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THE undersigned, acting as a committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Mr. Ira Ellsworth Schuler for the degree of Master of Arts. They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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The Work of the Trading Gilds  
in the Control and Influence of  
the Mediaeval Drama.

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Minnesota

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Irving H. Schuler

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*The Work of the Trading Guilds  
in Respect To the Development  
of The Mediaeval Guilds  
Ira Schouler*

I.

The Early English Gild was an institution of local self-help, with the high aim of joining all classes together in a care for the need in their problems of common welfare, and in the practice of Religion, Justice and Morality. They were very different from the modern trade union, whose chief object is personal gain, for the teaching of brotherhood was more than a dogma, in the Gilds, - it became a practice of life. Whatever was the object of the earlier Gilds, the principle which gave them birth was the same as that of later times; namely, self-help, which could think of the welfare of others.

Some links worthy of consideration that carry us from the Gilds of the old English times to those of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, are found in the Gild of St. John of Beverley, the earliest charter given in the time of Henry 1, and in the Gild of Stratford-upon-Avon, concerning the date of which only one thing is certain, it was from the time of very early history of Gilds in England. In the Gild of St. John of Beverley very few of the returns remain in the record office, only a few charters, the earliest of which was given by Arch-Bishop

\*

Thurston of York.

The Ordinances relative to the Gild of Stratford-upon-Avon have baffled all researchers in their attempt to ascertain its origin. Mr. Thomas Fisher, very early in the 19th century, found the records of the Gild, and tells us that he examined records as far back as the reign of Edward the First. However, Mr. Toulmin Smith in the E.E. Text. Society, has published the original return, in Latin, made on the 30th of January 1389. This may be found in the E.E. T.S. page 51. Vol. 40.

It is well at this point to state briefly the social importance of the Gilds. Mr. Toulmin Smith asserts that only five out of the five hundred Gilds were not formed equally of men and women. ( This is a noteworthy fact when we consider the neglect of ages heaped upon women). This period is significant for the discovery of that fact as well as the organized efforts of the masses. Even when the affairs were managed by priests women were admitted as lay members.<sup>1</sup>

Social  
Importance  
of Gilds.

\*E.E.T.S. page 151. Toulmin Smith English Gilds.

<sup>1</sup> The Gild of Corpus Christe when founded had forty-three members eighteen of which were women. Early English Text Society, page 155.

The sort of people who joined together may be judged, somewhat, by the names <sup>\*</sup> they assumed, as Young Scholars, Shepherds, Tailors, Cordnainers Gild and numerous others.

Gilds were popular and so well managed that they grew in numbers and importance, so that persons of all ranks joined in, even the highest in the Kingdom. The Gild of the Trinity, at Coventry, according to Dugdale, had enrolled Kings as members, Henry IV., Henry VI., and Henry VIII., and Cardinal Wolsey were brethren <sup>at</sup> † in the Gild of St. Barbara of St. Katharine's Church.

We have noted briefly the social importance of the Early English Gilds at the close of the thirteenth and the opening of the fourteenth century; it also is necessary to review with equal care the status of the drama in its process of evolution at the same period. The mediaeval drama is significant, because it was written by authors and performed by actors sprung from the people (of the age) and had nothing to do with learned studies of ancient forms of art.

Status  
of Drama  
at the  
Opening  
of the 13th  
Century.

\* Chaucers description of the brethren <sup>at</sup> who joined the pilgrimage to Canterbury, is a good illustration of the mixed characters.

† Strype's Stow, Book II. page 6.

A proper definition for the mediaeval drama is a popular amusement growing out the deepest concerns of men's minds of the times,--religion. So it is of interest, however, to investigate the drama itself, to find how the religious play of the Middle Ages developed itself..

In the Middle ages the Church was more than a refuge for sufferers and a house of worship for believers; it embraced all the intellectual interests of the time as well as all the higher aspirations of the people. The Mediaeval Drama found its origin in the church, whose very service had a distinctive dramatic character. And the clergy, soon understanding what power this dramatic element, in the service of the church, had over the minds of the people, did not hesitate to make use of the drama. They introduced by degrees dramatic action into the service, substituting intelligible performances for the incomprehensible Latin words. The great religious festivals, gave special opportunity for liturgical dramas. Thus at a certain Christmas celebration for example, St. Augustine is represented addressing himself to the Jews in order to convince them of the divinity of Christ. For this purpose

all the old prophets are made to appear before him in succession, in order to repeat their prophecies. Thus the beginning of the liturgical drama, which in different forms was acted all over Europe, in Latin, the clergy themselves taking the several parts.

