

# THE MEDIAEVAL STAGE

BY  
E. K. CHAMBERS

VOLUME II



FROM MINIATURES BY JÉHAN DE GRISE († 1344) IN  
BODLEIAN MS. 264 (*Li romans d'Alixandre*)



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Then comes the *Sponsus*, to whom the *Fatuae* finally appeal:

'audi, sponse, voces plangentium :  
aperire fac nobis ostium  
cum sociis ad dulce prandium ;  
nostrae culpa praebe remedium !  
dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit.

*Christus.*

amen dico, vos ignosco, nam caretis lumine,  
quod qui perdunt procul pergunt huius aulae limine.  
alet, chaitivas, alet, malaüreas !  
a tot jors mais vos son penas livreas,  
e en efern ora seret meneias !

*Modo accipiant eas daemones et praecipitentur in infernum.'*

This stage direction, together with an allusion in the opening lines of the *Sponsus* to the 'second Adam,' link this remarkable, and, I venture to think, finely conceived little piece to the Christmas play of *Adam* to be discussed in the next chapter. It has essentially an Advent theme, and must have been performed either in Advent itself or at the Christmas season, with which Advent is prophetically connected<sup>1</sup>.

Finally, there is a play which was almost certainly performed at Advent<sup>2</sup>. This is the Tegersee play of *Antichristus*<sup>3</sup>. It is founded upon the prophecy in St. Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians of the *homo peccati, filius perditionis*, who shall sit in the temple of God until the Christ shall slay him with the breath of his mouth, and destroy him with the glory of his advent<sup>4</sup>: and it is an elaborate spectacle, requiring for

<sup>1</sup> H. Morf, *loc. cit.*, considers the *Sponsus* an Easter play.

<sup>2</sup> Creizenach, i. 77. An Italian dramatic *Lauda* on the same subject is headed 'In Dominica de Adventu' (D'Ancona, i. 141).

<sup>3</sup> Text in Froning, 206, from edition of Zezschwitz, *Vom römischen Kaisertum deutscher Nation* (1877). The earliest edition is by Pez, *Thesaurus Anecd. Noviss.* (1721-9), ii. 3, 187. This writer introduced confusion by giving the play the title *Ludus paschalis de adventu et interitu Antichristi*. It has nothing

to do with Easter. The latest and best edition is that by W. Meyer, in *Sitzungsberichte d. hist.-phil. Classe d. königl. bayr. Akad. d. Wiss.* (Munich), 1882, i. The unique MS. is Munich MS. 19,411 (twelfth-thirteenth century), formerly in Kloster Tegersee. Both Zezschwitz and Meyer have long and valuable introductions; cf. also Froning, 199; Creizenach, i. 78. T. Wright prints the play from Pez, in *Chester Plays*, ii. 227.

<sup>4</sup> *2 Thessalonians*, ii. 3-12. According to *York Missal*, i. 10, part

its proper performance a large number of actors and a spacious stage, with a temple of God and seven royal *sedes*, together with room for much marching and counter-marching and warfare<sup>1</sup>. It must have taken up the whole nave of some great church. It begins with a procession of Emperor, Pope, and Kings, accompanied by personages emblematic of *Gentilitas*, *Sinagoga* and *Ecclesia* with her attendants *Misericordia* and *Iustitia*. The first part of the action represents the conquest of the four corners of Christendom by the Emperor and his championship of Jerusalem against the King of Babylon. *Ecclesia*, *Gentilitas*, and *Synagoga* punctuate the performance with their characteristic chants. Then come the Hypocrites, *sub silentio et specie humilitatis inclinantes circumquaque et captantes favorem laicorum*. They are followed by Antichrist himself, who instructs Hypocrisy and Heresy to prepare the way for his advent. Presently Antichrist is enthroned in the temple and gradually saps the Empire, winning over the King of the Greeks by threats, the King of the Franks by gifts, and the King of the Teutons, who is incorruptible and invincible, by signs and wonders. He marks his vassals on the brow with the first letter of his name. Then the Hypocrites attempt to persuade *Synagoga* that Antichrist is the Messiah; but are refuted by the prophets Enoch and Elijah. Antichrist has the rebels slain; but while he is throned in state, thunder breaks suddenly over his head, he falls, and *Ecclesia* comes to her own again with a *Laudem dicite deo nostro*.

The author of the *Antichristus* is not only a skilled craftsman in rhyming Latin metres; he is also capable of carrying a big literary scheme successfully to a close. His immediate source was probably the tenth-century *Libellus de Antichristo*

of this passage is read at Mass on Saturday in the *Quatuor Tempora of Advent*.

<sup>1</sup> 'Templum domini et vii sedes regales primum collocentur in hunc modum:

Ad orientem templum domini; huic collocantur sedes regis Hierosolymorum et sedes Sinagogae.

Ad occidentem sedes imperatoris

Romani; huic collocantur sedes regis Theonicorum et sedes regis Francorum.

Ad austrum sedes regis Graecorum. Ad meridiem sedes regis Babiloniae et Gentilitatis.'

Other than this direction the play has no heading, but in later stage-directions it is incidentally called a 'ludus.'

