproduced life the surer his success. Characterization was the touchstone of his power.

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* J. J. Jusserand, Le Théâtre en Angleterre, etc., pp. 307-315.
J. Churton Collins, Essays and Studies, pp, 124, 115-116.
J. S. Tunison, Dramatic Traditions of the Dark Ages, pp. 61-64 and Chap. IV. 247-334.

CHAPTER I.

CERTAIN ANALOGIES BETWEEN THE GREEK AND THE EARLY ENGLISH DRAMA: ORIGIN OF THE MODERN DRAMA.

Song and dance have entered largely into the public worship of peoples. Before formal cults existed spontaneous liturgies were enacted in presence of the Deity; choruses sang his victories or sought His favor and the "mirth of feete" testified to the joy of heart that his benefits had brought. It was so in Greece before the days of her poets. Alcman was not yet born when the men and maidens of Sparta sang before the Carneian Apollo the sacred laws of Lacedaemon. At Corinth a chorus wound around the altar of Dionysus, singing the dithyrambs of Arion, and in Athens at the great Dionysia a dithyrambic chorus was added to the other exercises in honor of the Wine-god. With Arion and Thespis choruses impersonated satyrs or goats, and by this easy transition the religious song and dance of primitive times passed into the tragedy, which was itself primarily an act of worship.

This was the beginning of the Greek theatre. It was intimated in that early artless expression of popular feeling which is the dramatic material common to every people. From the earliest times it appealed to those perennial, human interests which are at once universal and personal. The subjects dramatized had a meaning for everyone; none could be indifferent to the history of the great national heroes. No one doubted that the epic warriors were living with the gods and still winning victories. By commemorating the deeds of their fathers the spectators were inferentially contemplating their own destiny; every one saw a brilliant future awaiting himself, a life if not so heroic as that of his divine ancestors, a life at all events happy in their company. This was the ideal existence that the Greek theatre interpreted. In its developement and perfection it dealt with the same lofty theme. Of the Greek drama it can be justly said that the beginning contained the germ from which the classic theatre grew. The evolution was in a true sense organic. The heroes of the Epos lost more and

more their divine, representative attributes and became persons endowed with human characteristics, so much so that at the period of classical excellence, Greek characters though much less complex, are as truly persons as those in the plays of Shakespeare.*

Further on it will appear how far this is a prefiguration of the beginning and growth of the Modern drama. "Both in its theological beginnings and its didactic aim the history of the English drama offers a striking parallel to the growth of the Attic stage, and shows how general are the laws which govern the course of human imagination."† However striking the parallelism of origin and development may be, it is only a parallelism. After the classic period the Greek stage gradually declined. In time the success of Comedy reacted perniciously on Tragedy. The themes that the earlier poets treated as sacred and historical were profaned by the liberties of Aristophanes and his immediate successors. The heroic legends that Aeschylus dramatized and the ennobling intent of his theatre were replaced by the philosophy of Epicurus which imitators of Menander *diligentissimus luxuriae interpres* and later Alexandrian dramatists more or less delicately presented.

When the poets forgot the purpose of the early masters and neglected to set forth an heroic and ideal conception of life which would recall Troy, Thebes or Marathon, or reflect the frank, hellenic joy in physical life and beauty, tragedy and comedy ceased to appeal to the national interest. The people had delighted to see their own lives in the idealizing light of poetry. To gratify this popular feeling was ever the purpose of the great playwrights. They deliberately aimed at regulating the pathos and ethos of the city. Tragedy should be the imitation of a great, probable action, not told as in the case of lyrical recitals but represented, which by moving to fear and pity would be conducive to the purgation of these two passions in the mind.‡ It was believed that from a highly-wrought presentation of the two basic passions, terror and grief, spectators would best learn the nature of their own emotions, the degree of importance to be attached to them, as also the manner of dealing with them. This persuasion that the drama had a very special and sacred mission to fulfil seems to have affected permanently both the people and the poets of Greece.

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* Lewis Campbell, A Guide to Greek Tragedy, pp. 166-167.

† W. J. Courthope, A History of English Poetry, Vol. I, p. 393.

‡ Aristotle, Poetics, Chap. VI.

Even at the period of classic excellence "the great imitation" is on the occasion of the feast and, if the god is not directly worshiped, the religious sentiment everywhere betokens respect for his action and presence. I need not dwell on the analogy that here presents itself. In the Mediaeval drama and particularly in the Liturgical or Sanctuary scenes one feels that he is ever before the altar. This was the high purpose of tragedy; the end of comedy was to a great extent the same, but it sought its results in a different manner. It aimed consciously at being the imitation not of an ideal but of actual life; comedy should be "the mirror of human intercourse, the expression of reality."

With this tendency to harmonize the subject-matter of the plays and with the growing disbelief in the primitive religion, dramatic art degenerated. It ceased to be Grecian. When the old dramatic material, the heroic and sacred stories, no longer appealed to the audience, other motives of interest were devised. The drama of the Athenians could henceforth be appreciated at Rome where adaptations of the New Greek Comedy early degenerated into mere farce and pantomime. The passion for this low species of amusement became so intense that during the Empire, it may be said, that the mime held undisputed possession of the Roman stage. The tragedy and comedy, which were at no time highly esteemed, now became insipid to the popular taste. Ammianus Marcellinus relates, that at a time when famine was threatening and when foreigners, including professors of the liberal arts, were ordered to withdraw from the city, three thousand dancing girls were allowed to remain.* The profession of the stage had become synonomous with the trade of prostitution. This the edict of Heliogabalus plainly shows. The tyrant bids: "Mimics adulteris ea quae solent simulatio fieri, effici ad verum jussit."†

In the East as late as the reign of Justinian, though a certain emancipation was accorded to the actors, the theatres, however, retained the suggestive nomenclature which implied that the profession of the mimad differed in little from that of the hetaera.

In the West the popular demand for spectacula continued till the sixth century. After that time the office of Tribune of Pleasures was largely honorary. The theatre had died

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* Dill, Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire, p. 57.

† E. Du Meril, Les Origines Latines du Théâtre Modern, p. 6.

out and with it ceased the worst social curse of the Lower Empire.*

The attempt has been made to trace the existence of the ancient theatre from the reigns of Theodoric and Justinian through the first centuries of the Middle Ages. But the result is not convincing.† The Ostragoths had no passion for the theatre, and the invasion of the Saracens whose national spirit rejected the drama altogether, precluded the possibility of anything more than sporadic attempts at theatrical performance at Constantinople or in Spain during the seventh and eighth centuries.‡ Moreover, in the eleventh century when interest is felt in dramatic representation, it is clear, from the nature of the material dramatized, that a new drama begins which is rather a birth from the ashes than an offshoot from the decayed trunk. The arena and the circus had been forgotten, and with the last of the Romans the downfall of the theatre speedily ensued.

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* Dollinger, Heidenthum und Judenthum, (1857), p. 726.

† Krumbacher, Gesch, der Byzantinischen Litteratur, pp. 639-648.
"Es mögen noch in 6 Jahrhundert da und dort einzelne Stücke der neuren Komedie aufgeführt worden sein; diesen Bemühungen machte aber die einbrechende Barbarei bald ein Ende, und als einige Jahrhunderte später die Lust an der alten Litteratur wieder zu erwachen begann, hatten sich die kulturellen Bedingungen so sehr verändert, dass an eine praktische Wiederbelebung des alten Theaters nicht mehr zu denken war, wie in der Litteratur und im Gesamtem Geistesleben, so schneidet auch in Theaterwesen die dunkle Kluft vom 7-9., Jahrhundert tief ein zwischen Altertum und Mittelalter . . . Wenn man auch diesen Veranstaltungen einen gewissen dramatischen Charakter nicht absprechen kann, so sieht doch jeder, der sehr will, dass alle diese Dinge nicht das Fortleben eines wahren Theaters in der byzantinischen Zeit beweisen konnen," p. 646.

When I wrote in the text that the continuity of the old drama was not conclusive, I had in mind particularly the reasons furnished by Sathas in his history of Byzantine drama and music (1878). Krumbacher, as cited, deemed the arguments of the historian insufficient to establish the continuity of the drama, and went on to show by facts and inferences drawn from the study of Byzantine literature that the ancient theatre did actually cease to exist. The appearance of a scholarly work "Dramatic Traditions of the Dark Ages," Joseph S. Tunison (University of Chicago Press, 1907) brings much in favor of the thesis rather awkwardly defended by Sathas. Krumbacher may in places question premises and inferenecs but he must let pass the ingenuity with which Mr. Tunison rounds his reasoning. The purpose of the study, which is carried on with gratifying lucidity, is to "mark the process of transfer of theatrical aptitudes from the east to the west and from ancient to modern times," p. x. "The conclusion of the whole matter is that whatever value the stage tradition had, which was handed down by the performers of religious plays to the generation which represented and enjoyed the drama of Shakespeare, was ultimately due wholly to the uninterrupted culture of Byzantium," p. 64. It is not the purpose of this Essay to go into details on this most interesting difficulty. The difference between the divergent opinions largely resolves itself into the distinction between what is connoted by the terms "eines wahren Theaters," and "theatrical aptitudes."

‡ Ticknor, History of Spanish Literature, Vol. I. pp. 255 ff.

The Modern European, like the ancient Greek drama owes its origin to religion. "Virtutibus studuit qui voluptatibus miscebatur"—this ideal set up by Cassiodorus in his exhortation to the Tribune of Pleasures interprets the mind of the early church toward the theatre.* It was in every way just that ecclesiastical authorities should look with disfavor on the degenerating Roman stage, and regard the theatre in general as an unqualified evil. For, from the very first days of Christianity—not to say how much earlier—till the downfall of the stage in the sixth century, dramatic art had quite disengaged itself from what was carried on in the theatre. "Under the later Roman Empire the drama died a natural death, not because the Church condemned it, but by a lust for sheer obscenity and bloodshed which made true dramatic writing impossible."†

As Christianity, however, had converted the pagan shrines into Sanctuaries of the true God, so would she adapt herself, by virtue of the germ of Catholicity even then resident in her, to the actual conditions of social life. Whatever could be retained of the past she would keep; she had no commission to set herself wantonly against the ideas of the people. She was for the people then, as now and for all times. Her adaptability to all classes, conditions and climes will ever be a leading note of her perennial life.‡

Just as fittingly, then, as the new worship took place in the old temples would dogmatic teaching and moral precepts of Christianity find a home in the hearts of all men. There was not

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* Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, Vol. I, pp. 229-230. The instruction is given entire.

† Pollard, A. W., English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes, P. XI.

‡ E. Du Méril, Les Origines, etc., pp. 39-40.
Dans les religons qui se reservent, comme un privelège, à une caste plus chère a la divinité, le culte s'exprime par des symboles impénétrables au vulgaire des croyants: dans celles que, sous pretext de les embellir, les imaginations du bel esprit ont profondement altérées, son idée disparaît sous la magnificence tout extérieure de la forme. Mais le christianisme n'avait point de pretentions aristocratiques: c'etait une religion universelle qui s'adressait naivement a tous et ne professait de préférences que pour les simples de coeur et d'esprit; il se bornait, dans ses cérémonies, à rappeler en termes clairs l'histoire de son etablissment et les actes de son fondateur. Dans le deuxième siècle, les intentions dramatiques du culte aggissaient sur sa forme et l'appropriaient a sa penseé: . . . . "Cf. Oberle, K. A." Überreste germanischen Heidentums im Christentum, etc., pp. 160-167. Der Kirche war es nicht möglich, mit dem Alten ganz zu brechen. Es ist gut und hat viel Gutes . . . . Die Kirche hat aus dem Heidentum nur das in ihren Kult aufgenommen, was rein natürlich und an sich wahr ist. Eben darum spricht der Kultus der katholischen Kirche zum Herzen des Menschen." Also Newman, "Development of Doctrine," 210 ff.

one of her doctrines but followed along the lines of highest human development and each was perfectly in accord with what was most rational, purest and best in paganism. As she had never taught that the nature and passions of the heathen were wholly corrupt, her aim was rather to divert than oppose directly the trend of his desires. Accordingly her great concern in the beginning was to find a substitute for an institution that had become a most attractive centre of Roman life as well as the leading social demoralizing agency of the times. No Christian conscience could sanction what was taking place at the theatre. It had become a sanctuary of Venus.

So the problem presented itself to the infant Church: what would take the place of the theatre? To condemn puritanically all pleasures of the senses as sinful (as some heretics had done,) and to insist, with Tertullian that the Christian's earthly enjoyment should be solely in the anticipation of the beauty and bliss of heaven, would be to set up an ideal standard which could have little practical effect. The question, therefore, was not how to tear up or radically to remove from the constitution of man his sense or even his love of earthly pleasures; rather it was this; where might the convert to Christianity find a reasonable satisfaction of that truly human passion for social enjoyment which he had so extravagantly cultivated. From the prohibitions of the Fathers and especially from the work of Tertullian "De Spectaculis" we can realize somewhat how the Roman Christian felt when forbidden access to pagan diversions. Extraordinary as it now seems the catechuman had to fight hard and long with himself to overcome a habit that heredity, education and personal indulgence had ingrafted deeply in his nature. The renouncement was a veritable sacrifice, however little we may now sympathize with the victim. Baptism meant a break with the past; at the font he had to renounce the devil and the works of the devil whose masterpiece Christian and pagan moralists were agreed, had long been the theatre.*

Quite apart from the primary and dogmatic ends of the Christian cult, secondarily or altogether incidentally if we will, one may see in the celebration of the Christian mysteries, growing more and more elaborate as circumstances permitted, a response to this natural call for life, for show and ceremony. There could be no

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* Bossier, G., La Fin du Paganisme, T. I, pp. 269-277.
Freppel, Tertullien, T. I, pp. 176-220.
Cumont Franz, Les Mistères du Mithra, pp. 149-176.

easier transition out of the forms and customs of paganism than by establishing Christian practices in their stead. In no better way can the convert be made to forget the old Tables of Pleasures, the seasonal festivals, the commemorations of demi-gods and goddesses, and those anniversaries of deifications and triumphs which at the time had grown to be of almost daily occurrence. The people would more readily surrender their attachment to a god or goddess than give up the manner of his or her worship. A new Calendar, therefore, could replace the old.*

While it is certain that the Christian Liturgy was in the main the continuation of that carried on in the synagogues of the Jews, it can scarcely be doubted, however, that the Christian cult, ever enriching, expanding and diversifying its services as times permitted, was intended to counteract the heathen sacrifices and ceremonies.† The feast of Christmas is an instance in point. Whatever be the origin and primary motive of this very ancient feast, it was certainly a fitting substitute for the pagan festival in honor of the Invincible Sun whose birth-day was annually kept, according to the Julian Calendar on the 25th of December.‡ In the early Middle Ages among the Germanic peoples this coincidence is equally historical. The feast fell at a time when the northern tribes were wont to celebrate their pagan rites, and the missionaries prudently gave to the traditional customs a Christian sense and direction. To this feast and to the ecclesiastical celebration at Eastertide in the ninth century, historians usually refer the beginnings of the Gothic drama.§

When it is said that the Gothic drama had its beginning in the Liturgical services of the Mediaeval Church no more is intended than what may be reasonably inferred from the historical fact, that the ecclesiastical offices of the time, so rich in dramatic material and so frequently acted before all classes of society may on

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* Thamin, St Ambrose et la Société Chrétienne du Quatriéme Siècle, p. 125.

† Duchense, L., Orignies der Culte Chrétien, p. 45. Lightfoot, St. Cement of Rome, I. 393.

‡ Shahan, T. J., The Beginnings of Christianity, p. 144.

§ A. Maury, Croyancs et Légendes du Moyen Age (1896), pp. 394-5, shows how the Christian feasts of the Nativity and Resurrection replaced seasonal gatherings in honour of tribal divinities:—"La Saint Jean correspond au solstice d'été et les Gaulois, et les Germains, célébraient à l'epoque des solstices, des fêtés solennelles. Ou, pour mieux dire, il existait, chez les deux peuples, deux grandes fêtés: celle d'hiver qui, suivant les lieux, varient de l'équinoxe du printemps au solstice d'été c'est-a-dire de Pâques à la Saint Jean. La fête d' hiver s' appelait Ioule, Iole, ou Ioel, c'est-á-dire la fête du Soleil."

this account be justly regarded as the chief source whence the Gothic drama drew its life. Nothing more exclusive is meant. Other sources there were which might well, and doubtless did, contribute if not to the actual birth of a theatre, at least in a secondary, yet none the less positive way, to its early cultivation and growth. They supplied the conditions without which the germ, no matter whence its origin, could not normally develop.

Memories of ancient Rome lived long in the imagination of the Middle Ages. Though, as was seen, the theatre of the Empire and the Gothic kingdoms had wrought its own dissolution fully two centuries* before any very definite imitations of a Gothic Stage can be noticed, this was not the case, however, with the actors of the effete theatre.† All through the Middle Ages there were numbers of strolling players, mimes and joculatores in every country of Europe; the jonglers in France before the Conquest immigrated to England in the suite of the Conqueror, and the native minstrels in the Island were all capable of furnishing a variety of dramatic amusement as they went from town to town, from castle to castle. Though they enjoyed no very distinguished reputation, owing to their many-sided talent in creating diversion, they managed, however, to secure large audiences. Many among the higher class of minstrels became permanent residents in the mansions of the nobility, but the vast majority followed the bent of their inclinations and showed their 'maistrie' preferably before the admiring crowds at fairs and village-greens. To these dramatic gatherings not a little is due for the rise and growth if not for the origin, of the Gothic drama.‡

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* Krumbacher, K., Gesch. der Byzantinischen Litteratur, pp. 639-648.

† Mr. Tunison in his work on dramatic traditions (Chapter II and III) has valuable data on the dramatic impulses in religion and on the mutual influence of East and West through the activity of pilgrims and actors. The religious plays of Italy were not transferred into the secular drama by Italian initiative alone, but by the help of Byzantine mimes. (Op. Cit. p. 133.) For further matter on this point refer to Du Meril, p. 24 ff, and to J. J. Jusserand 'Le Théâtre en Angleterre, etc., (p. 16 ff.) Mr. E. K. Chambers' "The Mediaeval Stage" (pp. Vol. I. pp. 1-70, 24 ff), furnishes perhaps all possible information on the subject.

‡ As it is important for our subject to understand the nature of these popular performances I shall give an extract from the Polycraticus of John of Salisbury, Bk. I. chap. 8. 184 (as cited by M. Jusserand 'Le Théâtre en Angleterre; p 22) "Admissa sunt ergo spectacula et infinita tyrocinia vanitatis, quibus qui omnino otiari non possunt, perniciosius occupenter. Satius enim fuerat otiari quam turpiter occupari. Hinc mimi, salii, vel saliaries, balatrones, aemiliani, gladiatores, palaestrini, gignadii, praestigiatores, malefici quoque multi et tota joculatorum scena procedit. Quorum adeo error invaluit, ut a

Another probable tributary, that unquestionably at a later date did much to prepare the day for the regular drama, may have come from the study of the Roman playwrights. This study began in the monasteries at an early date. Hroswitha, a nun of Gandersheim in Eastphalian Saxony, wrote toward the close of the tenth century, six plays of a sacred character on legendary subjects which she modelled on the comedies of Terence.* It is important to bear in mind the end she had in view: She wished to show how much better and more edifying comedies than those of the pagan poet might be written by a Christian hand. Personally she recognized the strangeness of her avocation, but she wrote to remedy an abuse. The abuse was the reading of Terence's plays.

The influence of the nun's work was not widespread; it is disputed whether her productions were ever presented, but her

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* "Geschiclte der Deutschen Litteratur" Vogt—Koch. "Hrotsviths Dramen haben den ausgesprochenen Zweck, Terenz in den Dienst des Christentums oder vielmehr in der Dienst den Nonnenklosters zu stellen. Von den gefälligen Form des vielgelessenen Dichters gefesselt, über den anstossigen Inhalt seiner Komödien entrustet, will sie in seinem Stile Dramen anderen Geistes schreiben. 'In derselben Dictungsart in der man bisher von schändlicher Unzucht üppiger Weiber gelesen hat, soll jetzt die löbliche Keuschheit heiliger Jungfrauen gefeiert werden.' Mit diesen Worten bezeichnet sie selbst ihre Aufgabe. Und sie hat sie mit Geschick gelöst. In besserem und flüssigerem Latein als die meisten Schrifts teller ihrer Zeit, in stellenweise recht lebhafter und gewandter Führung des Dialoges hat sie in fünk Stüchen das Keuschheitsthema, in einem sechsten wenigstens auch die Stand—haftigkeit christhcher Jungfrauen behandelt' (pp. 52-53) Cf. A. Ebert, Algemeine Gesch. der Litteratur des Mittelalters in Abendlande" Vol. III. pp. 285-330. J. S. Tunison (loc. cit. 161 et seqq) "The Byzantines not only preserved the theatrical habits of the Hellenic race, but also endeavored to christianize the stage long before Roswitha was in existence. . . . The famous comedies of Roswitha when their genesis is carefully investigated, are seen to have with eastern lore, dramatic traditions, and history relations that can be explained in only one way." pp. 138-139.

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praeclaris domibus non arceantur, etiam illi qui, obscenis partibus corporibus, oculis omnium eam ingerunt turpitudinem, quam erubescat quando tumultiantes inferius crebro aerem foedant, et turpiter inclusum, turpius produnt. Numquid tibi videtur sapiens qui oculos, vel aures istis expandit?" Cf also M. Jusserand, "A Literary History of the English People," Chap VI. pp. 439-494, and his "Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages", pp. 23 et sqq; 212-218 etc. The passion for things theatrical passed in a short while from the streets and greens to the Churches. In the twelfth century Aelred, abbot of Rievaulx, complained that the house of prayer was turned into a theatre: Videas aliquando hominem aperto ore quasi intercluso halitu expirare, non cantare, ac ridiculosa quadam vocis interceptione quasi minitari silentium; nunc agones morientium, vel extasim patientium imitari. Interim histrionicis quibusdam gestibus totum corpus agitaur, torquentur labia, rotant, ludunt humeri; et ad singulas quasque notas digitorum flexus respondet. For this and much more, cf. Minge, P. L. CCXV. 571 and P. L. CCXV. 1070 (Chambers I. 279.) It will be well to bear in mind this deep and wide-spread interest in every species of dramatic life, if one would justly estimate the later formal products which were the fittest survivals of these *tableaux vivant*, early efforts at dramatic expression.

action is significant as a probable index of what may have been the practice in the monastic and scholastic circles generally. The "Christus Patiens," by a contemporary of Hroswitha, may be mentioned in this connection. Its author has Lycophron, Euripides, and Aeschylus contribute to the cause of Christian edification.* Again, at the end of the next century the "Ludus de Sancta Katharina," the first dramatic representation in England of which any account has come down, was composed by one Geoffreys, a member of the University of Paris.† As Paris was the home of the Humanities it is reasonable to suppose that this Norman scholar may have planned his composition on classic models. Matthew of Paris, whose account of the Ludus de S. Katharina is all that is known of the play, leaves it understood that Geoffrey's effort was not phenomenal but the like was "de consuetudine magistrorum et scholarum."‡ Be that as it may, this much seems certain: neither to the influence of the classic drama nor to the dramatic feats in town or castle may the origin of the Gothic drama be referred. *A priori* it would seem strange that the most 'democratic of the arts' should not spring from the people but have its fountain-head in the shades of academic seclusion. Whatever difficulties one meets with in ascribing the historical origin of the Gothic drama to the study of the Greek and Roman playwrights during the earlier renaissance of art and letters in the latter part of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century;§ when, however, there will be question of the literary origin of the drama in England one may not easily overestimate foreign influences—the early Elizabethans drawing directly from Plautus, Terence and Seneca, and mediately, through Italian

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* Brands, J. C. "Christus Patiens." He has compared the text-sources and has given, so far as I am aware of, the latest (1885) edition of the play. For a discussion of authorship, Krumbacher, "Gesh. der. Bvzant. Litt." (pp. 1006 ff.) also Mr. Tunison (loc. cit. pp. 70-71.) Magnin "Le Journal des Savants," (Jan. and May 1849) for an analysis of the play itself.

† For an an account of Geoffrey as Abbot of St. Albans, in Bulaeus "Historia Universitatis Parisiensis," Vol. I, p. 223.

‡ Matthew Paris, Historia Major (ed 1663), Vol. I, p. 223.

§ Walter Pater, The Renaissance, p. 3. "The Renaissance is the name of a many-sided, but yet united movement, in which the love of the things of the intellect and the imagination for their own sake, the desire for more liberal and comely way of conceiving life make themselves felt, urging those who experience this desire to search out first one and then another means of intellectual or imaginative enjoyment, and directing them not merely to the discovery of old and forgotten sources of this enjoyment, but to the divine new sources of it, new experiences, new subjects of its poetry, new sources of art. Of this feeling there was a great outbreak in the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the following century."

translators and imitators, from the dramatic masterpieces in Greek.* Neither should over-emphasis be put on the share which at first sight one is likely to attribute to the nomadic caste, especially popular all through the Middle Ages. It should be remembered that there is dramatic material among all peoples and at every age; it was abundantly present in mediaeval England, but would it not be pushing a search for origins a little too far to ascribe that of the Modern drama exclusively to the tactics of tumblers, rope-walkers, stilt-dancers and hoop-vaulters and to the obscene manoeuvres of mimics and contortionists?

Not with these nor with the students of the Greek and Roman dramatists does it seem that the Gothic drama took its rise. In the liturgical services of the Church a dramatic germ was for centuries in process of formation and grew into its fullest life during the high-tide of Mediaeval Catholicism at the period of the Crusades, from the accession of St. Gegory VII (1073) to the pontificate of Boniface VIII (1294-1303). In the simple but deeply significant liturgical dramas there were essential dramatic qualities that needed only formation and development to produce a drama of the highest order. These Sanctuary scenes derived from the inexhaustible nature of the realities which they treated a degree of actuality that they stand forth, instinct with vigorous life and capable of producing or of growing into a higher and fuller life. Unlike the other origins to which it had been the custom sometime to refer to the beginnings of the Gothic drama, the liturgical offices of Mediaeval Church seem alone deserving of the name of source.†

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* J. Churton Collins, Essays and Studies, p. 124. "We must, however, guard carefully against attaching undue importance to the influenee of Italy. It was an influence the significance of which is purely historical. All it effected was to furnish the artist of our stage with models, it operated on form and it operated on composition, but it extended no further. Once formulated, our drama pursued an independent course. It became, in the phrase of its greatest representative, 'the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure' " A study of the beginnings and early growth of the English drama from the view point of characterization proves the accuracy of this conclusion. A native power in the treatment of the caste is the dramatic progression one sees clearest underlying the many varieties of the Mediavel drama. From the beginning one may easily notice the passion of the playwright in his instinctive search for novel bits of matter, to enhance the interest and distinctness of his presentation.

Mr. J. S. Tunison in his fourth chapter deals with eastern dramatic traditions by way of ancient and mediaeval Italy. His reasoning is strongly supplementary of conclusions reached by Churton Collins.

† Du Meril, "Les Origines Liturgiques, etc.", pp. 83 ff.
W. Boyd Carpenter, "The Religious Spirit in Poetry," Chap. I and II.

The early imitation of the classics from the view point of a popular drama, contributed not considerably to the spread of interest in things dramatic. Like Christianity itself, the drama is no theory of the study or the cloister. Such a career is contrary to its genuis and character. Its proper atmosphere, its home is the world; and to know what it is we must seek it in the world and hear and study the world's witness. True, the anomaly of the later French Aristotle had not been known, still no one who is to any extent familiar with the spirit of Elizabethan dramatic literature will allow that so spontaneous and characteristically national art product as the Romantic drama is a growth of classic imitation. Less still would he for other reasons be inclined to admit that the ephemeral productions of mediaeval strolling entertainers can be linked in any save the remotest connection with a drama whose history is that of contemporary philosophic and religious thought and whose chief excellence lies in its depth of character-treatment. These were the very opposite of this. They were informed by no lasting motive or inspiration; they were origin and end in themselves, with no relation to past or future, simply things of the moment.

But in certain incipient ways the liturgical acts are fore-shadowings—they show characteristics or notes of the regular Elizabethan drama. They differ from it accidentally or in degree, not substantially or in kind.* They are, as it were, so many rude sketches of a variety of dramatic ideas which the playwright vividly conceived and felt but was incapable fully to realize dramaturgically. These liturgical attempts at dramatic expression possessed many essential qualities of a great drama—qualities, which when filled out and fashioned into a unity and centralized in order to a general dramatic effect, supplied what is fundamental in the Elizabethan drama. What these influential qualities or dominant ideas were will in part be seen in the next chapter. Here let it suffice to say that by virtue of their fecund nature they were capable of endless adaptation and development, containing a fund of latent energies and resources which were ever tending to break forth from their sacred, pent-up limits. Such fertility is wanting to the productions of the mimes and minstrels, and is wholly independent of any positive influence surviving the dissolution of the theatres. It is therefore strictly true that apart from the liturgical offices one finds in

* Courthope, W., A History of English Poetry, Vol. I, pp. 383-394.

no other dramatic form at such an early date so many vital dramatic elements from which, as from so many germs, a Shakesperean drama might have grown in England as in Greece and Spain.*

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* Faguet, E., Etudes Litteraire Dixneuvième Siècle, pp. 38-39. Religious Drama in Spain, Ticknor "History of Spanish Literature," Vol. I, p. 225 ff. Vol. II. 249. "Calderon," M. F. Egan, "Library of the Worlds Best Literature," Vol. VII, pp. 30-71.

CHAPTER II.

CHARACTERIZATION IN ITSELF AND IN ITS RELATIONS TO OTHER DRAMATIC ELEMENTS.

We can conceive of a purely intellectual nature apart from its personality, a nature, one and complete in itself, with reason, will and sense. A human nature so conceived though concrete, indeed, and full, can, however, reside only in the mind; for an existence other than the conceptual it lacks the perfection of the personality to vitalize and determine it to make it a living man, an effectual, responsibile being. In the whole scope of rational life neither reason nor faith gives an example of the purely objective, isolated existence of an intellectual nature apart from its personality. Human nature in its concrete existence is inseparable from the personality which adds to it a positive perfection of self-movement. Yet, a singular, living and complete rational nature, however potential or facultative it be, includes of necessity the prerogative of self-dominion and is itself a centre of responsibility, but not till the moment that personality and nature unite is that prerogative actually realized. The union effects the transition from a state of passivity or tendency to a state of activity and reality.

Character is the result of this union; it is this action. In its widest meaning character seems to be the sum of man's qualities, the outcome of the united nature and personality acting as a whole, reasoning, willing and feeling. In this primary signification, character is not solely an intellectual product, nor is it the outgrowth of volitional acts alone, nor exclusively sense-experience. It is rather the ever-varying interaction of the soul's triple activity, in act itself, while at the same time possessing an underlying unity that is simple, yet in its manifestations more diversified than the seven colors of the rainbow and as manifold and complex as the motives which make up an individual's life. To reproduce this activity—the interaction or struggle of reason, will and feeling; to express the various intricate motives back of the intellectual, volitional and emotional acts, as well as the consequences of these acts or forces, and their reciprocal reaction—this is to characterize.

Characterization in the Drama has always been one in its purpose and aim; in its means of realization, however, it is as manifold almost as there have been artists. Its aim, even, is immutable only in as far as characterization is concerned with the setting forth "the sum of man's qualities," when it is a question to determine their nature and extent, the aim of characterization will depend on the philosophy which governs the dramatist, on the answer he gives the question relative to the summed qualities of man. It is clear that the treatment of character by the playwright who looks on the hero's servant as "a machine" purely, and who sees the hero, as indeed the hero sees himself, urged on by an unseen power to an inevitable catastrophe, must differ not only in degree but in kind from the character-presentation by the dramatist who recognizes in the page a human person with rights and responsibilities and in the master a free agent that freely shapes his own ends. With this limitation as to the nature of its object, character-presentation has at all times been one in motive and purpose.

From an estimate of Shakespeare's achievement—which is the surest criterion of character-treatment in the drama for all time—one can see what is implied in the primary meaning of the term "character" itself. An analysis of the Poet's work makes clear that the word "personality" which is, perhaps, better described as an energy than as a substance, such are its essentially living qualities—would embrace all that the over-used word "character" includes and has the further advantage of bringing into special prominence the very idea least emphasized or quite forgotten in the thoughtless use of the commoner word. The term personality, as applied to the presentation of characters in the drama, would, it seems, primarily imply the presentment, or at least, the effort to present, on the stage, man in his highest moral relations, the mainsprings of his actions, their ethical worth and sanction, and such like root-principles of human life and emotion. Turning to the product of the early Gothic playwright's work one finds that this was precisely his view of dramatic action. He would set forth a spiritual picture which brought into distinct consciousness what the many felt but loosely apprehended His effort was to create a drama informed by Mediaeval Christianity, the growth of the religious ritual and for a long time intimately connected with the worship of precept, and therefore, the medium through which were shaped and expressed in a concrete manner the intangible realities of the spiritual world as they were known and felt in this. The mediae-

val playwright, in other words, dealt with those static aspirations that filled his soul with an ideal which his deficient language prevented him from embodying in artistic form. The immanency of the truth was felt by him but he was incapable of communicating it adequately to words and actions.

It is quite evident how nearly one the earliest attempts at character-presentation had been with treatment of dramatic life by Marlowe and Shakespeare.* An extract from Sidney Lee, in showing the nature of Shakespeare's processes, the extent and vividness of his conceptions, the firmness and flexibility of the mental grasp which he possessed over the creatures of his imagination, will help to illustrate this affinity further; and when read with the thought of the drama of today in mind, his words will go far to suggest a reason why the particular element which the word "personality" chiefly emphasizes is obscured or obsolete in the current use of the term "character." I should venture to say that owing to the perfection of what was weakest in Shakespeare and his predecessors or wholly neglected by them, the modern dramatist has relaxed his efforts to realize through poetry what technique apparently so fully supplies. These are Sidney Lee's words:†

"But when the whole of Shakespeare's vast work is scrutinized with due attention the glow of his imagination is seen to leave few passages wholly unillumined. Some of his plots are hastily constructed and inconsistently developed, but the intensity of the interest with which he contrives to invest the personality of his heroes and heroines triumphs over halting or digressive treatment of the story in which they have their being. Although he was versed in the technicalities of stage-craft, he occasionally disregarded its elementary conditions. But the success of his presentments of human life and character depended little on his manipulation of theatrical machinery. His unassailable supremacy springs from the versatile workings of his insight and intellect, by virtue of which his pen limned with unerring precision almost every gradation of thought and emotion that animates the living stage of the world."

This places one at the proper angle of vision to study the dramatic activity during the Middle Ages relative to the treatment of the characters. Though in its infancy from the point of view of art and development, and not for generations after the first indications of life are perceived do the embryonic forms evolve into dra-

* Dowden, E., "Transcripts and Studies," pp. 263-434-435-441.

† "A Life of William Shakespeare," pp. 355-356.

matic proportions and take on the properties of the drama; still competent admirers of Shakespeare regarded him as "the direct heir" of the mediaeval playwright, and see in his work "the highest expression of the dramatic spirit of the Middle Ages."

Just as the arrangement of the stage-structure itself was founded on contemporary cosmic belief, so during the three or four centuries of dramatic activity that preceded the Elizabethan drama characterization was based, unconciously no doubt, on the current philosophic view of man and upon the nature of his powers. No modern religion or social theory, no Christian dramatist, and mediaeval least of all, could ever have viewed the relations of man with man and men with the unseen as they appeared to the pre-christian audience and poet. The doctrine of Fate, the abiding conciousness of an overhanging doom, never exercised so dominant a sway over Greek life and conduct as the ideas of personality and responsibility influenced all classes of men throughout the Middle Ages. This is here, perhaps, the sharpest contrast that may be drawn between ancient and mediaeval life and habits of thought, and it is likewise of much significance to the understanding the theatre of both periods. If the Greek dramatist was subjected to the superstition that there is a divinity which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will, for the mediaeval playwright nothing was clearer than the fact that human destiny was the result not of what his stars but of what he himself had made it. No divine sentence, intransgressible because its cause could not be diverted or hindered, was ever pronounced on a mediaeval hero. The contrary was the rule. To the injury of divine and poetic justice instead of the condign catrastrophe awaiting a delinquent, in his last hours the life-long law-breaker meets with plentiful salvation from merciful Heaven.

"If we would understand well the Middle Ages we must ever keep in view that in those times public life was dominated by two great functional ideas—the sense of personality and the sense of responsibility. Throughout those centuries it was the universal persuasion that the final end of society was the perfection of each individual soul, or rather, its individual salvation."* These two dominant ideas of mediaeval life form the very basis of dramatic characterization as well as the immediate motive for the formation of the religious stage. The liturgical and in general the entire mediaeval drama, aiming primarily to give expression in action to the religious

* Shahan, T. J., The Middle Ages, pp. 182 ff.

and moral life of the age, is concerned most directly with two great functional ideas which, as may be seen further on, easily passed from the realm of the ideal and appealed to the interested audience as near and actual. These ideals or actualities manifested themselves nowhere so clearly nor so immediately as on the religious stage. Though at the basis of all dramatic action, giving a meaning to the perpetual struggle of good and evil, or as it is seen more concretely on the stage, the exertion of the will against opposing forces, which is the essential subject-mattter of the drama, the ideas emphasizing human freedom and destiny were, perhaps at no time so exclusively prominent in the mind nor so popularly sensed. These active "senses" of personality and responsibility being kept in view, many parts of the mediaeval drama will come not only intelligible but intimately personal and replete with interest for every listener.

