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Minstrelsy, Music, and the Dance in the English and Scottish Popular Ballads

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MINSTRELSY, MUSIC, AND THE DANCE
IN
THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR
BALLADS
BY

LOWRY CHARLES WIMBERLY, A. M.

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MINSTRELSY, MUSIC, AND THE DANCE

IN

THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS

I

INTRODUCTION

Throughout a study of minstrelsy, music, and the dance, as of other forms of recreation in the ballads, one should bear in mind that with a few possible exceptions no pastime is made the subject or theme of the entire ballad. One should not expect too much in the way of detailed description in the ballads of any one of these popular amusements, for the ballad is narrative rather than descriptive. It always tells a story, but rarely paints a scene. Its interest lies not in the background, but in the action of the story. The reader may think himself quite fortunate if in the course of the ballad story he catches a glimpse of the lords and ladies "a-huntynge" or "a-dancin." The action is swift, so swift that in a few stanzas the heroine with "gouden hair" changes her bridal veil for a shroud, and the hero with hair no less golden descends from his capering "milk-white" steed of the morning to swing that evening from the gallows tree. The plot is simple and forward-moving, and is obstructed neither by moralising nor by lyric effusion. To do the business of Hamlet's philosophic and dilatory "bodkin" the ballad uses the less leisurely and more expeditious "wee-penknife." And the jealousy of the ballad Othello leaps straightway upon the innocent object of its revenge and never through the endless machinations of an Iago. The story of the ballad is never intricate, and is seldom along dark and secretive paths. For instance, and to return to the sports of the ballad, it is not characteristic of the ballad so to contrive that the death of the hero be brought about, say, in a hunting expedition by the vengeful spear of a secret enemy among his fellow huntsmen. A sport or pastime, except in one or two cases, is never made the vehicle for the plot. This holds true, in general, for minstrelsy, music, and the dance. One important exception may be claimed for minstrelsy in *King Estmere* where the minstrel disguise plays so large a part, and one for the dance in *The Bonny Lass of Anglesey* where a dancing match furnishes the theme of the story. But, as a rule, mention of either minstrelsy or the dance in the ballad is only casual, and

neither amusement forms an essential part of the general fabric of the action. That minstrelsy, music, and the dance play only a minor part, or no part at all, in the narrative of the ballad need not, however, minimize the value of what the ballad may have to say about these important pastimes. Such casual and incidental treatment of these popular pastimes should, on the other hand, in that it cannot possibly be conscious and studied, lend to any evidence given, a greater weight and authority. In any investigation the chief emphasis must often be laid upon seemingly unimportant, out-of-the-way and stray allusions, rather than upon at first sight more promising, because more abundant, material.

The purpose of the present study of minstrelsy, music, and the dance in the English and Scottish popular ballads is primarily descriptive. It is in no sense controversial. No attempt is made to throw light directly or indirectly upon the various problems relating to the ballads; such as, the origin of the ballads, their sources, and the manner of their composition. For instance, there is no attempt to fix the age of the ballads, although such an attempt, however futile, might readily suggest itself to one engaged in an investigation of any of the particular phases of life which they portray. Ordinarily, an association of the terms "dance" and "ballad" might involve discussion of the connection between the dance and the origin of the ballads; but even should the various references to the dance in the ballad seem to suggest any such connection, their implications, in view of the descriptive nature of this paper, would be more or less left out of account. Further, the present study is not meant to be comparative, and little or no attempt will be made to extend it to the folk-songs of other nations than England and Scotland. Nor is there any intention, however closely minstrelsy, music, and the dance are bound up with other phases of mediaeval life, to survey in its entirety the folk life depicted in the ballads.

The manners and customs of the English and Scottish folk as depicted in ballad story have already furnished incentive and material for many interesting studies. Most investigators have been attracted, however, to the more serious phases of life which are reflected; such as, religion, love, death, and burial, while little or no attention has been given to the happier or lighter side of life as revealed in the recreational interests of the folk. That such has been the case can surely not be attributed to the unimportance of pastime among the varied interests of mankind, nor can it, in any sense, be ascribed to

silence on the part of the ballad as to popular sports and amusements. Perhaps it would not be uninteresting to know what would be the effect if all allusions to merriment and merry-makers were withdrawn from the ballads. How unnatural and lifeless the ladies, were there no game of ball; how uninteresting the lords without their hounds and hawks, their cards and dice! What would become of Robin Hood without his harping, his archery, his jolly pranks; and how could kings and princes wander about the country incognito if one were to hide away their minstrel guise? In the ballads, if anywhere, festive occasions and gaiety must play a rôle.

For it is very improbable whether any one side of life, with the exception, perhaps, of the love interest, has been so completely pictured in the ballads as has the recreational side. In the ballad one is more likely to find the king "a-huntynge," than at his beads; and although the young ladies of the ballad are always in love, yet they are almost as invariably engaged in playing ball or in "sewing the silken seam."¹ The tragedies of the ballad are at times preceded and heightened by an afternoon or evening spent in dancing, for the more serious and lighter sides of life in folk-song, as elsewhere, are complementary and go hand in hand. In the ballads every occasion, merry or sad, wedding or funeral, is seized as an opportunity to dance and sing to the music of piper or minstrel. If professional musicians are absent, king, or peasant finds joy or consolation in music of his own making. Many are the dances in the ballads and many the dancers, and the minstrel's harp or fiddle sounds in baronial hall and on village green. It should be with peculiar satisfaction, then, that one leaves for a while the tragedies of love and marriage, the ghosts and burials, the fighting and fatalities, in order to give the ballads an opportunity of telling the story of their happier moments.²

Although it has seemed proper to include music among the subjects treated in the following pages, it has not been thought best to attempt a treatment of it in a section apart from minstrelsy and dancing. However important as a pastime, music can hardly be considered profitably aside from its connection with the two forms of recreation with which it is

¹"Sewing the Silken Seam in the English and Scottish Ballads." *Poet Lore*, vol. xx., 1920.