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of Adso of Toul<sup>1</sup>. Into this he has worked the central theme of the *Prophetæ* and the debating figures from that very popular *débat* or 'estریف,' the *Altercatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae*<sup>2</sup>. His work differs in several obvious respects from the comparatively simple, often naive, liturgical dramas which have been considered. It is ambitious in scope, extending to between four and five hundred lines. It introduces allegorical figures, such as we shall find, long after, in the moralities. It has a purpose other than that of devotion, or even amusement. It is, in fact, a *Tendenzschrift*, a pamphlet. The instinct of the drama, which sways the imaginations of men perhaps more powerfully than any other form of literature, to mix itself up with politics is incorrigible: *Antichristus* is a subtle vindication, on the one hand, of the Empire against the Papacy, on the other of the *rex Teutonicorum* against the *rex Francorum*. It probably dates from about 1160, when Frederick Barbarossa was at the height of his struggle with Alexander III, who enjoyed the sympathies of Louis VII of France. And it is anti-clerical. The Hypocrites who carry out the machinations of Antichrist are the clerical reformers, such as Gerhoh of Reichersberg<sup>3</sup>, who were the mainstay of the papacy in Germany.

It is improbable that the few and scattered texts which have come to light represent all the liturgical plays which had made their appearance by the middle of the twelfth century. Besides the lost *Elisaus* and *Convivium Herodis*, there is evidence, for example, of scholars' plays in honour, not only of St. Nicholas, but of their second patron, the philosophical St. Catharine of Alexandria. Such a *ludus de Sancta Katarina* was prepared at Dunstable in England by one Geoffrey, a Norman clerk who had been invited to England as schoolmaster to the abbey of St. Albans. For it he borrowed certain

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *P. L.* ci. 1291.

<sup>2</sup> Pseudo-Augustine, *De altercatione Ecclesiae et Synagogae dialogus* in *P. L.* xlii. 1131. On this theme and the *débats* based thereon cf. *Hist. Litt.* xxiii. 216; *G. Paris*, § 155; *Pearson*, ii. 376. *P. Weber*, *Geistliches Schauspiel und kirchliche Kunst* (1894), is mainly occupied with this motive

and its place in the religious drama and religious art. It is a most valuable study, but I find no ground for the conjecture (*Weber*, 31, 36) that the *Altercatio*, like the *Prophetæ*, had already, before the *Antichrist*, been semi-dramatically rendered in the liturgy.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 98.

choir copes belonging to the abbey, and had the misfortune to let these be burnt with his house. Deeply repentant, he took the religious habit, and in 1119 became abbot of St. Albans. From this date that of the *ludus* may be judged to be early in the twelfth century<sup>1</sup>.

It cannot, of course, be assumed that every play, say in the fifteenth century, which although probably or certainly written in the vernacular was performed in a church, had a Latin prototype<sup>2</sup>. Many such may have been written and acted for the first time on existing models, when the vernacular drama was already well established. But there are certain feasts where it is possible to trace, on the one hand, the element of mimetic ceremony in the services, and on the other, perhaps, some later representation in the dramatic cycles, and where a Latin text might at any time turn up without causing surprise. With a few notes on some of these this chapter must conclude. A highly dramatic trope for Ascension day, closely resembling the *Quem quaeritis*, has already been quoted from the troopers of Limoges<sup>3</sup>. An *Ordinarium* of St. Peter's of Lille directs that, after the respond *Non vos relinquam*, the officiant shall mount a pulpit and thence appear to ascend towards heaven from the top of a mountain<sup>4</sup>. Fifteenth-century *computi* speak of this or of a more elaborate performance as a *mysterium*, and include amongst other items payments for painting the scars on the hands of the performer<sup>5</sup>. On Whit-

<sup>1</sup> *Representations*, s.v. Dunstable.

<sup>2</sup> At Rouen, e. g., a confraternity played a *mysterium* on the feast of the Assumption in a waxen 'hortus' set up in their chapel; and this between 1446 and 1521 required reformation from various 'derisiones,' especially a 'ludus de marmousetis' (*Gasté*, 76). But I know of no evidence for a Latin Assumption play, although such may quite well have existed. The Lincoln Assumption play was given in the cathedral, as a wind-up to a cycle (*Representations*, s.v. Lincoln).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ducange*, s.v. *Festum Ascensionis*, 'qui . . . officio hac die praeerat, cum modicum panis et vini

degustasset, cantato responsorio *Non vos relinquam*, ambonem ascendebat, ubi ex monte efficta coelum petere videbatur; tunc pueri symphoniaci veste angelica induti decantabant *Viri Galilaei*, etc.'

<sup>5</sup> *Julleville*, *Les Myst.* ii. 9; *Annales archéologiques*, xviii. 173 'pro pingendo cicatrices in manibus D. Iohannis Rosnel, facientis mysterium in die Ascensionis' (1416), 'pro potandum cum discipulis,' 'vicariis representantibus Crucifixum cum suis discipulis et ibidem simul manducantibus et bibentibus vinum,' 'pro pingendo vulnera,' 'pro faciendo novas nubes,' 'pro pictura dictarum nubium,' 'pro cantando non vos.' In Germany (*Naedgeorgo*:

'Mundi delectatio dulcis est et grata,  
cuius conversatio suavis et ornata.'