At first sight and apart from influencing conditions, one may think that in roles conceived so broadly and generally as those of the religious drama, the players must have moved and acted, as humanly as one might fancy an impersonal nature would act. One may see nothing or but little regular and consequent in what they do; actions of individuals not of persons, showing no signs of a self-determining process going on within but urged on and conditioned by something external. It requires, however, no very long or close intimacy with a mediaeval caste, and particularly with that of the liturgical drama, to find abundant instances to satisfy oneself that this is not so. It is true that there is what resembles an external necessity moving to act, but this is only apparent. This seeming outward coaction is not caused by any divine and intransgressible sentence, but results from the vivid and abiding consciousness of the fullest inner freedom and personal responsibility. It would be more exact on this very account to say that an internal necessity was at all times making itself felt and imperiously demanding attention. Consequently what looks to be the immediate cause is not the real cause; the true motive is occult. Every act has roots deep down and hidden, the motives that accompany and apparently explain it are never more than a part of the true cause. The accompaning cause — even as it will be in comedy later — is always illusive. One feels that there is ever going on in the bosom of the agent a self-determining process which is striving for complete realization independent and even in despite of everything external. This struggle is the essence of the drama. It was present at the

birth of the modern theatre and an account of its presentation to the last quarter of the sixteenth century would be the history of pre-Elizabethan dramatic characterization.

If the setting forth "the sum of man's qualities" be rightly said to characterize,—characterization being taken in a general sense—it may be claimed for our playwright that, though he numbered man's capacities differently, he understood the purpose of the stage and aimed, as dramatists of all times, to reproduce life, to present man as a whole—reasoning, willing and feeling. In the fundamental conception, then, the pre-Elizabethan playwright is one with his successors. He sought, though certainly not so consciously as the author of the phrase, to show Truth his face, to hold the mirror up to nature.

Thus far, perhaps, he succeeded. Let it be admitted that he did; that his idea of the stage and its requirements agreed, in the main, with that held by his classic successors, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Massinger and Jonson, and that in every case his ablest efforts were to realize this idea and meet these requirements by producing a living human caste; in a radical point, however, he was yet deficient. The pre-Shakespearean dramatist seems never to have grasped in its essential entirety what is dramatic. This was an original weakness and endured long. The playwright never took into practical account, though he refers to it repeatedly, the limitations of the stage, never distinguishing between an actual life of half a century and that lived on the boards during half a day. The slowness in duly appreciating this is the first cause of the comparative insignificance of the long beginning of the English drama. It is so intimately connected with the question of dramatic characterization that this may be told in terms which would express the growth in the realization of the idea of what is dramatic. Growth in the conciousness of what is dramatic is inseparable from growth of characterization in the drama.

Free-will, which is a first step to individuality, and personality, or the consciousness of oneself as a centre of moral retribution, were elements of great dramatic importance in the theatre of the Middle Ages. They were to an extent the cause of its origin and the reason of its longevity. No depth of characterization is possible without these vital factors, or more accurately, this essential fundament of all dramatic action, and with them little more is needed. However worthy of emphasis in this present

connection these predispositions are, the drama has yet other requirements. A dramatic action is needed. The subject-matter of the play must be dramatic; the hero must be governed by a predominate passion or desire and have a resolute will to gratify his desire, to reach the end he has proposed. In his efforts to attain the object of his ambition he is arrested by the action of opposing forces. Thence comes the necessary struggle of contrary wills, whence the revelation of character. Freytag defines the dramatic in this manner: The dramatic implies the presence of those mighty soul-swaying motives that nerve to will and to do: those passionate emotions astir in the soul in consequence of a deeply-felt happening. Dramatic also are those inner promptings that man experiences from the first awakening appeal or volition to do, through all successive degrees of growth, to passionate desire and actual realization. Similarly dramatic are the reactions on these, whether personal or otherwise, that are brought about within the soul of man. The welling forth of will-power from the depth of the human soul toward the outer world and the inflow of informing influences from the outer world into man's inmost being—all this is implied in the word "dramatic," as is also the coming into being of a deed and its consequences on the human soul.* An action in itself, Freytag says, or passionate feeling in itself, or even the presentation of passion for itself, is not dramatic; but a passion which leads to action is the business of dramatic art.

Giving to characterization its broadest meaning, it has been stated as the sum of man's qualities, the outcome of united nature and personality acting as a whole—reasoning, willing and feeling. This is characterization in general, as we may study it in the Epic or Novel or in its more complicated unfolding in actual life; but what is characterization as revealed by dramatic action? May it any longer be said to be "the sum of man's qualities," since the man we see on the stage is in an abnormal condition? We have just seen that the business of dramatic art is with a passion

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* "Technik des Dramas," p. 18. "Dramatisch sind diejenigen starken Seelenbewegungen, welche sich bis sum willen und zum Thun verhärten, und diejenigen Seelenbewegungen, welche durch ein Thun aufgeregt werden; also die innern Vorgänge, welche der Mensch vom Aufleuchten einer Empfindung bis zu leidenschaftlichem Begehren und Handeln durchmacht, sowie die Einwirkungen, welche eigenes und fremdes Handeln in der Seele hervorbringt; also das Ausströmen der Willenskraft aus dem tiefen Gemüth nach der Aussenwelt und das Einströmen bestimmender Einflüsse aus der Aussenwelt in das Innere des Gemüths; also das Werden einer That und ihre Folgen auf das Gemüth."

that leads to action, in what manner then, may such actions as these, motived by passion, be regarded as the *sum* of man's qualities?

At first it should be observed by the way of explanation that for obvious reasons the imitation of life on the stage must necessarily be in many respects from the point of detail other than the actual. This necessity was not fully understood, or at least, the compromise between the life of nature and its imitation in the drama was not effected very happily by our early playwrights. Dramaturgy in the beginning ignored the delicate art of perspective; it had not learned to choose the crisis or points of interest and dispense with the trivial details of its subject. The playwright of those times felt it necessary to itemize each quality to reach the sum. Hence it is that in the oldest extant Moral Play, *The Castle of Constancy*, the action covers the whole life of the hero, Humanum Genus appearing as a new-born babe, a youth, a man and a greybeard.

The epic-writer or novelist may utilize these details and form a very characteristic hero from them, but they do not come within the province of the dramatist. They are not dramatic for him, however much they be so in themselves.

Characterization in its technical meaning or as it is derived from dramatic action properly so called, gives, however, a very true summary of man's qualities. Be it so that we see the hero in exceptional circumstances and at the dramatic moment of his life, face to face with an inevitable fact or line of conduct which admits of only an alternative, Though inwardly agitated by the passion that is rapidly leading him to the crisis of the struggle, the hero acts all the while deliberately, and perhaps conscious, at least, confusedly, of the results which will follow the climax. Macbeth strikes the King, though alive to the nature of his act and its consequences. His instance is typically dramatic. A passionate ambition leads him to take the fatal step, though in doing so he jump the life to come. The dramatist (and especially the English with whom the laws governing the Unities of time and place are comparatively flexible) is careful to give the hero time and opportunity to test and choose, even at the moment when the passion is reaching its highest intensity and has led to the decisive action. Nothing pertaining to the substance of the climacteric act is indeliberate, every step thereto the spectator sees is voluntary "from the first glow of preception to the passionate desire and the action itself." Otherwise the art is false.

This being the process many of the terms that go to make up the sum of the hero's qualities are given by the poet. Later it will be more in place to speak of the activity of the audience on each term, phase or quality as the story unfolds itself, and of its final synthesis of the data and its resulting estimate or impression of the hero. "The poet's characterization," says Freytag, "rests on the old peculiarity of man to percieve in every living being a complete personality in which a soul like that of the observer's is supposed as animating principle; and beyond this, what is peculiar to this living being, what is characteristic of it received as affording enjoyment."* This instinctive desire in the audience to complete the person by fitting in or filling out along the suggested lines, and then endowing this outline, or let us say, the nature, with a personality, or centre of responsibility, is indispensible to the poet. It affords the listener an intellectual pleasure to meet the actor half way and supply at his suggestion the necessarily numerous minutiae missing from the role. On this account it is detrimental in the treatment of the caste to present to the audience more than characteristic traits, for unimportant details will of necessity withdraw the attention from what is peculiar and original and which alone interests. With a careful elimination of the unnecessary we shall arrive at a knowledge deeper and fuller of the hero's character from the few suggestive strokes, distinctive traits and concomitant action than we should have had we before our eyes the register of his doings and motives from the cradle to the grave. Nor does it influence our estimate of "the sum of his qualities" that exaggerated circumstances present themselves on the stage which are especially tempting to the nurtured passion. From his deliberate action when the decisive moment is reached we can form an accurate appreciation of the moral worth of what preceded, for the hero's antecedent life, the distinctive traits of which the actor has brought out, affords sufficient motive for the climacteric act. A felt propriety and truth is deduced from causes unseen which makes the relation of action and agent at the climax dramatically probable.†

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* Technik des Dramas, pp, 215-231.

† In a work, "An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff," Maurice Morgann shows the unconscious mental activity of the audience and actor in respect to the bringing out of secret or implied character motives.—"The characters in every drama must, indeed, be grouped; but in the groups of other poets (than Shakespeare) the parts which are not seen do

There will be occasion to return to these considerations. Such as they are they may be taken as proof to some extent of what was assumed hitherto, viz., that the pre-Elizabethan dramatist's idea of characterization was in an incipient way substantially similar to that of his successors. Only accidentally in the manner of presentation he differed from them. As they, he possessed material dramatic in itself, but unlike them he had not learned the full meaning of dramatic action. He had not learned what to emphasize. He erred in the use of emphasis. Though his fundamental idea was one and dramatic—a passion tending to action—it lost, however, much of its definitiveness and dramatic quality by the tendency to characterize generally, by treating the hero as a whole, reasoning, willing and feeling, impartially, and in presenting not only the sum of his qualities but in stressing equally all the addenda. As the playwright slowly perfected himself in the difficulty art of accentuation, details were eschewed, suggestion replaced narration, the action became more important, crises in the hero's life were chosen, the motive appeared more deliberate and was brought more and more into prominence, and the act, as such, withdrew to the background. The characters were no longer viewed in the whole, a predominant trait or passion was chosen and that was almost exclusively emphasized. From the leading motive all the minor qualities of the role flow and can be traced to it as to a source. The hero is mighty in intellect or resolute in action or

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not in fact exist. But there is a certain roundness and integrity in the forms of Shakespeare, which give them an independence as well as a relation, insomuch that we often meet with passages which, though perfectly felt, cannot be sufficiently explained in words without unfolding the whole character of the speaker . . . It is true that the point of action or sentiment, which we are most concerned in, is always held out for our special notice. But who does not perceive that there is a peculiarity about it which conveys a relish of the whole. And very frequently when no particular point presses, he boldly makes a character act and speak from the parts of the composition which are inferred only and not distinctly shown; this produces a wonderful effect: it seems to carry us beyond the poet to nature itself, and gives an integrity and truth to facts and character, which they could not otherwise obtain. And this in reality is that art in Shakespeare, which, being withdrawn from our notice, we more emphatically call nature. A felt propriety and truth from causes unseen, I take it to be the highest point of Poetic Composition. If the characters of Shakespeare are thus whole, and as it were original, while those of almost all other writers are mere imitation, it may be fit to consider them rather as Historic than as Dramatic beings; and when occasion requires, to account for their conduct from the *whole* of character, from general principles from latent motives, and from policies not avowed." Referred to by Lewis Campbell, Tragic Drama, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare, pp. 48-49. Dowden, E., Shakespeare—His Mind and Art, p. 111.

governed by sentiment. A consummate art in the arrangement of the dramatic action and depth of insight into its meaning resulted in Shakespearean characterization.

It will simplify our task to note at the outset these points of similarity and difference from the point of view of characterization between the early and the Elizabethan drama. The idea and aim of the dramatist being the same from the beginning, there is presently a continuity established. We can speak of power of characterizing as growing or developing or waning. The germ of characterization at the origin of the drama will pass through a variety of forms and take from them certain peculiarities; it will grow into a higher life, manifesting as it advances more and more its true nature and ultimate attributes, retaining all the while its primitive identity. The purpose of the playwright in every stage of this evolution is to present his characters realistically. His intention is that they enact his thought and his great concern will be to find a fitting dress in which to clothe it attractively and fully. If he ventures a presentation in a new form, it is precisely because he feels that the old, from being over-familiar, has lost its power to appeal. He hopes to derive from the changed form an element of interest, of which he profits to emphasize the ancient truth.

This, then, is the role of characterization in the Mediaeval English drama. It seems to mark the reason of all dramatic development. How best present the caste? All is in this. Dramatic laws are founded to answer this question. They make it their criterion—a factor is essential or important to the degree it is in sympathy with the treatment of the caste. The law governing the Relative Values of the characters themselves, the Unities, the laws of Probability, Concreteness, Completeness, and Coherence; those that have to do with the Incident and the Presentation of the Plot; the question of Emotion in the play, that of Interest and Fineness of Truth—all these are important for the drama, because each in its measure has in view the perfect presentation of the characters which is the end of dramatic art.

CHAPTER III.

CHARACTER-TREATMENT IN THE LITURGICAL DRAMA.

Beginning with the Liturgical Offices as the sacred origin of the Modern Theatre, one finds a multitude of germs that would go to form a drama. The marvelous conception back of the symbolic action, the effort to realize in idea the meaning of the veiled reality, and the further life-long attempt to give these spiritual facts a concrete bearing on personal conduct, demanded a continual exercise in a high degree of the individual's powers. It elicited the highest efforts of his reason, will, and sense-faculties; all were interested in the tremendous mystery that was unfolding itself before his eyes. It lost half its mysteriousness by reason of the very vital interest it had for him. And when it is remembered that in this chief, though most familiar liturgical function the action at the altar was (as all believed) not a sign merely representing an action done and past, but the actual creating at the moment of bread and wine into the Divine Flesh and Blood—as the words signified—it is easily seen how much this sacred rite shortened the mental step between symbol and reality. The senses expressed in action the thought of the mind. The symbol in a very true sense *was* the reality. It does not seem an over-estimate when the Liturgical Office is thus viewed, to see in it germinally, at least, a distant foreshadowing of Elizabethan "imitations of great and probable actions."

In the effort to supplement faith by bringing under the perception of the senses as much of the mystical liturgy as might be, scenic representations were introduced. In the beginning these performances were of the simplest kind, the dialogues were in Latin and based on prescribed portions of the Ritual. This interpolating or filling out the ritual of precept gave rise to what is technically called a *trope*. These tropes acted only on festivals of great solemnity, may be said to stand at the head of the Mediaeval religious drama.

Only two fragments of the Liturgical drama acted in England during five centuries have survived. Of its popularity down to the destruction of the monasteries there is abundant proof. It

was acted in England before the Conquest. The earliest and most complete account of its nature and scope is found in an appendix to the Rule of St. Benedict, which was drawn up some time between the years 959 and 979 by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester. * Though written at the cradle of the Liturgical drama it anticipates in the outline the perfection of the species. For this reason I shall give the entry entire as found in Chamber's "The Mediaeval Stage" (Vol. II, Appendix o). The arrangement is for the Easter dramatic scene in the cathedral. Mr. Manly gives the critical Latin text of the Bishop's words: †

"While the third nocturn is being chanted let four brethren vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the service, and let him approach the sepulchre without attracting attention, and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third response is being chanted let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes bearing in their hands thuribles with incense and stepping delicately (pedetentim) as those who seek something, approach the sepulchre. These things are done in imitation of the angel sitting in the monument and the women with spices coming to anoint the body of Jesus. When, therefore, he who sits there beholds the three approach him like folk lost and seeking something, let him begin in a dulcet voice of medium pitch to sing:

Quem quaeritis (in sepulchro, o Christecole)?

And when he has sung it to the end let three reply in unison:

Jesu(m)Nazarenum(crucifixu(m), o celicola).

So he:—

Non est hic; surrexit, sicut praedixerat;
Ite nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis.

At the words of this bidding, let those three turn to the choir and say:

Alleluia! resurrexit Dominus.

This said, let the one still sitting there and as if recalling them say the anthem:

Venite et videte locum (ubi positus erat Dominus, alleluia' alleluia.).

And saying this let him rise and lift the veil, and show them the place bare of the Cross, but only the cloths laid there in which

* "Migne P. L. Concordia Regularis, Vol. 137, p. 495.

† Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama," pp. xix-xx.

the Cross was wrapped. And when they have seen this, let them set down the thuribles which they bare in that same sepulchre, and take the cloth and hold it up in the face of the clergy, and as if to demonstrate that the Lord has risen and is no longer wrapped therein, let them sing the anthem:

Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro,
(Qui pro nobis pependit in ligno).

And let them lay the cloth upon the altar. When the anthem is done, let the prior sharing in their gladness at the triumph of our King, in that, having vanquished death He arose again, begin the hymn:

Te Deum laudamus.

And this begun, all the bells chime out together."

This long rubric may be said to be the first stage direction. We already have a drama outlined in the Bishop's words. The temptation to fill in and elaborate, so strongly suggested by the prelate's outline, could not be resisted. In the beginning, a century probably before this Easter ordinance was drawn up, four lines seem to have made up the dialogue at the Sepulchre:

Angels: Whom seek ye in the tomb, ye worshippers of Christ?
Holy Women: Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified, Ye heavenly adorers.
Angels: He is not here; He is risen as He said.
Go, tell He's risen from the tomb.

This was all. Later on, as Bishop Ethelwold's directions imply, a development set in, and elaboration once begun steadily continued till in the thirteenth century we find collateral incidents grouped around the primitive scene. St. Peter and St. John, Mary Magdalen and the Gardener take part with the Holy Women and the Angels at the monument. To transcribe the whole text of this trope would be too long. A paraphrased translation of a part will be sufficient to show the nature of the elaboration that had set in, and at the same time furnish a specimen of the strictly Liturgical drama at the period of its fullest development. The Latin text may be read in Wright's reprint or in the more recent manuscript by Du Méril. * This latter text I follow. Bishop Ethelwold's rubric will serve in the main as stage directions.

Three brethren clothed to take parts of the Three Maries, approach slowly and sorrow-laden to the Sepulchre singing in accents of grief nine subsequent stanzas:

* "Les Origines Latines du Theatre Moderne," pp. 110-115.

I. Mary: Alas, the loving Shepherd's slain,
He who no guile e'er wrought—
O Deed most pitiful.
II. Mary: Yes, the True Shepherd's dead
Dead, who brought the saintly life—
O lamentable death!
III. Mary: Whence, Jews, how came it so,
How came this rage, this rabid rage—
O cursed people, how?

To much the same effect the first Mary begins a new stanza and similarly the others. This is repeated another time which being finished as they near the Sepulchre all three sing:

Not by ourselves; we cannot ope the tomb.
Who'll roll the stone from off the door?

An Angel sitting at the head of the monument, clothed in white and gold, a shining mitre on his head and holding a palm in his left hand and a branched candle-stick in his right speaks gravely as follows:

"Whom seek ye in the tomb, ye worshippers of Christ?

The women answer:

Jesus, the Crucified of Nazareth, thou Heavenly Adorer.

And the Angel:

"What, worshippers of Christ, Ye seek the quick among dead?
He is not here, He is risen, as He told.
Remember you what Jesus spoke in Galilee?
'The Christ must suffer and on the third day rise.'"

At the end of this rythmic dialogue the women turn to the congregation and sing in prose the account of the resurrection. This done, Mary Magdalen, weighed down with grief, goes to the sepulchre. Though she had just returned with her two companions and with them had announced the Resurrection according to the word of the Angel, she now comes to the sepulchre and all in tears over the empty grave, laments the taking away of "the beloved Body from the tomb." She goes back, tells Peter and John that the tomb is empty and nothing but the cloths are left. At her word the two Apostles hurry to where Christ's body was laid. John, outrunning Peter, reaches the Sepulchre first:

John: What marvelous things see we—
The Master taken, stolen?
Peter: Not so. As He said, He lives—
I believe the Master's risen.

John: Tell, why here in the tomb
This shroud and towl remain?
Peter: No use to one arisen is aught of these;
Indices of His? resurrection they remain.

So ends the visit of Peter and John. Mary Magdalen returns again and repeats the same sorrowful and incredulous words as before. Two angels assure her of the Resurrection but still she persists in her unbelief. Jesus in the disguise of the Gardener alone succeeds to convince her. The recognition is substantially after the Gospel account with a paraphrased blending of Easter anthems. Mary, turning to the people, expresses her joy on seeing the risen Jesus in the beautiful Sequence:

> "Rejoice with me all ye that love the Lord: because He whom I sought hath appeared to me, and while I wept at the grave, I have seen the Lord, Alleluia."

At the bidding of the two angels Magdalen and her two companions turn to the congregation and say:

> "The Lord is risen from the dead, Him who was hanged upon the Rood, Alleluia!

The three then lift the winding sheet before the people: "See, friends, yourselves the linen cloths left in the empty tomb. These wrapped His Blessed Body."

They lay the cloth upon the altar and turning to the congregation alternate in the following lines:

I. Mary: The God of Gods is risen to-day.
II. Mary: In vain, O Israel, have you sealed the stone.
III. Mary: Now join you to Christ's followers.
I. Mary: The King of Angels is risen to-day.
II. Mary: And saintly hosts from darkness leads.
III. Mary: The gates of Heaven are open.

Christ next appears in all the glory of His state, bearing the insignia of His triumph. He promises to meet all in Galilee. A chorus breaks forth "Alleluia! the Lord is risen to-day," and the "Te Deum" follows.

To this proportion and dramatic significance the Liturgical scenes of Easter-day had grown by the thirteenth century. The growth was strictly organic. The lines along which it moved were traced in Bishop Ethelwold's Ordinance. In the brief dialogue that passed between the Angels and the three Maries four centuries previous, the texts of SS. Matthew and Mark were literally followed. So long as the author denied himself every right of invention and

deemed fidelity to the sacred narrative a religious duty, it is obvious no progress might be hoped for. Early, however, the need of adaptation—a first reason for characterization which was later to be insisted on—was felt. The playwright was taught to realize that Matthew and Mark were but synoptists and that a large field of probability adjoined the domain of truth. This was open to him. His success depended upon his power to profit of its resources. From it he might always hope to draw the novel element which would give fulness and interest to the more familiar narrative of the Evangelists.

As these Sanctuary scenes, thus enlarged, received a higher degree of artistic development, the representation became more and more life-like. In time the personal, uncanonical element mingled more freely with the strictly rubrical portions of the service. It might be supposed, the practice once begun, that the ingenious playwright would rhyme his own feelings with the lines of the Sacred Text. In this way the prescribed formulas were filled out, and as the interpolation was usually a phrase or paraphrase of the Sacred Writings themselves, it made a very pleasing complement. From being one with the service proper this acting became an accessory ornament. Gradually the Liturgical drama left the service quite behind it, although it continued to be acted only on occasion of the feast and always subordinated itself to the worship of precept. It had reached this point by the thirteenth century, at which time it may be said that the Easter Liturgical drama had attained its highest development as a part of an independent species.

What the Sepulchre was to Holy Week and Eastertide, the Crib was to Christmas. The dramatic scenes acted on occasion of these two solemn festivals make up the Liturgical drama proper. As the drama of Easter grew from insignificant beginnings out of the Liturgical services to an existence quite independent of the ritual of the feast, so the scenes that had their origin in the ecclesiastical commemoration of the Mystery of the Nativity developed from the undramatic, antiphonal dialogue of the tenth century to an independent fulness and variety comparable to the scenes which treated of the Resurrection. The incidents narrated by the Evangelists in connection with the Nativity were grouped around the brief narration of the Infant's birth. The Apparition of the Star, the Adoration of the Shepherds and Wise Men, even Rachel, the Slaughter of the Innocents, the Flight into Egypt and the Dethroning of

Herod were harmonized and adapted as was done with the events bearing on the Resurrection. Later when we come to speak of the Cyclic drama it will be further seen to what extent the dramatic writing in the early history of the stage has been influenced by the two greatest events of human history: the Birth and Death of Jesus Christ.

The paraphrase I have given of the thirteenth-century Resurrection Office which probably shows at its highest the dramatic power to contrast grief and joy, and now a Christmas Office that would be fairly representative of the author's ability to portray a purely joyous scene, will help us to understand with some degree of fulness the dramatic value of these Liturgical tropes. Again I paraphrase from the Latin text to be found in Du Méril. *

The stage direction begins: "Let there be a crib arranged back of the altar and a statue of Holy Mary placed in it. Then from an elevation in front of the choir, a boy taking the part of an angel will announce the birth of the Saviour to the five canons who represent the shepherds. As these enter the choir the boy speaks:

"Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For, this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord in the City of David, and this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

A number of choir-boys hidden in the niches through the Church or standing in the gallery above shall begin in a high key:

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."

On hearing this the shepherds will move toward the crib, singing as they go:

Pax in terris nuntiatur,
In excelsis gloria!
(Namque) terra foederatur,
Mediante gratia.

Mediator homo Deus
Descendit in propria,
Ut ascendat homo reus
Adadmissa gaudia.

Transeamus, videamus
Verbum hoc quod factum est.
Transeamus et sciamus
Quod (hic?) nuntiatum est.

In Judea puer vagit,
Puer salus populi,
Quo bellandum se praesagit
Vetus hospes saeculi.

Accedamus, accedamus
Ad praesaepe domini,
Et (congaudentes?) dicamus
Laus fecundae Virgini.

* "Les Origines Latines, etc." pp. 147-150.

As the shepherds are entering the stall they are met by Mary's two assistants.

(two canons of the first order) clothed in dalmatics. The nurses ask:

"Say O Shepherds, whom seek ye in the manger?"

These answer:

"Christ the Lord and Saviour, an Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes,—even as the Angel said."

The nurses draw aside a curtain which veils the Infant Jesus; chanting as they turn to the shepherds:

"Behold the little one with Mary his mother, of her long long since Isaias hath prophesied. . . ."

A chorus of choir-boys pointing to the Virgin-Mother takes up the prophecy:

"A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, but go ye now and tell that he is born!"

At the words of this bidding the shepherds bow themselves in adoration before the Infant, and salute his Mother, singing two stanzas in praise of the maidenhood of Mary and the divinity of Jesus:

"Salve, Virgo singularis; Virgo manens, Deum paris!
Ante saecla generatur (generatum) corde patris,
Adoremus nunc creatum carne matris!"

"Nos, Maria, tua presce
A peccati purga faece;
Nostri Cursum incolatus sic dispone,
Ut det sua frui Natus visione."

At this the shepherds shall leave the crib and turning toward the choir chant as they go:

"Alleluia! Alleluia! now indeed we are certain that the Christ is born upon earth. Sing ye all his praises. . . ."

The sixth verse from the ninth chapter of Isaias is sung. This forms the Introit of the Mass which is now begun. The canon-shepherds lead the choir." *

In these Sanctuary scenes are found first attempts at imitation, the earliest dramatic effort to reproduce a living past, to incarnate the spiritual, to clothe the ideal in tangible form. That the crude relics of this attempt, preserved in the occasional manuscript that has survived, are proportionate either to the theme itself or to the motive or instinct that must have prompted the attempt, it is

* Du Meril, Les Origines Latines, etc. pp. 147-150.

impossible to allow. The literary value of both the Latin and vernacular drama to the middle of the sixteenth century is extremely low. † It would, indeed, be generally true to say that the entire pre-Elizabethan drama till we come to the influential writings of Gascoigne, Udall, Sackville and Lyly possesses, in a strict sense, no literary value whatever. The literary quality, it should be remembered, is an essential only of the great drama. In comedy it is usually altogether wanting. Characterization, therefore, may be present in a comparatively high degree, though the literary quality of the play be extremely mediocre or entirely absent. In the Liturgical drama, however, there was nothing that might prevent the author from reproducing to the fullest all the poetic grandeur of the Resurrection and of awakening to the utmost the idyllic charms and emotions that filled all souls in presence of the actual crib.

Shortly, it is true, as we leave the Liturgical drama, the sacred representations take on a more practical character and become more and more exclusively a "Poor Man's Bible." But in the beginning this was not so; the liturgical scenes done in the Sanctuary were devotional and artistic, not primarily didactic. The liturgical playwright had all the opportunities, as far as theme was concerned, of the mediaeval builder. How comes it, then, that the Gothic dramatist dwarfs into insignificance when set by the Gothic architect? Why in the work of the builder or sculptor—*Magister de vivis lapidibus*—do we feel the intimate relationship between the work itself and the ideal it sought to glorify? And why is it that so little, comparatively, which we know to be characteristic of mediaevalism is perpetuated in the dramatic remains? *

Much of the inequality comes from the necessarily partial lights in which we are forced to see them. Age adds a poetry to architecture, whereas the old manuscript is the poorest representative of the reality; it is but the relic of what took place in the sanctuary of those vast edifices which themselves gave a depth of meaning that was impossible to be translated into words. How little of the present-day drama is contained in the text. The actor creates the part. The plays that most delight the audience are insipid to the reader. They abound in life and situation when the business is studied and understood, but, apart from the accessories of presenta-

† *The Holy Latin Tongue*, by W. Barry, Dublin Review, Vol. 138, No. 277.
* Michelet, L'Histoire de France, T. III, pp. 214 et seq.

tion, the composition has scarcely literary value. It is to its artistic setting that the drama at present owes its importance; it is from the presentation only that it must be judged. Color, light, shade, silence, movement, and, above all, the personality of the actor do not pass into the manuscript.

The text of the play is an imperfect substitute for any dramatic species and particularly so when the play or drama happens to be of an operatic nature. The Mediaeval Liturgical drama was essentially such; the singing quality long preceded any action whatever—one might even say it was long in advance of any *word*. For, if we go back to the origin of the Mediaeval Sequences, which entered so largely into the formation of the Liturgical drama, we shall find that the oldest of them consisted only of a single vowel. This was due to the nature and influence of the Gregorian Chant which in this particular is seen in its strongest antithesis to the Ambrosian recitation and song. * As the tone dominated the word and as the metrical and syllabic letters were set aside, a character of absolute freedom was given to the expression of the sentiment and thought. Subsequently when texts and full hymns were substituted for the vowel sound much of the original musical freedom was retained. At the period when the Liturgical drama reached its fullest development, Sequences of imperishable beauty, sentiment and melody were introduced into the offices of the Church, and ecclesiastical music had reached an unparalleled perfection in variety, power and depth of expression. It is of some importance to notice this fact if one would interpret the true nature of the Liturgical drama. Unlike the dramatic species that will in some way grow out of it the Liturgical drama was of a strongly operatic character. †

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* The History of Music. Emil Naumann, Vol. 1, P. 191.

† If music would become a self-dependant art it was imperative that the tone should be liberated from the word. Pope St. Gregory effected this ransom. But as is not unusual in the case of radical changes, reform was pushed to extremes. As time went on and the tonal art, enjoying a free sphere of action, grew more and more perfect, the tendency was to effect an artistic combination of word and sound. From the ninth to the fourteenth century every musician of note set himself to the task of perfecting that portion of the Mass between the Kyrie and the singing of the Gospel. The renowned monk of St. Gall, Tuotilo (915) is intimately connected with this movement. Though Eckehard says that this poet, painter, sculptor and musician played a Psaltery "in a remarkably sweet manner", it is to his work on the tropes—those short biblical and liturgical passages which served to prolong the Kyrie—that his fame is chiefly due. His confrere, Notker, gave a nobler and grander expression to the Sequences—aspirational chants of gladness sung by the choir and congregation after the Kyrie—than had been known before his time. He wrote thirty-five

Relatively, if not quite so essential as music is in the opera of the present day, it had been as inseparable from the Liturgical dramas as it was from those sacred dramatic performances in the Oratory of the Vallicella which Palestrina himself arranged. Accordingly, in forming an estimate of character-presentation in the Sanctuary plays, music must not be dissociated from the words. The management of voices and the beauty of the melodic phrases convey an intensity of human feeling which is wholly indescribable and lost in any manuscript account. "Tenebrae factae sunt" is the response of the fifth lesson of Matins of Good Friday. It is the brief Gospel narrative of the death of Jesus. When, however, the Palestrinian setting is rendered by proper arrangement of voices, probably no creation of any art can produce a comparable effect.

Again it should be borne in mind that the Liturgical drama was done in the Sanctuary. This was a very fitting theatre which helped not a little to sustain and perfect the dramatic illusion. It asked no great imaginative effort to build up the simple stage necessary for an Easter Office. The empty spaces in the cathedral were filled with splendid family tombs of marble and bronze; the dead bishop or distinguished canon reposed in a tomb that was neither inferior nor unlike the new sepulchre hewn from the rock at which Magdalen wept. The symbolism came so very near to what was actual that the impression must have been effective and striking. In an atmosphere of this kind the grand simplicity of the biblical

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pieces. A century later, King Robert, of France, (1031) wrote the Pentecostal Sequence, "Veni Sancte Spiritus," which is sung to this day during Whitsuntide. From this to the thirteenth century, when the poetry of the Church reached its highest perfection, a remarkable attention was bestowed on these Sequences. The most prolific Sequence-writer of the Middle Ages, Adam of St. Victor, falls in at this period. The quality of his work in this species of poetry has procured for him the flattering title, 'the Schiller of Latin Church music', by which is meant to express the double excellence of nobleness of language and purity of melody. The Sequences of St. Bernard, his contemporary, would be more deserving of praise for at least the former of Adam's qualities. The incomparable 'Dies Irae' of Thomas of Celano, the Stabat Mater of Jacopone Da Todi, and the two Corpus Christi Sequences, Pange Lingua and Lauda Sion, by St. Thomas Aquinas closed the classical period and probably reached the classical ideal in this species of composition. Concomitantly with these efforts to enrich the Liturgy, the music of the Church had been steadily developing. The Liturgical drama, as a form of art, being to a great extent the outgrowth of this activity in music and poetry, gave expression to the highest thought and religious aspiration of mediaeval life. Cf. Naumann, History of Music, pp. 202 et seq., also to Dr. Julian's "Dictionary of Hymnology," under the title 'Sequence' and the names of the respective writers. Dom Gueranger treats at length of the Trope and Sequence: Institutions Liturgiques, Vol. I, pp. 290-294, 313 *passim*.

language, heightened and made more appealing by its fusion with the Gregorian melodies of the old Roman Liturgy, was understood in a manner that can not adequately be appreciated at the present day. Not the tombs only nor the altars, but the statuary, carvings and paintings of this first theatre prepared the minds of the audience and gave to every action an emphasis quite incommunicable to any manuscript. * The sublime simplicity of the architectural lines, the tall arches, sombre masses of masonry—the whole Gothic building itself was a "poem in stone" that in an era of art, perception, and feeling lent to the role a significance and reason which should, in order to avoid the risk of a partial view, be apprised at its full value. It will be ever impossible to reproduce a mediaeval milieu or the temperament of a thirteenth-century audience, yet to be just to the characters in the Liturgical drama such a reproduction or restoration seems to be indispensable. Perhaps at no period, with which literature has to do, had there been so wide a distance between lofty conception and its concrete realization in words as during these centuries when the drama was in its beginning. It would seem that the tendency was to universalize the concrete and personal rather than to reduce the general to the particular and tangible. The mediaeval mind was capable of conceiving the higher realizations of beauty, but the time to give expression through the medium of language to such conceptions had not yet arrived. † The idea suffered through the fault of the medium that was intended to make it sensible and palpable. The mediaeval playwright felt those static inspirations that filled his soul with an ideal which his deficient language prevented him from embodying in an artistic form. The immanency of the truth was felt by him; helplessness to communicate it adequately through words is the cause of the weakness of his work.

Of the arts, architecture is not the least in power to reveal the soul of man; and as it lends itself more readily than words to the production of effects of a more general nature, the fact of an early and rapid perfection of a native architecture would go some way, in the absence of a more direct proof, to show the mediaeval power of conception and the limits of its realization. The religious and ethical sentiment was strong in the craftsman of the middle ages: he had an idea which he strove to realize, and the nearer he ap-

* J. K. Huysman, En Route, 24th ed., pp. 10 ff., *passim*.

† Michelet, Histoire de France, Vol. III, pp. 214-228.

proached it, the better was his work. His work is a sort of reflection of his life; the higher the character and tone of his life the more beautiful the objects he wrought. There was animating his work a spiritual force which turns our thoughts from the metal or stone to the idea back of the material. The consciousness at all times of the other worldly phases of human life, the unlimited moral capabilities of the individual, the everlasting consequences of his conduct, the eternal nature of both happiness and misery, were pictured with the force of men who felt keenly the spiritual reality of life. The divine law, its sanction, rewards and threats, were the great ruling ideas vividly understood and felt by all—the concepts, which seem ever struggling for expression in mediaeval art. * They were subjects of a perennial interest—an interest that was at once common and personal, and which for this double reason, demanded less emphasis and less detail to be fully understood. A suggestion sufficed. The thought was ever in advance of the word, the audience anticipated the actor. If the playwright lacked the sharp definitiveness of characters, it need not be inferred that they were indistinct or their apprehension incomplete; the creative audience, from his few vital expressions or suggestions or "single strokes," formed out of the stock of its own phantasy a vivid picture of a complete personality.