In the same way other Biblical subjects were represented at appropriate festivals such as the "Slaughter of the Innocents", the "Nativity", the Wise Men of the East", the "Raising of Lazarus" and the conversion of St. Paul. The rubric, in the manuscript of the Conversion of St. Paul, gives interesting information\* about the style of the scenery in the play. To represent the scene a station representing Jerusalem shall be placed in a suitable place, and in this high station the high priest shall stand. In another station shall stand St. Paul. He shall be accompanied by armed men. In another place at some distance, there shall be two stations representing Damascus; in one of them shall stand a man named Judas, in the other the

\* In the instructions for the actors found in the "rebries", the gestures are very minutely described. For example, in one of the plays of the Three Kings, the instructions are that one of the actors shall lift his hand and point to the stars that hang on a string.

chief of the synagogue in Damascus; and between the two stations there shall be a bed on which a man representing Ananias shall rest.\*

In nowise, however, could plays of this kind satisfy an audience whose sense for dramatic art was already awakened not so much because of the poor and elementary stage scenery, as on account of the uncomprehensible language. So by degrees the popular language crept in. But from the moment the plays were written entirely in the living tongue they slipped out of the hands of the church. It came about gradually of course, first the plays moved out from inside the church to the space in front of it, though at first performed by the clergy, then farther away to the public street. During this transformation, they were becoming more and more written and performed by the laity. The rupture between the church and the mysteries was gradually deepened; and the very basis of existence of the mediaeval drama became undermined. Lay actors becoming semi-professional, began to appropriate the sacred

\* The above statement is revised from a translation which seemed to be entirely inadequate.

subjects, and because these strolling actors could not infuse into the sublime dramas the same dignity that formerly impressed the people, the clergy deemed it right to oppose themselves to the mysteries and performances. Thus, just as the mediaeval drama had received its great impetus from the church so it also received its greatest set-backs from the same source until it had not much vital power left.

An attempt was made in the middle of the thirteenth century to put to a more emphatic religious use the performances, which seemed to be more and more worldly. This attempt connects itself with the endeavor to arouse the popular conscience in the central doctrine of the Church of Rome. I refer particularly to the institution of the festival of Corpus Christi, which was instituted by Pope Urban IV, in the year 1264. This was the first reactionary attempt on the part of the clergy against the plays, that were becoming less and less religious in nature. This bull issued by the Pope abolished the Order of the Templars, and stirred the clergy to start<sup>at</sup> counter organization<sup>\*</sup> to the Gilds.

\* See ~~F~~ Misl. Article by Leach.

## II.

To the mediaeval town the performance of a mystery was an event of immense interest. During the periodic festivals everything else was pushed to the background for the sake of plays. Before the theatre became an established institution, such an event was usually an annual occurrence in the history of a town. It was a great, expensive time-swallowing enterprise, which could take place only at long intervals. The talent was generally local, which made it necessary that the citizens, who acted in the play to break off part of their professional work. As a rule they received no, or very little, compensation for their loss of time, as they mostly played for the sake of their own pleasure.

However honorable or gratifying as it might be to please God and the Holy Virgin by acting in a play, it

\* In some accounts of English mysteries we find the following scale of the salaries of the leading parts- Pilate received the highest payment: 4s. The next in order Herod and Caiaphar each with 3s.6d. Christ strange to say, only gets 2s.; and Judas and the devil, are paid the small sum of 1s.6d. each. The peculiar scale of wage shows conclusively that the actual dramatic importance of the character had nothing to do with the compensation received. A complete itemized list of expenses can be obtained from Thomas Shuks, Dissertation of the Pageants.

The  
Mediaeval  
Town in the  
Middle Ages  
at time of  
Play.

would not do to let trade lie still for several months each year, and it did not take less than two months to prepare for a performance which lasted only a few days. So each town had to content itself with showing its religious feelings and skill and maintaining its reputation, on appropriate occasions, such as a great church festival, and, later in the period, the arrival of a prince and the cessation of a plague. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries regular festival days were appointed by the church to be celebrated each year, but later when the Gilds became a controlling influence in the management of the plays the performances became less frequent. Some towns in the latter part of the mediaeval period performed their religious plays at longer intervals, sometimes of five or six years, as was the case of the Passion plays.

The very fact of their rarity added to the great excitement created by these performances. In these pageants peculiar to Northern England the staff of performers were very numerous, and, including supers, and children. In the less populated towns of the Middle Ages, it is not at all improbable that every family contributed to the staff of

performers, which naturally added to the personal interest with which the townsfolk followed the course of the performance. The pleasure of seeing these festival programs finally became compulsory. On the day of the performance the magistrate ordered all the shops to be closed, and forbade all noisy work.\*

The festival always attracted a large number of jugglers and musicians to the town, and during the intervals in the acting they amused the people, or the people amused themselves as best they might with singing and dancing, refreshing their dry throats with strong beer and adulterated wine.