She is converted in a dream, puts on black, buys ointments from the same *Mercator*, and adores the Lord in the house of Simon. Then come, far more briefly treated, the Raising of Lazarus, the Betrayal by Judas, the Last Supper, the Mount of Olives, the Passion itself, from the Taking in Gethsemane to the Crucifixion. The introduction here of some *planctus Mariae* points to the *genesis* of the drama, which closes with the Begging of the Body of Christ by Joseph of Arimathaea. And so, at a blow, as it were, the content of the Easter play is doubled. Certain episodes, such as the Conversion of Mary Magdalen and the Raising of Lazarus had, as we know, received an independent dramatic treatment; but in the main the play before us, or its source, bears the character of a deliberate composition on the lines of the pre-existing *Quem quaeritis*. That it was to be followed in representation by a *Quem quaeritis* may perhaps be taken for granted. Indeed there is one personage, the wife of the *Mercator*, who is named in a list at the beginning, but has no part in the text as it stands<sup>1</sup>. She may have come into the Benedictbeuern *Quem quaeritis*, of which a fragment only survives, and this may have been intended for use, as might be convenient, either with the *Ludus breviter de Passione*, or with the longer text now under consideration. At all events, Passion and Resurrection are treated together in two slightly later texts, one from the south of France<sup>2</sup>, the other from St. Gall<sup>3</sup>. The St. Gall Passion play takes the action back to the beginning of the missionary life of Christ, giving the Marriage at Cana, the Baptism, and the Temptation. It also includes a Harrowing of Hell.

Certain forms of the Passion play, as the conjoint Passion and Resurrection may now be termed, show an approximation to the type of the Christmas play. It is obvious that the

<sup>1</sup> Scenes between the *Mercator*, his wife, and their lad Rubin play a large part in the later German Passion plays; cf. Wirth, 168.

<sup>2</sup> Creizenach, i. 155. Two four-

teenth-century texts exist, one in Provençal, one in Catalan.

<sup>3</sup> Text in Mone, *Schauspiele des Mittelalters*, i. 72; cf. Creizenach, i. 121; Wirth, 135, 282.

Fall and the *Prophetæ* would be as proper a prologue to the Passion which completes the Atonement as to the Nativity which begins it. And the presence of Adam and other Old Testament characters in the Harrowing of Hell would be the more significant if in some earlier scene they had visibly been hailed there. The first trace of these new elements is in the St. Gall play, where the Augustine of the *Prophetæ* is introduced to speak a prologue. A long Frankfort play of the fourteenth century, of which unfortunately only the stage directions and actors' cues are preserved, carries the process further<sup>1</sup>. Again Augustine acts as presenter. A *Prophetæ* begins the performance, which ends with the Ascension, a *Disputatio Ecclesiae et Synagogae* and the baptizing of the incredulous Jews by Augustine. On the other hand, the Fall forms the first part of an early fourteenth-century Passion play from Vienna<sup>2</sup>. Both the Fall of Lucifer and that of Adam and Eve are included, and there is a supplementary scene in hell, into which the souls of a usurer, a monk, a robber, and a sorceress are successively brought. Lucifer refuses to have anything to do with the monk, an early use of the Tomlinson motive.

The dramatic evolution is now within measurable distance of the 'cosmic' type finally presented by the English Corpus Christi plays. Two further steps are necessary: the juxtaposition of the Nativity and Passion scenes behind their common Old Testament prologue, and the final winding up of the action by the extension of it from the Ascension to the second coming of the Christ in the Last Judgement. The eschatological scenes of the *Sponsus* and the *Antichristus* are already available for such an epilogue. That the whole of this vast framework was put together by the beginning of the fourteenth century may be inferred from the notices of two performances, in 1298 and 1303 respectively, at Cividale<sup>3</sup>. The

<sup>1</sup> Text in Froning, 340 (begins 'Incipit ordo sive registrum de passione domini'); cf. Creizenach, i. 219; Wirth, 137, 295.

<sup>2</sup> Text in Froning, 305 (begins 'Ad materiae reductionem de passione domini. Incipit ludus pa-

scalis'); cf. Creizenach, i. 92, 120; Wirth, 134, 293.

<sup>3</sup> Giuliano da Cividale, *Cronaca Friulana* (D'Ancona, i. 91; Muratori, *Rev. Ital. Script.* xxiv. 1205, 1209): 'Anno domini MCLXXXVIII die vii exeunte Maio,

first included the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, Advent of the Holy Spirit, and Advent of Christ to Judgement: the second added to these the Creation, Annunciation, Nativity, with much else, and the *Antichrist*. Any further development could now be merely episodic. The text could be amplified at the fancy of the individual writer, or upon the suggestion of the great epic narratives, such as the *Cursor Mundi*, the *Passional*, the *Erlösung*<sup>1</sup>. An infinity of new scenes could be added from the Old Testament<sup>2</sup>, from the apocryphal gospels and acts, from the historic narratives of the vengeance of the Crucified One upon Rome and Jewry<sup>3</sup>. But beyond the limits of the fixed *cadre* it was now impossible to go, for these were coincident with the span of time and eternity.