From these considerations two inferences may be drawn: first, in the Liturgical drama characterization results not so much from any technical power the playwright possesses as from the peculiarly imaginative and sympathetic and, in every way, susceptible temperament of the audience. A characterization wrought in this seemingly inverted order is none the less real. The immense part an interested audience plays was not known, till recently, only to genius. The great poet has always understood the secret of suggesting, of inciting the hearers, through his work to follow his processes,

* Shahan, The Middle Ages, p. 182, Cf. also Henry O. Taylor, The Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages, pp. 245-246. "The emotion as expressed in classic literature was clear, definite and finite. Christian emotion was to know no clarity or measure. It's supreme object, God, was infinite; and the emotions directed toward Him might be vague and mystic, so unlimited was it. God was infinite and man's soul eternal; what finitude could enter the love between them? Mediaeval hymns are childlike, having often narrow clearness in their literal sense; and they may be child-like too, in their expressed symbolism. Their significance reaches far beyond their utterance; they suggest, they echo and they listen; around them rolls the voice of God, the infinitude of His love and wrath, heaven's chorus and hell's agonies; *dies irae, dies illa*—that line says little but mountains of wrath press on it, from which the souls shall not escape."

and create after him. "For the power to understand and enjoy a character," says Freytag, "is attained only by the self-activity of the spectator, meeting the creating artist helpfully and vigorously. What the poet and the actor actually give in itself is only single strokes; but out of these grows an apparently richly gotten up picture, in which we divine and suppose the fulness of characteristic life, because the poet and actor compel the excited imagination of the hearer to co-operate with them, creating for itself." *

A second inference is this: if a playwright and actor only co-operate with the hearer by giving suggestions and illuminating strokes, defining the lines along which the excited imagination is to follow and fill out, it is of importance that the intensity of the suggestions and the distinctness of the strokes be accurately known. As the resultant personality created by the hearers is so dependent on the nature and force of the stimuli supplied by the dramatist, it is needful to take into account not only the words of the actor, but all the accessories of presentation must be noted—those contingent circumstances which in any way intensify, diminish or modify the stimuli given the hearers.

When in the Liturgical drama, the mutual relations of the playwright and audience are understood one will appreciate with some degree of accuracy very many stimuli whose nature, appositeness and efficiency are not at first apparent. † A just estimate of characterization is quite out of the question without a knowledge of these relations. The temperament of a Mediaeval audience, its community of thought and aspiration, its power to project itself easily and naturally beyond the limit of facts to the unseen realities of faith, to realize in idea and to embrace with the will spiritual truths, which, it should be remembered, were unquestionably received as the divinely sanctioned laws of human conduct and consequently of immediate personal concern to every one—these characteristics were so many facilities for the playwright. A sugges-

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* Freytag, Technik des Dramas, pp. 216-217.
Lee, Sidney, Shakespeare and the Modern Stage, p. 22.

† An instance of what these stimuli might be and of the spirit of the Mediaeval drama in general, is afforded in a thirteenth-centurp Latin-German play on the Passion. (Cf. Du Meril, Les Origines Latines, etc. p. 126 et seq.) In it there is long space given to a very pathetic lamentation of the Blessed Mother beside the Cross. It is part in German and part in Latin, and in it chant and speech alternate. Half way in the lament occurs the rubric: 'Et per horam quiescat sedendo, et iterum surgat cantando.' During the hour all action ceases. Actors and audience meditate.

tion brought into immediate association all that the people knew about themselves, all that part of their spiritual experience which no one could account for or refer to any particular source. The suggested truth played directly on a thousand chords of association. † Add to these dramatic advantages the relative novelty and interest of the theme dramatized, its presentation at a season "of great joy to all the people" which long penitential preludes had intensified; then, the simplicity of the performance itself, which scarcely requiring any intellectual effort left the emotions and the imaginations free to follow and construct; the unfeigned naturalness of the dialogue broken in by the sighs of Magdalen or the sobs of the bereft mothers or the shrill soprano notes from the niches ringing out the Angels' hymn of praise and gladness, or the authoritative outburst of song coming from the chancel chorus, announcing the Infant's birth—these were contrasts of no little dramatic variety and power which music and the sacredness of the surroundings deepened and intensified. At every moment one is tempted to ask, do these Liturgical dramas in any way prefigure the modern opera? After all are they not "a form of theatrical entertainment in which poetry, music, pantomime, painting and the plastic arts co-operate on a basis of mutual dependence, or, better perhaps, interdependence and common aim, the inspiring purpose of all being dramatic expression?" * Speaking of the seventy-three Autos Sacramentales of Calderon who, perhaps, is unequaled as a writer of Sacred Dramas, Ticknor says, "they are all allegorical, and all, by the music and show with which they abounded are nearer to operas than any other class of dramas then known in Spain." ‡

Be that how it may, this seems certain—when the various influences that govern characterization are taken into account, valued and looked at in conjoint operation, the characters in this early species of drama stand out from the background of what is common to all men in a relief that is not only individual, but personal and broadly and sympathetically human. This is so whether we assist at the Manger or stand by the Cross. The characters speak what they feel with the thoughtlessness of instinct, with that directness and spontaneity which is characteristic of all beginnings of expres-

† Ker, The Epic and Romance, p. 32.
* Krehbiel, The Wagnerian Drama, p. 2.
‡ History of Spanish Literature, Vol. II, p. 347.

sion through art. There is in these Liturgical offices the absence of all studied analysis, the arrangement of the action and grouping of persons and scenes is intuitive—all that is technically dramatic is unknown, the situations are those of actual life, the effects those of nature. Not till the drama is taken from the sanctuary does the author appear conscious that he is a playwright.

Singly or collectively the Mediaeval caste stands in many points of resemblance very close to the persons of the Bible. The blending of natural and supernatural motives, the mingling of the promptings of purely human affection with the formal reserve of worship,—at one time the deference shown the sacred person of Jesus, who is in the Liturgical drama and will be all through the religious stage, the central figure or inspiring principle in every action, and again the tone of familiarity in which He is spoken of constantly recalls the Gospel days and reproduces in very many instances the biblical scenes with wonderful truth. Brief as these Liturgical scenes are, they, as their prototypes in the sacred writings, leave in the mind an after-image which, by reason of the few direct and sincere utterances, is concrete and characteristic, possessing at times remarkable perspective and fulness. This will not be true to such an extent in later dramatic developments, though in these the characters will discourse at more considerable length.

Viewing the Liturgical drama as a whole and allowing for the conventions in presentation to which its operatic character entitles it, one finds in this earliest effort at dramatization that the playwright was engaged with dramatic material not easily amenable to stage limitations, but, given the artist, capable of being wrought into a drama, as we shall see, of unequaled depth of power. The "two functional ideas" of personality and responsibility which lie at the basis of ethical, and consequently of dramatic life, afforded the dramatist then as at all times, an inexhaustible subject-matter from one point of view; and from another, the reason or motive or incentive to expression. Again, as was pointed out, the two senses which followed on the activity of these two ideas were so highly developed in the listeners at a Liturgical play that in consequence the labor of the playwright was considerably lessened. It is somewhat misleading, therefore, to state in speaking of the Liturgical drama that "the condition of any further advance (in the Liturgic play) was that the play should cease to be Liturgic." As Mr. Chambers, whose words I quote, understands them, they are per-

fectly true. In the succeeding paragraph he explains his meaning. "It is, however, the formal change with which I am here mainly concerned. The principal factor is certainly that tendency to expansion and coalescence in the play which already has been seen at work in the production of such elaborate pieces as the *Queen quaeritis* of Tours or that of the Benedictbeueren manuscript. . . . . This culminates in the formation of those great dramatic Cycles of which the English Corpus-Christi plays are perhaps, the most complete examples." It was necessary that the drama should become more popular, to pass "out of the hands of the clergy in their naves and choirs, to those of the laity in their market-places and guild-halls." *

This change of form was not only what might be desired as an ideal condition of progress, but was, as will be presently noted and as Mr. Chambers has fully shown, the actual historical origin of a new dramatic species and of new varieties of characterization. It was contemporaneous with a parallel change or attempt at change in the object of philosophic thought. Philosophy had hitherto been dealing with metaphysical problems. Physical truths—the universe, its laws and facts and man and his nature—were studied only indirectly as illustrative of inductive processes of reasoning or, in other words, deductions from higher and fuller truths which were more immediately the reflection of Wisdom, the highest Truth or Truth Itself. Man, for the great Scholastics, was important for his relation with God; this world and human life had significance because of the next which was everlasting and blissful or otherwise as man chose here. This was the prevailing philosophy of the thirteenth century when the Liturgical drama had attained what proved to be its complete evolution as a dramatic species. A reaction set in which, if it would be difficult to show its direct influence in any specific play, strikingly parallels or prefigures in the drama as a species of what was taking place in Scholastic disputes and which was later to find its way into educational systems and thence into practical life.

Humanism was the significant name given to this reaction. It was so named, as we all know, to express its main purpose which was a protest against metaphysical learning and exclusive attention to divine things to the neglect of things human. The humanist would regard man, hypothetically at first, apart from religion, in

* The Mediaeval Stage, Vol. II, pp. 69-70.

himself and in his relations with men—look at him as a microcosm in himself worthy of a special attention.

This tendency to loose the bonds between the Creator and the creature rapidly passed in the hands of the philosophers from the useful and hypothetic holding apart of relations in idea to the formation of theories, boldly empirical, which naturally came to be taken for conclusions by the indiscriminating. Matters of a more immediate human interest were presented to the thoughts of men. Theology, though still the chief, was no longer the sole study. The relations of man with man passed from the schools and became subjects of popular discussion. The humanists had triumphed. This, however, is not the place to follow out the results of their victory. *

> But man to know God is a difficulty,
> Except by mean he himself inure,
> Which is to know God's creatures that be:
> As first them that be of grossest nature,
> And then to know them that be more pure,
> And so by little and little ascending,
> To know God's creatures and marvelous working.
> And this wise man at last shall come to
> The knowledge of God and His high Majesty
> And so to learn to do His duty, and also
> To deserve of his goodness partner to be.

Further on Nature tells Humanity:

> So likewise reason, wit and understanding
> Is given to thee, man, for that thou shouldst indeed
> Know thy Maker and Cause of thine own being,
> And what the world is, and wherefore thou dost proceed;
> Wherefore it behooveth thee of very need
> The cause of things first to learn
> And then to know and laud the high God eterne.
>
> —Dodsley, pp. 9-10, 15.

This humanizing tendency which grew so rapidly and to such extremes in philosophy, made its way into the drama. At first hardly perceptible, as in the Cycles where the Divine Jesus is the great centre of all its parts, it became more pronounced as we pass to the Moral plays in which man—Humanum Genus is hero and abiding figure of interest, but as he stands in his relations with God.

* The Moral play, "The Nature of the Four Elements," the first of its kind, is an apology for humanisn in the sense of opposition to purely speculative learning. It well illustrates the transitional point of view which would have the study of things created lead the student step by step to "high matters invisible."

In the transition stage, humanism and mediaevalism seem to have met, the caste is partly sacred, partly secular. In the purely secular drama humanism has won, and human interests predominate. It would be, of course, impossible for Shakespeare to be a partisan; the harmonious action of divine and human agencies are as inseparable in the formation of his characters as those agencies are in actual life.

Change of form, then, and more freedom of treatment was a necessary condition of further advance in dramatic expression, and so far only was change necessitated. The Sacred Dramas of Calderon will show that nothing more was needed. It would mean to take evolution for dramatic progression and growth, to regard the succeeding species as intrinsically in advance of the Liturgical drama. It is doubtful if the change just observed in respect to the object of philosophy, as it made itself felt on the stage, had actually been quite as favorable to essential dramatic progress as might at first be supposed. Were the immediate theatres an evolution of the Liturgical drama? Were the Cycle dramas, Moralities and Interludes a development of the dramatic ideas which, we have seen, inspired the beginning of the Mediaeval drama? Are they an unfolding of these ideas along proportionately high and artistic lines? It was imperative that the Liturgical drama be removed from the Sanctuary, but it is difficult to see the intrinsic dramatic advancement which followed. "We can hardly call the Saint plays a dramatic advance upon the Passion (Liturgic) plays, nor a distinct link in the chain of evolution. They are rather an offshoot, a side growth, gaining in freedom and originality, in that their less sacred material permitted some license on the part of the poet, but with the loss of the great theme losing heavily in dignity and beauty and essential dramatic quality. And yet, indirectly, they contributed to the development of the Religious drama through its original channel." * Speaking of the initial stages in the development of the Moral play, Ten Brink, who regards the species as that which unites the Middle Ages with modern times in the history of the drama, says, "The Moral plays owe their origin to the same spirit that introduced the so-called Allegorical tendency into religious literature and court poetry; viz., to the effort to illustrate moral doctrines and present abstract ideas in bodily form. Unfortunately the drama, as well as the romance, in so doing, took the wrong path. Instead

* Lee Bates, K. L., The English Religious Drama, pp. 31-32.

of illustrating the universal by the special, the distant by the near, the abstract and intellectual by the really concrete and personal—in fact, instead of illustrating one thing by another (*allegorein*)—writers were satisfied with raising the abstract substantive into a person, and with dressing out this personage according to its meaning and making it speak and act." † Symonds is more severe on the Morality. Speaking of its relation to the Cycles he says, "We might compare it to one of those imperfect organisms which have long since perished in the struggle for existence but which interest the physiologist, both as indicating an effort after development upon a line which proved to be the weaker, and also as containing within itself evidences of the structure which finally succeeded." *

At first sight and from the point of view of character-treatment particularly, this "unfortunate choosing the wrong path" by the writers of the Moralities could not be of itself an advance. The substitution of an allegorical figure for the historical person of the Liturgical and Cyclical drama would seem to mark a retrogression in respect to characterization. In what way and to what extent the immediate theatres contributed to the development of the Liturgical drama will best appear when each is separately treated; here, however, it may be stated that only close on the coming of Shakespeare, on the return to historical subject-matter do we find genuine dramatic progression. Then it was that the "loss of the great theme" was in a measure repaired, and "dignity and beauty and essential dramatic quality" were restored to dramatic writing. In the immediate predecessors of Shakespeare, the basic principles, incipient and informal in the Liturgical drama assume artistic shape, and by art in the setting and the interest of the secular theme, the new drama profited by what was best in the foregone species and eschewed what circumstances and tastes had rendered no longer dramatic. Even in the Cyclic drama humanism had already impaired the usefulness of the machine which had been so efficient up to the perfection of the Liturgical, but at the beginning of the Elizabethan period when humanism and secularization had triumphed over the metaphysics of the religious stage, a new motive of interest was derived. It is the beginning of the Chronicle play and Historical drama. The poet now appeals to the patriotic rather than to the religious sense; and the response is equally effective.

† History of English Literature, Vol. 1, p. 297.

* Symonds, J. A. The Predecessors of Shakespeare, p. 181.

He points to the deeds of the great national heroes, rather than to the works that formed the mediaeval standard of heroism. * Then, only saints were heroes; now, the purely human chivalrous achievements of a royal ancestor are deemed more deserving of praise. †

So the Liturgical drama through the silent but influential workings of humanism came to an end as a species; yet only its accidents, it may be said, passed away. The form and topic alone were changed. The interest of the subject-matter and of the more dramatic treatment took the place of the old convention and theme which the keener spiritual sense of earlier times supplied with what was wanting dramatically or in attractiveness. So much is this the case that it appeals to me as applicable to this thirteenth-century dramatic species what Ruskin writes of thirteenth-century architecture. "The art of the thirteenth century is the foundation of all art—not merely the foundation, but the root of it; that is to say, succeeding art is not merely built upon it, but was all comprehended in it and was developed out of it! The nature of this growth he explains elsewhere. It was not the growth of the child into the man, but rather that of "the chrysalis into the butterfly. There was an entire change of the habits, food, method of existence, and heart of the whole creature." ‡ With what amount of truth this figurative language expresses the growth of religious dramatic species and their relation to the Secular drama, it is too early yet to calculate, but from what has been said on the Liturgical drama, Ruskin's statement on thirteenth-century art in general will find no exception in the dramatic art of that time. No one will doubt that its spirit, its substance, its essential dramatic quality, its abiding

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* Shahan, T. J., The Middle Ages, pp. 182 et seq.

† Schelling, F. E., The Queen's Progress, etc. pp. 163-164. Relative to scenes in a play of "hary vi", Martin Henslowe's Diary, Thomas Nash wrote: "Nay, what if I prove plays to be no extreme but a rare exercise of virtue? First, for the subject of them, for the most part is borrowed out of our English chroniclers, wherein our forefathers' valiant acts (that have buried in rusty brass and worm-eaten books) are revived, and they themselves raised from the grave of oblivion, and brought to plead their aged honors in open presence; than which what can be sharper reproof of these degenerate, effeminate days of ours? How would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that after he had lain two hundred years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times), who in the tragedian that represents has person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding."

‡ Ruskin, Lectures on Architecture, pp. 84, 116.

consciousness of the constituents that make up the highest moral life, and consequently, the highest imitation of that life, passed into the new indigenous growth of national spirit—the Historical drama.

What has been said thus far was applicable from the point of view of character-presentation to the European drama generally. In the Liturgical drama as in the liturgy whence it was derived, only very feeble and indistinct lines of national traits or characteristics can be perceived. There are many reasons why it should be so. An obvious one is this—there was at the time no national spirit, no fatherland, properly called. This is a fact of history. The awakening of a national consciousness did not come till long after the heyday of the Liturgical drama, and this feeling of national instead of Christian brotherhood did not make itself markedly felt as a motive on the English stage, as Mr. Schelling points out, till far into the sixteenth century at the rise of the Historical drama. †

Moreover, a further reason came from the nature of these plays themselves. The order of worship that the Liturgical dramas sought to beautify and solemnize was even in its details for the most part, strictly uniform, and the language in which they were written was quite, or almost exclusively, Latin—a fact which counts for much in the question of character-treatment. No matter how widely and well understood the Latin language had been among the people of the Middle Ages, it never became the vernacular in the sense that it grew from the soul-life of the fathers of the race and was imbued in consequence with hallowed memories of a golden past. It ever retained its sacred and scholastic characteristics: understood, indeed, and well fitted for the respectful utterances of worship but not the language of popular thought, aspiration, and desire. No Latin word could ever recall to a mediaeval Englishman any past incident of intimate personal interest or enkindle in his breast any embers of national pride. A profane drama in Latin for an educated Englishman of those times might win his admiration and probably satisfy him intellectually to some extent, but it would awaken little emotion. The Latin Liturgical drama owed its limited characterization to the fact that it appealed to the religious sense which, though common to all the audience, was personal with every listener. This was the secret of its longevity and comparative im-

† The Chronical Play, p. 26.

portance. On the force of his appeal the Liturgical poet elicited from an interested audience that helpful co-operation which every dramatic author needs indispensably. In the Cyclic drama the appeal to the religious sense retains its effectiveness—the interest in things spiritual is yet only slightly diminished by Humanism—and the poet will have the further advantage that he is working with the vernacular, and consequently may count on more effective help from the hearers. Owing to the introduction of the vernacular and consequent popularization of the drama we shall find in the next chapter what may be called the beginning of national traits limned with some distinctness on the features of the biblical caste. It will be a step toward the Historical drama.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARACTERIZATION IN THE CYCLIC DRAMA

From the sanctuary the Liturgical drama passed to the door of the Church. It had grown to such proportions that it was rightly deemed irreverent to multiply platforms within the Holy Place. This event is important as it marks a transition from the species of drama which was based mainly on the Ritual to a species which derived its material almost exclusively from Scriptural and Apocryphal sources. This new drama was a direct emanation to the degree just pointed out, from that done by the clergy within the Church. It became more secular in character, though the Bible furnished the subject-matter and clerics were still the playwrights and for some time the actors as well. Once, however, that the Sacred drama had severed direct dependence on the worship prescribed by the Ritual, a greater freedom obtained in the choice and arrangement of the material. The story might now become a drama in a truer sense of the word, and the action that at first had been represented disjointedly might now articulate and form a whole. Such was the actual process of development. Scenes were presented serially, principally after the chronological order of biblical events, in which was treated the whole round of Hebrew history, beginning with the presentation of Creation and terminating with a play entitled Doomsday. It is to this succession of plays that the title Cyclic drama has been given. There are four of these cycles which concern us mainly at present:—The York Cycle (c. 1340-1350) containing forty-eight plays; the Towenley Cycle (c. 1350) containing thirty-two; the Coventry (c. 1400-1450) forty-two; and the Chester Cycle (c. 1400) containing twenty-five plays. The following comparative table, which shows the order of presentation, will be helpful in understanding the author's unity of design — a factor of supreme importance in an estimate of character-treatment in the Cyclic drama. *

* A more minute comparative list of eighty-nine episodes will be found in Mr. E. K. Chambers' The Mediaeval Stage, vol. II., pp. 321-323. It is based on that drawn up by Professor Hohlfield in "Anglia" XI., 241. Mr.

Subjects.	York.	Towneley.	Coventry.	Chester.
Creation and Fall of the Angels	1,2,3	1	1	1,2
The Fall of Adam	4,5,6	1	2	2
Sacrifice of Cain and Abel	7	2	3	2
Lamech and Cain	0	0	4	0
Noah and the Flood	8,9	3	4	3
Abraham, Lot and Melchisedech	0	0	0	4
Abraham and Isaac	10	4	5	4
Isaac and His Children	0	5	0	0
Jacob's Sojourn with Laban and Return	0	5	0	0
The Departure from Egypt	11	8	0	9
Moses and the Ten Plagues	0	7	6	5
Balaam and Balaak	0	0	0	5
Processus of Prophets	12	7	7	0
The Barrenness of Ann	0	0	8	0
Mary in the Temple	0	0	9	0
Mary's Betrothment	0	0	10	0
Augustus and Cyrenius	0	9	0	0
The Annunciation	12	10	11	6
The Visit to Elizabeth	12	11	13	6
Joseph's Anxiety	13	10	12	6
The Trial of Joseph-Mary	0	0	14	0
The Nativity	10	0	15	6
The Sibyl and Octavian	0	0	0	6
The Adoration of the Shepherds	15	12,13	16	7
The Magi	16,17	14	17	8,9
The Presentation of the Infant	41	17	18	11
The Flight into Egypt	18	15	19	10
Slaughter of the Innocents	19	16	19	10
Christ Among the Doctors	20	18	20	11
Baptism of Jesus	21	19	21	0
The Temptation	22	0	22	12
The Transfiguration	23	0	0	0
The Woman Taken in Adultery	24	0	23	12
Healing of the Blind Man	0	0	0	13
Raising of Lazarus	24	31	24	13

Chambers follows the Scriptural order which is not always that of the plays. He adds to the data of the four Cycles above that of the Cornish plays. Also comparative tables of the English Cycles of Religious plays is given by Miss Toulmin Smith in her volume, York Plays, pp. 112-113. She follows chiefly the titles in the manuscripts. Her list is extended by Francis H. Stoddard, University of California, Library Bulletin No. 8. I have made the abridgment here given. As will be seen it presents not only the mauscript title but also the title of a play within a play which the playwright loosely included under one heading. In this I have followed the list to be found in Professor Hohlfield's, Die Altenenglischen Kollectiv-Misterien, pp. 25-26, (Halle 1888).

Subjects	York.	Towneley.	Coventry.	Chester.
Entry into Jerusalem	25	0	26	14
Conspiracy of the Jews	26	20	25	14
Treachery of Judas	26	20	27	14
The Last Supper	27	20	27	15
The Agony and Betrayal	28	20	28	15
Jesus before the High Priest	29	21	30	16
Jesus before Pilate	30	0	30	16
Jesus before Herod	31	0	29, 30	16
Condemnation of Jesus	32, 33	22	32	16
Remorse of Judas	32	32	32	0
Dream of Pilate's Wife	30	0	31	0
The Way to Calvary	34	22	32	17
The Crucifixion	35, 36	23	30	17
Descent from the Cross and Burial	36	23	34	17
Casting of Lots	0	24	0	0
Harrowing of Hell	37	25	33, 35	18
Resurrection	38	26	35	19
Three Maries	38	26	39	19
Christ and Magdalen	39	26	37	0
Travellers to Emmaus	40	27	38	20
Incredulity of Thomas	42	28	0	0
The Ascension	43	29	39	21
Outpouring of the Holy Spirit	44	0	40	22
Death of the Blessed Virgin	45	0	41	0
Mary Appears to Thomas	46	0	0	0
The Assumption	47	0	41	0
Signs of the Judgment	0	0	0	23
Works and Ruin of Antichrist	0	0	0	24
Doomsday	48	30	42	25

Already in the Latin Liturgical drama one finds the origin of a practice which was destined to be perfected by subsequent English writers of religious plays. In the first dramatic species the tendency of grouping cognate incidents around the central action had set in; the great centres being the Birth and Death of our Saviour. This was the main idea and accretion took place in either direction. To introduce a Christmas play, for instance, the playwright reached back into the Old Testament and had the Messianic prophecies spoken by the prophets in person under the auspices usually of St. Augustine and in the presence of a synagogue of Jews. The brief scenes of the Annunciation and Visit followed the long *Processus Prophetarum,* and brought the author to his subject, the Nativity. Then by way of conclusion he goes forward into New Testament history and much else concurrent legend, presenting in turn the appearance of the Star, the Coming of the Shepherds

and Kings, Herod's anxiety, and closes with the marvelous happenings on occasion of the Flight to Egypt.

A similar process of expansion developed the Easter Liturgical scenes. To illustrate this movement one needs only follow the growth of a thirteenth-century *Quem Quaeritis*. From the simple scene at the monument, to which we have referred, the Easter play enlarged itself to vaster proportions than the representations of the Nativity. In the manuscript of an Easter play to be found in the library of Munich the opening scene is a chorus singing some verses from the Gospel of Nicodemus. * This done Jesus passes through the stage to the seashore and there calls Andrew and Peter. Then follows the cure of a blind-man and the sojourn at the house of Zacheus. Next a chorus greets Jesus on the street and children spread garments and palm leaves on His way. Following the entry into Jerusalem, Jesus is met by Simon the Pharisee with whom he goes to dine. After this a curious scene takes place. Mary Magdalen comes on the stage singing the praises of a worldly life. Soon she is joined by a group of girls like herself, and the merry bevy goes singing to a shop where cosmetics are sold. An admirer follows them and speaks briefly with Mary who sings in the vernacular (Old German) for the benefit of all. She is converted by the visit of an Angel, mourns her sins and with the ointment that she has bought from her former dealer, she goes to Simon's house and anoints the Lord. This long episode is followed in rapid succession by the Raising of Lazarus, the Last Supper, the Betrayal, the Prayer in the Garden and finally the Passion to the Crucifixion which brings the poet to the point where the primitive *Quem Quaeritis* began. The play closes in its present form with the scene in which Joseph of Arimathaea treats wth Pilate (in German) concerning the disposition of the Body.

On precisely the same principle the vernacular Cyclic drama was rounded out. The scenes emanating from the main incident owed their full explanation to its presentation. Whether they led to this quasi climax or followed upon it, in neither case, strictly speaking, do they stand to it in the relation of cause and effect. This is particularly true of what preceded which was meant merely to make the main action more easily understood. Sometimes, however, the preparatory scenes are more than explanatory; they supply

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* Du Meril, Les Origines Latines, pp. 126-147.

the needed atmosphere and foreshadow to some extent the central incident. In the scenes that follow the principle action of the play the relation is more intimate. They follow as logical happenings, so to speak, from the climacteric event and form a fitting and necessary counterpart to the long beginning.

Not infrequently, however, a subject was a complete scene in itself and had to be acted as such. A number of isolated plays might be pointed out which were only remotely connected with what preceeded and came after them in their respective Cycles. The plays, for instance, of Abraham and Isaac or of the Travellers to Emmaus can very well stand alone. Yet both these scenes are in place in the Cycle. The former play prefigures the sacrifice on Calvary; and in the York Cycle this symbolism is borne out at the expense of dramatic effect.* Abraham does not seem wholy unconscious that he is playing the part of the Eternal Father whose words he paraphrases in the oblation of Isaac, and Isaac, himself who is over thirty years old, is unnatural in his desire to lay down his life. And the Travellers to Emmaus, though largely an independent production, fits into the Cyclic arrangement quite naturally and gives a climacteric effect to the Incredulity of Thomas who becomes thereafter a prominent character in his relations with the Blessed Virgin.

It is important at this point to bear in mind that the utmost freedom was exercised in the formation of the Cycles. The history of their growth into their present immutability is analogous in a degree to the growth of their Sacred Sources. The plays were not the composition of any one man nor of any one time. Some of them were pre-Cyclic, some were taken from other Cycles and incorporated with slight remodeling into the seasonal presentation, others were set in to fill a breach in the action, and others simply for emphasis or purely in deference to an influential visitor, or merely as a mark of courtesy to a Guild. The theatric manager then, as now, made perfectly free with his material, the effort, as perceptible then as at the present day, being to fit the word to the action and everything to existing circumstances. "An incessant process of separating and uniting, of extending and curtailing, marks the history of the Liturgical drama, and indeed of the Mediaeval drama generally."†

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* Ten Brink, History of English Literature, Vol. II, p. 271.

† Ibidem, p. 235.

If one studies from the point of view of character-treatment the general arrangements of the episodes that make up a Cycle-series, he will easily notice the evident purpose of the playwright to secure variety in the material, and variety as well as emphasis in his manner of attaining the dsired effect. In a first place one observes what is foremost in the composer's mind and that which influences considerably his method of treatment, viz., the symbolic character with which he invests the writings of the Old Testament. The plays treating pre-Christian history are ever anticipating, not so much verbally as in manner and thought, the plays which will deal with the history of Christ. It is as type to fulfillment; what passes on in the Old Testament scenes is prefigurative, and looks forward to its realization in the New. At times even one may perceive that the playwright has in view a polemical or apologetic purpose and consequently is at special pains to bring the prophetic or symbolic scene strongly to the foreground.

It is obvious that the abiding consciousness of the parallelism between both Testaments contributed much to unity of design and gave an impression of totality otherwise impossible from so remotely connected incidents. "The episodes chosen from this part of Scripture are the Creation and Fall of Man, the Sacrifice of Cain and Abel and the Departure of the Israelites from Egypt. This selection is evidently made for the purpose of symbolism, the prime intention of the dramatist being to illustrate from the narrative of the Old Testament the nature and effect of sin, as rendering necessary the Sacrifice of the Redeemer, and also to set forth the types of the Coming of the Messiah. In the York Cycle the playwright never lost sight of the doctrinal subject, and has employed his dramatic powers to bring this out in just relief."*

This symbolism between the Testaments is a point to be noted; but it did not long continue in the playwright's mind to be a simple contrast between books. The birth of the Messiah and the Atonement by His Death were climacteric events which gave a fullness of meaning to all antecedent scenes. These were the two determing facts, from them the series had grown and each term of it was vitally connected with them. "The starting point of the modern drama in the Ressurection of Christ from the dead regarded not simply as a miraculous fact, but as the central doctrine of the Chris-

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* Courthope, History of English Poetry, Vol. I, Chap. XI.

tian faith, the Crowning act in the Redemption on which depended the future happiness or misery of every member of the human race. It had been the endeavor of the Christian clergy, from the earliest times, to bring home the reality of this cardinal event to the worshiper by means of the senses as well as of the reason." *

As pageant followed pageant "excedinge orderlye," the main argument was never lost sight of; a continuous unfolding of the theme went on, successively gaining in interest as the spectator beheld the actual fulfilment of that which had been foreshadowed. This, broadly speaking, may be said respecting the unity of the Cycles: the Old Testament events are in respect to the central action of the New Testament what the introductory and pre-climacteric events are to the climax of the regular drama. It is a unity that is more strictly one than the historical unity of the originals, in this that the mediaeval playwright, viewing the persons of the Bible as his contemporaries, animates them with a sameness of spirit to a degree impossible to the Sacred writers. The cyclic dramatists presented the Scriptural character sometimes very faithfully as far as the Scriptural data went, but, that failing, the playwright drew on his experience. This circumstance and the necessity of selecting congruous scenes, if he would be true to his purpose, contributed much to the unity of the whole cyclic drama. Moreover, the freedom he allowed himself, particularly with his uncanonical material which naturally he would direct in a special manner to his main point of view, gave him an immense advantage over the Biblical writer whose object was not to offer commentaries but to tell facts. †

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* Courthope. W., "A History of English Poetry," Vol. I, p. 332.

† Mr. Tunison, Dramatic Traditions of the Dark Ages, pp. 253-254 suggests a principle of dramatic unity in the Religious drama supplementary of those presented in the text. "One cause of this neglect (of Seneca's tragedies) was that the serious side of the drama was supplied by religion. Not only was the liturgy a drama in itself, but the new fashion of pious plays founded on scriptural narratives was more deeply thoughtful than the world now is apt to suppose. The prophets of the Old Testament had developed a philosophy of history which was a romance, an epic and a drama all in one. . . . The unity of this epic, romance or drama lies in the necessary continuity of men's struggle with sin. Its form is a trilogy; man's fall, his redemption, his compulsory appearance before God on the day of judgment. The fully developed passion play (cycle-drama) took in all humanity in all its varieties of virtue and vice, wit and stupidity, humor and solemnity, wisdom and folly; it went from good to bad, from the sublime to the ridiculous, from horse-play to prayer, revealing the whole individual life and the whole course of history. It was rude in its form but wonderful in its scope, and the modern world has not yet gone beyond its horizon with all the boasted culture of the present

... It is an imaginative amplification of St Paul's saying about the fulness of time

Before passing to the persons of the plays, a somewhat more detailed notice of the several cycles—not of their relations among themselves, but with a view to the construction or presentation of the separate plays, and the relation and interdependence of the plays on one other within the cycle—will help to the understanding of the characters and indirectly illustrate some statements made in the preceding paragraphs.

There are many reasons why the York Cycle should be taken as the representative of the cyclic species. † It is the fullest cycle extant, numbering forty-eight plays. Though in the year 1568, the advocates of the New Learning "perused and otherwise amended" the York manuscript, still it remains probably the truest representative of the original popular play of the cyclic type. The York cycle, apart from its dramatic superiority, has the further distinction of being the only series that is known definitely to have been played by the shopkeepers and trade-guilds on the occasion of the feast of Corpus Christi.

The Cycle begins with the Barkers' Pageant on Creation. It is a tripartite play of 160 lines in all. The first scene or part is in Heaven, the second in Hell and the last back again in Heaven. As a specimen of the mediaeval dramatist's power of contrasting persons and scenes this play may be recommended. The contrast is more artistically done here because there is less exaggeration than will be met with after elsewhere. A play of contrasts almost always overdrawn and very superficial was the great means the old playwright used to individualize and reach his effects. Deus himself opens the first scene with an explanation of his purpose; his own glory and the happiness of his creatures lead him to create. Then he proceeds at once to the task of creation. He is interrupted, or probably only entertained in his work by the singing of the *Te Deum.* The newly created angelic chorus already participates in his bliss. The Creator goes on. Heaven, he declares, is for the Angels, his worthiest work, and the earth will be given to faithful men. Lucifer he creates chief of the highest heavenly power;

† Hohlfield, A., Die Altenenglischen Kollectiv-Misterien, pp. 68-69.

day. In truth it was not merely a mediaeval conception. It was a variant of the plain thought of the New Testament, of the Hebrew prophets as they have always been read by Christians, of the fathers of the Church, those who wrote in Greek as well as those who wrote in Latin."

"Of all the mightes I have made most nexte after me,
I make the als master and merour of my mighte,
I beelde the here baynely in the blys for to be,
I name the for Lucifer, als berar of lyght,
No thynge here sall the be derand,
In this blys sall be yhour beeldyng,
And have al welth in youre weledyng.
Ay whyls yhe ar buxumly berande."

At this point the angels again break forth in song, "*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus sabaoth.*" Silence being restored, a seraph speaks the admiration and the gratitude of all:

A! mercyful maker, full mekill es thi mighte,
That all this warke at a worde worthely has wroghte,
Ay loved be that lufly lorde of his lighte,
That us thus mighty has made that was righte noghte;

This lowly and grateful acknowledgment of bounty to the Almighty is in contrast with the words that follow. They are those of the vain-glorious Lucifer. "I am like a lorde, bounteous and powerful," he says,

"All the myrthe that is made is markide in me,
The bemes of my brightode ar byrnande so bryghte,
And so semely in syghte myselfe now I se,
For lyke a lorde am I lefte to lende in this lighte,"

He goes on to compare himself to his companions; his beauty and power find no match. The playright is careful to suggest no thought of thankfulness to this falling angel. A cherub, with a side glance no doubt at Lucifer, advises, "while we are faithful we need fear no harm." But his counsel is not received for immediately a Lucifer proselyte begins:

"O! what I am fetys and fayre and fygured full fytt!
The forme of all fayrhede apon me es feste."

Next, the seraph that began encourages now the "praise of God with steadfast voice." He pledges the fealty of all to the Lord, and adds that if anyone should prove felonous to his Maker, by the very fact he rightly becomes unworthy to "be fede with the fode of thi fayre face." By this time Lucifer is possessed of the idea that he himself is worthy of worship. As he offers some reasons why their praises should be directed to him, all of a sudden the floor gives way, and the scene closes with the cries of the devils for help.

The next part of the play opens on the plane of Hell. Lucifer is the first speaker.

"Owte, owte! harrowe! helpless, slyke hote at es here
This is a dongon of dole that I am to-dyghte."

The heat here and the loss of his comeliness which is now "blackened and blo" afflict Lucifer particularly. But the further cause of his discomfiture is that which he has to bear from his companions. They wrangle with him as a cause of their fall, and so belabor him as to force his cry,

"Owte on yhow! lurdens, yhe smore me in smoke."

We are next taken to the third scene which is in Heaven. The assembled Angels, through a cherub, offer their thanksgivings to God for his "rightwyness" and "merciful mighte. Deus, in some thirty lines, gives reason for the origin of evil, tells the faithful angels of his intention to make man, and to divide evenly into day and night the darkness that overspread the earth on the occasion of the Fall.

This was the Barkers' Pageant. Of it Mr. Pollard says, "The York play on the subject may certainly claim pre-eminence over its rivals. It is full of dramatic vigour, and is pervaded by a certain homely grandeur of style, which contrasts very effectively with the baldness of the Coventry playwright or the turgidity of the Chester.* The next play in the cycle, that of the Playsterers, carries on the work of Creation to the fifth day. Deus is the only speaker in this seemingly uninteresting play, but undoubtedly he had a number of active co-operators working in silence. If this was not so there would be but little justification for the presentation at all. That the creation of the firmament, division of waters, creation and distribution of animals were allotted to the guild of Plasterers is a presumption that more than mere narration of the work took place.† If there were not silent workmen actually in that pageant. Deus Himself displayed prearranged material. This play would illustrate what has been said of the difficulty to form an accurate estimate of character-treatment from the manuscript account. How, for instance, the "moo sutyll werkys," which Deus in one place promises to "asse-say," fitted in with the words of the text, it is impossible to decide. Happily collateral information is sufficiently abundant to warrant the conclusion that the play by the Plasterers was considerably realistic and formed an agreeable contrast to the serious matter which preceded and which will follow. ‡

* Pollard, A. W., English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes, 4th ed., p. 177.