Gilds may be divided into two classes, Social Gilds and Craft Gilds. Both were recognized by Parliament, which issued a separate Writ, for the Returns of each. The Writ for the Return from the Social Gilds by Act of Parliament, that met at Cambridge, demanded that before the 2d day of Februrary A.D. 1389, which is before the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, each town should send up Returns as to the beginning and government

\*See Ward, English Dramatic Literature for brief comment.

Gilds-  
Classification

of its Gilds. The Writ for Returns from the Craft Gilds, by authority of Parliament, commanded that Sheriffs must send up a statement when proclamations were made, and copies of charters and letters, under penalty of forfeiture.

The Social Gilds were organized upon the broad basis of brotherly aid and morality, without class distinction and they incorporated a great variety of objects. The Craft Gilds, sharing the same principles, were for the benefit of the members as Tradesmen, and for the regulation of that trade. There were also Gilds that were neither entirely Social or Craft Gilds as in the case of the Gild of the Fullers of Lincoln, founded in 1297, the Gild of the Tailors of Lincoln founded in 1328 and the Gild of the Tylers of Lincoln founded in 1346. These are the best examples of Gilds which were neither wholly Social Gilds nor wholly Craft Gilds. They did not come within the terms of the Writ for Returns from Craft Gilds. In each of the three cases only two or three of the ordinances have anything to do with the members of the Gild as Craftsmen. These stand as a sort of cross between the two above-named classes, and are in a class by themselves, as no record can be found of their being compelled to

forward Returns.

Although the Religious Gilds primarily had their origin as far back as 858, according to information afforded us by the Capitularies of Archbishop Hincman of Rheims, yet not until the fourteenth century were the Religious Gilds to play any part in the solidarity of the social units.

### III.

It is a very significant fact that York, a center of religious activity, for several centuries past, became at the beginning of the fourteenth century the center of the liturgical drama, both in the production of literature and in the activities of presentation. This interesting situation, which marks the beginning of a great era of productivity and advancement, in literary thought and widespread knowledge, can be accounted for by the following reasons. First,- the activity of the Social Gilds. Second,-the increased number of spectators, caused partly by the activity of the Social Gilds and partly by the preference of the common language, which was being substituted for the Latin, especially in regard to the

\*  
Gild  
Influence,  
Its  
Significance.

\* See Lucy Toulmin Smiths', introductory essay to York Plays.

celebration of the church. And, Third,- The utility of service manifested in the Gilds in the putting on of the Liturgical play. The psychology of the whole situation may be summed up in a single sentence. People of all classes and ranks took part in the Religious or Social Gilds, making the participants in the celebration universal and thereby furnishing a way for service and practicality.

But often we find Gilds organized for a local or concrete purpose, as in the case of the Gild of Corpus Christi at York. Without going into detail the Gild of Corpus Christi was brought about in this way. In all Roman Catholic countries on the day of Corpus Christi, the consecrated host was carried through the streets of every town in solemn procession. This is one of the greatest festival days in the Roman Catholic church. To heighten its solemnity and to arouse interest the clergy of York founded a special Gild, of which the only object was to provide for the ceremonies of this festival. As the solemnities of one of the greatest ecclesiastical feasts were in question, it cannot be doubted that the priests were at

The Gild of  
Corpus Christi

the head of the Gild. The Crafts of York joined heartily in this procession, but I cannot agree with Toulmin Smith that "the love of show and pageant" was the cause for the Crafts being enthusiastic over the pageant, but that the taking part in the procession was considered as a profession of faith in transubstantiation. So this Feast became the most materialistic of all church celebrations, and Clement V. confirming the idea of Pope Urban IV in 1311, made it a universal festival, to be celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. The English miracle play reached its height soon after the establishment of this Corpus Christi festival.

The brotherhood of Corpus Christi<sup>\*</sup> was begun in A.D. 1408. The following is a summary of the ordinances.

1. Every year there shall be a procession.
2. Six priests shall be chosen for masters.
3. New-comers shall not take any oath; but they shall have the conscience charged to make payments to the Gild.
4. Services for the living and the dead.
5. Laymen shall pay; and may pray, but they shall have no share in the management of the Gild.

\* Not The Feast of Corpus Christi.

Organization  
of Gild of  
Corpus Christi

6. Payment to be made, under penalty, for certain services.
7. Lights are to be borne at times named, and annual payments to be made for them.
8. No children or servants allowed in the meeting of the Gild.
9. The six old masters shall help the new ones coming into office.
10. Accounts shall also be given.