²Stow, in his *Survey of London* introduces his chapter on the sports and pastimes of London with the following words: "Let us now (saith Fitzstephen) come to the Sports and Pastimes, seeing it is that a Citie should not only be commodious and serious but also merry and sportfull."

completely bound up. It would only defeat the descriptive purpose of the present portrayal of sports and pastimes in the ballads were an attempt made to detach music from minstrelsy and the dance. Harping in the ballads is almost without exception the harping of the minstrel, and the stirring notes of the piper usually accompany and live again in the flying feet of the dancers.

II

MINSTRELSY

That many of the harpers and fiddlers of the ballads may not, strictly speaking, be called minstrels, but more appropriately, perhaps, as Ritson prefers, "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars," should rather add to than detract from their picturesque, especially when seen in ballad retrospect.¹ The fact that many of them did not sing "verses to the harp of their own composing," but sang rather, if they sang at all, to stolen verses, should, instead of creasing the brow with puritanical frowns, smooth away the last furrow; for who does not love a sturdy rogue? No doubt, the exalted, conventional minstrel who, as Percy says, "united the arts of poetry and music," must often, in the ballad at least, share the honours with Ritson's "fiddler or such like base musician." But the twang of an "auld harper's harp" or the shriek of a blind fiddler's fiddle may, after all, draw one nearer the past than can more golden tones.

The minstrel of the ballad is usually a harper or a fiddler. In his ballad of *King Estmere*, Percy may well have seen his minstrel of the exalted type. King Estmere is a rival of the King of Spain for the hand of King Adland's daughter. The lady prefers King Estmere, but the anxious father remembers the threat of the King of Spain to pull down his "halles and castles" in case his suit is not favored. King Estmere, after plighting troth with his love, leaves to prepare for his wedding day. On his way he meets the King of Spain bent upon the abduction of the lady in the case. Rather than lose his "ladye," Estmere, upon the advice of his brother, Adler, decides to return to the castle in the guise of a harper:

¹Ritson, *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, p. xvi.

'And you shal be a harper, brother,
 Out of the north countrye,
 And Ile be your boy, soe faine of fighte,
 And bear your harpe by your knee.

'And you shal be the best harper
 That ever took harpe in hand,
 And I wil be the best singer
 That ever sung in this lande.'

It is an old story, that of King Alfred's taking advantage of a minstrel disguise in order to spy out the secrets of the Danes. Such manner of spying was frequently resorted to, no doubt, because of the ready welcome which met the minstrel on every hand. Like wine and feasting, he came in the midst of war and hardships to lend an hour of cheer. King Estmere is in the guise of no ordinary harper. He is of the "north countrye," from whence seem to come all the good harpers of the ballads, and he has an attendant to bear his harp, and to sing to his music. As a general thing the harper sang his own songs, for singer and harper were oftener than not united in the same individual. But since the disguise of a singer offered Adler an opportunity of accompanying his brother, one is led to infer that harpers of note sometimes shared the honours with singers of equal fame.

They are provided with two good steeds and are dressed as becomes minstrels of worth:¹

And thus they renisht them to ryde,
 Of tow good renisht steedes,
 And when they came to King Adlands hall,
 Of redd gold shone their weedes.

One can hardly think of these two as "licensed vagabonds," who were known "from afar by their coats of many colors, gaudier than any knight might respectably wear,"² but to make their disguise complete, they, without doubt, put on the dress peculiar to the profession.³ The "redd gold" of their "weedes," however conspicuous, reflected in all probability the dignity of two such lordly minstrels.

¹See the descriptions of the dress of minstrels in Chappell's *Old English Popular Music*, 1, p. 19.

²Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1, p. 44.

³Cf. *A Poem on the Times of Edward II*, Percy Soc. lxxxii., p. 23:

'Now thei beth disgysed,
 So diverselych i-dight,
 That no man may knowe
 A mynstral from a knyght
 Wel ny.'

On their "renisht steedes" they ride boldly up to the king's hall and shortly gain admittance:

And whan they came to Kyng Adlands hall
 Untill the fayre hall-yate,
 There they found a proud porter,
 Rearing himself thereatt.

Sayes, Christ thee save, thou proud porter,
 Sayes, Christ thee save and see:
 'Nowe you be welcome,' sayd the porter,
 'Of what land soever ye bee.'

'Wee beene harpers,' sayd Adler Younge,
 'Come out of the north countrye;
 Wee beene come hither untill this place,
 This proud weddinge for to see.'

Sayd, And your color were white and redd,
 As it is blacke and browne,
 I wold saye King Estmere and his brother
 Were comen untill this towne.

The ready welcome extended by the porter attests at once to the friendly reception accorded minstrels by hall and palace. "Of what land soever ye bee," can only mean that the minstrel of these days played and sang in all parts of the world, and were he Frenchman, Italian, or Spaniard, his art was his passport. The French *jongleur*, especially, carried his songs into foreign lands,¹ often wandering far from home through love of travel, more often transported by the more serious purposes of pilgrimage and war.

A "weddinge" without minstrelsy was as unusual and as empty of meaning as is a modern wedding without the strains from Lohengrin.² Professional merry-makers of mediaeval times must have kept in close touch with every festivity which might call upon them to furnish entertainment. It is not unlikely that the demand for good minstrels often exceeded the supply, for they were invited to all marriages, and no feast was a success in the absence of their songs and music. That Estmere and his brother are "blacke and browne" seems to be not so much for purposes of disguise as "through help of gramarye" to secure invulnerability, for in a preceding stanza Adler says that there is no sword in England which can "byte" through such a color.