† L. Cledat, Le Theatre en France au Moyen Age, VII, p. 15, et seq.

The Cardmakers treat the last work of creation, that of Adam and Eve. The five days' work is finished and its Creator looks complacently upon it. He finds that among all His earthly creations there is not a "skyful beeste." He resolves to make Adam and Eve. They thank him for his great favor and pledge him fidelity. This pageant is intimately connected with the Fuller's play which deals with the installation in Paradise. The sentiment in the one is much like that in others: repeated expressions of wonderment, thankfulness and obedience. Scarcely has the Fuller's pageant been wheeled away when a new actor, Satan himself, arrives in the Cooper's "carre." He opens the play of the Fall from Eden, expressing his dissatisfaction that God should assume human nature in preference to angelic. The reference he makes to the fairness of his former appearance recalled to the audience the Barkers' play. Assuming the shape of a worm, he appears before Eve at the gate of Paradise and conducts with her a dialogue of remarkable shrewdness and point. It should be noted, in this connection, that the biblical account of the Fall is meagre, so that the fundament of world-wisdom and good-sense on which this conversation rests, the indifferent, altruistic tones which Satan affects are met with only in the play. The idea alone was borrowed, the nature of the "bad bargayne," as Adam later calls the dialogue, and its entire management, fell to the Yorkshire playwright. Eve, desirous of the "wirshippe" that Satan has promised will follow the eating of the apple, is naturally conceived by the writer of the play as impatient to have Adam eat. "Byte on boldely, for it is trewe,—we shall be goddis and knowe all thyngs." Adam and Eve are then cursed by God and driven by an Angel from Eden, but the barring of the gates to Paradise is reserved for the Armorers in the next pageant. This play recapitulates much that passed at the close of the preceding. But it makes at least one step in advance. The angered Angel attributes the fall directly to Adam, and Adam lays the blame upon Eve, who, after no little altercation with her husband, finally confesses her guilt and then all is at peace. The action of this play is well sustained and throughout much to the main purpose. The forenoon of their happiness is ever present to the two outcasts, and embitters their grief as they suffer the heat of the day and listen to the hard words of the Angel. Their efforts to comfort each other while wiping the sweat off their brows are touches from daily life.

Next follows the Sacrifice of Cain and Abel. An Angel exposes the necessity of offering tithes to God. Abel listens to the divine messenger and shows himself willing to obey. Cain ridicules the idea. His answer to the reasons his brother urges has all the point and appositeness of the Satanic logic before referred to:

> "Ya! deuell me thynketh that werke were waste,
> That he gaffe geffe hym agayne,
> To see
> Nowe fekyll frenshippe for to fraste.
> Me thynketh ther is in hym sarteyne.
> If he be moste in myghte and mayne,
> What nede has he?"

Abel understands all this but maintains that free gifts are pleasing to God. What Cain's answer was is missing, for the two leaves that must have contained it and the motives for the slaying of Abel have been cut out. An insignificant fellow, named Brewbarret (Mischiefmaker) who after the murder of Abel helps Cain in the field, was introduced into the play probably in the sixteenth century. The induction of a harvest scene (in which Brewbarrett in coming from the cornfield trips and breaks his toe and soothes his agony with his master's ale) was a relief in the action. It may have been introduced after the fratricide, before that scene was expuned from the text, and in this case it would be the connecting action between the murder and the nemesis. Later it will be more in place to speak of the artistic as well as the dramatic value of Cain's workman who serves as an indispensable medium through which the new experience of the fratricide fittingly finds expression. For our immediate purpose as the play stands the pastoral scene serves to heighten the last act of the play—the scene between the vindictive Angel and the impious murderer who goes so far as to smite the heavenly messenger "eveyn on the crown."

The Deluge is the next biblical event dramatized in the York cycle. Its presentation was entrusted to the Shipwrights, Fishermen and Mariners. Apart from the prelude of the first and the epilogue to the second, it is well to note that these plays are of a strongly secular character. Their religious import is, of course, never lost sight of, but the manual job inseparable from the presentation is what is most in view. Though much, particularly in the construction of the first of these plays was already at hand in the Bible, still, touches of current life and usage are evident throughout the scenes. The professionalism displayed by the Shipwrights

and Mariners in the building and manning of the Ark together with the domestic annoyances that beset the pious patriarch must have afforded a world of diversion to everybody.

The preceding appeal to the senses refreshed the audience for the Bookbinders' play, Abraham's Sacrifice. The trial of Abraham's faith was a very popular subject of dramatization. No less than six plays treating of it are extant. If, as was elsewhere alleged, the York writer by an initial error in his conception of a full-grown Isaac forfeited a dramatic advantage, in his treatment of Abraham, he has perhaps no equal. The conflict that was raging within the father's breast on his way to the Land of Vision reaches its highest pitch when on the top of Mount Moriah, Isaac asked:

> "Fadir, I see here woode and fyre,
> Bot wher-of sall oure offerand be?"

Abraham waives the question, answering vaguely:

> "Sertis, son, gude God oure suffraynde syre
> Sall ordayne it in good degre."

At this point I can see why it might have occurred to the York writer, even apart from any typical consideration, to break away from the tradition of the stage and treat an Isaac of "thirty yere and more sum dele." It afforded him a motive of great importance that was scarcely possible with a younger Isaac. The aged patriarch had far greater difficulties in complying with the Divine command, which was his main anxiety, when its fulfilment was contingent upon the will, not of a boy, over whom his control was absolute, but of a man advanced in years. Here it was more than a matter of sentiment, the question of a becoming possibility was involved. Indeed, that Abraham felt this difficulty all through the three days' journey appears from his prayer on reaching the mountain. After evading the question above referred to concerning the victim, Abraham prays:

> "Grete God! that all this worlde has wrought
> And grathely gouernes goods and ill,
> Thu graunte me myghte so that I mowght
> Thy commaundments to full-fill.
> And gyffe my flessche groche or greue oght,
> Or sertis my saul assentte ther-till,
> To byrne all that I hidir broght,
> I sall nocht spare yf I shoulde spille."

Isaac relieves his father of any fear he may have entertained on this score by the willingness with which he obeys. He even counsels

that he be bound: "I am ferde that ye sall fynde, my force your forward to withstaunde." He carries his resignation, unfortunately, too far, as though he would play on the feelings of his father; "Thy wordes makis me my wangges wette," says Abraham. In the Towneley play here there is an unwonted tenderness of expression that is all the more remarkable as coming from the cycle which deliberately aims at turning into fun every such sentiment. "What water shotes in both myn eyn!

> I were lever than al wardly wyn,
> That I had fon hym onys unkynde;
> Bot no defawt I found hym in,
> I wolde be dede for hym or pynde,
> To slo hym thus I thynk, grete syn."

However, in the York play, Isaac at times seems to be attached to life: "A! dere fadir, lyff is full swete, the drede of dede dose all my dere." But this is only momentary. "Isaac spoils the impression he has made," says Ten Brink, "when after his deliverance from death he repeats: "I would gladly have suffered death, Lord, according to Thy will." *

There is much variety of life and action in the next play. The Departure of the Israelites from Egypt, which the playwright treats with ease and sufficiency. The judgment he displays in the conception of the caste, in the relative distribution of parts and in the transition of scenes and features of the play which call for special mention. Pharaoh and his counsellors, though somewhat overdone, are by no means so exaggerated in their speech or behavior as in other mediæval presentations of royal ancient assemblies. Moses, who keeps "the bisshoppe Jetro schepe," on the slope of Mount Sinai, opens a quiet scene that contrasts very effectively with the troubled discussions at the court of the king. In the play no mention is made of Moses' natural qualifications to undertake the Divine embassy to Pharaoh; he prays Deus in the bush to hold him excused because of the ill-favor in which he is held at court. Assured of the heavenly assistance, he protests no longer. He visits his people and encourages them to hope. He goes to the palace of Pharaoh and delivers his message boldly. Throughout he is hero; the king's advisers dwindle into insignificance beside Israel's deliverer. The scene that presents all Egypt suffering from the plagues is made especially effective by directing the whole brunt

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* History of English Literature, Vol. II, part 1, p. 271.

of divine anger against the king. His personal afflictions are multiplied by the ceaseless importunities of his people begging relief. The play ends with a scene at the Red Sea. The Israelites have just crossed the waters dry shod, when the pursuing Pharaoh arrives on the opposite bank. Encouraging his army to follow, the king steps into the dried sea-bed:

> "Hefe uppe youre hartes ay to Mahownde,
> He will be nere us in oure nede—
> Owte! ay herrowe! devill, I drowne!"

A boy in the Hebrew camp calls for a song of victory.

With this play closes the part of the Cycle derived from Old Testament history and legend. It is important from what has been said on the typical character and treatment of these plays to notice a last instance of this symbolism in the Deliverance-scene of "Goddis folke" and the destruction of their enemies which will find its parallel in the Passion scenes, the Resurrection and Marian plays and the Doomday's pageant at the close of the Cycle.

So far the eleven preceding plays have been purely prefigurative. Of this the playwright himself was aware, as his prologue to the next play, the Annunciation and Visit of Mary to Elizabeth, sufficiently testifies. These scenes severally and collectively were dramatic, however; there was a struggle, not between abstract principles of good and evil, but between the persons of Lucifer and Deus and their respective allies. * This antagonism makes itself felt from the beginning. The creation of man to fill the seats of the dethroned angels embittered Lucifer and his fellows with jealousy toward the human race. This hatred for man and the desire to revenge himself on God, and particularly to thwart the Creator's design respecting man were the motives which prompted Luci-

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* In the Towenley Cycle this personal opposition between good and evil is shown even more impressively than in the corresponding York play. As the Angelic choir is singing a hymn of thanksgiving to the Creator for the works he has wrought and particularly for the brilliancy with which he has surrounded Lucifer, Deus takes occasion to descend from his throne and walks to the rear of the stage. Lucifer already inflated with the veneration accorded him by the choir mounts the vacant seat and actually usurps the throne of Deus. He calls on the assembled angels to decide if it does not become him as well as the Creator.

> "Say, fellowes, how semys now to me
> To sit in seyte of trynyte?
> I am so bright of ich a lym
> I trow me seme as well as hym."

The angels take sides and the Evil One and his followers, hurled from God's presence, begin their everlasting enmity against the good.

fer, as the playwright explained at the outset. It was an explanation that was extremely palpable to a mediaeval audience. For every listener the struggle between good and evil assumed very concrete shape. Nothing was so real as the activity of the devil and his emissaries. Their more sensible presences were frequent on the stage, and their ubiquitous stimuli to evil were never absent from any act. These formed the dramatic interest of every play; they gave rise to that opposition between right and wrong within the hero, without which the necessary dramatic struggle of the will against opposing forces would be impossible.

It is scarcely necessary to say that at an epoch when such an abiding consciousness of the strife between good and evil in man was so vivid, this was favorable to the treatment of dramatic characters. Characterization in the drama, it should be remembered, is not so dependent on freedom of language and elegance of diction as not to exist in a high degree, even where the speech is undeveloped, unmusical, and halting. Many forces enter into the production of the persons in a play. In the Old Testament series just outlined, the opening play dealt with the origin of evil. It went to the extent of personifying the Evil principle in its opposition to the principle of Good. The opposition thus dramatized at the outset was illustrated in the succeeding pageants. The impression that this first scene made on the mind of spectator was emphasized, broadened and deepened as the cycle unrolled severally its concrete and varied illustrations. Each scene in its degree reflected an aspect of the contest. The triumphs of Lucifer in the Fall of Adam, in the death of innocent Abel, in the bondage of God's Elect, show the nature and greatness of his malice which informs, as it were, his insatiable jealousy toward man and persistent desire of revenge on God. Evil is on the ascendency and will continue to advance till it has reached its climax in the Crucifixion of the Saviour Himself. The snatching of Noah and his kindred from the devouring waters of the deluge and the deliverance of God's chosen ones after four hundred years of servitude are the meagre successes on the side of righteousness, which are dramatically necessary to keep interest in the conflict.

These eleven scenes, roughly speaking, may be regarded as prefiguring the New Testament action. They have been dramatic; there was an external struggle between two strong heroes, and a struggle which was within the soul of man. The basal principle

of all dramatic writing is here, crudely expressed, no doubt, but it is none the less justly divined. It is the idea which is pushed to its limits in the allegorical Moral plays and it is also the very idea that will be perfected in the purely secular drama.

So far satan triumphant. It is his "hour," for the insignificant losses he has suffered appear of no consequence to him, proud spirit. From now on the interest of the play is much more intense; and from the viewpoint of struggle or conflict, at least, between the contending forces, there is a vital unity. The two introductory plays that intervene between the Exodus and the Nativity, bring us to the great crisis in the action. Each of the numerous scenes thereafter (and no fewer than twenty pageants roll between the Nativity and the Crucifixion) is an upward step to the climax. The hour of darkness quickly passes away and the reign of Evil is at an end. The victorious harrowing of Hell follows immediately the Mortificacio Christi—the Butchers' pageant. Then in direct succession follow the glorious scenes, expressive of the lasting reign of undisturbed peace and glory—the glory surrounding the Risen Christ, His Virgin Mother and the Just of Doomsday. Deus will pass sentence on His enemies in these unmerciful words:

"Ye cursid caytiffs of Kaymes kynne,
That neuere me comforte in my care
I an ye for euer will twynne,
In dole to dwelle for eueremare;
Youre bittir bales schall neuere blynne,
That ye schall haue whan ye come thare.
* * * * * *
Ther-fore till hell I schall you synke,
Weele are ye worthy to go that gate,"

But those who battled with Him and shared in His defeats will now be made partakers of His glory.

"Mi blissid childre on my righte hande,
Your dome this day ye thar not drede,
Your liffe in lyking schall be lede,
Commes to the kyngdome ay lastand.
That you is dight for youre goode dede,
Full blithe may ye be where ye stande,
For mekill in heuene schall be youre mede."

Whether this unity of purpose is to be accredited to the playwright's sense of dramatic values or to the scriptural history to which he is so much indebted is not our present concern. Our aim has been solely to find if there existed a unity of outline or design with the

hope of determining more fully what impression the presentation of the cycle, as a whole, might have made on the sympathetic onlooker. To whom to attribute the creation of this unity of impression is a later question of comparatively little import to our subject, which has to do with the existence or non-existence of the impression itself. The honor, however, may be approximately equalized when something further is said on the construction of each scene and the connection of play with play in the New Testament series.

In the York Cycle, the dramas presenting the scenes of the Annunciation and Visit of Mary to Elizabeth connects the Old Testament plays with those of the New. The Redemption of Fallen Man or the lasting triumph of good over evil is the foremost idea in the composer's mind and underlies all his work. Redemption is the subject of the prologue to this connecting play. The speaker summarizes the havoc the Evil one has wrought in God's creation and immediately turns to the question of an approaching atonement and triumph. His reference to prophecy happily fills up the gap between his subject and the Exodus. The play itself is built along the simplest lines. The scenes of the Annunciation of the angel and of Mary at Elizabeth's house possess an idyllic charm which is characteristic of the mediaeval dramatist at his best. The next play, drawn from apocryphal and legendary sources shows some inventiveness on the part of the playwright and afforded him much opportunity to characterize. He does define Joseph's anxiety and sets him in contrast with the quiet resignation of his spouse and her maidens. In some earlier presentations of Joseph's Troubles about Mary the scene was treated in a comic vein and was not free from vulgar associations. The York play, however, reflects the moderate spirit of its author. Of him, Professor Ward says, that he shows a special tenderness to St. Joseph. The playwright treats him, although from a wholly human point of view, with a degree of respect not always vouchsafed to this saint in the religious drama. It is to this respectful treatment that he is indebted for the truthful and effective picture he presents even to the reader's mind. No presentation of this scene comes nearer to the spirit of the apocryphal source nor emphasizes better the mysterious silence of Mary which the gospel intimates in contrast with the ever increasing, wholly human anxiety of Joseph. When warned in a dream not to fear to take unto him his wife, he asks forgiveness of Mary: "Yha, Marie, I am to blame, for wordis lang are I to

the spak." And then follows a really natural turn, "But gadir same now all our gere; slike poure wede as we were, and prike tham in a pak. Till Bedlam bus me it bere, for litill thyng will women dere. Helpe up nowe on my bak."

"The Journey to Bethlehem and the Birth of Jesus" is the next play, and it affords ample opportunity to the playwright to develop the characters of Joseph and Mary. The patriarch who is represented as very advanced in years, experiences acutely the burden of the road and yet makes belief as though he felt it not. All his anxiety, however, is for Mary and his talk with her on the way is most encouraging. She, on the contrary, has no thought of herself; she is quite absorbed on the precious Burden she bears, and seems inattentive to Joseph's forebodings about the inhospitable reception that awaits them at their journey's end. If we picture to ourselves the aged Joseph on reaching Bethlehem as the playwright represents him—bearing the "pak" on his rheumatic shoulders "uppe and doune thrugh diuerse stretis," in search of a dwelling-place for his "weyke and werie doughtir," at an hour and season when "it waxis right myrke unto the sight and colde withall"—it would be difficult to find in the whole repertory of the mediaeval stage a more delicate delineation than that which the Tile-Thatcher here gives:

Joseph: "For suthe I can no socoure see,
but belde vs with there bestes.
And yf we here all ryght abide,
We shall be stormed in this steede;
The walls are doune on ilke a side,
The rufle is rayned aboven oure hede,
als haue I roo,
Say, Marie Doughtir, what is thy rede?
How sall we doo?
For in grete nede nowe are we stedde,
As thou thyselffe the soth may see,
For here is nowthir cloth ne bedde,
And we are weyke and all werie,
and fayne wolde reste.
Now, gracious God, for thy mercie!
wisse vs the best.

Marie: God will vs wisse, full wele with ye,
Ther-fore, Joseph, be of gud chere.

A scene, dramatically effective, very naturally follows the entry into the shed. As the night is cold and dark—a veritable English Christmas-tide—Joseph goes to get a light and gather some fuel. In his

absence the Babe is born. Mary falls on her knees before her Son and worships Him with motherly devotion. Joseph, who knows nothing of the mystery that has taken place within the stall, is heard outside:

> "A! lorde, what the wedir is colde!
> The fellest freese that euere I felyd,
> I pray God helpe tham that is olde,
> And namely tham that is unwelde.

A sudden light shines on Joseph's face. Filled with astonishment he enters the stable and gazes bewilderingly at the Babe. "O Marie!" he asks, "what suete thyng is that on thy kne?" Mary explains to him the birth of the Infant and assures him that it is her "sone, the soth to saye, that is so gud." Joseph is beside himself with joy that he has seen the Saviour, long the wish of his soul. He adores Him, and joyfully prepares the manager, regretfully sighing that he has no softer bed on which to lay the "blissid floure."

No one can doubt the effect that this scene—so perfectly reflecting in an idealizing light the experiences of daily life—must have produced on the receptive mediaeval spectator. His mind and heart were open to the impression. It was his recreation day. He might, however, be able to recall days that were not unlike St. Joseph's Christmas Eve. And in the next scene how he must have understood and enjoyed the life-like realism of the shepherds descrying the Star, and their effort to reproduce with their cracked voices the Angel's song! But there was seriousness back of this fun. The shepherds worship the Babe and give Him what gifts they have. "A baren broche by a belle of tynne at youre bosome to be," is the first shepherd's gift. The second presents two cobb-nuts on a ribbon. A horn spoon that will harbor forty peas is all that the third shepherd has to bestow. The whole scene, says Ward, furnishes an innocent idyl.

The two following plays that deal with the coming and adoration of the Kings appealed less to the bulk of the audience. Herod's apostrophes of himself, though the author breaks away to some extent from the traditional manner of presenting royalty, the fulsome praises that the courtiers lavish on the tyrant, are still excessive. The playwright's aim in this presentation was obviously to provoke laughter and ridicule as well as to heighten the contrast between the heathen despot and the Wise Kings.

The brutal savagery of Herod is well brought out in the next play, "The Flight into Egypt;" and especially is this wanton cruelty shown in the play that follows, "The Massacre of the Innocents." The hunting down of the Divine Child and the horror of the slaughter prepare for the quiet scene which represents Christ among the Doctors. The anxiety of Joseph and Mary in fleeing with the Babe to inhospitable Egypt is here reproduced in the three days' loss. Joseph, it is quite noticeable, seemed to be more solicitous for the safety of the Infant than he is on this occasion, on the other hand, Mary is far more anxious about her Son than when she bore him in the Flight. Joseph is here the comforter of his spouse as he had been on the way to Bethlehem, but in the Exile, Mary tries to allay his fears. She was wholly indifferent to circumstances as long as she bore her Son in her womb or in her arms, but now that He is no longer beside her, she is inconsolable at the loss. This trait of motherly affection that the playwright suggests in this scene is an additional instance which goes to show the originality of his treatment and his closeness to nature. Another realistic touch is given the picture at the Gate of the Temple. Joseph and Mary are amicably vying about taking Jesus from among the Doctors. This incident Ten Brink quotes as an example of "excellent characterization." "In the play of Jesus in the Temple, the shyness of Joseph, and uneducated peasant, in appearing before learned persons, and the desire to let his more educated wife speak instead of himself is taken from real life, as is also, in a previous passage, the comparative placidity of the foster-father in contrast with the anxiety of the mother about their lost son":

Maria: A! dere Joseph, als we haue cele,
Go furthe and fette youre son and myne,
This day is gone nere ilke a dele,
And we have nede for to gang hyne.
Joseph: With men of myght can I not mell,
Than all my trauayle mon I tyne
I can noyt with them, this wate thou wele,
They are so gay in furres fyne.
Maria: To tham youre herand for to say
Suthly ye thar noght drede no dele,
They will take rewards to you all way,
Because of elde; this watte ye wele.
Joseph: When I come thare what schall I saye?
I wate neuere, als have I cele.
Sertis, Marie, thou will haue me schamed for ay,
For I can nowthir croke nor knele.

Maria: Go we togedir, I had it beste,
Unto yone worthy wysse in wede,
And yf I see, als haue I reste
That ye will noght, than bus me nede.
Joseph: Gange on Marie, and telle thy tale firste,
Thy sone to the will take good heede;
Wende fourth, Marie, and do thy beste,
I come be-hynde as God me spede.

The next play brings the cycle to the public life of Jesus. Following closely on the Baptism by John that had the effect of destroying "the dragons poure ilk a dele," comes the play of the "Temptation of Jesus" which gives the playwright an opportunity for another exhibition of Lucifer's management of an argument. Diabolus introduces himself with a show of great excitement; and as it is fairly a type of his manner I shall give in part his words:

Make rome by-lyve, and let me gang,
Who makis here al this thrang?
High you hense! high myght you hang
right with a roppe!

He goes on to explain the news that has reached him of a Redeemer on earth who will deprive him of his absolute sovereignty over men. He does not know fully the nature of the Redeemer, but he is confident of his success to tempt and injure Him. He goes directly to Jesus in the wilderness and apologizes to him that he has no bread to present him with—seeing the Saviour's weakness from the want of food.

For thou hast fasted longe, I wene,
I wolde now som mete were sene
For olde acqueyntaunce us by-twene,
Thy-selue wote howe.
Thar sall noman witte what I mene
but I and thou.

Jesus repells the tempter in this and in the two other temptations by a paraphrase of His answer in the Gospel. The majesty of the Saviour is well brought out in this scene in contrast to the characterless duplicity of the fiend. The dignity and calm that shines on the countenance of Jesus is the first characteristic which the comforting angel observes. The playwright had the moral in view from the beginning, as Jesus explains toward the close of the play. He gives as the motive of this serenity his wish to be a "myrroure" for men in overcoming Satan.

The scenes representing the Hidden Life of Jesus that had grown about the feast of the Nativity and formed a cycle in them-

selves, cause a sort of delay in the progress of the fundamental idea of struggle between the powers of good and evil—the action so marked in the York series, viewed as a whole into which the Christmas cycle of scenes had been incorporated. And yet in such scenes as the Trouble of St. Joseph, the hardships on the way to Bethlehem the Massacre of the Innocents, the Danger of the Flight and the sorrow of the Three Days' Loss there is an enlivening admixture of sadness and joy, of failure and success which is analogous to the underlying conflict between the two great combatants whose hostilities in varying intensity are waging from the beginning. In the preceding play a new impetus is given to the old warfare. Satan is represented as being particularly displeased at the baptism of Jesus, because as the playwright notices, the "certayne" effects of Christ's Baptism will be to destroy, in great part, the power of the Evil One.

Jesus:— John for manys prophyte, wit thou wele,
Take I this baptyme, certaynely,
The dragons poure ilke a dele
Thurught my baptyne destroyed hause I;
This is certayne;
And saued mankynde, saule and body,
Fro endless payne.

John has scarcely had time briefly to thank Jesus—his "souereyne leche" when the play is drawn away and Diabolus is wheeled before the audience in the pageant of the Temptation. Diabolus ingratiates himself in the words I have given above and proceeds in a more serious accent to explain his mission into the wilderness:

And nowe men spakis of a swayne,
How he schall come and suffre payne,
And with his dede to blisse agayne,
Thei (all that have been born) shulde be bought;
But certis this is but a trayne,
I trowe it noyt.

Jesus seems conscious also that the strife has been renewed. At the end of the play, after blessing those who will "stiffely stande agaynste the fende," he says, "I knawe my tyme is fast command—now will I wende." From this point the interest in the action increases. It centres exclusively in the person of Jesus. Nothing is omitted that would lend additional graciousness and dignity to his role. In the plays immediately following the Temptation, Jesus is triumphant. They are, however, his last triumphs. In the Transfiguration scene the saddening motives that called it forth reveal

the character of Jesus and stand in contrast with the moment of bliss vouchsafed the Apostles. Our Saviour's endearing personality is again in contrast in the next play which contains two scenes, the Woman taken in Adultery and the Raising of Lazarus. The Scribes, the lawyers on the case, are horrified at the deed committed (nemyn it noght, for schame), but Jesus is silent and listens to her condemnation. Unhappily the leaf of the manuscript that contained the temptation and His answer is torn away. The reply of Jesus must, we may presume, have been a characteristic paraphrase of His words in St. John (VIII, 1-12), somewhat as they read in the corresponding Coventry play. This scene is only half the play, the prelude in some sort to the Raising of Lazarus. The Apostles were still thanking Jesus for his pity on the guilty woman when the messenger from Bethany arrived. There is a ring of genuine sorrow in the words of Mary and Martha, but, as in the early part of the play, a leaf is missing at the point of chief interest, where Jesus gently chides Martha for her inconsolable grief. Martha's answer and much more is lost. Grief gives way to gladness as Lazarus walks forth from the tomb, but the period of rejoicing is brief for Jesus announces His immediate departure for Jerusalem.

In the triumphal entry into the Holy City there is remarkable variety. The pathetic introduction to this long scene in which Jesus intimates to his Apostles his approaching end, is relieved by the light episode showing Peter and Philip bargaining with the keeper of the ass; and, as Ward notices, the effect of a triumphant ride is further enhanced by the introduction of the blind man and the lame man, following, as suppliants in the track of the Saviour's progress. The play reaches its most effective scene at the close where a chorus of eight Burgesses welcomes and worships the King of the Jews. The eighth soloist sings,

> "Hayll! domysman dredful, that all schall deme (judge)
> Hayll! quyk and dede that all schall lowte (praise)
> Hayll! whom worschippe moste will seme,
> Hayll! whom all thynge schall drede and dowte.
> We welcome the.
> Hayll! and welcome of all aboute
> To our cete."

Following immediately this exhibition of welcome and allegiance comes the play of the Conspirators which is opened by Pilate's boastful proclamation of his learning, dignity and undisputed power. He shows throughout the play, however, a degree of impartiality

and love of truth, and openly expresses his determination to give justice to Jesus. It is true he gives to Judas the thirty silver pence, but his purpose in so doing is not malicious. The priest and soldiers on the contrary, are quite unreasonable in their efforts to make a case against Jesus, though all show a strong contempt for Judas—Annas curses Him and Pilate's doorkeeper calls Him to his face a "bittlbrowed bribour." The playwright manages the conspiracy with skill and interest, happily relieving the undramatic allegations before Pilate of their legal dryness by the more entertaining dialogue between the janitor and Judas. The Arrest of Jesus does not follow immediately. Over against the play of the envious conspirators stands the scene in the upper room. This peaceful spectacle and the gentle spirits of Our Lord and the Apostles gain much when viewed in contrast with the preceding scene and with the plays that follow. It is regrettable that this manuscript also has been "perused and otherwise amended" to the extent that the page (about sixty-five lines) which dealt with the institution of the Holy Eucharist is torn away. In this play of the Last Supper the introduction of James' unseasonable question on the matter of priority among the Apostles when Jesus is gone, coming just after the Master has washed the disciples' feet is one of those occasional instances that go to show the effort of the playwright to overcome a difficulty inherent in his theme.† "In the Mysteries not only were the subject and idea unalterable, but the way in which the subject and idea

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* A passage spoken by Saint John in honor of the Seven Sacraments in the Chester cycle is similarly crossed through and marked by a later hand as "correctyd and not played" (cf. Ward, Hist. Dram. Lit. p. 72). The same is done in the XIX Towneley cyclic play where the passage is crossed out with red ink and the number of sacraments carefully erased. Again in the XXIV pageant of the same series lines supporting the doctrine of transubstantion spoken by Christ from the Cross are likewise cancelled. (cf. Collier, Annals of the Stage Vol. 2, pp. 197-198.)

† There is throughout evidence of this effort on the part of the playwright to present a motive as palpable for the action. In the Chester XIII., for instance, the Merchant who protests against the action of Jesus in the Temple,

> 'What frecke is this that makes fare,
> And casteth downe all our ware?
> Come no man hither full of yare,
> That did us such anoye.'

In XVI., this same 'Primuz Mercator' turns out to be the prosecutor of Jesus before Caiphas, telling the Saviour's prophecy concerning the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple in three days. Again Judas is angry at the reprimand given by Jesus on account of the criticism which the traitor made of Magdalen's action in Simon's house. This was Chester, XIV. In

affected each other was equally unchangeable." * This statement needs qualification in many instances. Apart from the introduction of novel matter the transference of a familiar incident from its historical location to its dramatic position frequently occurs in the Cycles and contributes much to alter the relation in which the subject and idea affected each other. In the next play there is a like intimation of an effort at dramatic effect. After the traitor's kiss a brilliant light blazes forth from the face of Jesus which stuns the soldiers. There are in the subsequent scenes many artfully arranged incidents of a non-biblical character that afford moments of relief in the long and realistic presentation of the sad events of the Passion. To incidents of this nature the dramatist is indebted for the individuality they give his chief persons, whether viewed singly or in the heightened contrast of actions;—in either case the interpolated elements relax the bond of interest and prevent a painful tension. In the nine plays immediately antecedent to the Crucifixion scenes, interims of rest and suspension in the upward action are managed with discrimination and contribute in many ways to effectiveness of treatment. The pageant of the Conspirators for instance, following next in order the triumphal Entry is much improved dramatically by the playwright who presents both actions as taking place concurrently. The plotting against the life of Jesus and His Betrayal are shown to the audience as silently operating at the very time that Hosannas of welcome were cheered through the city.

Following the Agony in the Garden and the taking of Jesus comes the play of the trial—before Caiaphas. But instead of proceeding directly with the examination the playwright gives a long description of what was taking place in the palace of the high priest while Jesus was in agony on Mount Olivet. The amusing scene occupied in elaborate preparations "to lift" Caiaphas into bed after he had slaked his thirst with delicious wine that would "make you to wynke," is an effective interlude. It brings out to the point of utmost contrast the character of Jesus and his accusers, and relieves the audience of the distressing events during the long play of the Agony, and refreshes the

* Ten Brink, English Literature, Vol. 1, p. 306.

the next pageant, The Betrayal, the waste of the ointment is the only motive that urges the vindictive Judas to sell his Master. The whole tenor of his conduct reflects the wound the Saviour's censure caused.

mind for the Trial-scene and inhuman conduct of the soldiers toward their Victim.

For the same purpose of affording ease and variety and at the same time to bind into a closer unit the several scenes, the playwright adapts a curious incident from the Gospel of Nicodemus, the dream of Pilate's wife.* The audience knows from the closing scene of the trial before Caiaphas that Jesus is to be judged by Pilate. Caiaphas sends a messenger to "tell Pilate our compliments, and that this lad must be slain to-day because it is Sabbath to-morrow." At the beginning of the next play the Dream is enacted. It is introduced with the presentation of a typical evening at Court, differing materially in nothing from what took place at the high priest's house the night before, nor from the closing of the present day at Herod's quarters. It is Satan himself that whispers the dream into Percula's ear, the purport of which is that if the "gentilman Jesu" is unjustly doomed she and Pilate will be stripped of all their power and riches. The playwright artfully keeps this news from the Governor till the moment at which such an account was least desirable. Pilate had a mind to befriend Annas and Caiaphas whose sheer flattery he had just cordially accepted. when his son announced to him in presence of the "Bisshoppis" the threats of the dream.

The long presentation of the Passion derives human interest from the variety with which the poet intersperses the scenes. He interrupts the arguments at the trials and the brutal sports of the soldiers by distracting events of a serious nature, as well as by incidents of a light and comic character. The privileged Beadle supplied much of these diversifying elements. He was capable of saying and doing anything. His language on an occasion of unseasonable knocking at the entrance gate (though it happens to be the High Priests that are there) needs not be reproduced here; yet it is the same Beadle that alone publicly worships Jesus amid the scoffs of the priests and soldiers. The parts of the warden, the several royal supper-scenes, Percula's Dream, her undutiful son, the bowing of the banners, Barabbas' thanks, the Squire cheated of his title-deeds to Mount Calvary —these and such like scenes growing out of the main action.

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* Gospel of Nicodemus (Gesta Pilati). I. II. "Uber Quellen und Sprache der York Plays, pp. 25-26 Von Paul Kamann, Halle 1887.

not only afforded the audience needful mental rest, but were helpful also to the playwright's efforts in emphasizing situations and persons.

In the three pageants that have to do with the Crucifixion the author's design to reproduce realities literally is very noticeable. Nowhere else does he play on the feelings of his audience to such an extent, and consequently at no time so much as in the present instant, has it been necessary to put ourselves in the attitude of the playwright toward his theme. Here, if anywhere, nothing should come between us and the author. To overlook his intensely religious purpose and abstract ourselves from his milieu, would, of course, mean to miss not only the primary motive of the plays but the very reason of their existence. Most unquestionably the playwright's conception and execution of these climacteric scenes are barbaric in the extreme judged by the most lenient standard of what is now aesthetically proper. It is sufficiently deplored that the Mediaeval dramatist's description of the Sacred Passion and Death of our Redeemer is inexpressibly painful to our time—so no doubt, would be the actual tragedy itself had we witnessed it with all its wanton concomitant brutalities which the Evangelists permit to be inferred. This, however, is not the question. It needs no pointing out that we should be unwarranted in dissociating the dramatist from the listener and neither from his time and place. Plays of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were not written for audiences of the twentieth. This is surely a commonplace remark, yet its full meaning is not always borne in mind. We have no reason to suspect that the old playwright was ignorant of his public nor that it was his endeavor to secure its good will. The truth is rather that we have abundant evidence in proof of his intimate knowledge of his audience. The instinct to please is in the soul of every dramatist from Shakespeare down.

The early Gothic drama sought its effects and interest in fidelity to the reality. The author had no idea of the fact that the business of art was to correct and improve nature. His modification of the original was usually confined to the task of extending or contracting the material, a process of physical arrangement largely and not a recasting of the subject matter, or a heightening of its dramatic quality by giving the whole a

personal interpretation which would reflect the tone and color of his mind. This was to be the work of later dramatists. With the older playwrights, however, unmistakable intimations of mental assimilation can be found; the tendency to localize and modernize, to invent, emphasize and make attractive was going on from the beginning. This is strikingly illustrated in the plays which bring the York Cycle to its climax.

If we remember that the playwright's great law was to reproduce by imitation as far as he could the impression of what took place in the Garden, Judgment Halls and on Calvary, it will pass unquestioned that he has succeeded in presenting the terrible reality with wonderful truth. I doubt that it would be difficult to exaggerate what may be reasonably inferred from the Evangelists' unimpassioned narrative of the sufferings and death of Christ. To imply that the least irreverance was dreamt of in the long display of professionalism which the Guild of Pinners, for instance, so strikingly manifests in the Mediaeval crucifixion-scene, would be to mistake the whole spirit of the Liturgical and Cyclic drama. The realistic manual job that is detailed, the wrangling among the executioners for upward of a hundred lines about the cross, hammers, nails, brads, ropes and ladders, the poignant grief within Mary's heart at such a woeful spectacle, the sorrow of John and the Holy Women, the abusive lictors as they buffet their Victim, the cruel delight that the enemies of Jesus take in casting looks of scorn at Him —are all drawn out with a naturalness that is scarcely surpassed by the passion players of Ober-Ammergau. The consistency with which each role is sustained throughout the passion scenes cannot but be commended, however much one may charge the playwright's conception of his caste.

Hardly had the bloody spectacle which the Butchers' pageant represented passed from the people's eyes when a scene of relief was wheeled in its place. It showed the defeated, derided and disjointed Christ of a moment ago now perfectly whole and conquering, Harrowing Hell. The Redeemer takes with Him His faithful followers, those who stood by his cause against the enemy, and confides them to His commander-in-chief, Michael.