It was not the character of these ordinances that drew so many into the Gild, for they were very strict and decidedly favorable to the clergy, but the taking part in the procession was not only considered as a profession but it was the fact that many crafts were united, to go into the procession, that gave the Gild an importance that can hardly be estimated.

The total number of names recorded in a manuscript in the British museum, is 14,850. That this Gild should have become so popular can be explained in the following ways: first, it gratified the love of show and pageantry; second, it was a departure from the very narrow spirit of the original ordinances. A memorandum left by the old town-

clerk of York, shows that the procession was taken up with so much spirit by the lay craftsmen of York, that in 1415 no less than 96 separate crafts joined in it, and at least 54 distinct pageants were prepared and presented, in procession by these crafts. Of the 54 pageants thus carried through the streets of York, eleven had their subjects from the Old Testament and the rest from the New Testament.

#### IV.

From the fourteenth to the sixteenth century York became a great play center, and the performances must have benefited the people; for great crowds of visitors were people, who were not of the baser sort. In the magnificent religious pageant, Corpus Christi, the clergy and laity marched side by side. It marks the formal disunion of the church play in general. Though at first united in the pageants representing the principal events in sacred history, yet this was the fact that meant the secularization of the spiritual drama. Also at the same time, while the spiritual drama was being secularized under the influence of the Gilds, the plays grew so rapidly that the success of the procession was itself endangered.

Emancipation  
of the  
Drama.

To counteract this movement there were formed religious Gilds for the purpose of preserving the religious procession. Owing to these activities and the opposition of the clergy it was not until 1426, about 80 years after the first procession of the Corpus Christi, that the industrial Gilds became separated from the Religious procession. The church, however did not take its hands entirely off the plays. In many places the clergy took part in the pageants, acting or hiring the actors.

The causes for the separation are very interesting as well as significant. The first cause for separation is plainly the fact that plays dealing with the legends of saints, were less dependent upon the services of the church, than were the mysteries proper, so there was not only a tendency to take the Miracle plays outside of the church, but there likewise arose a demand for some outside organization to manage these plays. Another cause was that the people who were much interested demanded that the common language be used instead of the Latin. And again when the clergy were compelled, at first much against their wishes, to allow in the religious plays,

Causes of  
Separation.

scenes of more or less trivial nature, and to allow characters to assume peculiarities of speech or manners, approaching the hideous and contemptable, there also arose in the dramatised liturgy an element that could not be controlled by the church. Here, at this time, the tradition of popular entertainment began and what at one time was profoundly religious could no longer be regarded as worship.

To sum up the situation, there were two decisive steps taken in the transition from the liturgical to the popular mystery. The first advance was logically unavoidable, because of the demand for the vernacular in place of the Latin tongue.\* The second step was not unavoidable, nor was it invariably entered upon. It consisted in the joining together of all the mysteries on different incidents in Scriptural history into a single social work or production. The result was a so-called Collective Mystery, in which were composed the principal contributions to the English mystery drama, the content of which was the expansion of the Easter and Christmas mysteries and the combination of

\* The French mystery *La Resurrection*, in the twelfth century is regarded as the earliest religious drama in the popular language.

\*  
the two groups after the celebration of the festival of  
Corpus Christi had become generally prevalent.

Everything that we know of the Corpus Christi plays  
and players points to a secular origin, with a close  
connection with the townspeople. It is altogether probable  
that the secular clerks of the Universities, the choral of  
the churches, the parish clerks and the Grammar school  
masters, made up the players and authors of the Corpus  
Christi plays. On the other hand it is altogether improb-  
able that the playwrights were among the monks, for they  
were employed in an earnest fashion, immured in their  
churches and cloisters, fasting and psalm singing, or  
copying service books, or probably composing histories.

\* A distinction between the Mysteries, Miracle-plays, and  
Moral plays or Moralities ought to be observed with  
precision. Mysteries deal with Gospel events only, their  
object being primarily to set forth by illustrating the  
prophetic history of the Old Testament, and more  
particularly the fulfillment in the New, as accompanied  
by the Nativity, the Passion and the Resurrection plays.  
Miracle plays on the other hand have to do with the  
legends of the Saints of the Church. And Morals teach  
and illustrate the same religious truths not by legends,  
but by allegorical means, abstract figures of virtues  
being personified in the characters.

V.