¹See Gautier, *Les Épopées Françaises*, ii, p. 18:

"Tout ce que nous voulons établir, c'est que le mouvement de la jonglerie est surtout venu de notre France."

²The occasion for minstrelsy in Chaucer's *The Marchantes Tale*, 1718, is a wedding:

'At every cours than cam loud minstralcye.'

King Estmere, as was customary in minstrelsy of mediaeval times, finds stabling for his steed in the hall of King Adland:

King Estmere stabled his steede
 Soe fayre att the hall-bord;
 The froth that came from his brydle bitte
 Light in Kyng Bremors beard.

Sales, Stable thy steed, thou proud harper,
 Sales, Stable him in the stalle;
 It doth not beseeme a proud harper
 To stable his steed in a kyngs halle.

In the Middle Ages provision was made whereby a knight might enter a hall with his horse and even lead it into his bedchamber. King Bremor's rebuke of the disguised Estmere is probably meant to cast an aspersion upon the latter's calling. Ritson says that the English minstrel never had the dignity ascribed to him by Percy, but elsewhere it is to be noted that the minstrel, especially when he composed his own songs, was highly honored, and was treated by his hosts more or less as an equal.

Just what significance one can attach to the oft-recurring epithet "proud" in "proud porter" and "proud harper" is not clear. Since it is applied to the porter and to the "weddinge" as well as to King Estmere, one is led to infer that it is merely the language of courtesy, used upon all occasions and with reference to whatever was connected with a person of lofty station. But after all, King Estmere's natural bearing must have forbade any lesser designation. Although a strolling harper, he undoubtedly represents higher as opposed to lower minstrelsy. The fact that he goes from castle to castle does not exclude him from the rank of a minstrel of honour. Not only permanent minstrels of earls or barons, but even those of the king were allowed to visit other mansions, particularly on festive occasions.¹

Is it cause for wonder that King Estmere could carry out the rôle of harper so successfully as to play well enough for a royal wedding? King Alfred, it may be remembered, was a musician, and King Henry VIII not only sang well and played upon several instruments, but wrote songs and composed music for them. So genteel a king as Estmere had probably from his youth been skilled in playing "pretty things"!

¹Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, p. 155.

Then Kyng Estmere pulld forth his harpe,
 And playd a pretty thinge;
 The ladye upstart from the borde,
 And wold have gone from the king.

'Stay thy harpe, thou proud harper,
 For Gods love I pray thee;
 For and thou playes as thou beginns,
 Thou'lt till my bryde from mee.'

The power of Estmere's music to make the lady upstart and to "till" her from King Bremor is not to be regarded as fabulous but rather as quite natural. The part that music plays in war is well known, and its appeal in love can be hardly less potent.

The anxiety of the Spanish king is increased when Estmere "stroakes" upon his strings again, and in order to still the alluring sounds he offers to buy the harp:

Sales, Sell me thy harpe, thou proud harper,
 And thy stringes all;
 For as many gold nobles thou shalt have
 As heere bee ringes in the hall.

In making his offer, King Bremor is probably well acquainted with the poverty and prodigality of harpers in general. The harper of old, like the poor musician of today, was often compelled by circumstances to exchange his instrument for a trifling consideration. Even minstrels of the higher order took little thought of the morrow, and the ease with which they acquired wealth was surpassed only by the ease with which they dissipated it. Many of them were poor to begin with, and were driven into the profession through too great familiarity with the dice-box.

Yet again Estmere plays, but this time to Adler's song:

He played agayne both loud and shrille,
 And Adler he did syng,
 'O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
 Noe harper, but a kyng.

'O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
 As playnlye thou mayest see,
 And Ile rid thee of that foule paynim
 Who partes thy love and thee.'

Perhaps the motive for Adler's song, that of making the lady acquainted with the true character of King Estmere, is an

unusual one, yet the occasions which gave the minstrel his theme seem to have been as many and varied as the incidents of an eventful day.

But the minstrel of the ballad is not always a princely harper. In Scott's ballad of *The Lochmaben Harper* he is not only a "silly blind harper," but a sturdy rogue at that, and recalls Ritson's "fiddler or such like base musician." The version of the Glenriddell Manuscript opens:

Heard ye eer of the silly blind harper,
That long livd in Lochmaben town,
How he wad gang to fair England,
To steal King Henry's Wanton Brown?
Sing, Faden dilly and faden dilly
Sing Faden dilly and deedle dan.

But first he gaed to his gude wife,
Wi a' the speed that he could thole;
'This wark,' quo he, 'will never work
Without a mare that has a foal.'

That the harper here is called a "silly blind harper" may either mean that he belonged to a class of entertainers into which the honourable and famous order of minstrels had gradually degenerated, or that he lived in the better days of the profession, and was a representative of lower minstrelsy. If the former, here is portrayed a sad relic of other times when the minstrel was of good bourgeois, if not of noble blood, and was treated by lords and ladies as somewhat of an equal. If the latter, which is perhaps more likely, he may be taken as a more fortunate member of a host of vagabond musicians, who, unfettered by domestic or other ties, patterned their lives after vagrant and winding roads, and suited their songs and music to the popular ear of tavern and alehouse.