It is now necessary to consider briefly some modifications in the general character of the religious plays which accompanied or resulted from this great expansion of their scope.

videlicet in die Pentecostes et in aliis duobus sequentibus diebus, facta fuit Repraesentatio Ludi Christi, videlicet Passionis, Resurrectionis, Ascensionis, Adventus Spiritus Sancti, Adventus Christi ad iudicium, in curia Domini Patriarchae Austriae civitatis, honorifice et laudabiliter, per Clerum civitatis Anno MCCCIII facta fuit per Clerum, sive per Capitulum civitatis, Repraesentatio: sive factae fuerunt Repraesentationes infra scriptae: In primis, de Creatione primorum parentum; deinde de Annunciatione Beatae Virginis, de Partu et aliis multis, et de Passione et Resurrectione, Ascensione et Adventu Spiritus Sancti, et de Antichristo et aliis, et demum de Adventu Christi ad iudicium. Et predicta facta fuerunt solemniter in curia domini Patriarchae in festo Pentecostes cum aliis duobus diebus sequentibus, praesente r. d. Ottobono patriarcha aquilieusi, d. Iacobo q. d. Ottonelli de Civitate episcopo concordienis, et aliis multis nobilibus de civitatibus et castris Foroiulii, die xv exeunte Maio.' Still earlier, some dramatic fragments not later than the mid-thirteenth

century from Kloster Himmelparten near Nordhausen, include scenes from both the early and late life of Christ (Text, ed. Sievers, in *Zeitsch. f. d. Phil.* xxi. 393; cf. Creizenach, i. 124); but these might conceivably belong to a set of plays for different dates, such as those of the Sainte Geneviève MS. (Julleville, *Les Myst.* ii. 379). Besides the English *cosmic cycles*, there are several fifteenth-century French ones described by Julleville, *Les Myst.* ii. 394 sqq.: in Germany plays of this scope are rare.

<sup>1</sup> Pearson, ii. 312; Köppen, 49; Ten Brink, i. 287.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sepet, xxxviii, 415; Creizenach, i. 260; G. Smith, 253; Julleville, *Les Myst.* ii. 352. *Le Mystère du viel testament*, printed 1510 (ed. Rothschild, 1878-91, for *Soc. des anciens textes français*), is a fifteenth-century compilation of O. T. plays from various sources.

<sup>3</sup> French versions of the *Vengeance de Notre Seigneur*, of which the chief episode is the Siege of Jerusalem, appear in the fifteenth century (Julleville, *Les Myst.* ii. 12, 415, 451). A late Coventry play on the same theme is unfortunately lost.

These all tend towards that process of secularization, that relaxing of the close bonds between the nascent drama and religious worship, which it is the especial object of this chapter to illustrate. Of capital importance is the transference of the plays from the interior of the church to its precincts, to the graveyard or the neighbouring market-place. This must have been primarily a matter of physical necessity. The growing length of the plays, the increasing elaboration of their setting, made it cumbrous and difficult to accommodate them within the walls. It is a big step from the early *Quem quaeritis*, *Pastores* or *Stella*, with their simple *miscs-en-scène* of *sepulchrum* and *praesepé* to the complicated requirements, say, of the Fleury group, the *tabernaculum in similitudinem castelli Emaus* for the *Peregrini*, the half-dozen *loca, domus, or sedes* demanded by the *Suscitatio Lazari* or the *Conversio Pauli*. Still more exigent is the *Antichristus* with its *templum domini* and its seven *sedes regales*, and its space in between for marchings and counter-marchings and the overthrowing of kings. Yet for a long time the church proved sufficient. The Tours *Quem quaeritis* and some, if not all, of the Fleury plays were demonstrably played in the church. So was the Rouen *Prophetiae*, and an allusion of Gerhoh of Reichersberg makes it extremely probable that so was the *Antichristus*<sup>1</sup>. One must conceive, I think, of the performances as gradually spreading from choir to nave, with the *domus, loca, or sedes* set at intervals against the pillars, while the people crowded to watch in the side aisles. It is in the twelfth century that the plays first seek ampler room outside the church. Of the transition plays dealt with in the present chapter, the *Adam*, the Benedict-beuern Christmas play, the Anglo-Norman *Resurrection*, were certainly intended for the open, and the contrary cannot be affirmed in any case with the same assurance. Again, the Riga *Prophetiae* of 1204 was *in media Riga*, the Padua Passion play of 1244 was in a meadow, the *Pratum Vallis*, while in England an early thirteenth-century biographer of St. John of Beverley records a miracle wrought at a Resurrection play in the churchyard of the minster.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 99.

the vulgar<sup>1</sup>. The hope of affording a counter-attraction to the spring and winter *ludi* of hard-dying paganism probably went for something. Herrad of Landsberg, in the twelfth century, utters a regret that the *Stella* rightly instituted at Epiphany by the Fathers of the Church had given place to a shameless revel<sup>2</sup>. But a contrary opinion to Herrad's arose almost contemporaneously amongst the reforming anti-imperial clergy of Germany. This finds expression more than once in the writings of Gerhoh of Reichersberg<sup>3</sup>. He scoffs at the monks of Augsburg who, when he was *magister scolae* there about 1122, could only be induced to sup in the refectory, when a representation of Herod or the Innocents or some other quasi-theatrical spectacle made an excuse for a feast<sup>4</sup>. And he devotes a chapter of his *De Investigatione Antichristi*, written about (1161), to an argument that clergy who turn the churches into theatres are doing the work of that very Antichrist of whom they make a show<sup>5</sup>. Evidently Gerhoh has

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. vol. i. p. 318. Pearson, ii. 285, translates: 'The old Fathers of the Church, in order to strengthen the belief of the faithful and to attract the unbeliever by this manner of religious service, rightly instituted at the Feast of Epiphany or the Octave religious performances of such a kind as the star guiding the Magi to the new-born Christ, the cruelty of Herod, the dispatch of the soldiers, the lying-in of the Blessed Virgin, the angel warning the Magi not to return to Herod, and other events of the birth of Christ. But what nowadays happens in many churches? Not a customary ritual, not an act of reverence, but one of irreligion and extravagance conducted with all the license of youth. The priests having changed their clothes go forth as a troop of warriors; there is no distinction between priest and warrior to be marked. At an unfitting gathering of priests and laymen the church is desecrated by feasting and drinking, buffoonery, unbecoming jokes, play, the clang of weapons, the presence of shameless wenches,

the vanities of the world, and all sorts of disorder. Rarely does such a gathering break up without quarrelling.'