From authentic copies of original records, much light is thrown upon the relation between the old Gilds and the Municipal Bodies. In the examination of their documents, as a general rule, the result is found to be one of almost perfect harmony, between the Municipal Bodies and the Gilds. In the case of the city of Manchester, in the document drawn up in 1340, the Gilds are expressly named, and their connection with the Municipal Body is clearly shown. Mr. Toulmin Smith made a thorough investigation of the above document, the Mayor and Town Council having turned over for his use the valuable and interesting records.

Relation  
of Gilds to  
Municipal  
Bodies.

The government of the Gild, its officers and its ordinances were based on the same principles as those of other free institutions of England. The Gild invariably had its head officer or Alderman; its stewards, into whose hands the property and funds were intrusted.

Two years before entering upon office each mayor was  
\* This was true at York and Coventry, and several other of the important play centers.

master of the Gild of Corpus Christi, and two years after quitting office, master of the Trinity Gild. In fact all the Gild officers were so clearly considered as officers of the corporation that when they, together with city wardens, neglected to present their accounts for annual audits, they were all brought to remedy their neglect under pain of punishment. All documents relating to the corporation between the Gilds and town authorities, prove as a general rule, to be one of harmony. In the first two of the cities of Winchester and Worcester, the Gilds are expressly named, and their connection with the Municipal Body is more or less clearly shown.

People of all ranks took part in the Religious Gilds. The members had usually a special livery, as do some of the religious fraternities of the Catholic Church today. The liveries were worn at the festivals, and bouts with connected with them. The expenses to be defrayed for attaining the object of the Gilds were provided for by the entrance fees, the contributions, the gifts and legacies of members. The Corpus Christi play, which we are especially considering was brought out in York as in

Presentation.

every other English town, where they were known by the crafts and trading companies. It was the usual custom to announce beforehand the performance of the play sometime prior to the public exhibition. A document has been preserved, showing that the Mayor of York impressed upon the Crafts the duty of bringing forth their pageants in an orderly manner, with good players, well behaved and subject to be fined for violation of any rules of decency.

It also bids every player to be ready with his part of the pageant at a certain hour under penalty, not likely to be broken.

The sign of the municipal authority over the play, in general, was unmistakable, because banners with the city arms upon them were placed the evening before the performance in the place where the pageant wagon or platform was to be ~~placed~~. The big movable stages on which the pageants acted cost a considerable sum of money and had to be taken care of while not in use. Each company had its pageant or wagon, a high scaffold with two rooms a higher and lower. the lower for dressing, the higher for acting. Some of

\* Thus we hear of the pageant house "pellipuriorum" in 1420.

the acting was done upon the ground as in the case of Balwam, where a movable stage was inadequate . The performance was first executed at the main gate usually, then before the mayor. After this it was commonly played in the several streets as might convenience the citizens. At York, and in several other important centers it was played before the homes of those offering the greatest price for the privilege of seeing it from their front balcony.

The stage scenery and actors wardrobes were very simple. A different part of the stage was provided and actors, who were not taking part in the dialogue remained in view of the spectators. The costumes were usually selected for splendor, rather than for appropriateness, except in the attire of the devils. God was represented in a white coat, and at first the character had his face gilded. When it was found to be injurious to health, the costume was abandoned. It has been noted that the public Proclamation required the Crafts to provide good players, "well arrayed and openly speaking". It was a serious matter and the credit of the city was at stake. It was ordained on April 3d, 1476, by the full consent and authority of the council at York, that yearly at the time of Lent, that there

\*Toulmin Smith, York Plays (Introduction)

shall be called before the mayor four of the best players in the city, to search for and examine all the player aspirants in the city. And no player shall be allowed unless he shall promise to live up to rules and to play twice on the day of the procession. There was no lack of players to take the examination. A hundred years before the time of Elizabeth, the players of Dormington, Wakefield, and London, visited York, and took part in the pageantry.

The individual interpretation of the character which the player represented in this period afford a very interesting study. The influence of the church services had not yet been fully overcome. "All the speeches" (according to Karl Mantziñs, in his History of Theatrical Art,) "flow on one monotonous strain without arresting the attention of the spectator by any salient features of character, expression or thought". In the less elevated characters, there was, generally, a little more variety. Evidence for this is apparent in the fact that every opportunity was seized for producing a comic situation. This afforded a change from the solemn monotony of the serious characters. This does not mean, however, that all actors playing the leading parts were utterly deficient. Christ did not speak

The Actors.

like a merry peasant, or the Virgin Mary like the soldiers. But aside from the general outlines that would help us to distinguish a Saint from a hangman, nearly all characterization was neglected.