The harper's plan to steal King Henry's horse, Wanton Brown, furnishes the story of all the versions of this ballad. In one text it is the result of a wager with "lairds and lords" of "mony a guinea against a croon." That he should be wagering with "lairds and lords" must mean that he was on terms of some sort of intimacy with the young bloods and sporting lords of the town. Minstrels, no doubt, often harped to royster-ing in taverns and public places where good cheer opens heart and purse, and where a merry wager has topped many a mad revel. Moreover, silly blind harpers were public property, easily accessible, open and susceptible to the caprice of the moment, and willing or rather forced to bear the brunt of any

wild enterprise. In *Activa-vita* of *Piers Plowman* one finds a rather close parallel to the harper of Lochmaben.¹ It was no doubt the office of both these minstrels to minister to the popular mirth upon all occasions, and their lot to be "alternately petted and reviled by the lords and knights whom they entertained."²

As the story goes, however, the "silly blind harper" is not defenseless against the sportive wiles of his patrons. He first finds refuge in the counsel of his "gude wife," and moreover, in making such a wager he must have been reasonably sure of gaining access to King Henry's castle. In all descriptions of minstrel life one finds that the minstrel had not only the popular but the royal ear as well, and that he was sure of welcome and entertainment in "the village tavern, the guild hall, and the baron's keep."³ One finds the harper of Lochmaben riding up to the king's "geate" and meeting with a ready welcome from the king himself. The Glenriddell version continues:

So he is up to England gane,
Even as fast as he can hie,
Till he came to King Henry's geate;
And wha was there but King Henry?

'Come in,' quo he, 'thou silly blind harper,
And of thy harping let me hear;'
'O, by my sooth,' quo the silly blind harper,
'I'd rather hae stabling for my mare.'

The king he looks oer his left shoulder,
And says unto his stable-groom,
Gae tak the silly poor harper's mare,
And tie her side my Wanton Brown.

Not only does he gain admission to the king's palace, but like King Estmere, he gets stabling for his mare.

¹*Piers Plowman*, Passus xvi. 192:

'Ich am a mynstral,' quath this man. 'My name is *Activa-vita*,
Peers prentys the Plouhman, alle people to comfortye.'
'What manere mynstralcie my dere frend,' quath Conscience,
'Hast thou vsed other haunted al thy lyf-tyme?'
'Mynstralcie can ich not muche bote make men murye,
As a waffrer with waffres and welcome godes gistes.
Of my labour thei lauhe the lasse and the more.
The poure and the riche y plese and payn fynde,
And fewe robis ich fonge other forrede sounes.'

²Gummere, *The Popular Ballad*, p. 8.

³Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1, p. 44.

His mare provided for, the harper harps for the king and his lords:

And ay he harpit, and ay he carpit,
Till a' the lords had fittid the floor;
They thought the music was sae sweet,
And they forgot the stable-door.

And ay he harpit, and ay he carpit,
Till a' the nobles were sound asleep;
Than quietly he took aff his shoon,
And safly down the stair did creep.

Is one to understand by "harpit" and "carpit" that the harper not only harped but also sang, that is, sang to the accompaniment of his harp? Professor Child suggests that "carp" seems to mean tell tales, probably sing or chant tales (ballads) to the harp. It is hardly likely that the harper's entertainment was purely instrumental, for the function of the harp was chiefly to accompany song or story. Moreover, the power of the ordinary minstrel to entertain, rested less, no doubt, upon his skill as a musical performer than upon his gift of song or story-telling.¹ In all five versions of the ballad the harper both harps and carps.

In one version he harps the lords asleep, "bundles his fiddles upon his back" and creeps downstairs to steal the king's horse. Is fiddle synonymous with harp? The harp, played by plucking the strings, was the favorite instrument of the early Saxons, but in the Middle Ages it was superseded by the *vielle*, an instrument similar to our fiddle and played with the bow. It is probable, however, that the ballad "fiddles" is merely a popular generic term for all stringed instruments.

At the court of the ballad Henry, harping was not only the order of the evening but of the early hours of the day as well, and on the next morning the king asks for more harping. Harping was also the usual entertainment after the midday meal, and when there were no theatres and few books, it served

¹Cf. Chaucer, *House of Fame*, 1197:

'Of alle maner of minstrales,
And gestiours, that tellen tales,
Bothe of weping and of game.'

Gower also, *Confessio Amantis*, vii, 2424:

'And every menstral hadde pleid,
And every disour hadde seid
What most was plesant to his ere.'

to enliven and give color to many an otherwise dull afternoon. From such an enthusiastic patron of minstrelsy the harper might expect a munificent reward, nor is he disappointed. In addition to being paid for the pretended loss of his mare he is given a heavy purse. In the Buchan Manuscript the Lochmaben harper, while recounting his exploit to the lords with whom he wagered, is not unmindful of the reward he won by his harping:

'My music pleasd the king sae well
Mair of my harping he wisd to hear;
An for the same he paid me well,
And also for my gude grey mare.'

Then he drew out a gude lang purse,
Well stored wi gowd and white monie,
An in a short time after this
The Wanton Brown he lat them see.

In its most flourishing period, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, minstrelsy yielded a rich reward to those who were fortunate enough to be called upon to provide entertainment for the wealthy, who were often prodigal of both money and jewels. In *Piers Plowman* reference is made to the pay or reward which minstrels received.¹ One of the causes of the decay of his art was the minstrel's encroachment upon the liberality of his patrons, and his presumption in the price he set upon his services. He counted his gains not only in money, but in jewels, rich garments, and gifts of land. The provision made at various times by royalty and nobility alike for the support of minstrelsy, was always generous, and in given instances was characterized by great extravagance.