"Adame and my frendes in feere,
Fro all youre fooes come forth with me
Ye schall be sette in solas seere,
Wher ye schall neure of sorowes see,

> And Mighall, myn aungell clere,
> Ressayue thes saules all unto the,
> And lede thame als I schall the leve
> To Paradise with plays and plente."

The loss of Limbo was a cause of much excitement in the underworld; but the real tragic incident took place only when Michael shortened Satan's chain and pinned him faster within his narrow dominion.

The resurrection scene follows the Harrowing of Hell and joy is brought to Christ's followers on this upper world and fear to His enemies. Here strong effects are attached by the playwright's introduction of his old device of abrupt contrast. The feeling of repose and satisfaction that Pilate and the Priests experience is well worked up and prepares for the effect which the writer meant that the Centurion's news would cause. And equally well-wrought is the second part of this play, which is no other than the old Latin liturgical office lost in the vernacular cycle. The Three Maries come on the stage, inconsolable over the loss of Jesus. Their grief heightens as they advance on the way of the Cross to the Tomb to anoint Jesus, and is paralleled only by their surprise and joy later. The play of the Resurrection, only four hundred and fifty lines in all, exhibits in its construction a noticeable growth in dramatic skill. There is not much invention manifested, but the selection of material is judicious. Pilate, it is clearly intimated in the opening scene of the play, despite his apparent calm has scruples about the legality of the condemnation of Jesus and fears an uprising among the Jews. But this latter dread is of secondary importance in his mind, though it is the only thought that disturbs Sirs Caiaphas and Annas, who are afraid that the populace will come to think that the Sabbath-Breaker is somebody. The respectful and bold confession of the Centurion is opposed to the vacillating explanations of the Governor and High Priests. Soldiers are sent to guard the monument, and the interlude of the three Maries appropriately fills the time between the commission of the guard and its experience at the Tomb. The return of the guards to the Court and their frank statement of the triumph of Jesus utterly defeats His enemies. It may seem regrettable that the very knight who prevailed on his comrades at the Sepulchre to tell the facts of the Resurrection, even at the expense of life, should later be the spokesman for his fellows

in accepting the thousand-pound bribe. Had we, however, heard the derisive laugh that followed the ridiculous suggestion of Annas to Pilate, to have the soldiers tell wherever they went that 20,000 men took the body from the Tomb and that they themselves were nearly slain, we could better appreciate the comic touch and ironic humor in the action of the Primus Miles. It was the last time the conspirators were to appear and the playwright would have their defeat and exit emphasized by "bringing down the house" on the ridiculous measures that the councillors of Pilate advise in order to offset the fact of the Resurrection.

The enemies of Christ vanquished in this way, the closing plays treat of the glorious life of Christ, the Triumph of His mother and His followers. The Gospel account of the Risen Life being extremely meagre the playwright had recourse to the more amenable material in the apocryphal legends.* Oral and written notices of this period of the Life of Christ were circulated widely and they afforded excellent subject-matter for dramatization. Popular though they were, they were not so familiar as the writings of the Evangelists and consequently a greater freedom might be exercised in the formation of dramatic parts from them. The play showing the grief of Magdalen is treated with more detail than in the corresponding Liturgical drama. The gardener here does his part well and the same may be said of Thomas, whose incredulity and loneliness afford the playwright room for effective suspense and contrast. The Marian plays are mainly spectacular. It is easy enough to picture to one's self the effect which Mary's Death created. Music and angelic songs invite her to the Paradise of her Son. Her Assumption and Coronation is followed by the Judgment Day which puts an end to the strife between the Righteous and the Wicked and brings back the whole action of the cycle, says Ward, "into the hollow of the hand of God."

Such in outline was the York Cyclic drama. It contained a fuller development of the dramatic idea—in so far at least, as accuracy of definition and detail in the presentation contributed to this growth—than was found in the liturgical plays. It may hardly be said that our knowledge of the cycle caste is more complete because more individualizing traits are given us

* Paul Kamann "Uber Quellen und Sprache der York Plays," pp. 3 ff.

to fill out the personalities; rather, we come to know the characters better in this than in the earlier species by reason largely of the additional items which help us in forming a more accurate estimate of the summed qualities of the persons. It would be contrary to fact, however, to deny a notable power of suggestion in many of the details chosen by the York playwright. His effective contrasts within the scenes have been pointed out. Then, the juxtaposition of play with play and the feeling of struggle underlying and informing the several plays unified the action of the whole cycle. This brought the persons more in relief. The two functional ideas of personality and responsibility that dominated all mediaeval life, exercised an influence scarcely less perceptible and telling in the Cyclic than in the Liturgical drama. The presence of these "two senses" in the auditors secured for the playwright a receptive hearing which supplied what was wanting in the interest and outlining of the caste. It furnished a principle or bond of unity which helped to a more complete assimilation of the varied action, and to a deeper realization of the cycle as a whole. While his eyes beheld the movement and his ears received the actor's words, the mind and soul of the auditor followed, as it were, the continuous development and ever changing succession of emotions and conceptions out of which the words and actions sprung. The unifying effect of the oneness of mood and sympathy noticeable here will be perfected by the great Elizabethan dramatists.

Studied in view of this peculiar genius or spirit, the persons in a Cyclic drama acquired a marked individuality for the audience. The playwright's suggestion was worked on and elaborated by the the mental activity of his hearers into life-like pictures of Christ, of Mary and Joseph—of the entire Biblical caste and more particularly of the non-scriptural persons. If we follow the unfolding of the cycle from the promise of a Redeemer at the expulsion from Eden till the spectators see the Messiah on His Mother's knees in the stable, and then follow the action as it brings out the character of Jesus through the scenes of His childhood, youth and public life, to Calvary, we shall not fail to see the finished outline the playwright has sketched. We shall find lineaments of the Sacred Persons of the Bible underneath the imprints laid upon them by the mediaeval dramatists. A general disposition of his mind and soul stripped,

it is true, of much of the heavenly character and charm which the Gospels inimitably suggest and portray, is preserved in the Christ of the Cycles. It was unavoidable that the celestial atmosphere which surrounds the figure of Christ in the Gospel would vanish before the untrained vision of Mediaeval play-goers. The softness of touch, the poetry and sentiment so delicately expressed by the Evangelists, escaped the rough handling of the playwright. This is not a matter to be wondered at. These were literary rather than dramatic qualities which could scarcely be treated in a positive way. They could only be insinuated, and to effect this would demand an arrangement of action, a cleverness in technique and a flexibility of language quite beyond the power of the cyclic poet. The Christ of the stage in being adapted to new circumstances contracted a temperament and character corresponding to His surroundings. The sacred Text, however, was sufficiently adhered to by the playwright to afford a warrant that there would be in the dramatic person no appreciable deviation from the biblical prototype. The human qualities of Christ were emphasized rather than His divine attributes. He came nearer to the level of the people on the stage than when He walked among men. This trait is most evident in His familiar manner with the Apostles and with His friends. When speaking officially, Christ addresses the crowd and His enemies in a doctrinal and somewhat impersonal tone: yet His arguments have a true scholastic point, and when among the Doctors in the Temple He seems to take genuine satisfaction in the cruel delight of showing His questioners, on the least provocation, the limits of their attainments.

It is, however, owing to the treatment of qualities, which seem but little consequent on His purely human conduct, that the character of Christ rises at times to a dramatic level. Much of the spirit of the Gospel narrative is felt in the plays, in those, for instance, that have to do with the Trial and Crucifixion. The true greatness of the Hero is seen in His hours of suffering, but we need the scenes of His innocent childhood, youth and manhood to realize the height of the climax. The cyclic playwright in reproducing the dramatic points in the private life of our Saviour offers an insight into the human heart of the Hero which, with all its limitations, reveals with a certain degree of fulness, the ideal meek and good man who suffers wrong; and in the treatment of the Public

Life he sets forth the same ideal character whose distinctive traits are deepened by reason of the more intense action and more dramatic situation.

All through the New Testament series of plays a two-fold life of Christ is definitely marked off. What He *seems* is very different from that which He really *is*. It is this precisely which gives the cyclic play its intrinsic dramatic worth. The Hero's motives of action, which are wholly unknown or misconceived by His enemies, are as evident as sunlight to the audience. This oldest stage convention of enlightening the auditor with a foreknowledge of reasons and events which are hidden from the counter-players, was done beforehand for the playwright owing to the familiar nature of his theme; nevertheless, as was noticed elsewhere in speaking of the corporate unity of the cycles, he was careful frequently to recall the illusion. He places the utmost confidence in his hearers; their spiritual preceptions and easy apprehension of realities are strikingly in contrast with the utter absence of such faculties among the jews and heathens on the stage.

The assumed mental superiority over the unchristian element among the players is noteworthy in this connection. It was no difficulty for the mediaeval mind to be in fullest sympathy with the minutest manifestation of the spiritual world. The inexplicable silences and mental reservations on the part of Christ, and the intermittent marvel and ominous foreboding which so affrighted His enemies give rise to effective situations by reason of the clear discernment with which the spectators are endowed touching these events. The consistent intellectual opposition of the actor and auditor in this way contributed much to the development of the characters and helped to suggest, to bring out and emphasize those latent motives which, in the character of Christ particularly, were the main-springs of His acts. The auditors being fully conscious of the secret causes at work in the dramatic life of Christ, built up a hero that was, no doubt, ideal, and typical—so far as all heroes are types—but who was none the less a person with reason, will and perception properly his own. Such a concept of the leading character, considered relative to the action of the cycle, seems to be strictly dramatic. In the somewhat incoherent treatment of the material that resulted, however, in a tolerably concrete whole, there were situations which furnished the playwright opportunities for dramatic characterization. We have noticed instances where he

analyzed, collated, transposed and rejected the text, and has repeatedly interpolated personal and apocryphal incidents in order to heighten the dramatic quality of his matter. All this bears witness to the conscious effort of the dramatist to bring into as just relief as he conceived it, the living form of the central Figure in the cycle. What was intuitive and undeveloped in the Liturgical drama becomes a reasoned, though crude, process with the poets of the cycles, and the character that was only most generally limited in the earlier species has grown into a dramatic person, with more nicely defined human properties and possessing in an initial stage certain qualities of the Elizabethan hero.

Something has already been said on the management of Mary and Joseph by the liturgic and cyclic playwright. These two characters of all the historical persons he had to treat were most in the line of what the writer of the Corpus Christi plays could do best. To set in a serious religious background two such intensely human persons as St. Joseph and the Mother of Jesus was in a special way according to the genius of the York playwright. By reason of the familiar Biblical account and the traditional concept of the auditors touching the Blessed Virgin and her husband he was morally prevented from any deviation from the well known prototypes. The simplicity and dignity of "Marie modir and maiden clene" are throughout the cycle consistently brought to the foreground. From the dramatic point of view she is immeasurably beyond the Three Maries who, with her and her cousin Elizabeth are, perhaps, the only women-characters in the entire mediaeval drama that are not highly disagreeable persons, introduced for purposes of relief in the action or to give proof and point to the moral that young men should beware of marrying.* As with all the roles in the early drama there is nothing involved or complicated in the characters of Mary and Joseph; no technical artifice is introduced to heighten the dramatic value of their parts. All the unconsciousness of nature is in their unstudied words and movements. Mary is afraid of the Angel, and knows not how to allay Joseph's anxiety. She

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* To appreciate fully the delicate treatment of the York playwright of his heroine in this respect it should be borne in mind how the mediaeval comic writer treated his women characters. Chaucer in his Envoy, to husbands at the end of the Clark' of Oxenford's Tale delinlates the mediaeval wife in his own inimitable way. This is Noah's counsel in the third Towneley play. "Ye men that have wifes, whyles they are young, if ye luff your lifes, chastise thare tong."

is afraid of her Babe, nevertheless she loves Him and calls Him the sweetest of names. Both Joseph and she hurry with Him in the Flight, though Mary can not understand the reason why she has to flee. As illustrative of this strikingly womanly trait, the following from the play on the Exile may be transcribed here. Speaking of those who sought the life of her Babe, the Mother says to Joseph:

What ayles thei at my barne
Slike harmes hym for to hate?
Allas! why schulde I tharne
My sone his liffe so sweete,
His harte aught to be ful sare,
On slike a foode hym to to forfare,
That nevir did ill
Hym for to spille,
And he ne wate why.
I ware full wille of wane
My sone and he shude dye,
And I haue but hym allone.

JOSEPH ANSWERS:—

We! leue Marie, do way, late be,
I pray the, leue of thy dynne,
And fande the furthe faste for to flee
Away with hym for to wynne.
That no myscheue on hym betyde
Nor none vnhappe in nokyn side,
Be way nor strete
That we mon mete
To slee hym.

MARY:

Allas! Joseph, for care!
Why shulde I for-go hym,
My dere barne that I bare.

JOSEPH:

That swete swayne yf thou saue,
Do tyte, pakke same oure gere,
And such small harness as we haue.

MARY:

A! leue Joseph, I may not bere.

JOSEPH:

Bere arme? no, I trowe but small,
But God it wote I must care for all,
For bed and bak,
And alle the pakk
That nedis unto us.
This pakald bere me bus,

It fortheres for to fene me
Of all I plege and pleyne me.
But God graunte grace I noght forgete
No tulles that we shulde with us take.

While Mary had no thought but for the safety of her child, Joseph, naturally enough, as a practical man, and helpful husband, has in mind the length of the road and is anxious about the comfort of the mother and Babe. In the Three Days' Loss, Mary's impatient solicitude and disquieting despair contrast well with Joseph's reasonable search for the Boy, though his bereavement in that it is silently borne is none the less heartfelt. I have cited the characteristic scene in which Joseph urges Mary to take Jesus from among the Doctors. This is the lasts appearance of Joseph. He retreats with Mary from the Temple to Nazareth and is heard of no more. But his memory abides with the audience.

Mary next appears at the foot of the Cross. To her lamentation, *Marienklage,* preserved in a thirteenth century manuscript, reference has already been made as illustrating the spirit of the playwright and audience; at this point in the York cycle she gives expression to her grief, not in a sustained lament, but in short, direct addresses to her Son, who tries to console her. Her words in the betrayal of Christ in the Coventry cycle, Ward believes, give a glimpse of genuine tragic passion.

A! A! A! how myn herte is colde!
A! hert hard as stone how mayst thou lest?
Whan these sorroweful tydinges are the told,
So wold to God, hert, that thou mytyst brest.
A! Jhesu! Jhesu! Jhesu! Jhesu!
Why xuld ye sofere this trybulacyon and advercyte?

The three plays after the Resurrection that have to do with the Death of Mary, her Appearance to Thomas and her Coronation reflect the mind of the playwright with reference to his heroine. Despite the very spiritual nature of his theme he manages to conduct the action with considerable realism. Mary has a vision of a choir of Angels, singing before her. She listens to the hymn; "Surge proxima mea columba mea tabernacula glorie vasculum vite templum celeste," and then is greeted by a series of alliterative biddings in which she is called "Maiden and modir maid, lilly full lusty, chefteyne of chastite, and rose ripe redolent". She is borne aloft by angels who

sing from the Canticles (IV. 8) Veni de Libano sponsa veni coronaberis. Very beautiful is Christ's loving welcome to his mother, and though the scene takes place in the heights of heaven, the sentiment is of this world. All her sorrows are forever ended, she is crowned with five joys and will abide beside her Son through all ages as His "modir and mayden schene". Though much of these last scenes is rather spectacular than dramatic and of little help in the inner development of the characters, as the persons are influenced largely from without, it is easy to see, however, that this glorification of Mary is a necessary outcome of her life of suffering which reaches its climax on Calvary. This glorious retribution logically finds place after the Resurrection of the Son and immediately preceding the public triumph of His friends and defeat of His enemies, as shown in the Doomsday pageant.

Outside the role of the hero, nowhere in the cycle can we follow to such an extent the growth of characterization as in the parts of Joseph and Mary. From their presentation in the York cycle one finds recapitulated the playwright's power of drawing real persons in a series of actions, and the degree of his perception of the dramatic in life. Many times his dramatic instincts have been noticed in these pages, but the natural consistency between the poet's conception of his characters and the parts he allots to them are no less apparent and noteworthy. The situation in which we find Joseph and Mary, are, broadly speaking, dramatic, yet not the least strain after effect is anywhere traceable; the words fit the action, and the surroundings make the action probable. It is true that written and oral information had preceded the dramatist in forming the popular concept of the parents of Jesus, and no doubt, this traditional view determined the author in a general way, but apart from this drawback he had room sufficient to emphasize and deepen certain lines of the popular picture and so change the countenance that, though unable to alter the features, he effected, nevertheless, in the parts of Mary and Joseph the transition from the mere ideal type of individual to the truly human and personal. This was a progress which counts for much when one remembers the playwright's limitations and particularly if we compare his work with the authors of the other Cycles or even with the writers of the Moral plays.

The roles of Jesus, Mary and Joseph received much from their position as part of an organic whole. Scenes in which their interests only are concerned, or of which they are but remotely the occasion, contributed many helpful suggestions and indirect explanations which spared the audience the flat and undramatic expositions of the Banns or Doctor. The cyclic arrangement of the matter, which is characteristic of the early English dramatic writing, facilitated the treatment of the caste and touches at more points than is evident at first view the regular plot of the early Elizabethan dramatists. In no connection do the advantages of the cyclic or serial action better come to light than in contrast of the comic with the purely serious element which we have just been considering. But before passing to illustrate the nature of the lighter sentiment in the Biblical plays it may be well to examine a play of non-cyclic character which owes its existence to its own dramatic worth. The independent play I choose is that treating of the familiar theme, the Sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac, which is preserved in the Brome manuscript.* It occupies only four hundred and sixty-five lines in all, yet there is a proportion in the distribution of the action that leaves an impression of completeness.

Incidentally the simple and effective arrangement of this dramatically pathetic and even tragical theme, certainly unequaled by anything in the cycles in the way of character treatment, shows how unnecessarily slow was the evolution of the cycles—not to speak of the Moralities—in passing from the liturgical acts to the beginnings of the secular drama. The author of the Brome play chooses the point of dramatic interest in Abraham's long life and excludes every circumstance foreign to his purpose. In a few lines he suggests more than the prologue speaker of the cycles would tell in fifty. The patriarch opens with a direct address to the Almighty, thanking Him for the gift of land in which he is to lead in grateful content the evening of his life. More than for his life and land Abraham is bound to God for the "younge chyld Ysaac" whom he loves half greater than all his children and next after "der Fadir of blysse."

* The text is re-edited from Miss Toulmin Smith in the *Anglia* VII., 316-337, by Professor Manly, Specimens of the pre-Shakespearean Drama, Vol. 1, pp. 41-57.

"And therfor, Fadyr of heuven, I the prey
Nowe, Lorde, kepe hym both nyght and day,
For hys helth and also for hys grace;
That neuer dessese nor noo fray
Come to my chyld in noo place."

Isaac is indeed deserving of his father's affection for his only defect (it is a common fault in all the six Isaacs—with the exception possibly of the virile little fellow in the Woodkirk play) is his unreal, and rather theatrical protestations of respect and obedience to Abraham.

"Abraham, myne own fader so mylde,
To followe youe I am full prest,
Bothe erly and late."

This glance at the relation of the father and son prepares for what follows. On the scaffold above the patriarch and his son, Deus has been listening all the while. He summnos an angel whom He commissions to descend "on-to medyll erth anon" to inform Abraham that it is the divine pleasure that he offer in sacrifice the blood of his child.

"Say I commanded hym for to take
Ysaac hys young sonne, that he love so wyll,
And with hys blood sacryfyce he make,
Yffe ony off my freynchepe he wyll ffell."

The angel descends the stairs from heaven and finds Abraham engaged at his morning prayer, asking the Almighty what might be His will and what manner of ocering would be most agreeable in His sight. Ten Brink thinks that Abraham receives the dreadful answer with too much coolness and resignation. Abraham speaks like a moral preacher, not like a father."* When we consider the origin and sanction of the command which admitted of no alternative in connection with the temperament of the patriarch, anything other than the fullest acquiescence was out of question. His action may not be so dramatic as we can fancy a like scene would be presented to-day, but the Brome Abraham is none the less true. He did precisely what every father in the audience would have done; and when we recall with what facility the mediaeval mind looked back of the symbol and seized on the reality of things, the didactic and impersonal element in the patriarch's fiat is at once reduced to a minimum. The words of the mitred craftsman above stairs

* English Literature, Vol. II, part 1, p. 254.

were easily understood as voicing the will of God which Abraham receiving as such was bound by every dictate of reason and propriety, even at the sacrifice of fatherly sentiment, to obey unquestioningly. Had the command to slay Isaac come from King Edward or Richard, Abraham might well waive the test and defer obedience. A ready and implicit compliance to such an authority would savor of socratic renunciation and be justly chargeable with playing the part of the unfeeling moral preacher and not that of a father. Only when we mistake the mediaeval view does Abraham's attitude appear unreal.

The unswerving will in Abraham to do the angel's bidding, while throughout appreciatively stronger than his fatherly affection, becomes, as the actual process begins, swayed and disturbed by natural sentiment. The touch is especially good which shows this contrast between the will and the deed. One feels the conflict waging within the old man's bosom as the hour for leaving for the mountain of sacrifice draws near.

"Now, Ysaac, my owne son dere,
Where art thow, chyld? Speak to me."

Isaac as it "prerys to the Trenyte", but he breaks off at once and holds himself ready to do his father's bidding. "The child-like innocence of Isaac," says Ten Brink, "is beautifully set forth and in a way that must have touched the father's heart, and which still greatly moves the spectator." Both collect and bind the faggots, Isaac talking the while in the most endearing way to his father. As Abraham puts the bundle on the boy's shoulder he is overcome with grief.

"A! Lorde or heuyn, my handes I wryng,
Thys chyldes wordes all to-wond my harte,

And again as the father asks to make haste, Isaac answers:

"Go we, my dere fader, as fast as I may;
To followe you I am full fayn
All-thow I be slendyr.
Abraham:—A! Lorde, my hart brekyth on tweyn,
Thys chyldes wordes, they be so tender."

The dialogue and action on the mountain are transcripts of nature, and yet are intensely dramatic. The naive inquisitiveness of the son as he first notices his father's "heauy chere", and his acknowledged effort to make him feel bright and happy is particularly fine, as well as the effect of all this on Abraham. Isaac, failing to cheer his father, is naturally led to inquire into

the nature and cause of the unwonted dejection. But his mind at once turns on an idea that may be the cause of the grief and which proves besides to be of immediate personal interest. The fire and the wood is ready but there is "no qwyke best" for the offering.

"A qwyke best, I wot wyll, must be dede
Your sacryfyce for to make.
Abraham:—Dred the nowyth my childe, I the red,
Owr Lord wyll send me on-to-thys sted
Summ maner a best for to take,
Throw hys swet sond.
Ysaac:— Ya, fader, but my hart begynneyth to quake
To se that scharpe sword in your hond.
Why bere ye your sword drawyn soo?
Off your conwnauns I haue mych wonder.
Abraham:—A! Fader of heuen, so I am woo!
Thys chyld her brekys my harte on-sonder.
Ysaac:— Tell me, dere fader, or that ye ses,
Ber ye your sword drawn for me?
Abraham:—A! Ysaac, swet son, pes! pes!
For i-wys thow breke my harte on thre.
Ysaac:— Now trewly sum-wat, fader, ye thynke
That ye morne thus more and more.
Abraham:—A! Lorde of heuen, thy grace let synke,
For my harte was neuer halffe so sore.
Ysaac:— I preye yow, fader, that ye wyll let me that wyt,
Wyther schall I heue ony harme or noo.
Abraham:—I-wys, swet son, I may not tell ye yyt
My harte ys soo full of woo.
Ysaac:— Dere fader, I prey yow, hyd it not fro me,
But sum of yowr thowt that ye tell me.
Abraham:—A. Ysaac, Ysaac, I must kyll thee!
Ysaac:— Kyll me, fader? alasse, wat haue I done?
Yff I haue trespassyd a-gens yow owt, *t*
With a yard ye may make me full myld;
And with your scharp sword kyll me noyght,
For i-wys fader, I am but a chyld.
Abraham:—I am full sory, son, thy blood for to spyll,
But truly, my childe, I may not chese.
Ysaac:— Now I wolde to God my moder were here on thys hyll!
Sche wolde knele for me on both hyr kneys
To saue my lyffe.
And sythyn that my moder ys not here,
I prey yow fader, schonge yowr chere,
And kyll me not with yowr knyffe."

The son no longer pleads for his life when Abraham tells him it is God's will that calls for the sacrifice of his blood. Isaac

with a brevity and directness that smites his father's heart, asks

"And ys yt Goddes wyll that I schulde be slayn?"

He resigns himself to Abraham's answer, encourages him to do the command of God, but begs him not to tell his mother what has happened.

"But, good fader, tell ye my moder no-thyng.
Say that I am in a-noyther cuntre dwellyng."

This overpowers the father.

"Sone, thy worddes make me to wepe full sore;
Now, my dere, son Ysaac, spake no mare.

Ysaac:— A! myne owne dere fader, wherefore?
We schall speke to-gedyr her but a whyls.
And sythyn that I nedysse be ded
Yyt, my dere fader, to yow I prey,
Smythe but fewe strokes at my hed,
And make an end as sone as ye may,
And tery not to longe.

Abraham bursts into tears and embraces his son a second time. Isaac complains that his father's grief affects him more than the shedding of his own blood. Upon this Abraham takes courage to bind the victim, but Isaac's question unnerves him: "A! mercy, fader, wy schuld ye do soo?" He consents to be bound and repeats his former request that his mother will hear nothing of the deed, for if she should, he says, she would weep "full sore". All this prolongs the agony of the father who has still to hear the further heart-rending petition for pardon:

"And of all the trespasse that euer I ded meue you,
Now, dere fader, forgyffe me that I haue done."

Abraham's emphatic answer betrays the extent of his grief:

"A! dere chylde, leafe of thy monys;
In all thy lyffe thow grevyd me neuer onys."

Isaac has yet to ask that his father's handkerchief be put over his eyes that he might not see the sharp sword, and then that his face be turned downward for the same reason, and finally that Abraham will smite "hastely" and "not oftyn."

These favors are granted, though every word from Isaac pierces his father's soul and hardly leaves him strength sufficient to draw the sword. The poet, whose psychological insight from the beginning is most acute and sure, gives here a touch which shows how fully he was in sympathy with his theme. Abraham all through had shown himself disposed to hurry the

action and strove in every way possible to waive the questions of Isaac or so to distract himself from the thought of the deed that his fore-image of the bleeding child might not prevail on his resolution. He would not suffer himself to listen to the appealing words of Isaac nor look on his fair innocent face, for fear his heart's affections would betray him and cause him to fail in the fulfillment of his duty:

"My hart be-gynnth strongly to rysse,
To see the blood off thy blyssyd body."

When the fatal moment comes, characteristically enough, it is Abraham that delays the decisive blow. He bewails that he should have lived to see the day, he prays that his heart 'breke on thre' and offers to God the sacrifice of his life in place of that of his child. He defers so long that Isaac asks him to have mercy and not delay the stroke:

A! mercy, fader, wy tery ye so;
And let me ley thus longe on this hethe?"

This moves the patriarch to the final decision; addressing his heart reproachfully he draws the sword:

"Now, hart, wy wolddyst not thow breke on thre?
Yt schall thou not make me to my God on-myld.
I wyll no longer let for the,
For that my God agrevyd wold be;
Now hoold tha stroke, my owyn dere chyld.

The Angel stays his hand as the sword is to fall on Isaac's neck, and explains to the patriarch how God was pleased with the will for the deed. The heavenly messenger on departing points to the ram caught in the thicket. Abraham, overcome with joy, breaks forth into words of thanksgiving:

A! Lord, I thanke the of thy gret grace,
Nowe, am I yeyed on dyuers wysse,
A-rysse up, Ysaac, my dere sunne, arysse;
A-rysse up, swete chyld and cum to me.

Unlike the Towneley play at this point Abraham will not speak to the heavenly messenger until he himself has released and kissed his son, in the Brome play Isaac knows nothing of the Angel's intervention and all the while awaits the fatal stroke in silent suspense. Consequently, now when Abraham bids him rise, he fears that his father has been wanting in resolution.

"A! mercy fader, wy smygth ye nowt?
A! smygth on, fader, onys with your knyffe."

Abraham tells him of the heavenly visitor and the happy issue of their grief. Isaac wishes that he could believe it. Doubt and fear possess his mind all through the remaining lines, despite the fact that Abraham points to the "blyssyd scheppe" which God has sent for the sacrifice. Even when the victim is ready to be immolated and Isaac feels the joy of life and the prospective happiness of seeing his mother again he can not persuade himself that all danger is over. He asks for repeated assurances that his life will be spared, as when he fans the fire:

> But, fader, wyll I stowppe downe lowe,
> Ye wyll not kyll me with yowr sword, I trowe.

The patriarch gently assures him that their mourning is past and that he must not entertain such idle fears. But Isaac can not put them away.

> Ya! but I woold that sword were in a gled,
> For, i-wys, fader, yt make me full yll a-gast.

Abraham offers the sacrifice and Deus speaks from above acceptance of it. Father and son fall on their knees and thank heaven for its manifold blessings. As Abraham and Isaac leave for home, a 'Doctour' comes on the stage and explains at length the lesson of the piece.

From this brief outline of the action it is sufficiently evident that the author of this isolated, or at least, detached drama, understood the spirit or inner movement of the contrast between the tragic quality of the situation and the non-tragical characters of the persons engaged in it. The struggle presented in this most pathetic of incidents is singularly dramatic. For the purposes of the playwright, a more inspiring theme than this Biblical suggestion of the clash of highest interests between obvious duty and fatherly affection, could hardly be conceived. The characters develop not by any external agency but from within, in a purely moral way. The outward action is informed by an inner principle. The variety of motives, their apposite arrangement, the logical growth of influencing causes into effects and reactions—in a word, from the general impression of the whole as well as from the effective and artistically dramatic setting of its parts, one may conclude that he has here in this religious drama of the fourteenth century, the highest result of a conscious effort at dramatic effect through characterization. It will be remembered that although the Brome play,

Abraham and Isaac, is thought to be independent of cyclic influences, it differs however, only in degree of perfection from its counter-part in the cycle series. Indeed, Ten Brink when noticing the richness of motives and varieties of thought and emotion as presented in the Brome scene, observes that some passages in it arouse in him the suspicion that motives from other plays have been interwoven with the representation forming the nucleus of this play. There is intrinsic evidences to confirm the suspicion that the Brome play drew from many sources and that its originality comes rather from the fusion and recasting of foreign material than by way of a studied deduction direct from the Biblical suggestion. In either case the work is original for us—it being the best of the six plays extant on the subject—and from the point of view of character-treatment it is of the utmost value as illustrative, at so early a date, of such perfection in the evolution of the caste. There is a genuine growth and expansion of the persons outward from within, the informing principle or process inside furnishes life, motive and meaning to the external activity. There has been this intrinsic inner force operating in the liturgic and cyclic characters, but for its full perception special faculties were required. These, it has been said, were supplied by the two senses of personality and responsibility which were developed beyond parallel all through the Middle Ages. The environment, too, in disposing favorably the acts of presentation incited the perceptive powers and aided in bringing out the significance of the action. But in the present scene the matter is dramatic in itself, and it is its human side which is accentuated. It belongs to the Middle Ages but the sentiment, while peculiarly suited to the mediaeval temperament, has power to appeal to any audience in any age. There is an element of human interest in the Sacrifice of Isaac with which no one who can appreciate tragic action will be wanting in sympathy while he beholds this most trying struggle within the range of the dramatic—the conflict between evident duty and fatherly affection.

The transition to the Elizabethan drama from the Brome, Dublin, or Chester plays of Abraham and Isaac, or from the development of many situations all through the cycles might have been easily effected. Many of the scenes such as those treating of the Crucifixion, for instance, in the York set, or

the play of the Last Judgment in the Chester Cycle, which is, in its way, a tragedy in little, might be taken from the series in which they are linked and worked over and extended into an independent drama. This was tentatively aimed at by the liturgic writer. All that had been needed was to substitute for the exclusively spiritual or supernatural motives of the religious dramas incentives of a more sensible nature, connections less occult between the directing thought or process within and the outward act. Though it is the divine element within the character which is the vivifying germ of all real human heroism and this, as has been said, was intuitively understood by the mediaeval mind, the later dramatist, however, felt it necessary, not indeed to exclude the great mian-spring and the determinative of human activity which dwells in man's nature, but to assume its existence as the hidden root-virtue, whose acts and manifestations it was his main task to emphasize. Here, perhaps, we may see at the closest, how strictly one the early conception of characterization was with the highest Elizabethan development of it, and how unbroken the continuity from the origin of the Gothic drama to its fullest perfection, had been the playwright's growing consciousness of the need of presenting his persons in lifelike action, reasoning, willing and feeling. This was the aim immutable. What ever contributed to realize this great end was straightway canonized as dramatic material.

The Liturgical drama retained throughout close affinities to its sacrosanct origins, never forsaking its solemn ritualistic character, so far, at least as any conscious introduction of the comic is concerned. With the cycles this was not the case. Though in purpose and matter these, too, were essentially faithful to their Sacred beginnings, the religious element predominating to the last, they were not, however, so exclusively serious as not to admit at times a seasoning mixture of what was less weighty, humorous touches, comical incidents and downright incongruous farces. It is here at this early period in the development of the drama that we find the crude beginnings of what was later to be perfected by the Elizabethan writers—the intermingling of the light with the grave, the trivial with the serious, comedy with tragedy. Here also at the birth of the comic element in the religious drama one sees best the difference between the Biblical writer and the mediaeval playwright. Seen

from this side one appreciates at its fullest the mite of originality in the treatment of the persons of the Bible and particularly the attitude of the dramatist toward his non-biblical caste. His constant attention to what is dramatic in their lives, as was observed when speaking of his search for contrasts, and his effort to recast the biblical material and make it appeal to his audience by such indefensible processes as modernizing and localizing by homely allusions of the day in Mediaeval England events that took place at the dawn of time in heaven and hell, Chaldea and Calvary, Bethlehem and Egypt, show attempts at realism which facilitated and fostered greatly the beginnings of English comedy. The insight one gets into the dramatic purpose of the playwright from the consideration of his partiality for the imponderable parts of his matter is of the greatest importance in an estimate of characterization during the cyclic period. The introduction of the comic —itself a natural outgrowth of a fuller treatment of the serious and tragic—humanized the purely spiritual drama of the Sanctuary and made it more concrete than any external influence could have done. Similarly it will be the coarse comic element that will keep the Moral plays in touch with the audience, and give to the abstractions in appearance outwardly, the semblance somewhat of the very close relation in which the allegorical figures actually stood to the persons of real life.

Incidents and scenes of relief have been noted from time to time in summarizing the action of the York Cycle. This set of plays, however, is perhaps, the least remarkable for that display of merriment on every occasion to be met with, for instance, in the Towneley cycle of which Mr. Courthope says, that "it would indeed almost seem as if the author, in attempting to gratify the taste of his Wakefield audience, had studied the York text, and had deliberately resolved to bring the comic elements of that play into exaggerated relief." The York writer, whose sense of dramatic proportions preserved him on the one side from the didacticism of the Coventry Cycle, and on the other, from the more supportable weakness of the Towneley playwright's bent to carricature and burlesque, divined perhaps, with a surer instinct than any of his contemporaries the true function of the comic in tragedy. His humorous incidents appear to grow out of his material, or at least, they never strike one as such

patent inorganic interpolations as do the Towneley Noah and Secunda Pastorum, for instance, or Joseph's Jealousy and the Trial of Mary in the VII and XIV plays of the Coventry Cycle.

In the presentation of the comic no less than in the purely serious matter one finds reflected the spirit of the mediaeval times and the unerring instinct of the playwright in divining a process of dramatic action which the practice of Shakespeare alone seemed capable of defending. "The parent stock of the English Chronical Plays (as of the comedy of manners and some other forms of realistic drama)," writes Professor Schelling, "is ultimately the comedy element in the old sacred drama. It was thence that the Chronical play drew its sense of comedy and its adhesion to simple realism in the representation of scenes of actual life."* George Whetstone in the dedication of his "Promos and Cassandra" gives this description of the nature of the popular theatrical representation in 1578: "The Englishman in this quality is most vain, indiscreet and out of order. He first grounds his works on impossibilities, then, in three hours, runs he through the world, marries, gets children, makes children men, men to conquor kingdoms, murder monsters and bring the gods from heaven, and fetches devils from hell: and, that which is worse their ground is not so imperfect as their working indiscreet; not weighing, so the people laugh, though they laugh them for their follies to scorn. Many times to make mirth, they make a clown a companion to the king; in their general counsels they allow the advice of fools, yea they use one order of speech for all persons, a gross indecorum."† That all these charges as stated might not be alleged against the work of the cyclic playwright is evident; but it is nevertheless true that what had become the ordinary license in the Chronical play and Romantic drama before the time of Shakespeare was quite in keeping with the spirit and practice of the religious stage.

Five years later, about 1583, another theorist, Sir Philip Sidney repeats in his Apology the complaint. Plays were "neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrusts in the

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* Schelling, F. E., The English Chronical Play, p. 28.

† For Dedication, see Gregory Smith "Elizabethan Critical Essays," Vol. I, 58-60.

clown by head and shoulders, to play a part in majestical matters with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration nor right sportfulness is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained." This censure, not at all addressed to the Sacred drama for which Sidney had little regard, was however, as applicable to it as to the other species. Tragi-comedy had its origin in the religious representations as the Mystery of the Passion, before referred to, would show. In that play the Mercator is not "thrust in by head and shoulders", nor is there "the gross indecorum" of using one order of speech for all persons, as the cosmetics are bought and the songs are sung in the vernacular. It is evident to every one how much this shopping-scene, immediately preceding Magdalen's conversion and the Crucifixion itself, served to heighten these subsequent parts of the play. Nothing could further the interests of characterization more directly than the effort called forth here to present, even with the faint semblance of reality, the truly dramatic transitions in this brief play.