Thomas Sharp, in his Dissertation on the Coventry Mysteries, gives detailed accounts of the Smiths' Company at Coventry, which had in charge the Trial, Condemnation, and Crucifixion of Christ. The following will give some idea of a performance in the latter part of the fifteenth century, supposedly, 1490. Characters:

God, (as Jesus)	Malchus
Cayphas	Anna, (Annas)
Heroude, (Herod)	Pilate
Procula, (Pilate's wife)	Pilate's Son
Beadle, (Porter)	2 Knights
Devil	4 Tormenters
Judas	2 Princes.
Peter	

Thomas Sharp also gave, in the above mentioned work, the following list of properties and dress.

The Cross with rope to draw it up and a curtain hanging

before it.

Two pairs of gallows.

4 scourges and a pillar.

Scaffold.

Fanes to the pageants.

A standard of red buckram.

Two red pensils of cloth painted on silk fringe.\*

Iron to hold up the streamer.

Costumes.

1

4 gowns and four hoods.

2 miters, (for Cayphas and Annas)

Gods coat of white skins.

A staff for the demon.

2 spears

12 pairs of gloves

Herods Crest, (Helmet of iron)

Scarlet hoods, hats and caps.

\* Cloth for draperies around the lower room, which was used as a dressing room- it was usually decorated in brilliant colors.

1 They are described as jackets of black buckram with nails and dice upon them.

Cheverel, ( ) for God. 2 for Jesus.

Foulchion, ( ) for Herod.

Scarlet gown.

Maces

Girdle for God

A seat for God, sceptres for Herod and Son.

Pol axe for Pilate's Son.

#### Music.

Minstrels was a common entry, and the Wayts were paid for playing. Trumpets and bagpipes were the instruments used.

#### Expenses.

A summary of the expenses of the Smith's Company, for 1490, including workmanship and colors is fifteen

The expensive costumes were generally paid for by the actor himself. If it was beyond his means, some rich fellow-citizen, who did not perform in the play, usually bore the necessary burden. The costumes of sepers were usually borrowed. The clergy were very willing to lend surplices, hoods, robes and other ecclesiastical garments,

\* Karl Mantzius<sup>u</sup> History of Theatrical Art. page 98.

for they could be used for prophets, priests and other historical characters of religious stamp. We must not get the idea, that because the costumes <sup>were</sup> gorgeously colored that they represented the dress of former times, for they knew nothing of the habits of historic peoples, and had no idea that such knowledge could be acquired.

So the theatrical costume of this time coincided with the general costume of the period. If there was any resemblance <sup>to</sup> of former dress at all it was copied from the church images. From a study of the History of the Theatrical Art, by Karl Mantzius, in which he gives detailed descriptions of the chief costumes as represented by painters and sculptors, the most characteristic costumes, and those which differed more widely from the general everyday dress, were those of the devil. According to illustrations of the character, as given in copies of frescoes, painting etc., which no doubt in the main was accepted in all countries where mysteries were performed, the costume consisted of a tight-fitting skin which covered the whole body except the head, and which resembles very much the shaggy skins of dogs or wolves.

The head dress, was painted sometimes in different places, with heads of devils. Their faces were either painted or masked with parts of heads of rams or goats, and sometimes even of birds.\*

#### VI.

The germ of the mediaeval drama was religion; it was fostered by the Christian Church, and remained under the protection until it was strong enough to support itself. The drama grew rapidly within the walls of the Church, and continued for a long time, after it was carried outside, under religious influences. The history of the development of the mediaeval drama was everywhere very much the same, owing to the sameness of religion and custom, and not until the liturgical drama had become completely secularized, did the religious influences cease to be a potent factor in its development.

The transfer of control from the clergy to the Gilds, the removal of plays from the inside of the church to the outside were gradual developments, and with no intention

\* For description of other characters see Thomas Shapir, "Limitation of the Pageants", and Karl Martzins' "History of Theatrical Art". Relics of the black soul mystery costumes ~~is~~ found in the penitential garments in which heretics were clothed at the autos-da-be of the sixteenth century.

of bringing about radical changes. When the laymen took charge, their desire was to do just what the priests had done, namely to popularize the most materialistic of church celebrations. Furthermore the circumstances of the performances inside the church were not materially changed, when they were taken outside. In the cycle of the Nativity, or the Christmas and Easter cycles, there were places in different sections of the church known as sections, for showing or performing different episodes in a play. For example, the life of Christ was often shown by numerous stations about the church, and when the dialogue describing the stalls was superseded by the speaking and the acting of the actual characters, there became a demand for stage conveniences and scenery that the church alcoves and walls could not satisfactorily provide. Thus, the growing length of the plays, the increased elaboration of the paraphernalia, the vastly increased number of spectators, led the laity to prevail upon the priests to take the play out of the church. It was the earnest desire of the organized laity to establish Gilds, in order to accommodate the people, and it was the devout intention of

the clergy to popularize the sacred story that led the priest to allow the performances to be carried on outside the church.