On the whole, despite the fact that he had a settled home, one must think of the Lochmaben harper as of the class of wandering or itinerant minstrels. Municipal musicians, that is, those in the service of the town in which they lived, would have had little or no occasion to wander from "toun to toun" nor would they have been denominated "silly blind harpers"; for those minstrels employed by towns or cities, from the beginning of the fifteenth century,² were made independent of vagabondage and chance employment by the fixed fees which they received,

¹*Piers Plowman*, Prologue, 33:

And summe murththes to maken as munstrals cunne,
And gete gold with here gle giltles, I trowe.

²See, for example, *English Gilds*, Toulmin Smith, E. E. T. S., vol. xl. p.

and were raised above the contempt of the public by the livery which they wore. That the harper of Lochmaben suggests the strolling type, need not imply, however, that he emerged from the sixteenth century, when minstrelsy had lost its mediaeval status and dignity, but that he reflects the lower as opposed to the higher order of minstrelsy. It is not impossible that he descends from the golden age of minstrelsy and that such vagabond harping served to divert the dragging hours of royalty which were perhaps too often cloyed by the more elegant performances of the court minstrels.

It is interesting to pass from the Lochmaben harper, with his roguish shifting to turn a crown or two, back to proud and princely harpers of whom there is no dearth in the ballads. This time one finds not a harper in disguise, as in *King Estmere*, but a harper in actuality; Percy's *Glasgerion*:

Glasgerion was a king's owne sonne,
And a harper he was good;
He harped in the kings chamber,
Where cuppe and candle stodee,
And so did hee in the queens chamber,
Till Ladies waxed wood.

The favors which the minstrels enjoyed often admitted them to the privacy of a king's chamber. Edward II welcomed four minstrels in his chamber at Westminster.¹ They had likewise the patronage of queens, and the queen of the ballad does not disdain to receive them, so that she and her ladies may hear and "wax wood,"—become mad. How well one may read history in popular song is shown when it is remembered that according to William of Malmesbury,² Matilda, wife of Henry I, like the ladies of the ballad, waxed "wood," and to such a degree that she squandered most of her wealth upon minstrels.

The potency of Glasgerion's music serves the interests of his love for the king's daughter:

And then bespake the king's daughter,
And these words thus sayd shee:

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423: Among the yearly payments by the balliffs to the city officers of Bristol is found entered for the mayor the sum of "v. marcs" for his "mynstralles." Again, *ibid.*, p. 447, in Norwich it is ordained that on St. George's day after mass that there be a feast at which "every brother and sister" must pay for "her mete, wax, and minstrales."

¹Wardrobe Accounts, *Archaeologia*, xxvi. p. 342: "William de Horsham and three others his companions."

Saide, Strike on, strike on, Glasgerion,
 Of thy striking doe not blinne;
 There's neuer a stroke comes ouer thin harpe
 But it glads my hart within.

There is no indication here that Glasgerion sings to his harp, but there is singing in Jamieson's version of the ballad. The harper of this version, although not spoken of as a king's son, is clearly a king's harper, or at least a harper of higher minstrelsy:

Glenkindie was ance a harper gude,
 He harped to the king;
 And Glenkindie was ance the best harper
 That ever harped on a string.

Glenkindie may be thought of as a permanent harper, that is, one attached to the royal household, or only as a harper of note who in the course of his wanderings has gained admission to the king's palace. It is well known that minstrelsy found such favor with the king and his court that royal patronage of entertainers of all kinds often exceeded the bounds of liberality and ran into the most foolish extravagance. So important a rôle did the minstrel play in mediaeval society that the royal establishment was incomplete without its body of permanent minstrels.

The power of Glenkindie's harp is paralleled only by the magic of Orpheus' lyre:

He'd harpit a fish out o saut water,
 Or water out o a stane,
 Or milk out o a maiden's breast,
 That bairn had never nane.

The ballad seems fond of ascribing fabulous powers to music, as is shown again in *The Twa Brothers*, where Lady Margaret harps the small birds off the briers and her true love out of the grave. The potency of the harp to bring the dead from the grave, recalls again the charm of Orpheus' music to wrest Eurydice from the regions of the damned.

As already remarked, Glenkindie not only harps but sings. If he is an English or Scotch harper worthy to play before the king, and not merely play but sing, he must be taken as representative of an exception to the general class of minstrels of his nationality; that is, in case one sides with Ritson when he decries all English harpers as vagabonds and mere instru-

mental performers. It is more likely that he is one of those accomplished minstrels who sang traditional songs in castle hall:

He's taen his harp intil his hand,
He harpit and he sang,
And ay as he harpit to the king,
To haud him unthought lang.

Moreover, Glenkindie might furnish one instance, at least, of a harper who might fit Percy's description of the ancient English minstrel; namely, one who sang to the harp, verses of his own composing. At any rate, his harping is not unbecoming a minstrel of high station, and holds the king "unthought lang," that is, keeps him from weariness.

Nor is the king ungrateful to one who with his music can stay off or purge away that malady known as *ennui*, which in the days of no books and no theatres, must have made frequent visitations to the houses of the upper classes:

I'll gie you a robe, Glenkindie,
A robe o the royal pa,
Gin ye will harp i the winter's night
Afore my nobles a'.

A robe or other rich garment was not an unusual reward for a minstrel's services.¹ By "pa" is meant fine cloth. The king's invitation may well have been a request for Glenkindie to attach himself somewhat permanently to the royal household. It was customary for minstrels to establish themselves for a period of some years or months in the house of a lord, and upon reaching the end of their services, to depart well rewarded with a robe among other things.² It was not unusual for the minstrel to ask for his pay in advance.³ It was the duty of established minstrels to furnish amusement at all times, and it is to be noted that Glenkindie's talents are to be employed not necessarily upon special occasions, but at the close of day when the winter's night confined pleasure within doors.