Numerous instances might be given which would go to show that certain germinations of tragi-comedy manifest themselves in the Cycles. I am not implying that all the pieces of rusticity and buffonry one meets with existed "because the matter so carrieth it", neither should I feel warranted to go to the other extreme and say that nothing of the light, humorous and even the burlesque was of organic growth, belonging to the genius of the subject. This much is true, that one seldom finds the comic introduced for its own sake but that in most cases the contrast of the light with the grave adds considerably to the general effect. The playwright has in mind the reproduction of the actual scene and it is frequently remarkable with what pains he aims at a certain fineness of truth. The vivid manner in which the Towenely writer conceives the scene which presents the Sacrifices of Cain and Abel is an instance in point. Cain's workman, Pyke-Harnes, "a merry lad, both blithe and glad" speaks the prologue, calling on the audience to put an end to noise and talk. His words are scarcely over when Cain enters with a team—or more accurately, pulls up on a reserved space of ground beside the scaffold. The ox and mare that draw the plow are unmanageable—a circumstance which gives occasion to present the ploughman in his heated moments. Cain's

language is characteristic throughout; the Towneley author strives to stamp every word uttered by his characters with a peculiar accent unmistakably their own. When the gentle Abel comes before the spectators wishing Cain and his man "a God spede", he actually finds the ploughman and servant at fists. He parts them and peace is restored, but Cain's disposition is not changed. His very answer to Abel's salutation would show the spiteful disregard of the insolent and envious miser towards his brother. We have seen the reasons Cain gave in the York Cycle for not wishing to offer tithes to God, as Abel bids him at this point to do; among others these are what he alleges here

> "When all mens corne was fayre in feld,
> Then was myne not worthe an eld;
> When I should saw (sow), and wanted sede,
> And of corne had fulle grete neyde,
> Then gaf he me none of his,
> No more wille I gif hym of this."

Fear rather than love or duty moves him to follow Abel to the place of sacrifice. Feeling it impossible to revenge himself on God, he grows at every step more vindictive toward his brother whose generous disposition is a continuous reproach to his ungrateful spirit. Abel is shocked at the height of insolence on the part of Cain, who deliberately assorts two dozen sheafs, the poorest in his property, to offer as a holocaust to the Lord. The clever commingling of the comic and serious elements here would go far to justify Mr. Pollard's statement that the author of the Towneley Mactatio Abel, was a genius.* The rejection of his sacrifice, evident in that it was not consumed without smoke, and the acceptance of Abel's lamb enkindle his wrath the more, and as if it were impossible for jealousy and anger to burn fiercer within his breast, when he hears the formal reproving voice from heaven his passion apparently calms. In the whole round of the Cycle, I doubt that there be many touches truer to nature than this manifested in the affected composure Cain assumes to hide more effectively his murderous design. The sudden transition from a violent hate to a hypocritical placidity of mind reveals the depth of his passion. Abel, with characteristic innocence is betrayed by the seeming sincerity of his brother. He goes with Cain into the fields, where, without

* Journal of Comparative Literature, Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 324-344. The Character of Cain, by Paul Hamelius.

the remotest positive cause, the inhuman archmurderer falls on his brother and crushes him to death. The divine curse is pronounced over Cain, who seeks to hide himself from the face of God.

The scene that follows the fratricide and malediction affords the playwright an occasion to show the hero in the most calamitous circumstance imaginable. The language and action of Cain reflect his mental state—the traditional seven mortal sins of which legend held him guilty, so operate within his breast that he appears to be less a rational being than a sensible composite of this seven-fold spiritual activity. And yet he is intensely human. His fiendish exultation over the dead body of his brother, only surpassed by the bold defiance he offers to God, would lead one to infer otherwise. A careful study of the play will justify the conclusion that the conduct of Cain, even in the second part of the play, differs essentially from the roles of Satan and his fellows (with whom, however, the mediaeval painter was wont to associate the first murderer) as these impersonations of evil are conceived by the playwright of the Middle Ages. The two senses of personality and responsibility, I should venture to say, are abnormally keen, though dulled by his seven-fold guilt. The whole tenor of his actions, notably his will, however reluctant to follow Abel to offer tithes, and his effort to hide from the Lord after the murder, makes it appear that Cain was fully sensible of the divine sanction governing his conduct. At times his words would lead one to infer the contrary, but his deeds are surer indices of his belief than his words, and the opposition here between words and acts is, or is analogous to, the rendering explicit through speech and movement, the willingness or unwillingness to do a deed or follow a course of action. This making objective, a personification of the secret, inner prompting of the human spirit, would appear to me the main work of the moral playwright.

How wide the playwright's conception was of the truth in his presentation of this scene from Genesis, will always remain an open question. That it illustrates the point for which I have chosen to speak of it here, is evident to all who have considered the nature of the tragi-comic in the Elizabethan drama. To put into serious dramas sorcerers, peasants, drunkards, buffoons, grave-diggers in the act of making a grave and

singing drinking songs as they play with the skulls of the dead, grated on Voltaire's sensibilities. But had he observed closer he might have found, as Prof. Lounsbury aptly points out, "that the grave-diggers sing songs; but they are not drinking songs, and in the exercise of their calling they throw up skulls but they do not play with them."*

Place side by side the narrative in the fourth chapter of Genesis and its dramatization by the Woodkirk playwright and it will appear that he came nearer to fact than is commonly thought. To the meagre outline given by the sacred writer, the author of the play worked out the suggestion into reasonable fullness in a just, dramatic progression. That his interpretation of the Scriptural passage is wholly in keeping with the suggestion of the text no one will be likely to deny; on the contrary, it is for his extreme realism that he is censured. In his work one may perceive many of those germinations that were to grow to fruitage in the Elizabethan drama. The lovable character of Abel and the mild rebuke from God: "Cain why art thou so rebelle. Agans thi brother Abelle?" are contrasted with the insolent and irreverent attitude Cain manifests throughout. The long scene that presents the hero choosing and counting the poorest sheaves to pay the tithes brings out the antithesis in Cain's moral life better than pages of analytical writing. Again, the introduction of Pyke-Harnes, a personage wholly unknown to the inspired writer, was the fashioning of a stage-machine that looks like a creation of a born playwright. Pyke-harnes is a fellow of infinite jest and seemingly as irresponsible morally and socially as his descendants on the Elizabethan stage. How happily he serves the author in the development of the hero!

More need not be said in this place in reference to the cyclic playwright's view of the stage as an expression of life—the whole life, tragic and comic. It is wonderful with what directness and truth in his inimitable, unvarnished way he brought out, at times, with some dramatic intensity, the complex existence of the Biblical characters. With obvious limitations, Voltaire's confession is applicable to the Mediaeval stage. "When I began to learn the English language, I could not

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* Shakespeare and Voltaire, p. 51.

understand how so enlightened a people could admire an author (Shakespeare) so extravagant. But when I gained a fuller acquaintance with the speech, I perceived that the English were right, and that it is impossible for a whole nation to be deceived in a matter of sentiment, and to be wrong in being pleased. They saw, as I did, the gross faults of their favorite author, but they felt better than I his beauties, all the more remarkable because they are lightning flashes which have sent forth their gleams in profoundest night."*

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* Lounsbury, T. Shakespeare and Voltaire, p. 51.

CHAPTER V.

CHARACTERIZATION IN THE MORAL PLAYS

The development of the Liturgical drama into the Cyclic series was a natural, and dramatic conditions considered, a necessary growth. The idea undeveloped in the Sanctuary Scenes, however essentially prolific we admit it to be in itself, would remain to a great extent potential and inoperative as long as it abode within the seclusion of the sacred precincts. We have seen in what sense it was necessary for dramatic advancement that the Liturgical play should cease to be liturgic. In passing out of the hands of the clergy in their naves and choirs, to those of the laity in their market-places and guild halls, the dramatic germ which drew its life from the liturgy met with the needed conditions for growth. It may be questioned, however, if the Middle English cycles contributed in a more positive way to the Elizabethan drama than in affording a more or less congenial atmosphere to the unfolding and developing of what was germinally, at least, contained in Liturgical plays. No doubt there is a great distance between the first informal suggestion and actual execution of the idea in finished work. Moreover, it is purely speculative to ask was it necessary to await the slow round of the Cycles to reach the transition stage. The fact is that in adapting, defining and enlarging the Sanctuary Scenes, which was the great work of the cyclic playwright, much dramatic knowledge was acquired. New aspects of the central idea were observed, new dramatic points in the action were disclosed, invention was elicited, efforts to condense, recast and harmonize loosely connected incidents were called for, non-Biblical material was introduced, interest was quickened and the auditors grew more exacting.

Characterization was advanced by the removal of the stage from the sanctuary to the market-greens. Humanism had set in and its spirit was slowly permeating all institutions and classes of society, so that actions and incidents which at an earlier date edified and pleased, edified indeed as before, but were now more apt to grow tiresome. Unalloyed religious seriousness was no longer relished. Incidents of relief, not to say of profane burlesque, had to

be introduced to attract and keep the audience. What ever widened the sphere of the playwright meant a corresponding growth and variety in his characters. New phases of the hero's life appeared, recesses of his soul that no analysis could translate into words were shown open to the spectators by the brutal gesture, the scornful glance and slanderous tongue. Somewhat in this way it was that an atmosphere favorable to dramatic life and character-treatment resulted from the activity of the cyclic playwright. Remote preparations were made for the Elizabethan drama. The historical, comic, grotesque as well as dramatic elements of these early efforts might be so verified as to become component parts of a Shakespearean play. At all events it was to be expected that a new independent species might at any moment be deduced from the experience and suggestion afforded by the adaptation and continual revision of the cycles. The new species or sub-variety which grew into prominence was known as the Moral Play.

As complement of the cycles the Moral play which emphasized in a special way the ethical side of human existence and the sacramental system of the Church had a distinct value and appropriateness apart from its dramatic importance. In the plays that had to do with Scriptural history the doctrinal side of Christianity was brought chiefly into the foreground, the playwright not unfrequently treating his material with an evident apologetic purpose in view. However well it rounded out the religious teachings of the cycles, the Morality as a dramatic species, was apparently the least fitted of the many possible varieties suggested by the Biblical series to lead long in the struggle for life. If one would expect in the course of dramatic evolution the survival of the fittest from every generation, it would seem that we should regard the moral play as an anomaly, a barren and abortive side-growth from a stem of promise. When the idea of struggle and conflict present incipiently in the Liturgical drama had been elaborated and rendered so concrete by the long activity of the cyclic playwrights as to have reduced the general to the particular and personal—to be on the point of introducing real persons and manners on the stage—a reaction took place. It looked, at least from the point of view of character-treatment, as if the drama were to begin its career over. Instead of regular Comedy and Tragedy anticipating the dissolution of the long-lived Mysteries, these were suffered not to die but to become transformed into what would seem their primal state—the abstrac-

tions of the Moralities. The Four Sisters, Mercy, Truth, Peace and Justice, were to meet one another again on the stage from which they had made their exit early in the Coventry cycle.

"Allegory in the literature of the Middle Ages," says Mr. Courthope, "presents itself under three aspects: (1) As a philosophical method of interpreting the phenomena of nature (2) As an abstracting process of the mind which embodies itself in the rhetorical figure of Personification; (3) As specific form of Poetry." * There is no question of the Mediaeval predeliction for this form of writing. The extensive cultivation of allegory by poets and romancers would of itself be sufficient to settle any doubt as to the popular taste in this respect. This is noteworthy in the present connection where it is in place to trace out the course by which character-treatment in this chief among the apparently destructive species of drama had come to make contribution to the advance of characterization in a positive way. †

Considered in itself, the return to the presentation of abstract allegorical personages certainly would seem to indicate a retarding, if not an actual retrogression in the growth of dramatic characterization. To substitute for the homely, historical persons of the Bible, creations of the mind, such as Contemplation, Human Nature, God's Felicity, Light of the Gospel, Ecclesia, Synagoga, Gentilitas, etc., appears at first sight to put quite out of thought the essentials of dramatic composition. Such a process, it would seem, sapped at the very vitals of character-life and made all progressive growth impossible. That the Moral plays, however, were in some respects, in advance of the Cyclic drama, even in the way of character-treatment, and its complement from a dramatic as well as religious point of view, will sufficiently appear from a brief account of the species as a whole, and an analysis of a few representative moralities. They recapitulated to some extent the vital dramatic

* W. J. Courthope, History of English Poetry, Vol. I, pp. 341-392.

† Professor Brander Matthews in describing the nature of the Moral play, indicates this relative dramatic advance of the Morality Species. "The Morality was an attempt to depict character, but with the aid of the primary colors only, and with an easy juxtaposition of light and darkness. Yet it helped along the development of the drama in that it permitted a freer handling of the action, since the writer of the Moralities had always to invent his plots, whereas the maker of Mysteries (Cyclic playwrights) had his stories ready made to his hand. The Morality was frankly fiction, while the Miracle play gave itself out for fact. Then also the tendency seems irresistable, for any author who has an appreciation of human nature to go speedily from the abstract to the concrete, and to substitute for the cold figure of Pride itself, the fiery portrait of an actual man who is proud."

qualities of the Liturgical and Cyclic period and added to them the individuality of a new expression. This is true of the whole species generally, yet there are important accidental differences between the earlier and later Moral Plays.

Ordinarily it advances an explanation but little to say that there is much similarity among the several species of a literary genus, or among individual compositions of a species. We read a sixth novel, though we are convinced beforehand that the plot and denouement are identical in the main, with one or other of the preceding five. So, too, it is hardly true that there is no originality in the treatment of the several Moralities. Everyman, New Custom, The Conflict of Conscience and the Three Ladies of London, which are among the later moralities in point of time, and in many respects reached the perfection of the species in England, are at once very like and very different, for instance, from the "Macro Moralities," which are the earliest plays of the moral type. For the purpose of this Essay, details must be dispensed with and only typical plays chosen. Some definite idea of the characters may be formed with greater precision by dwelling, first, on the early moral plays, to wit, those contemporary with the Cyclic drama or those that drew their existence more directly and immediately from the Biblical Plays, as the Coventry set would lead one to infer; and then it will be in place to treat of character-presentation in the several later varieties which were mediately derived from the Cyclic-series and directly the outgrowth, for most part, of the preceding moralities.

"In tracing the origin and course of unconscious growth," says Ward, "it is well to abstain from any endeavor to draw hard and fast, and therefore more or less arbitrary, lines of demarkation." * This is very true and necessary. It is well, however, in the present connection, to distinguish between earlier Moralities, that is, the moral plays as such—didactic and allegorical; and the later moralities that were planned on a less extensive scale and ordinarily of a less religious import, and subjected to secularizing influences which in great part modified their nature. In this way we shall the better see how the growing Humanism with its manifold offshoots and interests, in arresting the progress of allegory and abstraction on the stage, furthered the growth of dramatic characterization.

Generically a morality is a play enforcing a moral truth by means of characters which are personified abstractions—figures rep-

* History of English Dramatic Literature. Vol. 1, p. 70.

resenting virtues and vices, qualities of the human mind, or abstract conceptions in general. * The allegorical tendency prevalent in every department of literature all through the Middle Ages, and particularly owing to such widely popular works as the Visio concerning Piers Plowman, the Roman de la Rose and the Confessio Amantis, contemporaneous with the growth of the Moralities in England, made it inevitable that the stage should escape the spirit of the times. Mr. Chambers sees intimations of the moral plays of the fourteenth century during the Liturgical period, and to ground his claim he refers to the twelfth-century Latin play of Antichristus, whose whole content in essence may be called allegorical, possessing at this early date such distinctively allegorical characters as Ecclesia, Synagogue, Gentilitas, Misericordia, Heresis, and Ypocrisis. † Ward also is of the same opinion. He condemns as "a fallacy" the supposition that would have the Moralities nothing but the outgrowth of the Mysteries, a mere literary expansion of the allegorical figures exhibited in those pageants (in the narrower sense of the term, as Warton and Collier would have it) which constituted the chief popular attraction of the religious and other processions of the Middle Ages." Ten Brink, Jusserand and Courthope agree in referring the origin of the moralities to the same spirit that introduced allegory into the current religious literature and court-poetry—the effort to illustrate moral doctrines and abstract ideas in bodily form. ‡

When the distinction between the earlier and later Moralities is borne in mind one can determine in a general way what were the influencing agencies which operated in either set. There are very positive differences both in the matter and the manner of treatment between the earliest moral plays and those which in point of time at least, stood nearest to the perfection of the species. It will not be questioned that in the early Moralities the allegorical and purely symbolical element predominated to such a degree that it would be impossible to eliminate it without the loss of an essential constituent of the play. It was the inseparable shadow of their substance. The simple frame or plot used in allegory which, to be worked out consistently, necessitated special conventions in respect to the choice and use of actors that were in keeping with its nature. A moral play

* Ward, A. History of Dram. Lit. Vol. I, p. 108.

† Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, Vol. II, p. 62, 151-152.

‡ Jusserand, Le Theatre en Angleterre, p. 320.

was like a Mid-summer Night's Dream, the conception and process dealt immediately with shadows of things, not with things in the manner that we know, see and feel them. These shadowy actors were real as long as one shut his eyes and dreamt, but the moment he awoke and would touch and see, the caste for the greater number vanished. "It was only necessary," says Ten Brink, "to take seriously the personification and figures of speech, and to carry them out consistently in order to complete the anthropomorphism." *

The early Moralities, then, could not be dissociated from their allegorical setting, and seem to reflect more the spirit of the Liturgic than that of the Cyclic drama. So far as the stage has given expression to Mediaeval life, one would find, perhaps, the truest mirror of the times in the Liturgical and early Moral plays. It strikes me as much to the purpose here in giving some general idea of the characters and movements in this earlier variety of Moral Play that which M. Jusserand says in speaking of physical types in the Middle Ages as they are seen in the remains of the plastic arts." "(Les) princes et gens du peuple ont des corps osseux et anguleux, au geste brusque, passablement brutal, et dans l'esprit desquels il est difficile de croire que des mots comme, grace, distinction, noblesse de maniéres aient un sens précis ou meme quelconque. Ce qu'on trouve dans la réalité, au Moyen-Age, des choses que désignent ces mots, paraient plus comme expressions d'aspirations vagues vers un idéal supreme, ä peine entrevu, que comme image de beauté pleines, contemplée habituellment et en face." †

Something analogous to the transition from the Liturgic to the Cyclic drama took place between the earlier and later plays of the Moral type. In the Moralities, however, this evolution was principally intrinsic, a growth from the abstract and general to the concrete and personal to the presentation of common life and manners; whereas the transition of the stage from the sanctuary to the fair-grounds wrought also notable inner modifications, inevitable in the process of elaboration that took place, but this change was mainly a formal one. The importance attached to allegory (including the moral lesson) in the respective plays of either period, affords a common basis for a distinction between the earlier and later Moralities. In the later Moral plays the allegory had not been nearly so indispensable as in the earlier compositions of the species.

* English Literature, Vol. I, 297-298.

† Le Theatre en Angleterre, etc., pp. 331-332.

For the most part it had direct bearing only on the plot; the characters were little affected by the allegorical surroundings in which they moved. They continued in many instances to be known by the familiar names, such as Avarice, Sensual, Suggestion, Hypocrisy, Satan, Tyranny, Spirit and Conscience. But these resemblances were only nominal. It is interesting to notice how in the course of development these abstractions took on flesh and blood, the qualities and manners of men, with human interests and evident personal motives back of their conduct. They became capable of a variety of action and their names signified only a predominant feature of their characters, not, as in the early Moral plays, their sole activity.

The titles just given common to the very first castes, are taken from the Conflict of Conscience, a Morality printed in 1581, a date which probably marks the closing days of the Moral plays as such. The play is purely controversial. It is particularly interesting, apart from its indication of allegorical usage in the drama, as here for the first time in the history of the religious stage we meet a hero taken from contemporary life. Francis Spiera, the Philologus of the Moral, was an Italian lawyer who "for fear of loss of life and worldly goods forsook the truth of God's Gospel." Having entered into himself after his apostasy from Calvanism, he was so smitten with remorse that in despair of salvation he committed suicide. This "most lamentable example of the doleful desperation of a miserable worldlinge" affording the teachers of the New Learning an apt illustration to point their discourses, very soon became widely known in England. The thin veil of allegory which the playwright, Nathaniell Woodes, minister in Norwich, threw over his "comedie," barely hid the reality. The prologue gives the author's view of the function of allegory in the drama after the following:

> And here our author thought it meet the true name to omit,
> And at this time imagine him Philogogus to be:
> First for because a comedy will hardly him permit
> The vices of one private man to touch particularly:
> Again now shall it stir them more, who shall it hear or see;
> For if this worldling had been named, we would straight deem in mind,
> That all by him then spoken well, ourselves we would not find.
> But sith philogogus is nought but one that loves to talk,
> And common (commune) of the Word of God, but hath no further care.
> According as he teacheth them in God's fear for to walk,
> If that we practise this indeed, Philologi we are:
> And so by his deserved fault we may in time beware,

Now if, as author first it meant, you hear it with this gain,
In good behalf he will esteem that he bestowed his pain.

To this extent the stage had emancipated itself from the dominion of the allegory even within the life-time of the Morality strictly so-called. Lusty Juventus, written about 1550, New Custom, printed in 1573, Hicke Scorner, Like Will to Like, in 1568, The Three Lords of London in 1584, would show the gradual attenuation of the allegorical element. Indeed, the Disobedient Child, printed in 1560, though in spirit a Moral, retains, however, none of the abstract characters. But at this time Bale and Lyndsay had written, and John Heywood was advanced in years.

This much in general. In the prologue to the Castle of Perseverance, the first of the three Macro Moralities, which are the earliest extant plays of the species, one will find the main argument underlying all plays of the Moral type, and incidentally an illustration of the nature and purpose of allegory in reference to construction and characters as conceived by the playwright at the inception of the Morality on the English stage.

The cause of our comynge you to declare
Everyman in hymself for soth he it may fynde,
Whou mankynde into this world born is ful bare
And bare shal beryed be at the last ende;
God hym yevyth two aungel ful yep and ful yare,
The goode aungel and the badde to hym for to lende;
The goode techyth hym goodnesse, the badde synne and sare,
Whanne the ton hath the victory the tother goth behende.
Be skyll.
The goode aungel covetyth evermore man's salvacion,
and the badde bysyteth hym evere to hys damnacioun,
And God hath gevyn man fre arbitracion
Whether he wyl him(self) save hy(s soul?). *

Throughout no less than 3,500 lines the argument here set forth is worded out with all the nakedness and earnestness in which it is stated. On inspection it will be manifest that the central idea of the Castle of Perseverance is very nearly related to the motive which gave dramatic unity in some sort to the Cycles. In both the conflict is between Good and Evil, and the issue at stake is the soul of man. The story of Creation, Fall and Redemption was wrought into dramatic form by the preceding playwrights. Deus was shown in a most attractive manner, with attributes by nature benevolently inclined. He was solicitous for the highest good of his friends,

* Pollard A. W. English Miracle Plays p. xlv.

and, as if one of them, He enjoyed their company and felt happy in their happiness. His undisturbed reign while it lasted, was a millenium of delights for his subjects. This is the beautiful picture which the action of the first pageant suggests. The Fall of the Angels was the birth of Evil and the beginning of the conflict between the divided powers. Milton's great Cycle was alone capable of giving adequate expression to this high argument. Ten centuries before Milton's day Caedmon and Cynewulf felt the inspiration of this same theme. Three hundred years prior to the Elizabethan drama, it was the concrete presentation of this historical struggle which supplied the cohesive qualities and dramatic interest in the Mediaeval cycles.

In a less broad scale in the Moral play there was a similar conflict waged. The two Angels fight perseveringly for the possession of Mankind whose "fre arbitracion" keeps the issue doubtful to the last. The dubious nature of the struggle and the consequences of surpassing magnitude resulting from each decision of the hero contributed an abiding interest to the action. It made up for what the drama lost in setting aside real persons such as the Bible furnished, and introducing in their stead typical figures impersonating abstractions of the mind.

By its very constitution the caste of the Moral play was limited in its action. The author seemed to have grasped the subject in its entirety, but not with the fulness that would give him mastery over its details. He failed to embrace the significance of the respective roles. He had yet to learn the way of justly apportioning the parts and of nicely co-ordinating the several activities. The actor presented himself in a formal way before his hearers on his first appearance in the play and thus predetermined the range of his activity. All was in a name. It ranked the bearer in one of two classes: it set him in the companyof the confirmed evil-doers or it fixed his role with the unchangeable righteous. There was no question of a middle course. An actor was good or evil and he could not help himself. Apparently the hero alone in the early moralities enjoyed freedom; all the rest on the stage were as their respective names signified—irresponsible creatures, indissolubly wedded to the one line of conduct which had been minutely defined at the beginning, commonly by the actor himself. In the Castle of Perseverance, Mankind was the only human person in the play; his part was dramatic, he alone could deliberate and choose, elicit sympathy and in-

terest in the audience. He ceased to be in a strict sense an allegorical or representative figure, in so far as this would imply rigid fidelity to an assumed and fixed course of action. The hero was a component of defects and qualities, he felt he was a person that had responsibilities. Modifying moral ingredients mingled with the good and evil in him to a degree not so apparent in the elemental condition of the subordinate players. These minor characters enjoyed such large immunity from the ordinary laws which govern man's conduct that they could teach no forcible lesson in human ethics. * They were merely facts of the hero's character and not themselves persons, centres of responsibility. Their great value was in this, that they pictured to the auditor in a sensible manner the psychic activities going on within the hero. Every figure in the play represented, or was instrumental in bringing to life some definite peculiar qality of the leading character. What was fluent, intuitive and tangible in the Liturgic and Cyclic drama became incarnate in the Moralities. The presence of such a distinct role as that of Conscience and Free-Will exemplified clearly the organic growth in power of character-treatment. The existence of the functional ideas of personality and responsibility as influencing character presentation, need no longer be assumed. The metaphor has been realized in fact by the moral playwright. He furnished a body to these two senses which were present and had operated in an implicit or spiritual way in the earlier species of the drama. †

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* Symonds, J. A., The Predecessors of Shakespeare, p. 118.

† What Newman says on the process of the development in ideas may be applied analogically to illustrate to some extent the way by which the morality playwright endeavored to realize a complete dramatic expression.

"The idea which represents an object or supposed object is commensurate with the sum total of its possible aspects, however they may vary in the separate consciousness of individuals, and in proportion to the variety of aspects under which it presents itself to various minds is its force and depth and the argument for its reality. Ordinarily an idea is not brought home to the intellect except through this variety; like bodily substances, which are not apprehended under the clothing of their properties and results, and which admit of being walked around and surveyed on all sides and in different perspectives, and in contrary lights, in evidence of their reality, and, views of a material object may be taken from points so remote or so opposed that they seem at first sight, incompatible, and especially as their shadows will be disproportionate, or even monstrous, and yet all these anomolies will disappear and all these contricities be adjusted on ascertaining the point of vision or the surface of projection in each case; so also all the aspects of an idea are capable of coalition, and of resolution into the object to which it belongs; and the *prima facie* dissimilitude of its aspects becomes, when explained, an argument for its substantiveness and integrity, and their multiplicity for its originality and power". (Development of Doctrine, pp. 34-35.)

The intention in this on the part of the author of the Moral plays to emphasize and have the thought more dramatic cannot be mistaken. To realize fully his idea was wholly beyond his power, but the attempt was praiseworthy. It is interesting to notice that his energies worked in the right direction. He labored to give concrete dramatic expression to the two great root principles of ethical life. In other words he proposed to decompose the moral life of man, to single out his mental faculties to make objective the intellect, will, imagination, memory, etc., so that while holding apart their several activities he would present at the same time on the undivided individual the ethical influences resulting from the action of one psychic process on the other, its reaction and the interaction of all the human powers in eliciting the human act. Such an undertaking viewed in the light of after development in power of character-presentation was along the right line. The face value of the moral plays as finished works of dramatic literature is unquestionably little, but when taken as evidences of characterizing power the moralities acquire a very positive worth. They mark, if not the birth of a new instinct, at least a realization of an old feeling in things dramatic.

Take as illustrative of this the oldest morality extant—the Castle of Perseverance. The prevailing idea is one of conflict between Good and Evil, and the point at issue being the soul of the hero, Mankind, who is the representative of the human race. The three great sources or agencies of evil are the first impersonations in the opening scene. Mundus, Caro and Belyal enlarge on their inexhaustible capabilities in the way of creating the moral ruin of Humanum Genus. The three are of one mind and league their respective resources toward the conquest of the hero. While they are speaking Humanum Genus leaves his cradle and comes on the stage. He is in a most helpless condition, only a day old "ful feynt and febyl, not wedyr to gon ne to lende." He speaks four thirteen-line stanzas, graphically setting forth with amazing insight and prevision the general wretchedness of his present and future state, and the immediate dangers which threaten him at the hands of the three malicious veterans that stand by him on his left. A Bonus Angelus stands on his right and warns him against his enemies, counselling him at the same time to "fare well in all thinge, and certes thou shalt not wante." A bad angel silences the speaker and offers the hero this advice:

Cum on with me, stylle as ston:
Whow sone thou schalt be ryche,.
And thanne thou schalt sen a-non
Thou and I to the werld schul goon,

The Good Angel calls this "folye" on these grounds:

Why schuld he coveyt werldes goode,
Syn Criste in erthe and hys meynye
All in povert here thei stode?.

The response of the evil angel is not in the way of an answering argument, but of an hortatory appeal to the hero to offer allegiance to Mundus and to share at once in therights and privileges of a subject. Humanum Genus is divided in mind and yet he cannot remain passive nor avail himself reasonably of both counsels since they are mutually exclusive. He has to choose.

"Whom to folwe wetyn I ne may:
I stonde in studye and gynne to rave,
I wolde be ryche in gret aray,
And fayne I wolde my sowle save.
As wynde in watyr I wave:
Thou woldst be to the werld I me toke,
And he wolde that I it forsoke,
Now so God me helpe, and the holy boke,
I not wyche I may have."

This nine-line stanza is perhaps the earliest formal statement in English of that which constitutes the essence of the drama—an inner conflict of magnitude. The struggle here presented is followed out on the strictest lines. There is no question of the unity of the Moralities. The simplicity of the action itself and the fixed, invariable bent in the constitution of the caste made any swerving from the main idea impossible. Only Humanum Genus could change. The disadvantages under which the cyclic dramatist labored by reason of the unavoidable familiarity of the audience beforehand with his story and persons seemed to have been deliberately created by the moral playwright himself. No one doubted the necessary attitude of Stultitia, Voluptas, or Detraccio toward the hero the moment he heard from their own lips their respective names and properties, any more than he could have hesitated to predict infallibly the after activity of Abstinentia Charitas and Solicitudo when he beheld their first ingress on the stage. From the point of view of technique this was as if a detective-story writer would insert his concluding chapter immediately after the title page.

True to his role, with instinctive readiness the Angel of Evil

seizes on the opportune moment while the hero is undecided which advice to follow.

"Cum on, man! where of hast thou care?
Go we to the werld, I rede the, blyve;
For there thou schalt now ryth wel fare,
In case if thou thynke for thryve,
No lord schal be the lyche."

Humanum Genus would compromise. He is strongly influenced by the words of the bad angel and partly consents to follow his counsel, but he feels pained at the remonstrance of the angel of good who deplores that he should have made the slightest concession to the evil adviser.

The werld is wyckyd and ful wod,
And thou schalt levyn but a whyle,
What covytyst thou to wynne?
Man, thynke on thyn endynge day,
Whanne thou schalt be closyd under clay,
And if thou thenke of that a-ray,
Certes thou schalt not synne.*

The Malus Angelus perfectly understands what is taking place in the mind of Humanum Genus and feeling it impossible to refute in a direct way the argument of the good angel, he waives the point by an important remark, and paliates the doubts agitating the hero by proposing a compromise,—following in this the hint given by

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* The moral lesson taught here Calderon makes the climax of the auto "Los Escantos de la Culpa."

Music (*enters*).
Would'st thou, man, to rapture give
Life's young hours that flower and fly,
Oh, forget that thou must die!
And but think that thou dost live!
(A sound of drums and voices typifying Doom-day's call is heard outside; all—Music and the Five Senses, Circe and Seven Deadly Sins—start in surprise).
The Understanding and Penance answer within.
Sin (*to Music*)
Cease thy song! What voice doth strive
Thus to mar our joy thereby?
Understanding (*to Ulysees*)
Valiant soldier, from on high,
Wouldst thou lasting bliss receive?
Penance (*to Nero*)
Oh, forget that thou must live.
Understanding
And remember that thou must die!
Sin.
Who is this whose voice breaketh
Rudely on my startled ear?
Man.
'Tis my inner voice you hear—
'Tis my understanding speaketh;
Him my answering conscience seeketh.
Sin.
—Heed him not, no answer give.
Man.
Let him go!
Sin.
Thou goest to grieve.
Sing once more lest Man should hear
That mysterious voice severe.
Music.
Oh remember that thou must live.
—(MacCarthy, D. F., The Three Dramas of Calderon with the Spanish Text, p. 184.)

Humanum Genus himself to whom just now nothing could be more agreeable than a middle course.

> With the werld thou mayst be bold,
> Tyl thou be sexty wynter oold;
> Wanne thi nose waxit cold.
> Thanne mayst thou drawe to goode.†

This suggestion is welcomed. After some hesitation and in spite of the entreaties and "grisely grones" of his good angel, the hero takes the decisive step. He is ushered to the throne on which Mundus is seated and there plights unqualified obedience to the monarch. His fealty insures to him all the pleasures he is capable of enjoying, and Mundus himself introduces him to "two lovely ladies," Voluptas and Stulticia, and then to Detraccio, who becomes his page, and later to Belyal and Caro. Avaritia finally takes the hero to the Six Capital Sins—"the devylys chyldren," with whom he abides till close on his fortieth year.

After this long career of the freest dissoluteness he begins to taste "the sowre sweetenesse" as he calls it, of pleasure. All this while the Angel of Good never lost interest in him, and now when his charge is growing tired of companionship with the "develys chyldren," the long-suffering angel calls to his help Confessio and Schrift and the three with Penetencia succeed after much effort in reclaiming the hero. They hurry him to the Castle of Perseverance (which is "strenger thanne any in Fraunce") and there lodge him out of reach of his enemies. Here in this "precyous port" with Christ his "coumfort" he leads a "merry life" in company with the Seven Virtues. *

† Observe how Mediaeval-like is the scene in Marlowe's *Faustus*

> O, Faustus, lay that damned book aside,
> And gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soul,
> And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head!
> Read, read the Scriptures—that is blasphemy.

The Evil Angel paraphrases the language of the Tempter of Eden:

> Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art
> Wherein all Nature's treasure is contained;
> Do thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,
> Lord and commander of those elements. (Act 1, Scene 1.)

Good Angel: Sweet Faustus, think of heaven and heavenly things.
Evil Angel: No, Faustus, think of honour and of wealth.'
(Act II, Scene I.)

* It is impossible for me to follow the action further. The Castle of Perseverance has yet been printed only in part. Mr. Pollard who has promised to edit the manuscript entire for the Early English Text Society, has given a specimen of the play which has enabled me to speak of it this far. To him and to Collier I am indebted in the main for what follows. Cf. A. W. Pollard, 'English Miracle Plays and Moralities,' pp. xlv ff; and Collier, 'History of Dramatic Poetry,' pp. 279-287.

Detraccio brings the news of Mankynd's conversion to Caro, and after a brief counsel they report what has happened to Mundus. Measures are taken by the powers of evil to secure Humanum Genus. Belyl after he has abused and beaten his subjects, the Seven Deadly Sins, for their negligence leads them to besiege the Castle of Perseverance. Collier quotes the spirited address of the leader to his followers before they assault the Castle.

"I here trumpys trebelen all of tene
The very werld walkyth to werre
Sprede my penon upon a prene,
And stryke we forthe now under sterre.
Schapyth now your sheldys shene
Yone skallyd shouts for to skerre—
Buske ye nowe, boys, belyve,
For ever I stonde in mekyl stryve,
Whyle Mankynde is in clere lyve."

Pride bears the banner, Caro rides on horseback and Gula flourishes an immense lance. Humanum Genus is terrified at the onslaught and implores "the Duke that died on rood" to take care of his soul. A shower of roses flung from the wall drives the allied forces of Mundus, Caro and Belyal into hopeless flight. The effective roses, it need not be observed, typified the Passion of Christ. *

Very soon afterward (though in the meantime the hero has grown hoary and feeble) Mundus engages Avaritia to approach stealthily to the Castle walls and induce Humanum Genus to descend. Avaritia plays his part well and his arguments have the desired effect. Humanum Genus descends from the Castle, remarking,

Certys this ye wel knowe
It is good whan so the wynde blowe,
A man to have sumwhat of his owe
What happe so ever be tyde.

The Virtues who do their utmost to keep him within the Castle are

* In Calderon's Auto "Los Encantos de la Culpa," Penetentia lets fall on Man a bunch of flowers,

all dappled
O'er with virtues from the life-blood
Of a Lamb, whose crimson altar
Was a tree's unmeasured hardness
By whose mystic aid thou mayest
All her (Sin's) poisoned snares down trample
Touch them with but this—that moment
Shall they lose all power to harm thee—
Take it, and adieu!

MacCarthy, D. F., the Three Dramas of Calderon, p. 175.

grieved at his departure. Largitas, as naturally most disconsolate of all, addresses the audience:

'Now, good men alle, that here be
Have my systers excused and me,
Thou Mankynde fro this Castle flee!