<sup>3</sup> On Gerhoh (1093-1169) see the article in the 2nd ed. of Wetzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexicon*. He took a strong reforming and anti-imperial line in the controversies of his day.

<sup>4</sup> Gerhohus, *Comm. in Ps. cxxxii* (P. L. cxciv. 890) 'Cohaerebat ipsi Ecclesiae claustrum satis honestum, sed a claustrali religione omnino vacuum, cum neque in dormitorio fratres dormirent, neque in refectorio comederent, exceptis rarissimis festis, maxime in quibus Herodem repraesentarent Christi persecutorem, parvulorum interfectorem, seu ludis aliis aut spectaculis quasi theatralibus exhibendis comportaretur symbolum ad faciendum convivium in refectorio aliis pene omnibus temporibus vacuo.'

<sup>5</sup> Gerhohus, *de Inv. Ant.* lib. i. c. 5, *de spectaculis theatricis in ecclesia Dei exhibitis* (*Gerhohi Opera Inedita*, ed. Scheibelberger, i. 25) 'Et sacerdotes, qui dicuntur, iam non ecclesiae vel altaris ministerio dediti

been stung by the lampooning of his party as the *Hypocritae* in the pro-imperialist *Antichristus* which is still extant. But he includes in his condemnation plays of a less special and polemical character, referring especially to the Nativity cycle and to a lost play of *Elisaeus*. He repeats some of the old patristic objections against *larvae* and *spectacula*, and tells tales, such as Prynne will tell after him, of how horrors mimicked by actors have been miraculously converted into verities<sup>1</sup>. Literary historians occasionally commit themselves to the statement that Innocent III forbade the clergy to participate in miracle-plays<sup>2</sup>. It is more than doubtful

sunt, sed exercitiis avaritiae, vanitatum et spectaculorum, adeo ut ecclesias ipsas, videlicet orationum domus, in theatra commutent ac mimiciis ludorum spectaculis impleant. Inter quae nimirum spectacula adstantibus ac spectantibus ipsorum feminis interdum et antichristi, de quo nobis sermo est, non ut ipsi aestimant imaginariam similitudinem exhibent sed in veritate, ut credi potest iniquitatis ipsius mysterium pro parte sua implent. Quidni enim diabolus abutatur in serium rebus sibi exhibitis in vanitatis ludicrum, sicut Dominus quoque Iesus convertens in seria ludibria, quibus apud Iudaeos vel Pilatum in passione sua affectus est? . . . Quid ergo mirum si et isti nunc antichristum vel Herodem in suis ludis simulantes eosdem non, ut eis intentioni est, ludicro mentuntur sed in veritate exhibent, ut pote quorum vita ab antichristi laxa conversatione non longe abest? . . . Contigit, ut comperimus, aliquando apud tales, ut eum quem inter ludicra sua quasi mortuum ab Elisaeo propheta suscitantem exhiberent peracta simulatione mortuum invenirent. Alius item antichristo suo quasi suscitandus oblatum intra septem dies vere mortuus, ut comperimus, et sepultus est. Et quis scire potest an et cetera simulata antichristi scilicet effigiem, daemonum larvas, herodianam insaniam in veritate non exhibeant? . . . Exhi-

bent praeterea imaginaliter et salvatoris infantiae cunabula, parvuli vagitum, puerperae virginis matronalem habitum, stellae quasi sidus flammigerum, infantum necem, maternum Rachelis ploratum. Sed divinitas insuper et matura facies ecclesiae abhorret spectacula theatra, non respicit in vanitates et insanias falsas, immo non falsas sed iam veras insanias, in quibus viri totos se frangunt in feminas quasi pudeat eos, quod viri sunt, clerici in milites, homines se in daemonum larvas transfigurant . . .'

<sup>1</sup> Prynne, *Histrionastix*, 556, refers to 'the visible apparition of the Devill on the Stage at the Bel-savage Play-house, in Queene Elizabeth's dayes (to the great amazement both of the Actors and Spectators) whiles they were there prophanely playing the History of Faustus (the truth of which I have heard from many now alive, who well remember it), there being some distracted with that fearefull sight.'

<sup>2</sup> Pollard, xxiv. I do not know how Ward, i. 43, gets at the very different theory that in 1210 (*sic* for 1207) Innocent III ordered plays 'to be represented outside the church as well as inside.' Mr. Pollard, by the way, assigns the prohibition to 'Pope Gregory,' a further mistake, due, I suppose, to the fact that it was subsequently included in the Gregorian *Decretals*.

whether this was so. The prohibition in question is familiar to us, and it is clear that the *ludi teatrales* which Innocent barred from the churches were primarily the Feasts of Fools, and the like<sup>1</sup>. And as a matter of fact the *glossa ordinaria* to the decretal by Bernard de Bottone, which itself dates from about 1263, so interprets the words of the Pope as expressly to allow of Christmas and Easter representations calculated to stimulate devotion<sup>2</sup>. Yet there would have been no need for the gloss to have been written had not an opposite interpretation also been current. It was perhaps on the strength of the decree that another reformer, Robert Grosseteste, justified his action when in 1244 he directed his archdeacons to exterminate, so far as they could, the *miracula*, which he put on the same level as May-games and harvest-Mays, or the *scotales* of the folk<sup>3</sup>. And it is certainly appealed to before the end of the thirteenth century in the *Manuel des Péchés* of the Anglo-Norman William of Waddington<sup>4</sup>. Robert