Like the harper of Lochmaben, who had no difficulty in playing King Henry and his nobles asleep, Glenkindie, in order that he may further his courtship with the young countess, has little trouble in bringing sleep upon his hearers:

¹Cf. *Piers Plowman*, C-text, Passus xvi. 202:

'The poure and the riche y plesse and payn fynde,
And fewe robis ich fonge other forrede gounes.'

²Gautier, *Les Épopées Françaises*, II, p. 52.

³In speaking of the pay given minstrels, Gautier, *Les Épopées Fran-*

He's taen his harp intill his hand,
 He's harpit them a' asleep,
 Except it was the young countess,
 That love did waukin keep.

It was probably no unusual occurrence for lords to fall asleep under the soporific effects of heavy feasting and the spell of wine and song.

The nearness of the minstrel to the king is again instanced in *Hind Etin*, the Buchan text, where Hind Etin, wishing to be recognized as the grandson of the king, approaches him through the "proud porter," the "butler-boy," and last, the minstrel, to each of whom, upon his mother's instructions, he gives a "royal ring":

'Ye'll gie the third to the minstrel
 That plays before the king;
 He'll play success to the bonny boy
 Came thro the wood him lane.'

The minstrel here, it is evident, is as much a part of the king's household as are the porter and the butler-boy of the preceding stanzas. But as regards the bonny boy, what particular office does the minstrel perform? Can his playing success to him mean that with his music he throws the royal heart into a mood favorable to a happy recognition scene?

It is not infrequent that we come upon royalty at play, and surrounding itself with means of diversion. In *Young Bearwell*, the hero, sailing away from danger, is blown upon a foreign shore where the king and his court, playing at ball, ask him to stay and be their harper. Here, as in *Glasgerion*, one finds the king openly inviting the harper to enter his services:

When he did see the king and court,
 Were playing at the ba;
 Gave him a harp into his hand,
 Says, Stay, Bearwell, and play.

He had not been in the king's court
 A twelvemonth and a day,
 Till there came lairds and lords anew
 To court that lady gay.

There is nothing to show that Young Bearwell is a harper by profession, and yet he seems qualified to be a court musician. This may not seem strange when it is remembered that among the upper classes music was considered as a genteel accomplish-

çaises, ii, p. 124, says: "Plusieurs de ses confrères, qui se croient plus fins que lui, ont accoutumé de se faire payer d'avance," or "Le mieux était encore de s'arrêter au milieu de la chanson et de faire sa quête au moment où l'intérêt est le plus vivement excité."

ment. Young Bearwell accepts the king's invitation and remains at the court for twelve months. No doubt, like Glenkindie of *Glasgerion*, he too plays before the king and his nobles "i' the winter's night."

That the association of king and minstrel caught the popular fancy in song is evidenced again in *The Twa Sisters*, probably a seventeenth century piece. Fair Ellen of Motherwell's text is a king's daughter, and after her death, her ghost appears to her father's fiddler:

They laid her on the brae to dry;
Her father's fiddler then rode by.

When he this lady did come near,
Her ghost to him then did appear.

'When you go to my father the king,
You'll tell him to burn my sister Jean.

'When you go to my father's gate,
You'll play a spring for fair Ellen's sake.

'You'll tak three links of my yellow hair,
And play a spring for evermair.'

The fact that fair Ellen gives this mission to the fiddler must presuppose the usual close intimacy between the king and the minstrel. Like the king's jester or fool, the fiddler, no doubt, enjoyed privileges denied to earl or baron; and with harp strings made from Ellen's yellow hair, the fiddler of the ballad might easily sway the king's will and harden his heart against the cruel Jean! By "spring" is usually meant a quick, lively air, but here it must signify a melody of a graver nature, a melody more suitable to commemorate the fate of the drowned Ellen.¹

Ellen's request that the fiddler play an air for her sake makes it imperative to ask the question here as to whether or not minstrels were often given the themes of their songs. In this connection it is interesting to note a stanza from *Geordie*, probably a sixteenth century piece, in which Geordie's lady asks that ballads telling of her worth be printed:¹

'Gar print me ballants weel,' she said,
'Gar print me ballants many,
'Gar print me ballants weel,' she said,
'That I am a worthy ladie.'

¹Cf. Burns' song, *McPherson's Farewell*:

He play'd a spring, and danc'd it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

One more allusion from the ballads relative to this point will surely not be out of place. In the second fit or part of the romance, *Thomas Rymer*, the elf-queen gives Thomas the power of speaking the truth, and asks that in the exercise of his minstrelsy he speak no "euyll," evil, of her:

To harp or carpe, whare-so thou gose,
 Thomas, thou sall hafe the chose sothely:
 And he saide, Harpynge kepe I none,
 For tonge es chefe of mynstralsye.

'If thou will spelle, or tales telle,
 Thomas, thou sall neuer lesynge lye;
 Whare euer thou fare, by frythe or felle,
 I praye the speke none euyll of me.

Probably among other things which caused the minstrels to be classed as "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars," was a proneness to lying and to idle tales in which they had little scruple as to the defamation of those who had in any way offended them. Just what is the significance of "tonge es chefe of mynstralsye?" Had minstrels learned that words had more power to entertain than music? Harping or musical accompaniment, was at times dispensed with altogether and the minstrel became a mere story-teller. No doubt the "tonge" rather than "harpynge" was "chefe of mynstralsye," especially when the art of the minstrel went beyond mere amusement, and entered, for instance, the service of political intrigue.²

The ballads keep ever before the reader the close association of royalty and minstrelsy. The chief of the king's minstrels was often known as king of the minstrels, and this title was also bestowed upon the regent of other companies of musicians.³ No treatment of minstrelsy would be complete without some reference to this important officer, and fortunately the ballad does not disappoint one, for in *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valor, and Marriage*, there is a "king of the fiddlers":

This battle was fought near to Titbury town,
 When the bagpipes bated the bull;
 I am king of the fidlers, and sware 't is a truth,
 And I call him that doubts it a gull.