Humanum Genus receives as price of his defection a thousand marks from Mundus. Immediately he buries the money in the ground, reserving it for the future. Much to the old man's surprise, Garcio (a boy) representing the rising generation, lays claim to the treasure in the name of Mundus. Humanum Genus protests,—

What devyl! thou are not of my kyn,
Thou didyst me nevere no maner good
I hadde lever sum nyfte, or sum cosyn,
Or sum man hadde it of my blod:—

But in vain. The minion of Mundus inherits what Avaritia and Humanum Genus had accumulated. The hero's mind turns to the happy days in the Castle, and this crowns his sorrows. Every thought is a pang. He often tasted the "soure sweetenesse" of pleasure's cup, but now they are the dregs he has to drink. The remorse of Philologus and the terror of Everyman seem to torture him, as abandoned by every succor he sees "drery Death" slowly approach. Anima cries to Misericordia for help, but Malus Angelus is beforehand and will brook no delay. He seizes the decrepit Humanum Genus, hoists him on his shoulder and sets off with him to the infernal regions, bidding the audience as he passes

Have good day; I goo to helle!

The closing act takes place in heaven. Misericordia, Pax, Justitia and Veritas plead the cause of Humanum Genus. Misericordia at the command of Deus, who presides as judge, fetches Anima from hell. After a process conducted largely after the manner of the XI Coventry Pageant and the Hegge Play on the Salutation and Conception in which, as in a larger scale in the French *Mystere Du Passion* of Arnoul and Simon Greban, the Heavenly Sisters, the Four Great Attributes of the Eternal Father plead before the Holy Trinity the feasibility of man's salvation. In the Biblical plays Mercy and Peace take the part of the fallen race, Justice and Truth are opposed to the redemption of man. They cannot understand how they will exist if the arguments of their sisters prevail. The discussion stands two and two. Man's fate hangs in the balance. How effect a decision? Mercy and

Peace plead earnestly for pity and grace, but Truth urges that there can be no amity between sin and law. The discussion continues with some warmth till Peace brings all to accord. "Mercy and Truth have met each other, Justice and Peace have kissed." The Sisters go to the ends of the earth to find a sinless man that is willing to give his life for the salvation of all. But the search is in vain; no such man can be found. They refer the whole matter to the Council of the Holy Trinity. God the Son consents to undertake the work of redemption, the Father agrees, and the Holy Ghost promises to bring all to a happy issue.

Before a court of this nature the soul of Humanum Genus is arraigned. The Sisters take sides as in the case of the Mysteries, when the fate of the human race was at stake, and here, too, the arguments of Misericordia prevail. Her appeal to Christ's passion procures from *Pater sedens in judicio* a decision in favor of Humanum Genus. Collier gives the epilogue, which is the moral, as spoken by the Judge:

> All men example here at me take,
> To mayntein the good and mendyn here mys.
> Thus endyth our ganys:
> To save you fro synnynge,
> Evyr at the begynnynge,
> Thnke o nyour last endynge.
> *Te Deum Ladamus.*

This in merest outline is the structure and content of the oldest Moral Play extant. It is certainly as old as the reign of Henry VI. The completeness with which the idea is treated implies the existence of predecessors in the same kind. Wycliff, who died in 1384, refers to "The Paternoster in Englysch tunge, as men seyen in the pley of York." This play presumably old in Wycliff's time, "set forth" the goodness of the Lord's Prayer," and was so received that after its first presentation a Guild, which in 1399 numbered over a hundred members and their wives, was formed solely for the purpose to secure its regular performance. It must have been in the line of the Moralities, for in it "all manner of vices were held up to scorn, and the virtues were held up to praise." Another play or cycle of plays akin to the Moral type grew out of the Credo. This play or series of scenes was of great length and was played at Lammastide; but nothing more in the way of details concerning these is known. Both plays or cycles antedate the Castle of Perseverance which itself would illustrate a clause of the Pater or Credo.

Mundus et Infans, a play written probably early in the reign of Henry VII, treats the same broad theme as that which formed the subject of the Castle of Perseverance. The piece has too little action, though the author at times arranges his extensive material with much dramatic effectiveness. The structure of the play, however, is of the simplest kind. Just as in the preceding Morality, Mundus here appears in the opening scene, boasting of his might in a true Herodian measure. His supremacy is such on all sides that he is "kynge in every case." "Me thynketh I am a god of grace," is the conclusion he comes to from reflection on his person and power.

Infans enters in as pitiful condition every way as little Humanum Genus appeared in the earlier play. He begs the audience to look at him and see how "mankynde doth begynne." After speaking some lines on his lowly origin and the inconveniences of poverty, he goes to the "worlde, some comforte of him for to crave." Mundus receives him affably, and asks him his name, which is Dalyaunce, clothes him in "garmentes gaye," promises him plenty and rechristens him. Wanton is now the name which he is to bear till he is fourteen years old. Wanton promises on his part the most submissive allegiance to the "worthy Emperour." He leaves the throne and with accents of triumph addresses the audience—

> A ha! Wanton is my name
> I can many a quayante game:
> Lo, my toppe I dryne in same,—
> Se, it turneth ronde!
> I can with my scorge strycke
> My felowe upon the hede hytte
> And myghtly from hym make a skyppe,
> And blere on hym my tonge.

He can cry, bite and kick and "make a skyppe" if his father or mother chides him; he can dance, whistle, rob a sparrow's nest or an orchard, and absent himself from school.

After describing the "quaynte games" of childhood, as reckoned from the age of reason "tyll xiiii yere be come and gone," he returns to Mundus, who confers on him a new name, Love-lust and Lyking. He comes back to the audience and tells briefly of his experience as before. He presents himself another time before Mundus, who, on account of diligent obedience to his will, bestows a third name on his faithful vassal. Manhode is the new name, and the privileges attached to this title are far more numerous than

to either of the preceding. Manhode is specially enjoined to worship seven kings whose characters Mundus outlines. The royal personages to whom the hero swears by "Saynt Thomas of Kent" that he will serve truly "with mayne and myght" are no other than the Seven Deadly Sins. Mundus takes occasion of the ceremony to address the audience in the most pompous manner, as Pharoah or Herod might have done in the Cycle plays. Manhode adopts his master's style of speaking. He ingratiates himself to the audience in this manner:

'Peas, now peas, ye felowes all aboute;
Peas now, and herken to my sawes,
For I am a lorde both stalworthy and stout,
All londes are ledde by my lawes.
Baron was never borne that so well hym bare,
A better ne a bolder nor a bryghter of ble;
For I have myght and mayne ower countrees fare,
And Manhode myghty I am namyd in every countre.

He continues to recount his travels and triumphs as a conquering knight, for he has broken breastplates and cracked "many a kyng's crown."

'I have done harme on hedes and knyghts have I kylt;
And many a lady for my love hath said, alas.

At this point Conscience enters. He entreats the audience to join with him in a prayer to the end that the evil one be set "sharpely on syde" and Christ be crowned king. Then he defines himself at length,—

'Me thynke it is a necessary thynge
For yonge and olde, both ryche and pore,
Poore Conseyence for to knowe.
For Conseyence clere it is my name
Conseyence counselyth both hye and lowe,
And conseyence comenly bereth grete blame,—Blame?
Ye, and often tymes set in shame.'

He goes on to state his knowledge of the secrets of the heart, "thay be as symple as thay can," and the difficulties he meets within the exercise of his office. He is interrupted by Manhode, who impertinently asks,—

'Say, how felowe, who gave the leve this way to go?
What, wenest thou I dare not come the to?
Say, thou harlot, whyder in hast.

After some impolite altercation they come to a better understanding, Conscience remarking,

'Syr, thought the Worlde have you in Manhode brought,
To mantyne maners ye were never taught:
No, Conseyence clere ye know ryght nought,
And this longeth to a knyght.
Manhode—Conseyence, what the devyll, man, is he?
Conseyence—Syr, a techer of the spyrytualete.
Man.—Spyrytualete, what the devyll may that be?
Con.—Syr, all that be leders into lyght.
Man.—Lyght, ye, but herke, felowe, yet! Lyght fain wolde I see.
Con.—Wyll ye so, syr knyght? Than do after me.
Man.—Ye, and it to Prydes pleasynge be,
I wyll take thy techynge.

Conscience warns the hero to beware of pride, and illustrates his teaching by referring to the pride of "Lucyfer and Kynge Robert of Cysell." Manhode is not at all pleased with Conscience's open denunciation of "Kynge Pryde," and taunts him that what ever he may bring against Pride, he has nothing to reprove in the "Kynge Lechery." Conscience proves that Lechery is to be obeyed not a bit more than Pride, and so in turn convinces Manhode that his worship of the seven kings is false and odious. The hero, enraged at first, wishes woe to the day Conscience came near him, but acknowledges finally that the "cunnynge" of the mentor is "moche more" than his own. After a warning to shun the company of the seven kings and an instruction on the Ten Commandments, Conscience enjoins particularly that the penitent avoid 'Folye' on all occasions. Manhode promises and prays to be told 'what is most necessary for man in every tyme.' (Conscience repeats, 'beware of Folye' and 'always thynke on the endynge') He then takes his leave of the hero.

Manhode's conversation was not sincere; he will not 'clene forsake the kynges of synne.' He will follow the advice of Conscience in part and in part obey Mundus. But, as might be expected, when Folye, who is the seven deadly sins personified, comes on the stage, the hero, after weak resistance, takes him for his servant. Folye fetches him a 'draught of drynke' which, he assures the audience, will prevail on Manhode to cast away Conscience. And so it does. Folye, to deceive Conscience, at Manhode's request, changes the hero's name from Manhode to Shame and then both hero and servant set off for the Tavern. Here his career is fully in keeping with his name. Conscience begs him to give up his wicked life, but he answers: "Why, frere, what the devyll hast thou to do, whyder I go or abyde." Conscience takes occasion of

this answer to illustrate to the audience 'the freylnes of Mankynde.' He then goes in search of 'his borne brother' Perseverance, who comes on the stage and after much pious talk goes to reclaim Shame.

Shame, who henceforth is called Age, arrives, old and broken. His long lament which recapitulates his eventful career, begins

> "Alas, alas, that me is wo!
> My lyfe, my lykyng I have forlorne;
> My rentes, my ryches, it is all ygo,
> Alas the daye that I was borne!"

As he is leaving the stage 'hymself to spyll,' Perseverance enters and prevents the suicide. Age does not want to listen at first, but is induced by Perseverance not to despair. Then follows the instruction on 'Contrycyon' and on the 'fyve thynges nessary to wynne hevyn.' Age 'plightes' sorrow for his sins, and receives the name of Repentance on accepting the twelve articles of the Creed and the Ten Commandments. The moral is spoken in part by the hero himself and is completed by Perseverance.

The morality 'Everyman' is unquestionably a favorable speciman of the entire species, and illustrates in a special manner the perfection of what I am calling the earlier or allegorical variety of the Moral Play. Ten Brink refers the subject of this piece to a parable of Buddhist origin, viz., 'Friendship's Test in Time of Need,' which became known to the Christian nations through the legend of 'Barlaam and Josaphat.' * The theme was widely popular and a long series of adaptations of it have been met with in the Latin, German and Dutch — from which last source the English Everyman was derived. The moral teaches substantially what we have learned from the two preceding plays, but the manner of treatment, it is significant to notice, differs much from either of them. In the Castle of Perseverance and in Mundus et Infans, the writers were content to follow the example of the Cycle playwrights, and present the successive incidents of the hero's existence rather than choose the dramatic points of his life, the crisis of his career; Everyman, on the contrary, has the action confined to a single event of the greatest moment, and only inferentially do we get to know the antecedent life of the hero. This characteristic would of itself give the play a marked value over the Morals we have seen. It was quite impossible to hope for any measure of

* History of English Literature, Vol II. Part 1. Pp. 279 ff.

success so long as the playwright undertook to dramatize the whole life of the hero—from babyhood to old age, chronologically. The effort of the author of Mundus et Infans, for instance, to keep in touch with life, so far as choosing the besetting follies of each successive period in his hero's career is concerned, merits to be noted as an intimation of better work in copying life and manners on the stage. It gives promise of more artistic characterization; but in itself, for the most part, it is an altogether too oral presentation of nature. Infans and Love-lust and Lyking scarcely did more than affirm what was asked in the Table of Sins of any Mediaeval Penitentiary.

Everyman shows indeed, close affinity to the cyclic drama. The very opening scene itself would sufficiently establish the author's indebtedness to the technique of the Biblical playwright. The subject of the piece is the summoning of the hero, Everyman, out of the world by Death. There is not the slightest deviation from this truly dramatic situation all through the scene. The subject and moral are opened in a brief prologue by the Messenger, but the action proper is begun in heaven, where God, looking down on sinful earth, perceives the degeneracy of mankind, who, the more the Almighty forbears, the worse becomes. The spectacle rouses the divine indignation and God summons His mighty messenger Dethe and orders him to bring Everyman without delay 'before the hye Juge Adonay.' Dethe obeys. Everyman now appears on the stage and receives the summons with all the marks of confusion and terror. With prayers and bribes he begs the summoner 'to deferre this mater tyll another daye;' but Dethe assures the hero,

> 'Everyman, it may not be no waye
> I set not by golde, sylver nor rychesse
> Ne by pope, emperour, kynge, duke ne prynces
> For, and I wolde receyve gyftes grete,
> All the worlde I myghte gete;
> But my custome is clene contrary,
> I gyve the no respyte, come hens and not tary.'

However a brief respite is accorded in which Everyman may prove his friends to see whether any of them be so hardy as to accompany him on the 'pylgrymage' whence there is no return 'till the day of dome.' He addresses himself in a most pitiful manner to Felawshyp, Kyndrede, Cosin, and Goodes or Ryches, and later to Beaute, Strengthe, Dyscrecyion and Fyve Wittes, but none of these will go with him on the journey. Each successively re-

nounces and forsakes him. The conversation that passed between Felawshyp and the hero is typical of the rest.

Felawshyp.—Everyman, good morrow be this daye,
Syr why lokest thou so pyteously?
If any tynge be amysse I pray the me saye,
That I may helpe to remedy.
Everyman.—Ye, goode Felawshype, ye,
I am in grete jeoparde.
Fel.—My true friend shew me your mynde
I will not forsake the to thy lyves ende,
In the way of good company.
Everyman.—That was well spoken and lovingly.
Fel.—Syr, I must needes know your heavynesse
I have pyte to see you in dystresse.
If ony have you wronged ye shall revenged be
Though I on the ground be slayne for the,
Though that I knowe before that I scholde dye.
Everyman.—Veryly, Felawshype, gramercy.
Fel.—Tusshe, by thy thanks I set not a strawe,
Shewe me your grefe and saye no more.

He continues to protest his fidelity through some lines in this fashion, and will accompany Everyman even to hell if needs be. When, however, the hero tells him the message of Dethe, Felawshyp forgets the assurances which he has so heroically pledged and waives an answer; but when he hears that there is no return from the 'vyage,' his refusal to go is unconditional,

"In fayth than wyll not I come there."

Everyman laments pitifully that the comrade with whom he played and sported should prove so faithless in time of need. His appeal to his other bosom friends only aggravates his disappointment. In this disconsolate state, abandoned by all whom he most regarded, he has recourse to a distant relative, Good-dedes, whom he finds lying 'colde in the grounde'

'Thy synnes hath me sore bounde
That I cannat stere'.

She responds to his entreaty and introduces him to her sister Knowledge, who leads him to 'holy man' Confession from whom he receives the precious jewel 'called penaunce,' which his 'garment of Sorowe' has procured for him. As he receives the last Sacrament, Strength, Beaute, Dyscretyon and Fyve Wittes stand round him on the stage. He next makes his will, bequething one-half of his possessions to charitable purposes. His allotted respite, however, is over and with feeble step, he begins his last journey to the grave.

Beaute, Strengthe, Dyscrecyon, Fyve Wyttes join in the pilgrimage, but successively as the procession advances, each, despite the entreaties of the hero, begs to be excused from proceding farther. As Beaute catches sight of the grave she turns back and bids 'Adewe' to Everyman who begs her not to be so heartless as to leave.

"What, Beaute, whyder wyll ye?

Beaute answers,—

"Peas! I am defe, I loke not behynde me,
Nat and thou woldest gyve me all the golde in thy chest.

Everyman deplores this ingratitude most pathetically, but is interrupted by Strengthe, who, too, wishes him farewell, saying,

"Ye I have you ferre ynoughe conveyed
Ye be olde ynoughe, I understande,
Your pylgrymage to take on hand.
I repent me that I hyder came."

As Dyscrecyon "wyll after Strengthe begon," the hero begs him for the love of the Trinity to look into the grave. But Dyscrecyon pays no heed to his appeals and is followed by Fyve Wyttes off the stage. As Everyman finds himself thus forelorn on the very brink of the grave, he exclaims,

"O Jesu helpe: all hath forsaken me!"

Good-dedes answers,

"Nay, Everyman, I will byde with the."

Everyman's face lights up with hope as his only friend descends with him into the grave. The hero's repentance, though tardy, was sincere, for heavenly voices (so Knowlege tells the audience) chant his requiem. A Doctour speaks the lesson.

Only Mr. Ben Greet's presentation brings out the character of Everyman. The argument is at such odds with modern popular tastes that the success which attends the performance of the play before English and American audiences is a present day proof of the perennial vitality of that essential dramatic element whose existence in the pre-Elizabethan drama affords a basis for what is said in this Essay in reference to character-treatment. In no play may the processes of the early dramatist be studied at nearer view than in the unfolding of the intense action presented in Everyman. The whole scene is a transcript from nature. He takes hold of the situation in its entirety and sets forth the personality of the hero with a psychological insight characteristic of few dramatic pieces of this date. But the analysis, which so accurately reproduces in

the personifications, the sequence of phenomena in actual life, is not peculiar to the author of Everyman; it is illustrative of what one frequently meets with in the work of the mediaeval playwright. His aim was to image life on the stage, and in this all men agree that the writer of Everyman has fairly succeeded. "The whole pitiful pathos of human life and death is here and with it the solution of the problem which—theological controversies apart—has most enduringly commended itself to mankind. What wonder that a Morality which is successful in bringing these things before the hearers and readers, should by a consensus of opinion to which I know of no exception, be regarded as the flower and crown of the literary species to which it belongs." *

The cursory notice of the Castle of Perseverance, Mundus et Infans, and Everyman, is sufficient to show the progress in dramatic form which the morality play evinces from the beginning. The effort to emphasize the inner processes of the moral agent by personifying the virtues and vices, mental faculties and inclinations,—all the ethical influences which determine the actions of the hero, prepare the way for original treatment of the plot. "Each of the moralities," says Mr. Courthope, "treats in its own fashion one fundamental idea, namely, the struggle between good and evil in human nature; just as in the mysteries different dramatists handled variously the story of the Fall and Redemption of man."† The main idea in both species of drama is the same but the constructive principles involved differ widely in each. In the Cycles the Bible and Legend furnished the framework in which to set the characters and left but little room for the exercise of invention. All that fell to the playwright was to arrange pre-existing material in dramatic form. In developing ideas and incidents merely suggested by the Sacred Text or Apocryphal writings the dramatist in these accidents of his theme gives evidence of his power to work independently. In bringing the historical and traditional material on the stage the author repeatedly gives proof of a dramatic sense in the choice and disposition of his matter. In such scenes as the Fall of the Angels in the several cycles, the Slaying of Abel by Cain, the Story of the Ark, the Sacrifice of Abraham, the Deliverance from Egypt, Moses and Pharaoh, Balaak and Balaam, the numerous incidents relating to the Nativity, Joseph's Jealousy, Holy Mary's

* Ward, A. W., History of Dramatic Literature, Vol. I, p. 124.

† W. Courthope, A. History of English Poetry, Vol. II, p. 331-378.

Detractors, Mak, The Slaughter of the Innocents, Herod, Sir Grymbald and Sir Launceler, the scenes treating of the Conspiracy and Passion, The Casting of the Die, the Marian Plays and the original handling of the events of Doomsday testify to the playwright's ability of synthesizing indifferent material, turning it into dramatic form, and of creating when need be, the connecting incident between isolated scenes.

In the Moral plays the dramatist had no pre-existing framework in which to set his persons. He had to form his own plot. He was no longer filling in an apocryphal story or giving dramatic point to an historical record. The task at which the Moral playwright was engaged was a process of drawing out into action an idea, an ethical precept or lesson. His was a creative work. In all the nakedness of infantine art-form, one meets with here a grand conception struggling for expression. Marlowe will come nearest in compassing it while retaining the idea or soul-struggle in its elemental state. Dr. Faustus, yearning for omniscience on a stage occupied by good and evil Angels, by the Seven Deadly Sins in person, and Hell in view with its "damned souls tossing on burning forks," bears striking resemblance to the leading characters of the Moralities. Tamburlaine the Great, ambitious of universal conquest and Barabas of universal wealth are for the most part 'personified vices in tragical pursuit of unattainable ideals.' * Marlowe—every Elizabethan for that matter—might attach a moral lesson to his play after the formal manner of the earlier playwrights. †

The principles involved in the construction of the morality species of drama afforded the author amplest freedom in determining the nature of his composition. It devolved on him to provide a suitable action through which he might express the ethical truth he had in mind. There was no possibility that his auditors could have predicted the action had he so desired, any more than they could foretell events and consequences in actual life. The hero was in conflict from start to finish, at any time capable of losing his vantage ground or being wholly overcome, but always perfectly conscious that the issue would be as he deliberately chose. This was all that was fixed. The manner of conducting the struggle was open to the playwright-motive, situation, incident, intrigue, all was

* Sidney Lee, 'The Cambridge Modern History,' Vol. III., p. 374.

† W. Boyd Carpenter, 'The Religious Spirit in the Poets,' pp. 81-102.

at his disposal. How, at an early date he availed himself of these advantages to reach his great end, namely, the presentation of the hero in action, reasoning, willing and feeling, may be seen from an analysis of Mankynd, the third of the Macro Moralities.

Though no fast line of demarkation can be drawn between the varieties of the species, I think, however, Mankynde may be regarded as a transition drama between the earlier and later moralities. * It falls far short of the simple solemnity, the sustained force and intrinsic dramatic quality of Everyman; but it stands in advance of any of the earlier Moralities in the arrangement of what may be called the plot. The structure of the Castle of Perseverance, apart from its impossible scope, is extremely artless. Humanum Genus grows into evil and forsakes his bad habits as easily as he contracted them. It is true the remorse which the voice of his good angel aroused at the beginning, abides with him amid the pleasures of the Tavern and does not leave him till he has found safety in the Castle. This conflict within the breast of the hero—the 'sowre sweetnesse' of pleasure, as he expresses it—was, in an elementary way, dramatic. But Humanum Genus so deliberately embraces vice in preference to virtue that the logical process by which he feels his way makes him unworthy of sympathy. He is never surprised into wrong doing and he does not turn to 'goddys servyse' till he has tired of 'faryn wel at mete and mele.' His temptation to leave the Castle has been so manifestly overt that his consent to the pleadings of Avaritia deserves a genuinely dramatic catastrophe which no one, save Mercy from Heaven, would feel obliged to prevent.

In Mundus et Infans the line of least resistance is followed in the construction of the framework. Indeed, it would be impossible to conduct the action in a more obvious and less artistic and effective manner. Conscience or opposition, does not enter till the hero is dubbed 'knyght,' and even then the half-hearted conversion of Manhode has not produced the abiding deep-felt remorse which Humanum Genus experienced as the result of his fall. There is no depth in the moral nature of Manhode, he has no sense of responsito decisive Conscience, from Manhode to Shane. Yet there is more

* Mr. Pollard finds the leading varieties of the Mediaeval drama resumed in the play, St. Mary Magdalene (c. 1480-90). Not only is every type of drama familiar to the stage in England represented here, but scenes reminiscent of the French miracle are introduced into this motley composition which is more descriptive than dramatic.

bility as is clear from his easy consent to 'folowe' Follye who graciously grants the hero's sole request, viz., that his name be changed human interest in the closing scenes of this Moral than in the corresponding parts in the Castle of Perseverance. Age is more deserving of sympathy than old Humanum Genus. The extreme spiritual ignorance, as is quite apparent from the long explanations of Perseverance on essentials of salvation, wins the affection of the audience for dying Age.

Both these Moralities aimed at giving a detailed account of the whole course of human existence. Their efforts to present the life of man in its entirety after this fashion were necessarily doomed to defeat. Concentrated attention on the crucial point of the hero's career can alone succeed to show with dramatic effectiveness the one or two ideas which influence his moral life. Only with this emphasis and exclusiveness as the leading English dramatists have proved, is it possible to portray the complex activities that make up character-life.

Quite the opposite pole is reached in Everyman. The action here is so contracted that there is no plot, properly speaking; the whole is rather a scene or incident in a play than a play itself. In Mankynde there is not the breadth of action of the Castle of Perseverance or Mundus et Infans; neither, on the other hand, is it reduced to the episodic proportion of Everyman. There is evident pains taken in the structure of this transition moral which from the point of view of dramatic form, marks an advance beyond what is reached in the earlier play of the species. Progress in form implies a more concrete presentation of the theme which in turn involves more human traits, or at least, more individuality in the caste. There is an effort in Mankynde to bring the hero in touch with nature and to provide a reasonable motive for his actions. The other actors, it will be seen, are supposed to represent typical heroes in their very low social state. The character of Mercy, however, is fashioned after the usual manner.

The nature of Mankynde, as indeed to a great extent that of most moral plays, may be inferred from the names of the caste.

"Mankynde		Mercy
New Gyse		Now-A-Days
Nought	Tityvillus	Myscheff

Mercy, who is apparently dressed in the robe of a friar, is alone in the play to sustain the cause of righteousness. New Gyse, Now-a-

Days and Nought, veritable *enfants sans soucis,* stand for worldly temptations as Mercy interprets (l. 878). * Tityvillus, who possesses the preternatural power of rendering himself invisible, 'propyrlly sygnyfieth the fend of helle.' † Myscheff is a sort of go between. There is much more action in this play than in the Castle of Perseverance, or in the other moralities this far noted.

In the opening scene the whole future action is made known. There is a certain discrimination exercised in the presentation of the matter which contributes much to precision of outline in the treatment of the characters. Mercy, the first speaker, exposes somewhat diffusively, though in easy verses, the duty and advantage of leading a righteous life, the means of so doing and the obstacles to be met with by one who espouses the cause of virtue; and in a closing quatrain he announces the nature of the sanction which gives his word and the subsequent action genuine dramatic value. Mercy does not speak abstractly nor urge in a vague way submission to impersonal laws. "The very fownder and begynner of ower fyrst creacion" who sent "amonge us, synfull wrechys, hys own son to be torne and crucyfeyde" is represented as one personally interested in the salvation of Mankynde. Mercy is his vicar and bears toward the hero such anxious solicitude as to make it needful to ask at the close of the play the pardon of the auditors for giving way to tearful sentiment.

> My mynde ys dyspersyede, my body trymmelyth as the aspen leffe;
> The terys xuld trekyll down by my chekys, were not yower reuerence
> Yt were to me solace—the cruell vystacyon of deth.

Opposed to this is the 'mortall enmye'—again no abstract or indifferent principle—who, so far as the procuring of man's ruin is concerned, is possessed with the power that equals the creator's, and which is here, as invariably throughout the religious drama, far more effectively applied. The good angels cannot compare dramatically with those of the enemy. They commonly speak most generally and but little to the purpose (their 'body ys full of Englysch Laten' as New Gyse aptly remarks); whereas the evil agents are not given to rant without a very evident motive; they speak little and do much and their words are always apposite, urging to immediate action and present results.

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* J. M. Manly, Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama, Vol. I, 315-352.

† Collier, H. E. D. P., Vol. II, pp. 222-223, has interesting data on the etymology of the name Tityvillus (totus vilis) and on the evolution of the partly elfish and partly human role that he plays in Mediaeval literature.

Mercy ends his long discourse with an exhortation to the audience to reflect on the account Mankynde will have to render of his words and works of Doomsday.

"The corne xall be salvyde, the chaffe xall be brente
I besech you hertyly, haue this premedytacyon."

As Mercy pronounces these words, whose sound abides as deterrent echoes in the ears of Mankynde, Myscheff enters and improvises a parody on the parable referred to by Mercy.

"I besech yow hertyly, leue yower calculacyon,
Leue yower chaffe, leue yower corne, leue yower dalyacyon.
Yower wytt is lytyll, yower hede is mekyll, ye are full of predycacyon.

Mercy remonstrates,

"Why come ye hyder, brother? Ye were not dysyryde."

But he holds himself altogether indifferent to Mercy's wishes, and proceeds to give his interpretation of the parable;

"Corn seruit bredibus, chaff horsibus, straw fryrbusque.
Thys is as moche to saye, to yower leude undyrstandynge,
As the corn xall serue to brede at the next bakynge;
Chaff horsibus & reliquid . . . . . .

Mercy again begs him to desist. But no; he continues to gibe and cavil till at length his companions, Nought, New Gyse and Now-A-Days, come on the stage. They carry on the roughest species of rusticity and horse-play. Mercy's reproofs are wasted on them; they make sport of him and beat him, take off his habit and have him join in their dance. This Morality shows to what extremes the early playwrights were wont to go in their efforts to be realistic. Surely no picture of society could be drawn with a freer hand than that which this scene illustrates. The behavior of Nought, New Gyse and Now-A-Days represents no very elevated strata of human intercourse and is no doubt a caricature of inn-life in the reign of Henry VI, or Edward IV. * It need not be implied that the author was more in sympathy or better conversant with the manners of the lower caste than with those on a higher level of society. It had been his art that was at fault. Contrast was the principal, not to say the sole law of dramatic technique which he knew;—a realistic presentation being rather the end proposed than a means or law governing a method. The playwright here effected the desired opposition in the strict ethical teaching of Mercy and the loose moral practices of his "undysyryde" visitors.

* Cf. Piers the Plowman (Passus V) for a realistic picture of a London ale shop.

As New Gyse, Now-A-Days and Nought leave the stage, Mercy breathes a sigh of relief. He sets to prove "by reason" to the auditors that such fellows are worse than beasts. The brutes obey his instincts, but these sin against all law.

"Ther joy and delyte ys in derysyon
Of ther owyn Cryste to his dyshonur."

What account must they yield to the "Justyce of all" on the last day, when "for euery ydyll worde us must yelde a reson?"

With this sad reflection he closes, and is on the point of leaving the stage when the hero enters. After recommending by way of introduction the "holl congrygacyon" to the mercy of God's providence, Mankynde remarks briefly on the composition of man in general which brings him to the very heart of his "lamentable story."

"To se my flesch of my soull to haue gouernance:
Wher the goode-wyff is master, the goode-man may be sory."

He resolves to seek 'gostly solace' in his distress. Falling on his knees at Mercy's feet he prays for counsel to strengthen his 'onstedfastnesse' in well-doing and to be his shield against his 'gostly enemy' that is ever urging him to sin. Mercy gives him the desired comfort, and bids him have courage: 'Vita hominis est milicia super terram.'

"Oppresse yower gostly enmy & be Crystes own knyght,
Be neuer a cowarde agayn yower aduersary.
If ye wyll be crownyde, ye must nedes fyght
Intende well & God wyll be yow adiutory."

He further advises Mankynde to 'dystempur not' his brain with either good ale or wine, and in general to shun all excess: 'Mesure ys treasure.' The horse that is over-well fed will disobey the rein, 'and, in happe, cast his master in the myre.'

At this New Gyse, back of the scene, interrupts the conversation on the stage, and takes his cue from Mercy's latest remark:

"Ye say trew, sir; ye are no faytour!
I have fete my wyff so well tyll sche ys my master;
I have a grett wonde on my hede; lo! & thereon leyth a plaster.

Mankynde asks in indignation "wher spekys this felow? Wyll he not come nere?" Mercy gravely answers: "All to sone, my brother, I fere me, for you," and goes on to explain that shortly New Gyse, Now-A-Days and Nought will come to tempt him. After some brief advise and words of encouragement, Mercy tells Mankynde that "Within a schorte space I must nedes hens." Now-A-Days speaks from his hiding place:

"The sonner the leuer, & that be ewyen a-non!
I trow yower name ys do-lytyll, ye be so longe fro hom."

I trow yower name ys do-lytyll, ye be so longe fro hom." And Nought in the same strain:

"Yower potage xall be for-colde, ser; when wyll ye do dyne?
I haue sene a man lost XX noblys in as lytyll tyme."

Mercy is provoked at such foolish talking. He repeats his former directions to Mankynde, warning him not to meddle with the vicious visitors. "Thei harde not masse this twelmonyth, I dare say; Do truly yower laboure, & kepe yower haly-day." His parting words to the hero are instructions how to treat Tityvillus, who is more malicious than the others and whose hidden snares are everywhere laid to entrap man. With this he embraces Mankynde and withdraws.

The hero sets to "tytyll in papyr" the resolution that Mercy's words have inspired him.

"Memento, homo, quod cinis es et in cinerem reuerteris:
Lo! I ber on my brest the bagge of myn armys!"

New Gyse enters at the back of the stage, but Mankynde, who is provided with a spade, keeps on digging, according to the counsel of Mercy, "to eschew ydullness." Now-A-Days and Nought shortly arrive on the stage, and these with New Gyse sing some stanzas whose refrain very appropriately typifies the quality of the vulgar song itself. "Yt ys wretyn with a coll. Yt is wretyn with a cole!"

Mankynde grows indignant and drives them off the stage with his spade. He kneels to thank heaven whose "grace and this spade haue putt to flyght myn enmys." He leaves the stage "ryght sone to reverte," and bring corn to plant in the soil he has tilled. Myscheff enters and deplores that Mercy has succeeded too well in teaching Mankynde; but resolves to undo what has been done. He invites the three who are outside groaning over their wounds, to come in and offers them his sympathy. This fellowship in woe assuages the smarts of the spade, and shortly all set to plan how to revenge themselves on Mankynde. They conjure up Tityvillus, who is soon heard outside: "I com with my legges under me." He enters, arrayed like a devil with a net in his hand, and takes entire control of the business on the stage. He sends New Gyse, Nought and Now-A-Days upon expeditions to commit depredations of all kinds. "Yf ye fayll of hors, take what ye may ellys." They beg him as they go not to forget what Mankynde did to them. He

promises to "venge the quarell," which he proceeds to do after he has given them a left-handed blessing as assurance of his pledge and smpathy.

Tityvillus now begins operations against the hero, "to assay hys goode purpose for to sette asyde." As illustrative of the playwright's effort at invention and his desire to give a palpable motive for the subsequent action of the hero, I will transcribe Tityvillus' scheme which he confidentially commits to the audience.

"Euer I go invysybull, yt ys my rett,
Ande befor hys ey thus I will hange my nett
To blench hys syght; I hope to haue hys fote wett.
To yrke hym of hys labur I xall make a frame.
Thys borde xall be hyde under the erth preuely;
Hys spade xall enter, I hope, on-redyly;
Be then he hath a-wayde, he xall be uery angry
And lose hys pacyens, peyn of schame.
I xall menge hys corne with draw & with durnell,
Yt xall not be lyke to sow nor to sell.
Yonder he commyth, I prey of cownsell;
He xall wene grace were wane."

Mankynde comes on the stage to plant the corn, but as he begins to dig his spade sticks into the board which Tityvillus has buried.

"Thys londe ys so harde, yt make unlusty & yrke,
I xall sow my corne at winter & lett Gode werke.
Alasse my corne ys lost! Here ys a foull werke.
I se well, by tyllynge lytyll xall I wyn."

He throws away his spade which Tityvillus stealthily picks up and removes to the back of the stage. Mankynde begins his "ewynsonge" on his knees, but he has hardly begun the Pater Noster when Tytvillus returns to distract him. "I xall go to hys ere and tytyll ther-in." Mankynde becomes weary of praying and imagines he is seized with the colic, and leaves the stage, remarking as he retires: "My bedes xall be here for who-summe-euer wyll cume."

While Mankynde is absent Tityvillus tells the audience how easily he has triumphed over the hero's resolution. He takes them into his confidence again and explains further his plans in reference to Mankynde, who, as he now enters, begins:

"Ewynsonge hath he in the saynge, I trow, a fayer wyll;
I am yrke of yt, yt ys to longe be on myle.
Do wey; I wyll no more so oft on the chyrche-style;
Be as be may, I xall do a-nother.
Of labure and prayer I am nere yrke of both;
I wyll no more of yt, thowgh Mercy be wroth."

He lies down and sleeps. Tityvillus charges the audience on "peyn of XL pens" not to utter a word. He then whispers in the ear of Mankynde the ingenious calumny that Mercy has stolen a mare and was hanged for the theft. He bids the hero to dismiss all further thought of Mercy, to arise and ask pardon of New Gyse, Now-A-Days and Nought for "mekyll sorow with thi spade beforn thou hast wrought." The fiend sees that his charm has had its effect, and his work is over. He addresses parting words to the audience:

> "For-well, euerychon, for I haue done my game
> For I haue brought Mankynde to myscheff and schame."

Mankynde awakes transformed to all evil dispositions and unquestioningly accepts the vision as literally true. He believes that he has been deceived by Mercy and the consciousness of this leads him to the rash resolve:

> "A-dew fayer Mastere! I will hast me to the ale-house
> And speke with New Gyse, Now-a-days and Noght,
> And get me a lemman with smattrynge face."

The interim between this purpose and its realization is filled out by the humorous recital of the "narrow escapes" of the four explorers whom Tityvillus commissioned. New Gyse enters with a broken halter round his throat; and explains how he "was twychyde by the neke." Later, when Mankynde asks what gave him the crick in the neck, the villain answers:

> "In feyth Sent Andrys holy bende;
> I haue a lytyll dyshes as yt plesse Gode to sende,
> With a runnynge rynge-worme."

Nought and Now-A-Days arrive famished with hunger, and Myscheff, who has slain the jailor, enters in fetters pretending humorously to be a man in armour.