<sup>1</sup> Cf. vol. i. p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Creizenach, i. 101, 'Non tamen hic prohibetur repraesentare praesepe Domini, Herodem, magos et qualiter Rachel ploravit filios suos, etc., quae tangunt festivitates illas, de quibus hic fit mentio, cum talia ad devotionem potius inducant homines quam ad lasciviam vel voluptatem, sicut in pascha sepulcrum Domini et alia repraesentantur ad devotionem excitandam': cf. vol. i. p. 342. J. Aquila, *Opusculum Enchiridion appellatum ferme de omni ludorum genere*, f. 14 (Oppenheim, 1516), after referring to the canon, says, 'Demonstrationes quae fiunt ad honorem dei puta passionis Christi aut vitae alicuius sancti non prohibentur in sacris locis ac temporibus fieri.' Both canon and gloss are cited in *Dives and Pauper*, a book of fifteenth-century English morality (F. A. Gasquet, *Eve of Reformation*, 317): cf. also D'Ancona, i. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. vol. i. p. 91. An anchoress of Tarrant Keynston (*Ancren Riwele*, 1150, C. S. 318) was bound to confess if she 'eode oðe pleouwe ine chircheie: biheold hit 7 oðe

wrastlinge 7 oðer fol gomenes': but 'pleouwe,' like *ludus* (vol. i. p. 393), may have a very general meaning.

<sup>4</sup> Manning, 146:—

Un autre folie apert  
Vnt les fols clerics cuntroue,  
Qe 'miracles' sunt apele;  
Lur faces vnt la deguise  
Par visers, li forsene,—  
Qe est defendu en decree;  
Tant est plus grand lur peche.  
Fere poent representement,—  
Mes que ceo seit chastement  
En office de seint eglise  
Quant hom fet la deu serve,—  
Cum iesu crist le fiz dee  
En sepulcre esteit pose,  
Et la resurrectiun,  
Pur plus auer deuociun.  
Mes, fere foles assemblez  
En les rues des citez,  
Ou en cymiters apres mangiers,  
Quant venent les fols volunters,—  
Tut dient qe il le funt pur bien,—  
Crere ne les deuez pur rien  
Qe fet seit pur le honur de dee,  
Einz del deable, pur verite,  
Seint ysidre me ad testimone  
Qe fut si bon clerik lettre;  
Il dist qe cil qe funt sepectacles

Grosseteste presumably, and William of Waddington specifically, objected to *miracula* even out of doors, which is surely stretching the words of Innocent III beyond what they will reasonably bear. In any case the austere view of the matter was not that which prevailed. The lax discipline of the 'Babylonish captivity' at Avignon, which allowed the Feast of Fools to grow up unchecked through the fourteenth century, was not likely to boggle at the plays. The alleged indulgence, not without modern parallels<sup>1</sup>, of Clement VI to the spectators of the Chester plays and the performance of a *Stella* given by the English bishops in honour of their continental colleagues at the council of Constance in 1417<sup>2</sup> are two out of

Cume lem fet en miracles,  
Or ius qe nus nomames einz —  
Burdiz ou turneinens, —  
Lur baptesine vnt refusez,  
E deu de ciel reneiez,' &c.

Robert Mannyng of Brunne  
(1303) translates:—

'Hyt ys forbode hym, yn the decre,  
Myracles for to make or se;  
For myracles, 3yf þou begynne,  
Hyt ys a gaderyng, a syghte of  
synne,  
He may yn þe cherche þurgh  
þys resun  
Pley þe resurrecyun,  
Dat ys to seye, how Gode ros,  
God and man yn myzt and los,  
To make men be yn beleue gode  
That he has ros wyþ flesshe and  
blode:

And he may pleye wyþoutyn  
plyghte  
Howe god was bore yn zole nyght,  
To make men to beleue stedfastly  
Dat he lyghte yn þe vyrgyne Mary.  
3uf þou do hyt in weys or greuys,  
A syghte of synne truly hyt semys.  
Seynt Ysodre, y take to wytne,  
For he hyt seyþ þat soþ hyt es;  
Þus hyt seyþ yn hys boke,  
Þey foresake þat þey toke—  
God and here crystendom—  
Dat makes wyche pleyysto anyman  
As myracles and bourdys,  
Or tournamentys of grete prys,' &c.  
The reference to 'Seynt Ysodre'  
is to Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum* xviii. 59, *de horum* [*ludo-*

*rum*] *exsecratione* (P. L. lxxxii. 660).  
The saint is speaking of course of  
the Roman *spectacula*.