¹Falstaff is willing to entrust his fame to a ballad: "I know not: here he is, and here I yield him and I beseech your grace, let it be booked with the rest of this day's deeds; or, by the Lord, I will have it in a particular ballad else, with mine own picture on the top on't, Coleville kissing my foot." *Henry IV*, 2, IV, iii, 45.

²Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life*, p. 206.

³Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, p. 161.

Minstrels were called fiddlers as early as the fourteenth century. In commenting upon the above citation, Strutt seems to imply that fiddler was an opprobrious title for minstrel, and was used particularly after minstrelsy had fallen into disgrace.¹ But if such is his inference, he may, after all, in part, at least, have concluded erroneously; for it is well established that minstrels, and that as early as the reign of Edward I, the most flourishing period of minstrelsy, were often distinguished by the name of the instrument upon which they played.²

To appreciate fully the allusion to minstrelsy in the above quotation, one cannot do better than to look for a moment at Ritson's description of the office of the *Roy des Minstraux*.³ After discussing the king of the minstrels and his court, he says that upon the courts being over, "the steward to the Duke of Devonshire, as representative of the prior of Tutbury, used to deliver a bull, prepared for the occasion, and turn him loose among the Minstrels; and, if they succeeded in their endeavors to take him before he got over the Dove, he was brought to the stake, and baited for their diversion." And then, on the point of quoting the above stanza from the Robin Hood ballad, he says, "such was the famous bull-running of Tutbury, or court of minstrels."

Of the occasions for minstrelsy thus far pictured in the ballads, disregarding any use which the plot might make of the minstrel's music, such as, furthering the minstrel's courtship, minstrelsy has been introduced chiefly for general entertainment, as where Glasgerion plays "i' the winter's night"; and for more special purposes, as at weddings. As another instance of minstrelsy for general amusement, there is an interesting reference in *The Two Sisters*. In the notes the "ancient harper," after making himself a "fiddoll" and all the parts thereof from the "poor lady's body," again takes up his wandering life and soon finds occasion to employ his art:

Then forth went he, as it might be,
Upon a summer's day,
And met a goodly company,
Who asked him in to play.

¹Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, p. 161.

²Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1, p. 73.

³Ritson, *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, p. xii.

They asked him in ale to swim,
 For sorrow's mighty dry,
 And he to share their wassail fare
 Essayed right willingly.

No period of rejoicing was complete without minstrelsy. The lady in *The Earl of Aboyne*, prepares to receive her lord who is just returning from London:

'My minstrels all, be well on call,
 And set your harps a tunin,
 Wi the finest springs, spare not the strings,
 Sin the Lord o Aboyne is coming.'

Clearly, the minstrels here are attached to the household, and like the cooks, the stable-grooms, and the servant-maids of the preceding stanzas, are subject to call upon every occasion. The number of minstrels must have been considerable, for in another version, they are stationed in several rooms:

'My minstrels all, be at my call,
 Haud a' your rooms a ringin,'

A like preparation for merry-making, though in this case the occasion is a wedding, may be found in the Jamieson-Brown Manuscript of *Young Beichan*:

'Fy! gar a' our cooks mak ready,
 And fy! gar a' our pipers play,
 And fy! gar trumpets gae thro the toun,
 That Lord Beichan's wedded twice in a day!'

Here, also, are permanent minstrels, perhaps musical retainers,—pipers and trumpeters, who take their names from their instruments. The number of minstrels maintained in royal palaces was in keeping with royal pomp, and the king, in respect of his establishment of entertainers, was, as elsewhere, emulated by the nobility. In a further version, Lord Beichan is a lord of "hie degree," and no doubt, like the king, included among his minstrels a number of trumpeters. Edward III had in his household both "trompeters" and "pypers." Trumpeters, says Chambers, usually appear in twos and threes rather than singly, and, as in *Lord Beichan*, their performances were chiefly ceremonial.¹

¹Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1, p. 73.

As is to be expected, minstrelsy is often mentioned in connection with the dance, as in *Leesome Brand*.¹

'Get minstrels for to play,' she said,
'And dancers to dance in my room;
For here comes my son, Leesome Brand,
And he comes merrilie to the town.'

Clearly, in days gone by one could call for minstrels much as one today may command the services of musicians.

Again, in *Sheath and Knife*, there are minstrels with dancing:

And when he came to his father's court hall,
There was music and minstrels and dancing
and all.
But they'll never, etc.

It is not necessary to think of the minstrels here as all musicians or singers. In its most thriving period minstrelsy was represented at the court in all its varieties. There were acrobats and contortionists of all kinds; there were mimes, jugglers, and dancers. Women vied with men in their efforts to entertain and to win royal favor. Of musicians there was one, at least, for each of the principal musical instruments then in use.

The occasion is war, the instruments are trumpets and drums, in the Kinloch Manuscript of *The Young Earl of Essex's Victory*, an eighteenth century piece:

'T is, old England, old England, I bid thee adieu,
The drums and the trumpets command me frae shore;
And you lusty fellows, both valiant and true,
Will you venture with me where loud cannons roar?