When the removal did take place and the mysteries were presented in the open air, the Gilds would undoubtedly seek to preserve the traditions that had been established in the course of the performances given by the clergy. The laymen would, therefore, avail themselves of the devices of the stations, but modifying them as the new conditions would require, and as the new system and management might suggest. The change became marvelous. The stations were separated, and each when shown by itself became known as a pageant. The pageant followed in the wake of the Corpus Christi procession through the town.

The order of the procession, as exhibited at Coventry in the year 1426 was as follows: The porters and collers went first; then on the right the weavers and cordwainers; on the left the fullers, culters, gerdirs, chandlers, carpenters, and tailors; then the better sort of citizens; afterward, the members of the council, twenty-four in number, the twelve aldermen, and lastly the mayor.

The members of the Gilds and Orders rode in their proper liveries, preceded by their own torch-bearers. The journeymen also went in the Procession though probably on foot. The laity preceded the Host, and the various religious orders followed it. The members of the Trinity Gild also joined in the Procession, adding splendor to the scene with their gorgeously decorated banners; and bearing the consecrated Host suitably displayed in a gilt cup; and attended by the Priests with the Processional crucifix. The Fraternity of the Corpus Christi Gild, exerted themselves in a special manner, to do honor to this solemnity, and had in the Procession four great torches, their processional crucifix, and many candle-sticks, and a gilt chalice. The Corpus Christi Gild carried a canopy over the Sacrament and usually the Trinity Gild bore one over the Host. Thus the mayor, the aldermen with attendants, the civil and religious fraternities, and all the ecclesiastics of the city would join the Procession; and the chief characters of the several pageants were furnished with horses for the occasion, making a most brilliant and striking effect. The Pageants have usually

been given first place in the events handed down to us of this great festival day, but they do not compare with the splendor and general effect of the Procession.

The interest excited by the Corpus Christi procession and pageants, is shown by the many royal and noble personages, who came to see them and the serious quarrels\* that often happened on the eve of Corpus Christi.

\* In the M.S. annals of the city of York, in the year 1477, a severe fight occurred at the Broad gate, in which Sir Humphry Stafford and Sir Rich Harcourt were engaged, resulting in the slaying of Sir Humphry's son and many others on both sides.

Karl Mantzins, in his "History of Theatrical Art", quotes Archdeacon Rogers, who was an eye-witness of the pageants in the early part of the sixteenth century. He writes: "The season of the performance was Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in Witsun-week. The manner of these plays weare, every company had his pageant, or p'te, which pageants weare a high scaffold w'ith rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon four wheels. In the lower they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, beinge all open on the tope, that all behoulders might hear and see them. The places where they played them was in every streets. They begane first at the Abay gates, and when the first pageant was played, it was wheeled to the highe crosse before the Mayor, and so to every streete, and sae every streets had a pageant playinge before them at one time, till all the pageantes for the daye appoynted weare played, and when one pageant was neere ended, worde was brought from streete to streete, that sae they might come in place thereof, excedinge orderlye, and all the streetes have their pageantes afore them all at one time playinge together, to see w'ch playes was great resorte, and also scaffoldes and stages made in the streetes in those places where they

After the procession had completed its round, the first pageant with its appropriate stage and decorations would draw up before the church door, and in some instances immediately after the end of the Procession had emerged therefrom. The first section of the Pageant would then be presented, on the broad platform of a wagon. When the first section or Pageant had been played, then the second section would appear; and the first pageant would be hauled to another station along the prescribed route, where the first section was acted again while the second episode was being presented before the door of the church. Thus, it was during the long summer day, one pageant after another taking its turn at each station, so that a spectator might take up his position at any desired spot, and see the entire display of successive episodes.

It was ~~usually~~ the custom to announce beforehand the performance sometime previous to the public exhibition.

\* A document has been preserved showing that the mayor of  
determined to play their pageants". Other M.S. of Arch-  
deacon Rogers are given in Thomas Sharp's, Dissertation  
on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries anciently perform-  
ed at Coventry. pages 17, 18.  
\* Thomas Sharp, Dissertation of the Pageants.

York impressed upon the crafts the duty of bringing forth, their pageants in an orderly manner, with good players well behaved and subject to be fined for violation of any rule of decency. It also bids every player to be ready with his part of the play at a certain hour under penalty not likely to be broken.