<sup>1</sup> On the 'pardon' or 'Ablass'  
given to actors at Oberammergau,  
and the meaning, or want of mean-  
ing, to be attached to it, see an  
amusing controversy in the *Nine-*  
*teenth Century* for January and Feb-  
ruary, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> L'Enfant, *Hist. du Concile de*  
*Constance* (1727), ii. 404; Hardt,  
*Magnum Oecumenicum Constan-*  
*tiense Concilium* (1700), iv. 1089;  
K. Schmidt, *Die Digby-Spiele*, 12.  
The performance, which was pos-  
sibly a dumb show, took place at  
a banquet on Jan. 24, 1413, and was  
repeated on the following Sunday  
before the emperor, who had arrived  
in the interval. Hardt quotes the  
German of one Dacher, an eye-  
witness: 'Am 24<sup>ten</sup> tag des Monats  
Januarii, das vvar auff Timotheus  
tag, da luden die Bischöff aus Enge-  
land, der Bischoff Salisburgensis,  
der Bischoff von Londen, und  
demnach funff Bischoff von Enge-  
land, alle Rächt zu Costniz und  
sönt viel ehrbar Bürger daselbst,  
in Burchart Walters Haus, das man  
vorzeiten nennt zu dem Burgthor,  
itz zu dem gulden Schwvert, allern-  
ächst bey S. Laurenz. Und gab  
ihnen fast ein köstlich mahl, ie 2.  
Gericht nach einander, jedes Gericht  
besonder mit 8 Essen: Die trug man  
allvveg eins mahl dar, deren allvveg;

upon record which were apparently represented after the traditional manner of miracles, but differ from these in that they treat subjects not religious, but secular. Extant examples must be sought in the relics, not of the English, but of the continental drama. The earliest is the French *Estoire de Griselidis*, a version of the story familiar in Chaucer's *Clerkes Tale*, which was written and acted, according to the manuscript, in 1395<sup>1</sup>. Slightly later is a Dutch manuscript which contains, amongst other things, probably the *répertoire* of some *compagnie joyeuse*, three plays on the subjects respectively of Esmoreit, Gloriant of Brunswick, and Lanseloet and Sanderijn<sup>2</sup>. Both the French and Dutch plays belong to what may be called the wider circle of chivalric romance. An obvious link between such pieces and the ordinary miracle-play is to be found in those of the *Miracles de Nostre Dame* which, like *Amis et Amiles* or *Robert le Diable*, also handle topics of chivalric romance, but only such as are brought technically within the scope of the miracle-play by the intervention of the Virgin at some point of the action<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, another French play, dating from about 1439, on the subject, drawn not from romance but from contemporary history, of the Siege of Orleans, may be explained by the sanctity already attributed in the national imagination to Joan of Arc, who is naturally its leading figure<sup>4</sup>. But the usual range

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Groeneveld (1888); cf. Creizenach, i. 362; Julleville, *Les Myst.* i. 180, ii. 342.

<sup>2</sup> I do not think that these Dutch plays have been printed. The MS., in the Royal Library at Brussels, is described by Hoffmann von Fallersleben. *Horae Belgicae*, vi, xxix; cf. Creizenach, i. 366. Besides the three chivalric plays, it contains a dramatized *estریف* of Summer and Winter (cf. vol. i. p. 187) included with them under the general title of 'abele Spelen,' and also a long farce or 'Boerd.' To each of the five plays, moreover, is attached a short farcical after-piece. A few notices of other fifteenth-century Dutch chivalric plays are preserved. The subjects are Ar-

noute, Ronchevale, Florys und Blanchefflor, Gryselle (Griseldis); cf. Creizenach, i. 372.

<sup>3</sup> Julleville, *Les Myst.* ii. 284, 310.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. F. Guessard et E. de Certain (1862) in *Collection des documents historiques*; cf. Creizenach, i. 372; Julleville, *Les Myst.* ii. 576; H. Tivier, *Étude sur le Myst. du Siège d'O.* (1868). The play may have been designed for performance at the festival held at Orleans in memory of the siege on May 8. The passage quoted from Sir Richard Morrison on p. 221, suggests that a similar commemoration was held in the sixteenth century by the English at Calais of the battle of Agincourt in 1415.

of subject was certainly departed from when Jacques Millet, a student at Orleans, compiled, between 1450 and 1452, an immense *mystère* in 30,000 lines on the *Istoire de la destruction de Troye la grant*<sup>1</sup>. In England, the few examples of the mingling of secular elements with the miracle-plays which present themselves during the sixteenth century can hardly be regarded as mediaeval<sup>2</sup>. The only theme which need be noticed here is that of King Robert of Sicily. A play on this hero, revived at the High Cross at Chester in 1529, is stated in a contemporary letter to have been originally written in the reign of Henry VII. But a still earlier *ludus de Kyng Robert of Cesill* is recorded in the *Lincoln Annales* under the year 1453.

Far more important than this slight secular extension of miracle-plays is another development in the direction of allegory, giving rise to the 'moral plays' or 'moralities,' as they came to be indifferently called<sup>3</sup>, in which the characters are no longer scriptural or legendary persons, but wholly, or almost wholly, abstractions, and which, although still religious in intention, aim rather at ethical cultivation than the establishing of faith. The earliest notices of morals are found about the end of the fourteenth century, at a time when the influence of the *Roman de la Rose* and other widely popular works was bringing every department of literature under the sway of allegory<sup>4</sup>. That the drama also should be touched with the spirit of the age was so inevitable as hardly to call for comment. But it will be interesting to point out some at least of the special channels through which the new tendency established itself. In the first place there is the twelfth-century Latin play of *Antichristus*. In a sense the whole content of this may be called allegorical, and the allegory becomes formal in such figures as *Heresis* and *Ypocrisis*,

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Stengel (1883); cf. Creizenach, i. 374; Julleville, *Les Myst.* ii. 569.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Representations*, s.v. Dublin.