Mankynde asks pardon for the injuries he inflicted on the company with his spade. His request is granted. They enroll his name in their list and provide him with a new jacket, which is symbolical of the moral change in his life. These details as well as the actual dubbing, which consists of reiterated pledges on the part of Mankynde to commit the six deadly sins ("lechery ys non") are considerably protracted, though apparently not unduly.

Scarce is the ceremony over and Mankynde clothed in his 'ioly iakett' when the reproving voice of Mercy is heard:

> "What, how, Mankynde! fle that felyschyppe, I you prey.

Mankynde turns his back on Mercy and goes with his companions

"to kepe his fader's yer-day." He is under the special tuition of Myscheff, who spares no pains to secure his spiritual destruction. In the meantime Mercy bewails the prodigal through some thirty lines. His lament is not wanting in elevation of thought and depth of feeling. There is much variety, also, in the rapidly changing mood of the speaker. At one time he mourns his sad lot to be charged with such a creature as Mankynde "dyspectous and odyble, so on-curtess, so inconsyderatte;" at another time he upbraids the hero, but suddenly breaks off and in self-reproach, exclaims: "Alasse, who is me?" And again immediately addresses the absent Mankynde "as the fane that turnyth with the wynde, so thou art convertyble." Finally, from a direct personal attack, he enlarges on the nature of ingratitude and inconstancy in general.

> "In trust ys treson, the promes ys not credyble;
> This peruersyose ingratytude I cannot rehers;
> To go ouer all the holy corte of heuyn, thou art despectyble.
> As a nobyll versyfyer makyth mencyon in is verse:
> Lex et natura, Christus et omnia jura
> Damnant ingratum; lungetur eum fore natum."

At length Mercy entreats "the goode Lady and the Mother of Mercy" to "haue pety and compasyon of the wretchydness of Mankynde, that is so wanton and so frayll." He resolves to turn the hero from the "allectuose ways of detestabull lyvynge."

Myscheff does his utmost to hide Mankynde, who, when he hears that Mercy is "here fast by," and wishes to speak with him, despairs and calls for a rope to hang himself. Myscheff gives him the rope and commissions New Gyse to show the hero how to adjust it properly. Mercy arrives in time to prevent the crime. All the evil agents fly on his entrance. Mercy urges Mankynde not to despair, but to take courage and to have confidence. He explains to the hero the grounds for hope and the danger of "weyn confidens of Mercy." Mankynde is beside himself for joy at this happy deliverance.

> "O Mercy my solasius solas and synguler recreatory
> My predilecte specyall, ye are worthy to haue my lowe;
> For, wyth-out deserte and menys supplicatorie,
> Ye be-com pacient to my inexcusabyll reprove."

Mercy at great length warns him of the dangers which beset his path: "Libere velle, libere velle. Ye may both saue and spill yowre sowle that is so precyous." Then he cautions him to beware of Tityvillus with his net and all hys enmys wyll" and finally bids him

to depart in peace and to persevere. Alone on the stage Mercy speaks the elilogue which unfolds a moral.

From the point of view of dramatic structure Mankynde is, though probably antecedent in date, easily in advance of the earlier species of Morality. The playwright brings the hero into close relation with the action which in some manner is specially suited to express the characteristics of a definite individual, or at least a specific type and not a frame work within which Humanity or Everyman could fit just as well. In other words, Mankynde develops in a more life-like way than either Humanum Genus of the hero of Mundus et Infans, and to some extent the spectators witness a process of growth. In the rudimentary attempt at precision of outline, the motive, however, rationally inadequate to account for his action, gives semblance of reason for Mankynde's change of resolution and prevents the violent transition from good to evil which is the common fault in the earlier of the moral plays. There is a conscious effort not merely to draw the hero with distinctness, but also to render his doings probable. Mankynde is perhaps the earliest Moral that comes closest to the Renaissance or Humanistic varieties of Allegorical dramas of which it is now in place to speak briefly.

At this point in the development of the Moral play a number of dramatic growths present themselves. These sub-varieties of the Morality species, offshoots of the parent stem which drew its existence mediately through the Cycles from the Liturgical germ or root, afford valuable indices towards an estimate of characterization on the eve of the Elizabethan drama. Certainly at no period of the early Gothic theatre had there been such dramatic activity in so varied directions as during these years when the gradual influx of Renaissance ideas were becoming perceptible on the stage. At no time does it appear so evident that the great animating principle beneath the ever-changing forms was the intuitive perception on the part of the dramatist, that the secret of success lay in the concrete treatment of the caste. From no other viewpoint may one see so clearly the advantages and shortcomings, respectively, of the diverse themes dramatized. The presentation of his persons is the sure test, the last analysis in determining the dramatic worth of his subject and the capability of the author. This is especially true during an epoch of transition and at a time when neither law nor convention excited a restraining influence on the native resources of the playwright.

At the opening of the sixteenth century dramatic activity was so varied that the new experiments considerably modified the old Morality. It lost in a great measure its former identity and gradually became only one among many species which were destined to contribute to the formation of the Elizabethan drama, in its beginnings. All these several attempts at dramatic expression, however, were influenced in the way of form by the structure of the Moral play. The commodious nature of the Allegorical mould made it an easy task to fit in any conceivable topic with sufficient congruity. Theological dogma and philosophy, the physical sciences, mythology, history and politics were cast into it and adjusted as nicely as had been the purely satiric and ethical themes. Authors whose aim was primarily to amuse followed also the current conventions of the stage and sought their effects, at least in part, through an allegorical presentation. It has been noted already in a quotation from the Castle of Constancy what the author's attitude at this late date was in respect to allegory and how little this shaded the reality of his persons. In proportion as character-treatment developed and genuinely individual features were presented on the stage to that degree the allegorical element dwindled into insignificance. An increased proficiency on the part of the playwright and the novel interest imminent in his subject contributed very effectively to replace the earlier abstractions with characters taken from common life. *

A word in reference to the respective classes or varieties of dramatic endeavor will be sufficient to indicate the direction taken and show the power in character-presentation noticeable at this stage of dramaturgical experience. At the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII, a branch issued from the Morality stem which directly contributed little to the advance of character-treatment. Fittingly enough a first Morality of this new type had for its author John

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* Referring to the English theatre of Early Renaissance years, M. Jusserand writes: "A Londres, la part de la vie reelle, s'accrut sans cesse; les trivialites et les menus incidents qui encombrerent les existences ordinaire, encombrerent aussi les pieces qu'on pretendait calquer sur le modele vivant; les personnages abstraits disparurent, et les comedies des moeurs et d'observation demeura en possession de la scene. Mais un signe visible de l'ancienne origine demeura toutefois l'habtude de donner au personnages des noms qui sent des etiquettes; les faiseurs de comedie la prirent aux faiseurs de Moralities; Sheridan l'accepta comme Massinger; apres Ambition, et Hypocrisie, on eut sir Giles Overreach et Joseph Surface. Cette coutume qui remonte si loin n'est pas encore entirement abolie." L'Histoire Litteraire du peuple Anglais. T. II, p. 484.

Rastall, brother-in-law of Sir Thomas More. It was a species of Moral in the interest, not of religious but of secular education. This modification of motive, due to incipient enthusiasm for Humanistic learning, in turning the attention of the listeners from the immediate consideration of moods and passions, from actions and reactions within the soul of the hero to problems of cosmography and physics—"poyntes of phylosophy naturall"—would transform the stage into a school-room. It was impossible that such sheer didacticism would long continue to be relished by the play-goers, many of whom, no doubt, could not grasp the inner meaning which the writer intended, though insisted on with less pains than he took in displaying his learning. In fact, the author of the earliest specimen of this variety of drama, The Nature of the Four Elements, (c. 1517) anticipated the unpopularity of his theme and promised in the prologue to enliven his lessons by introducing less serious matter. These hors-d'oeuvres brought his production within the province of the dramatic for everybody by supplying a large mite of human interest.

> But because some folk be a little disposed
> To sadness, but more to mirth and sport,
> This philosophical work is mixed
> With merry conceits, to give men comfort
> And occasion to cause them to resort
> To hear this matter whereto if they take heed
> Some learning to them thereof may proceed.

The "matter substancyall" which Natura Naturata; Studyous, Desyre, and Experyens undertake to teach Humanyte is reduced to the following heads:

> 'Of the situation of the four elements, that is, the earth, water, the air and fire; and of their qualities and properties and of the generation and corruption of things made of the commixtion of them.
>
> 'Of certain conclusions proving that the earth must needs be round, and that it hangeth in the midst of the firmament and that it is in circumference above 21,000 miles.
>
> 'Of certain conclusions proving that the sea lieth round upon the earth.
>
> "Of certain points of cosmography, how and where the sea covereth the earth, of diverse strange regions and lands and which way they lie and of the new found lands (America), and the manner of the people.
>
> 'Of the generation and cause of stone and metal, and plants, and herbs. Of the generation and cause of well-springs and rivers, and of the cause of hot fumes that come

out of the earth; and the cause of the baths of water in the earth which be perpetually hot.

'Of the cause of the ebb and flow of the sea.

'Of the cause of rain, snow and hail.

'Of the cause of winds and thunder.

'Of the cause of lightning and blazing stars and flames flying in the air.

The main object of the author in explaining this program was not solely to create a taste for the study of nature, but to lead Humanyte from a consideration of created things to a more worthy concept of the Creator. First, a knowledge of the theology of nature befitted the student of divinity, in the more limited sense. This is made clear by the speaker of the prologue. Humanyte delights in the disquisitions of Natura Naturata and ponders them over in the company of Studyous Desyre, who, too, is capable of giving "suffycyent solucyon" to cosmological questions which Humanyte can in "no maner wyse parceyve nor see." But the author, true to his promise, did not forget the groundlings. Sensual Appeytyte comes on the stage and in the absence of Studyous Desyre prevails on Humanyte not to waste his strength on study. By the time Studyous Desyre arrives with Experyence, a man that is never without "dyvevrs instrumentys," Sensual Appetyte has taken the hero "for a pastime of recreation to a tavern where Ignorance Shortly joins the company. Humanyte loses all taste for study and prefers to "refreshe nature, with drynkes plesaunt and delycate vyand" than to return to the lessons of Experynce who in the interim has been instructing Studyous Desyre.

In root this play is not so different as it seems to be from the purely religious Morals. It meant to illustrate the strife between good and evil in man from a new point of view. Nature and Experience would lead the hero along the path of truth to a higher and happier mode of life; their antagonists, Sensual Appetyte and Ignorance were bent on his ruin.

Another branchlet in this new arm of the old trunk is the play Wyt and Science, by John Redford. Mr. Manly, who has edited the text, says it is one of the most perfect Allegories extant and illustrates well the variety of the Moral play which concerned itself with the diffusion of secular learning. All the *dramatis personae* bear abstract names and there are no fewer than nineteen engaged in the presentation. These plays, however, are by no means inanimate; each has many personal interests and a will to realize them.

What contributes most to the life of this piece is that there is no formal program to be disposed of, as in the Nature of the Four Elements. The author is less concerned in the kind and amount of what he actually imparts than in the manner in which instruction, in general, is imparted. His purpose is mainly to show the difficulties, in their way at times dramatic, that beset those who pursue after Wyt and Science. A struggle takes place in the intellectual order similar to that experienced by the hero when ethical interests were at issue. Tediousness, Idleness and Shame work harm in its kind as fatal to Wyt and Science as were the efforts of Mundus Caro, and Belyall, of Tityvillus and the three 'unthryfty gestes' unthryfty gestes to Humanum Genus and Mankynde. The intellect had its enemies even as the will, and their mode of attack was not quite dissimilar. It was this inner conflict Redford sought to make objective as his predecessors had solidified the fluent, intangible and spiritual processes that affected the human will.

The Marriage of Witte and Science is closely modeled on John Redford's Morality which preceded it on the stage fully half a century. The play is regularly divided into five acts and in every respect shows this subvariety of the moral species at its perfection. Though the author in many instances only modernizes the language of the older play, the whole treatment, however, is not merely more perfect on the literary side, but the later playwright's sense of the dramatic in the way of technical effects is far keener and more sure than that which may be ascribed to his predecessor. The blending of the light with the serious in the action and the proximity of the whole to actual life prove a more developed dramatic instinct. The allegory affects the construction merely. The caste is abstract only in name. There is a prayer for the King and Queen at the close of the play which fixes the date. According to Collier it must have been written "late" in the regn of Henry VIII.

"The lesson," says Ward, "which the Marriage of Witte and Science enforces is thoroughly sound and sensible." In this respect at least it brings us close to a parallel branch, which, as itself, draws sap from the old stem. The variety of Morality to which I refer, may be illustrated by the Disobedient Child, "a pretie and mery new Enterlued," by Thomas Ingelande, "late student in Cambridge." This play is of interest for many reasons, though it is merely representative of a large number of others. Lusty Juventus, the Interlude of Youth, New Custom, Nice Wanton, The Longer

Thou Livest the More Foole Thou Art, Like Will to Like, The Three Ladies of London, and especially The Three Lordes and Ladies of London, set forth in sum, the lesson contained in the Disobedient Child and would illustrate my point fully as well. The teaching presented in the plays that had to do with education in general is illuminated on the negative side by the variety of drama of which this of Ingelande's is a fair specimen. The Disobedient Child is in structure simplicity itself, the author evidently having in mind throughout the one idea of illustrating in a telling manner the evil effects of bad education and of hasty and imprudent wedlock. There is no abstract figure introduced if we except Satan, the devil whose part stands in no vital relation with the main movement, but a mere interpolation of the author either to supply interest in the piece or in deference to the old time convention. Satan here is so little himself that he quite forgets his role, and after a long explanation of his powers and experiences among men he advises the younger part of the audience to take heed of his temptation, for he goes on to say, unless God supports them "they cannot agaynst me sticke or stande." With this he retires from the stage.

The Disobedient Child not only marks the passing away of allegorical abstractions from the Mediaeval stage and the introduction of real, though still typical life, but in the use of dramatic technique there is a noticeable advance. The action in brief is this: The Rich Man's Son asks his father "what is the best way to spend short life?" The answer given is first to go to school. But the lad detests nothing more than to "consume" his life at a book. He prefers any task to the "business" of the school—"the house and prison of the school-master." He brings forward reasons to convince Rich Man, his father, that there is nothing to be gained by study; the thing is tiresome in itself, and what is more, there is mortal danger in attending the local school owing to the vigorous discipline flourishing there. He illustrates this last point by the narration of the tragic fate of one of his companions who fell a victim of the master's rod. Nothing of all this, however, has any weight with Rich Man, because his son is grounding his arguments on mere hearsay and has no direct experience of school-life. The old man could tell many catastrophes—not so tragic, indeed, as that of his son's illustration, but none the less fatal—that resulted from non-attendance at school. Rich Man's Son does not

see things as his father and only grows more wilful in his resolution not to go to school. He boldly asks for a wife—a request which he thinks his age and the practice of everybody around ought to make sufficiently reasonable. The father, presaging the bitter consequences of this rash act, reluctantly permits his son to go in search of a bride.

The son leaves home and shortly wins the affection of Rose. During his absence an amusing scene takes place in the kitchen between the man-servant and the maid-servant who are in extreme ill-humor on account of the extra work involved in the elaborate preparations—buying, baking and boiling—"for the great bridal against to-morrow." The cooks converse in very natural tones and freely exchange their sentiments touching their master's choice. A glance and a word suffice for Blanche to tell the temperament of the bride:

> "The tip of her nose is as sharp as mine,
> Her tongue and her tune is very shrill. . . ."

The priest who is to preside at the ceremony is no ordinary pastor; he has many personal traits which remove him from the conventional type and efface family resemblance. He appears before the audience quite out of patience. The reason of his provocation is that "many a time and oft" he must "play priest, clerk and all," owing to the irregular life led by his sexton—"whose nose is not greatly pale." He officiates, however, at the nuptials, as shortly after the husband and wife come before the audience.

Rich Man's Son so delights in his new experience that he finds its sweetness has surpassed even his anticipations.

> "O Lord, what pleasures and great commodity
> Are heaped together in matrimony"!

Shortly, however, these pleasant sensations are changed for others less disagreeable when his wife orders him to work.

> "O Mirth, O Joy, O Pastime and pleasure,
> How little a space do you endure!"

She has him to gather faggots and carry them on his back to the market. To overcome his reluctance the stage direction bids her "to strike him handsomly about the shoulders with something." She is not pleased with the sale he has made and again seizes the rod "to make the brains in his skull more deeply to settle." This over she bids him fetch a pail of water from a distant well and on his return she hurries him to the stream to do the washing. He brings

back the clothes, in his opinion, "white as a lily," but she detects a stain and "must knock him down," as the rubric directs. Finally she goes to visit her friends, but warns her husband not to leave the house during her absence. In this, however, he does not obey. As soon as she is out of sight he goes to his father's home to be relieved of his termagant spouse. The devil keeps house in his absence.

The meeting of the father and the prodigal is well worked out. When the father asks "what cheer with thee?" the son falls on his knees and confesses his imprudence:

> "All such sayings as in my mind
> At the first time ye studied to settle
> Most true, alas, I do them find,
> As though they were written in the Gospel."

The father artfully enough has forgotten what his advice had been, so that the son goes over the whole history of his experiences, telling how his "seely poor shoulders have been thwacked full often with the staff. She spareth no more my flesh and bone than if my body were made of stone." Rich Man is not prodigal of his sympathy, so that despite entreaties the young man has to return to his wife. This logical outcome is a very unusual ending of the action in a Moral play. Qui parcit virgae odit filium is the lesson the speaker of the epilogue enforces, with a less pitiless exhortation to despise the vanities of this life "and set the mind on the Holy Ghost."

Such in outline is the form and content of this representative Moral play which dates from the middle of the sixteenth century. The margin that separates it from Gammer Gurton's Needle is not broad. Long before the appearance of either, however, John Heywood (who died about 1580) had written in a true Chaucerian vein six plays that had anticipated many of the qualities for which the Disobedient Child is chiefly deserving of mention here. Heywood's Johan and Tyb and Margery Corson are surely as real as Rich Man's Son, Rose, or Blanche.

Heywood was a typical dramatist of his time. Endowed with a good voice and musical ability he was at an early age attached to the court of Henry VIII, and enjoyed the lucrative as well as honorable office of Master of the King's Children-Comedians. Like Chaucer, whom he resembles in very many lines, Heywood was not a polemist nor a Crusader. He preferred to hold aloof from

all religious and political strife. Not wishing to conform to the religion of the state nor to adopt the teachings of the New Learning, he gave up his living and quietly retired to Mechlin where he was living as late as 1575.

His dramatic work, perfectly presenting the mediaeval conception of life with all its unobtrusive serious-joyousness, is so like that of the moral playwright, and yet in so many ways touching the coming drama, that it marks a transition stage between the Mediaeval and Elizabethan. The lively realistic action of Heywood's Interludes (a very appropriate name in its literal meaning and historical reference) was sure, by degrees, to push the abstractions of the moralities from the stage. In extracting from its religious and didactic surroundings the comic element incidental in the cycles and early moralities, and emphasizing it almost exclusively, Heywood did much to further the interests of dramatic characterization. It is chiefly in this respect that he merits his important position in the history of the English drama. In point of construction and dramatic development, Heywood is scarcely better than the least gifted moral playwright of his time. It would, indeed, be truer to say that his plays are dramatic episodes than dramas. He possessed, however, qualities that his contemporary fellow-workers might have profitably imitated. Ten Brink says of him that "he did not create English Comedy, but certainly many of its essential elements. He prepared the way for it much in the same way as the *Comedia dell' Arte* served as the first stage to Moliere's art." Further on the same writer places the value of Heywood not in any cleverness of technique, but in "successful delineation of character (even though not carried to any great depth) an inexhaustible fund of whimsical ideas, dramatic animation and in the development of an effective though drastic species of comicality." *

If, as Brunetiere holds, † freedom of satire be an essential condition for the birth and growth of the *comedie de caracteres,* Heywood was in no way withheld from the freest treatment of his caste. Perhaps he comes nearer to his prototype in this respect than in any other. Like Chaucer and Sir Thomas More, he could let his fancy play with no thought of danger. What Professor Egan says of them is applicable in a measure to Heywood. "His

* History of Eng. Lit., Vol. II, part 2, pp. 134-147.

† Les Epoques due Theatre Fraicais, pp. 142 ff.

geniality, his acuteness in the knowledge of the foibles of humanity, his optimism, his power of picturing, his grace and immortal freshness make him beloved of the world . . . . . As the Cathedral carvings of his time, we find in his work strange things which modern taste, more delicate, rejects. Like all men of genius, he was of his time, but not of the worst of it." * No one could be lost among the pilgrims to Canterbury more easily than Heywood's Four P's. No one as this type of mediaeval playwrights could laugh so heartily at the traditional bogus Pardoner who was perpetually offering for sale a flask of Saint Michael's sweat, the finger-nail of a cherub, the whole finger of the Holy Ghost and the jaw-bone of All Saints.

Heywood's manner of writing, combined with the wide-spreading Humanism did much to weaken the influence of mediaeval dramatic motives. The auditors could no longer rest satisfied with the serious religious and didactic presentations that they had formerly enjoyed. This drastic reaction, wholly unconscious on the part of the pioneer of English Comedy, did much to advance the interests of the stage. He came before the public opportunely. In every department of mental activity there was a quickening interest, a selective and assimilative process going on. Obviously more than for anyone else it was the playwright's business to gauge the spirit of the times. This, of course, had not yet so generally become the vital necessity it was later when popular approval meant considerably more for the needy dramatist than the satisfaction of an empty vanity. The efforts of the playwright to keep pace with current thought and taste, the tendency on his part to treat his matter more consciously, or, on what may be called artistic principles, have been noted. In all this Heywood was of his time. In his manner of appropriating, selecting and rejecting material to fit his purposes he seems to have had no compunctious visitings. He was as indifferent in this respect as his son, Jasper, a free translator of Seneca's plays, or any of the Elizabethan dramatists. In the spirit of Chaucer and of the Towneley playwright he gathered suggestions from every source—from the cycles and moralities, from poetry and romance, from gossip and his own inexhaustible imagination. He recast and shaped this motley material into his one-act drama, giving the twice-told tale an original freshness and charm.

* Egan, M. F., Studies in Literature, pp. 26-27.

The religious stage, Liturgical, Cyclical and Moral, was comparatively well fitted for a highly dramatic presentation of sacred themes, as long as the religious motive, so repeatedly referred to, retained its mediaeval effectiveness; but when at the passing away of mediaeval habits of thought and life, the "two senses" were gradually losing point, and the "functional ideas" that predominated almost to exclusiveness the life of man in the Middle Ages ceased to operate in the manner and degree of former times, it was imperative for the dramatist to have recourse to other means to secure new motives of appeal. To this John Heywood's work and the pieces of the later Moral playwrights evidently point. The first notable attempt at purely English Comedy in the Towneley Secunda Pastorum, is the best proof of a like feeling in the cycles. The desire on the part of the playwright to widen and vary his scope of appeal manifested itself the moment the drama left the Sanctuary when the playwright seemed first to awaken to the consciousness of his work. The development of this dramatic instinct, virtually synonymous with growth of power in character-treatment has been sufficiently illustrated in its different degrees and directions that it is not necessary to dwell on it further here. Yet in one other branch of the Morality one finds a very conscious effort to supplement a purely religious motive by one scarcely less effective—an appeal to national sympathy and interest.

Bale's Kinge Johan shows this clearly and is, moreover, a very favorable specimen of that numerous class of later moralities in the interests of the New Learning as distinguished from those moral plays which, as was seen, reflected in their measure the spirit of Humanism. In Kynge Johan, Bale, says Mr. Saintsbury, in referring to the historical character of the play, "first blundered on a path which led to the heights of English literature." The word "blundered" aptly defines the process. Looked at from the point of view of the morality, Kynge Johan is a decided advance toward the drama of secular and historical purpose, though as Mr. Schelling points out, it had no influence on the coming theatre, but may well be regarded as the connecting link between the Morality species of drama and the Chronicle play. * This, however, is high tragedy, Gorboduc, "King of Great Brittaine," contributed in a praise as the same author (p. 273) doubts that our earliest English positive way to the growth of the Historical drama.

* The Chronicle Play, pp. 16-17, 272 ff.

Bale, in choosing an historical name for his hero, sought a new motive of appeal. In presenting King John, despite the historical facts, (for John Bale shows himself wholly destitute of any faculty to perceive truth) as the champion of "Crysten libertie and Cristes holy gospell," the playwright not only rendered concrete and significative the action of the abstractions that plot against the King and the welfare of religion and the realm, but in associating all these wrongs with English interests, the dramatist secured a direct hold on the main springs of genuine dramatic power. In the Conflict of Conscience, it will be remembered, the process was just the reverse of this; the didactic purpose was much less veiled. Francis Spiera is translated by Philologus, whereas Crysten libertie or Veryte is personified in a passionate manner by an English King. With this change of dramatic motives the moral play lost its identity and ceased to be an independent species. It would be an idle undertaking to pursue it further in the vain hope of extracting its elements from the heterogeneous mass compounded by the varied and extraordinary activity of English playwrights during the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign.

Briefly, to summarize: The reference in the opening section to a parallelism of origin and growth existing between the Greek and Gothic drama has been to some extent justified. If the two indispensable conditions for the rise of a great national theatre be "on the one hand, a wide-spread religious belief, accompanied by splendor of religious ritual; on the other, flexibility of imagination enabling the dramatist to give form, life and individuality to the floating conceptions of the people — both requirements were satisfied by Athenian genius; and Attic tragedy and comedy were the joint products of the religious spectacles of the Dionysia and the succession of great inventors who interpreted the feelings of the spectators." The Gothic drama "in its infant form, is the direct product of the religious Ritual; the festival of Corpus Christi becomes as powerful an instrument as the Dionysia at Athens for the encouragement of the actor's art." *

It was not intended to lean too much on this fact of similarity and development; for, though the parallel may be true in general, it does not, however, bear to be pressed on equally at all points along the line. At Corinth and Athens the classic drama which was an integral part in the worship of the deity developed in a true sense

* Courthope, W. A. History of English Poetry, Vol. I., pp. 392 473.

organically from the earlier informal liturgies, the spontaneous, religious and dramatic expression of the rural populations at their several seasonal gatherings. After one has left the Moral plays, whatever connection in other respects he may see between them and the other species of the English drama, it would be difficult, except in a most general way, to carry out the parallelism evident enough between the earlier forms of the theatre in England and Greece. In referring to this analogy the main purpose in view had been to show apropos of Grecian worship that in connection with the Christian cult, and particularly in the liturgy of the Mediaeval Church, there were dramatic germs which under suitable conditions and like treatment were capable of growing into a drama not inferior to its prototype. This might have been; the fact is, no practice or institution has had part in creating what may be called the essential qualities of a Gothic drama to any degree comparable to that effected by the ecclesiastical Ritual all through the Middle Ages. Other important influences there had been, but the Liturgical germs as containing in a peculiar manner the root-principle of dramatic life and growth alone deserved to be named the *source* of the Gothic drama.

Intimately connected with the awakening consciousness of the dramatic instinct is the origin and application of the basic law which governs dramatic movement—the law of characterization. The relation of the Mediaeval English drama to the Liturgical Offices is observable from no point so fully as in the presentation of the worshipped realities which were back of the symbols. The universality of appeal so marked in the Ritual sprang from the effort to bring the veiled actuality more and more within the perception of the senses which was the direct object of the Lturgical drama. Precisely in the very reason of its origin we have defined the nature and purpose of the drama of all times. It was intended to supplement the Liturgical Acts proper which themselves aimed at the fullest realization possible of the loftiest spiritual ideas and of embodying human feelings and aspirations in a tangible form. It meant from the start to show Truth his face, to hold the mirror up to nature, or more concretely, to present man as a whole—reasoning, willing and feeling—on a deeply moral background.

From the beginning the playwright dealt with a reality peculiarly suited to his capacity and tastes. There was nothing to tramel the flexibility of the imagination, as the Autos Sacramentales of Calderon, abundantly prove; sheer incapacity alone impeded the Mediaeval playwright from giving through the medium of words

and action, (as was actually effected by the mediaeval builders and painters) "form, life and individuality to the floating conceptions of the people." The fault was not with his subject-matter, it was in himself.

It has not, perhaps, been always sufficiently recognized, at least seldom adequately acknowledged, to what extent after development in the treatment of the caste was due to the fact that the earlier playwright at first identified his purpose with that of the Liturgy, and later worked on doctrinal and ethical themes. Ordinarily in all beginnings at expression through art, much energy is expended ineffectually. There are few or no positive results of value from the early exercises at dramatization that would influence in a direct way the Elizabethan writer of plays. This is beyond question. None the less the idea that the playwright conceived at the beginning was essentially dramatic; it involved the only really important problem of his day, for it engaged itself with nothing less than the criterion that regulated the intrinsic worth or worthlessness of personal acts and policies. Surely such material might be easily prepared for the stage and considerable effect produced without great effort. Free from rule and precedent, all the author's energy and talent were directed to the one end of presenting in the clearest and most emphatic way in his power this essence of all dramatic action. The struggle of the human will against opposing forces of preternatural malice and might was a conflict of intense interest to the mediaeval man, and one, as was seen, which he could justly appreciate by reason of the very keen perception of the sanction governing the ever doubtful issue of the combat. Founded on ethical ideas these uncouth, incipient attempts at dramatic expression served to intensify in the mind of the auditor that consciousness of personal responsibility which already dominated his life. *

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* Brander Matthews, The Development of the Drama, pp. 120-121. "Altho The priests who put it together had not given a thought to this aspect of it, the story of Jesus is truly dramatic, not only in its humanity, in its color, in its variety, in its infinite pathos but also and chiefly in its full possession of the prime essential of a true drama—in its having at the heart of it a struggle, an exhibition of determination, a clash of contending desires. Indeed, it is the most dramatic of all struggles for it is the perpetual conflict of good and evil. To us moderns, the issue is sharply joined; but in the mediaeval church it was even more obvious; since in the middle ages no one ever doubted that a personal Devil was forever striving to thwart the will of a personal God. In the passion-play, which showed in action all the leading events of the life of Christ, both contestants were set boldly before the spectators—God himself high in Heaven, and the Devil escaping from Hell-mouth to work his evil among mankind."

This was a preliminary, of some importance if one would arrive at an accurate estimate of the intrinsic dramatic worth of the subject-matter itself, which, when viewed relative to the mediaeval author and audience, acquired a value not easily perceptible from the text. It was chiefly this implicit quality I have tried to show. An exaggerated stress on the dramatic possibilities of the epical and lyrical recitations in the halls of the nobility by the successors of the Anglo-Saxon Scop and Gleeman, and the hopelessly barren manœuvres before the people of the mediaeval histriones, mimi and joculatores weakens the emphasis that justly belongs to the liturgical drama in which alone, there is apparent genuine dramatic promise. It possessed, so far as the drama is concerned, what was essential in them; and besides its depth of interest, the university of its appeal, its inexhaustible nature in every way—were so many essential dramatic qualities not wholly hidden in the comparatively few remnants of the early Gothic drama.

Character was defined to be the summed qualities of man and its presentation nothing less than a setting forth of the processes and acts of the human reason, will and perception, through whose innumerable varieties of activity the sum was reached. The great aim of the dramatist was to present the whole life of his hero—action, situation and emotion—every dramatic factor that will help to bring out the "whole life" entire is nicely adjusted and receives the necessary emphasis. In the early drama the instinct to reproduce real life on the stage manifested itself from the beginning. Realism even to the minutest detail by any means was the main object of the playwright. He knew no other law of composition than that which gave the fullest utterance to his mind. It could not be a question with him whom to imitate. He wrote as he conceived and felt, and he understood that his business was closely to imitate life, to reproduce the Holy Night of Bethlehem or contrast the sadness and joy of Easter morning in the most effective manner possible. And as with the liturgic so with the Cyclic playwright. How bring home to the spectators in the most striking way the origin of sin and the history of Redemption? What manner of appeal could best attract and hold, what device of workmanship would bring clearest in relief the idea of struggle between the two concrete and personally interested powers that underlie the ethical history of the Human Race? Some attempt has been made to point out the playwright's design to give connection, unity and emphasis

by referring to his attitude toward his theme. The freedom with which he invents interpolates, transposes and rejects is sufficient evidence that his conception of his work differed widely from the mere historical point of view. He respected the facts of history, but he did not restrain his fancy from amending them in the interests of his purpose. It is clear what advantages he possessed over the historian and how much his unity of design through forty acts contributed to distinctness of presentation. This multiplicity of impressions unified by reason of singleness of view, when cast on the sympathetic mind of the onlooker was sure to leave there an after-image, a kind of composite photograph in which could be seen the leading idea of every scene, not as an entity apart, but incorporated into the structure of the whole, contributing, as it were, a feature to the living countenance which was formed in the memory of the spectator.

In passing to the Moral plays the aim of the dramatist was to present the same dramatic idea under a new, more concrete and emphatic form. It was easier in this species of drama to show the intrinsic relations of character and passion or the vital sequence of mental and moral development. It was no longer question to speak of the origin of evil in general, and the persistent conflict waged between it and the good as affecting the human race at large; but to present this warfare within an individual, through the medium of anthropomorphized abstractions which would externalize the processes of the secret spiritual agencies going on within. Thus, in making objective the several activities of the mind by raising each to the dignity of an independent role the writer of the Moral play contributed not a little to dramatic precision of outline in detail—in the measure the impossible scope of his theme would allow—without deviating from the old idea and line of development indicated in the Liturgical drama and realized in the perfect imitation of the Liturgy itself which leads to the grand climax where the substance and symbol meet and actually become one.

This was the early Moral play which in many respects stands in such close relation to the drama of the Sanctuary that it may be looked on, to some extent, as the fuller expression and complement of the Liturgical presentation. The later Moralities, in root for the most part, no different from the earlier plays of the type, were influenced, however, more than these by the work of the Cyclic playwright. In time as well as in matter and manner they mark, broadly

speaking, the transition stage between the Mediaeval and Elizabethan drama. At every step the author seems to look back toward the old religious exhibitions, but this only delays his progress. His own preferences and the tastes of his audience incline him to advance in the way of the new theatre. While retaining the form and to a degree the didactic tendency of the earlier Moral plays, the author in the later varieties of the species guarded against abstraction in the presentation. In keeping the allegorical action he is merely following the old convention and the line of least resistance, for his allegory clothes the reality only in the airiest of undress costume. One can perceive the countenance beneath the veil. The caste is abstract only in name; satire is introduced; points of native humor and wit, and incidents of personal interest so outline individual features that there is little in the actor to suggest his representative character. Thus, in emphasizing what had been introduced into the cyclic scenes merely as points of relief or with the view of giving local color to the workmanship, the moral plays imperceptibly pass from considerations affecting the ethical life of a Humanum Genus and Everyman in general, to a more concrete presentation of ordinary existence with its manifold interests.

The change of motif, the humanizing of the theatres, did not, however, escape the weakness usually attendant on transition. The essential dramatic qualities easily perceptible in the earlier forms of the Gothic drama were missing from the stage during this brief period. The dramatic action from being mainly intrinsic came quite on the surface for a time. Instead of beginning at the heart of their persons and working outwards, the dramatists of the transition stage began at the surface and worked the other way—noting merely the incongruous accidents of the character with little relation to the cause of their being. With the earlier writers of Moralities all this was just reversed. They conceived their persons not from the outside, but in their rudiments and first principles. They began with the heart of the character and unfolded it outwards. But the time was not now distant when power sufficient arose that drove the impracticable allegory as well as meaningless buffoonery from the stage, and restored in an artistic and explicit manner, motifs equal in force of appeal to those that were previously implied in the action on the religious stage.

From this cursory review of a main line of Mediaeval dramatic activity, I think it may be concluded that the theatrical reper-

tory of this long period is of a much richer quality than appears from a purely textual analysis of the material. From the viewpoint of character-presentation, the religious drama possessed a considerable wealth and variety of dramatic life which, when seen in the light of influencing circumstances as affecting author and audience respectively, was far more concrete, actual and personal than may be easily conceived at the present day. When the religious drama is studied with the help of collateral information it will appear that the playwright was occupied throughout on a genuinely dramatic and original idea, and that his constant effort had been to present this idea with all the realism and actuality in his power. The instinct to reproduce in the strongest colors, born with the drama, was cultivated as time went on. The several sub-varieties of the main species of dramatic growth evidence ambitious attempts of the ceaseless activity of the same instinct for something novel and attractive. Whatever would arrest attention or afford emphasis, anything that would renovate the familiar theme was welcomed. This was a sign of life, and a promise of hope when a public would compel the author, as eventually it did, to choose and adjust his material in a more artistic manner.

This injecting of lighter matter into the substance of the composition not only added the element of interest, but contributed much to a concrete and enlivened presentation of the whole which ever remained in purpose distinctively serious. Not, however, to this flavoring of the main subject, but to the vital dramatic qualities intrinsic in the theme itself that the theatre of the Middle Ages owes its real value and longevity. After all, it was the impulse to find fitting and forcible expression for the essentially dramatic in the underlying idea that led to the introduction of heterogeneous elements. The Mediaeval author of religious plays perceived the essence of the drama—this is evident and important—and sought by every means within his reach to present it in a telling and attractive manner. The measure of his success—a minor consideration—is best ascertained when we have projected ourselves into his surroundings and seen life as he saw it. When we have understood the business of the stage, with what it implies, and above all when his motifs which give full meaning to what seems to us mere elliptical utterances, are duly appreciated, we shall be minded to believe that a Mediaeval imitation of dramatic existence on the boards was not so unreal and ineffective as it has been some times

reported, but that in spite of inadequate and awkward expression, there flourished a vigorous and healthy dramatic vitality; just the manifestations of life that admirers of Shakespeare—apart from any knowledge of the pre-Elizabethan drama—would on very reasonable grounds have divined to be peculiarly fitting the Poet's ancestors.

INDEX

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