#### VII.

In England the mystery and miracle plays were very closely allied, the miracle play having come into being before the Easter cycle elaborating itself into a passion-play. The mediaeval liking for legend and allegory having instilled itself into the liturgical play, the result was a dramatized sermon in the place of a dramatized text as were the mysteries. This dramatized sermon became known as the morality play. The morality was an attempt to portray character; it was harsh and highly colored and permitted freedom of action. The writers had to invent their own plots, and in this way it helped along the development of the drama in that it had achieved for itself a certain freedom in plot and character. And again there were real authors, created and inspired, who had an

appreciation of human nature, who dared to present an actual man instead of the substitute of a cold figure of pride. The play swiftly warmed into social satire, with a tinge of individuality, and we have the germ of the modern drama.

The period in which the Gild was so active aroused in the people the desire for the pleasures of the theatre, and began to train writers and actors for a time when playwriting and acting would become professions. But considering the time we must not forget that the actors were priests first, then craftsmen. Students and clerks usually performed for the love of acting. There was nothing to stimulate the actor, only love of acting and pastime. There was nothing to encourage the playwright except as it was a labor of love, hence we find only amateurs, yet in the midst of the confusion the traditions of the theatre were being established. There was acting; there were plays; there were successive episodes; there were audiences, rude and gross; there were, too, human beings; and above all there were, clear and decisive, the elements of a vital drama, an inspired dramatist, and a tremendous

struggle between good and evil, God and devils.

The surroundings, amidst which these plays were produced, should not and cannot be dissociated from them. For these very surroundings which strike us as incongruous were the atmosphere that created the mediaeval play. The symbols of their religious creed, and the supposed personalities of its sacred characters were shown in every detail. All the cadence and diction of the Bible so familiar to us, was as well known to the mediaeval minds through the instruments of the play managed by the Gilda. On every street men were accustomed to see some Biblical design representing the Passion or the mourning mother of Christ; while in every church colored frescoes brought before them constantly the familiar figures and scenes. Men's conversation and speeches were enriched with the sights which their eyes were habitually accustomed to see. (Thus the attitude of the spectators toward the miracle and morality plays). The fact that there was a multitude of independent bodies of men and women all over the land, each formed by ordinances, for the attainment of better brotherhood, and morality among themselves, is evidence

enough that there was a great educational value in the Gild system. The audience as has been noted, were not limited to craftsmen and their people, or clergymen, but great crowds of rude folk from the surrounding country, together with kings, queens, princes and nobles, who assisted with generous donations of money or silken gowns, that could be used for properties. Henry V., Margaret of Anjou, Richard III, Henry VII, were present several times to witness the Processional Pageant at Coventry. The great men of the land rubbed elbows with the crowd in one common festival occasion. The plays became a great instrument of civic as well as social solidarity. Wealth, wit and enterprise, and an incentive of literary culture and amusement were handled by the vehicle of the Gilds, which did not consider it dubious to give religious instruction by means of the Pageants. Great care was taken to prevent the Great care was taken to prevent the disturbances that frequently did attend the public assemblies. None but those who were privileged were allowed to carry weapons, and the disturbances were always charged with imprisonment or fine. We read that the admiring crowds would weep and then

laugh, for reason had not become a factor in the development of the plays. <sup>in spite of</sup> There was the quarrel between the church and stage, In spite of grossness, ignorance and crudity, the plays were nevertheless not without beneficent consequences. In the first place, the opposition between the Christian religion on one side and the plays on the other has been a great factor in the progress and evaluation of both.

We know ~~se~~ little of actual life in the middle ages, and what we do know seems to partake largely of the mysterious and picturesque. The modes of life and manners of the mediaeval times are so far removed from our own that it is hard to appreciate the highly colored pageantry and trying contradictions. It is, however, the contradictions and contrasts that make the age so significant in its social achievements. In these days we find lust, sacrilege and tyranny, side by side with the best evidence of chivalry. <sup>\*</sup> The most devoted enthusiasm to champion the cause of religion is strikingly manifest in the way the

\* Wordsworth in *Happy Warrior* gives an excellent picture of the mediaeval conception of the perfect knight.

Gild took up the cause, and in the way the crowds gave their support and yielded to its influence. In this, our time, we see only the prominent light of the great picture, but the things that make it human and comprehensible to us are usually lost in our inability to understand. It seems to me the subject of mediaeval Gilds appeals to a wide range of sympathies, -to the political economist, investigating the annals of commerce and industry; to the sociologist and historian, interested in the social structure and municipal institutions of the past; and pre-eminently in the literature of English Gilds, its educational and social value.

In order to get an idea of the dramatic literature of this period, which, with all its absurdities and childish technique, it will be necessary to describe the contents of some miracle of the time. x x