<sup>3</sup> Collier, ii. 183, thinks the term 'morality' a 'recent' one, but it was used in 1503: cf. p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> There is not much direct imitation of the *Roman de la Rose* in the moralities. Perhaps the French *Honneur des Dames* of Andrieu de

la Vigne (Julleville, *Rép. com.* 73) comes nearest. But its leading episode, the siege of the fortress of Danger, is reflected in the siege of the Castle of Perseverance and that of the Castle of Maudleyn in the *Mary Magdalen* of the Digby MS. On the general place of allegory in contemporary literature cf. *Courthope*, i. 341.

*Iustitia* and *Misericordia*, and in those of *Ecclesia*, *Synagoga*, and *Gentilitas*, suggested to the clerkly author by a well-known *disputatio*. The same theme recurs in more than one later play<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, there is the theme of the Reconciliation of the Heavenly Virtues, which is suggested by the words of the eighty-fifth Psalm: 'Mercy and Truth are met together: Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.' This is treated in two unprinted and little known French plays, also of the twelfth century, which I have not as yet had occasion to mention and of which I borrow the following analysis from Dr. Ward: 'These four virtues appear personified as four sisters, who meet together after the Fall of Man before the throne of God to conduct one of those disputations which were so much in accordance with the literary tastes of the age; Truth and Righteousness speak against the guilty Adam, while Mercy and Peace plead in his favour. Concord is restored among the four sisters by the promise of a Saviour, who shall atone to Divine Justice on behalf of man.' One of these pieces is ascribed to the Anglo-Norman poet, Guillaume Herman (1127-70), the other to Stephen Langton, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury. They are generally spoken of as literary exercises, not intended for representation<sup>2</sup>. But it is obvious that they might very well find their places in miracle-play cycles, as links between the scenes dealing respectively with the Fall and the Redemption. Further, precisely such an episode, in precisely such a position, does occur, three hundred years later, in the English cycle known as the *Ludus Coventriae*. Nor is this the only allegorical element which distinguishes a certain part of this patchwork cycle from nearly all the other English plays<sup>3</sup>. It is not, perhaps, of great importance that in the Assumption scene the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 63, 77.

<sup>2</sup> Ward, i. 105; *Archaeologia*, xiii. 232. A *débat* on precisely this theme is introduced into the *Chasteau d'Amour*, a theological work in the form of a romance, ascribed to Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), on which cf. F. S. Stevenson, *Life of Grosseteste*, 38; Jusserand, *Eng. Lit.* i. 214. In the English version

of the fourteenth century (R. F. Weymouth, *The Castel of Love*, 273) the passage begins—

'For now I chul tellen of þe stryf  
þat a-mong þe foure sustren lip.'

<sup>3</sup> No stress is of course to be laid upon the late introduction of Dolor and Mysery into the Grocers' play at Norwich, when the text was rewritten in 1565.

risen Christ receives the name of *Sapientia*, or that *Contemplatio* is the 'exposytour in doctorys wede,' by whom several other scenes are introduced. But there is a striking passage at the end of the Slaughter of the Innocents, where 'Dethe, Goddys masangere,' intervenes to make an end of the tyrannic Herod<sup>1</sup>, and here, I think, may clearly be traced yet a third stream of allegorical tendency making its way into the drama from that singular *danse macabre* or 'Dance of Death,' which exercised so powerful a fascination on the art of the Middle Ages. Death hobnobbing with pope and king and clown, with lord and lady, with priest and merchant, with beggar and fool, the irony is familiar in many a long series of frescoes and engravings. Nor are cases lacking in which it was directly adapted for scenic representation. An alleged example at Paris in 1424 was probably only a painting. But in 1449 a *certain jeu, histoire et moralité sur le fait de la danse macabre* was acted before Philip the Good at Bruges, and a similar performance is recorded at Besançon in 1453<sup>2</sup>.

The process of introducing abstractions into the miracle-plays themselves does not seem to have been carried very far. On the other hand, the moralities, if God and the Devil may be regarded as abstractions, admit of nothing else. Two at least of the motives just enumerated, the Dance of Death and the Reconciliation of the Heavenly Virtues, recur in them. But both are subordinate to a third, which may be called the Conflict of Vice and Virtue. This *débat*-like theme is of course familiar in every branch of allegorical literature. Prof. Creizenach traces one type of it, in which the conflict is conceived under the symbols of siege or battle, to the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius<sup>3</sup>, and perhaps even further to the passage about the 'whole armour of God' in St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians<sup>4</sup>. For the purposes of the stage it

<sup>1</sup> *Ludus Cov.* 106 (play xi, *Virgines*), 70, 79, 89, 105, 124, 129, 289 (plays viii-xiii, xxix, *Contemplacio*), 184 (play xix, *Mors*), 386 (play xli, *Sapientia*); cf. Hohlfeld, in *Anglia*, xi. 278.

<sup>2</sup> Jusserand, *Théâtre*, 123; Pearson, i. 2; Creizenach, i. 461; *Certain Cox*, clxvi; W. Seelmann, *Die*

*Totentänze des Mittelalters (Jahrb. d. Vereins f. niederdeutsche Sprachforschung, xvii. 1)*. A bibliography of the Dance of Death is given by Goedeke, i. 322 (bk. iii. § 92).

<sup>3</sup> Prudentius, *Psychomachia* († 400 *P. L.* lx. 11); cf. Creizenach, i. 463.

<sup>4</sup> *Ephesians*, vi. 11.