The drum and the trumpet were no doubt more often in the van of armies than in the ceremonies of peace, and were better suited to sound a call to arms than to accompany a dance. As far back as the time of Edward I, the drum, as an instrument of minstrelsy proper, was held in disrepute,² probably because little skill was needed to play it; as an instrument of

¹Cf. *The Pastime of Pleasure*, Percy Society, xviii, p. 63, a sixteenth century allegorical poem:

She commaunded her mynstrelles right anone to play
Mamours the sweet and the gentill daunce;
With La Bell Pucell, that was fayre and gaye,
She me recommaunded, with all pleasaunce,
To dance true mesure without varyaunce.

²Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, i, p. 73.

battle, as in the above ballad, it was probably as much esteemed as it is today.

When Johnie Scot goes to the rescue of his imprisoned lady,¹ he gives his expedition a military guise by having his drums "beat round":

The next gude toun that Johnie came to,
He made the drums beat round,
Till the king and all his merry men
A-marvelled at the sound.

With even more of a military air the first stanza of *Captain Ward and the Rainbow* moves off to the sound of the drum:

Strike up, you lusty gallants, with musick and
sound of drum,
For we have descryed a rover, upon the sea is come;

It is probable that as early as Edward III the royal minstrels acted in times of war as a military band,² and it is not at all unlikely that the musicians of the ballad have been summoned from furnishing the music of a festival to herald an attack upon the rover.

But the drum of the ballad is not always at the head of armies, nor is the trumpet always sounding in the services of war. In the royal entertainment which Sir Patrick Spens and his followers enjoy in Norway, the trumpet is found in company with the harp and the pipe; in Buchan's version:

They hadna stayed into that place
A month but and a day,
Till he caud the flip in mugs gae roun,
And wine in cans sae gay.
The pipe and harp sae sweetly playd,
The trumpets loudly soun;
In every hall where in they stayd,
Wi their mirth did reboun.

It is to the music of minstrels and the sound of drums that Hugh Spencer makes good his boast in his joust with the French knight, and incidentally brings the French king to sue for peace:³

'But proue att parting,' Spencer sayes,
'Ffrench knight, here I tell itt thee;
For I will lay thee five to four
The bigger man I proue to bee.

¹*Johnie Scot*, Motherwell's Manuscript.

²Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1, p. 49.

³*Hugh Spencer's Feats in France*, Percy Manuscript:

But the day was sett, and together they mett,
 With great mirth and melodye,
 With minstrells playing, and trumpets soundinge,
 With drummes striking loud and hye.

Among the events, such as weddings, festivals, and knight-dubbing, to which minstrelsy was indispensable, was the joust or the tournament.

To discover some of the instruments of minstrelsy one need go no further than the ballads themselves.¹ In the romance, *Thomas Rymer*, there is a rather complete list of instruments, mostly stringed:

Harpe and fethill bothe thay fandē,
 Getterne, and als so the sawtrye;
 Lutte and rybybe bothe gangande,
 And all maner of mynstralsye.

Here in the elf-queen's castle there is the usual motley crowd of entertainers among whom are musicians of all kinds. There is dancing also, as is seen in a following stanza where the "Knyghtis dawnesede by three and three." Among other instruments of minstrelsy were the rebec, the regal, the sackbut, the guitar, and the rota.

But according to the ballad the usual instruments were the harp and the fiddle, and the minstrel is, as a rule, called a harper or fiddler. Although there are many other instruments, such as the trumpet and the drum, they receive, as a general thing, such casual mention that the players upon them never become actors in the ballad story. It is true that the pipe is a favorite instrument, but it is usually found in connection with the dance, and one never reads, in the ballads, at least, of a blind, a wandering, or an ancient piper. According to Chaucer, there were many different kinds of instruments.²

That the fiddle and the harp were well-known instruments, all their parts familiar to people in general, may be seen in the

¹It is interesting to compare, however, the long list of instruments of minstrelsy given in *The Pastime of Pleasure*, Percy Society, xviii, p. 61:

There sat Dame Musyke, with all her mynstracy;
 As tabours, trumpettes, with pipes melodious,
 Sackbuttes, organs, and the recorder swetely,
 Harpes, lutes, and crouddes ryght delycyous;
 Cymphans, doussemers, wyth claricimbales glorious.
 Rebeckes, clarycordes, eche in theyr degre,
 Dyd sytte about theyr ladyes mageste.

A list, almost as exhaustive as the preceding, is given in *The Complaynt of Scotlande* (1549); ed. James A. H. Murray, E. E. T. S., vol. 17, p. 65.

²*The Squire's Tale*, 268:

Twa Sisters, where in several of the versions the fiddler or the harper, as it may be, furnishes his instrument almost entirely from the parts of the drowned maiden's body. In the *Notes and Queries* text,¹ in which there is neither harper nor fiddler, the miller himself not only makes strings and peggs for his "violl," but even the violl itself from the body of the unfortunate sister:

The miller runne hastily downe the cliffe,
And up he betook her withouten her life.

What did he doe with her breast bone?
He made him a violl to play thereupon.

What did he doe with her fingers so small?
He made him peggs to his violl withall.

What did he doe with her nose-ridge?
Unto his violl he made him a bridge.

What did he doe with her veynes so blew?
He made him strings to play thereto.

What did he doe with her eyes so bright?
Upon his violl he played at first sight?

What did he doe with her tongue so rough?
Unto the violl it spake enough.

What did he doe with her two shinnes?
Unto the violl they danc'd Moll Symes.

Then bespake the treble string,
'O yonder is my father the king.'

Then bespake the second string,
'O yonder sitts my mother the queen.'

And then bespake the strings all three,
'O yonder is my sister that drowned me.'

In nearly all the subsequent versions it is either a harper or a fiddler who supplies the parts of his instrument so conveniently. In the version cited above, no mention is made of a fiddle bow, but in Motherwell's text, for instance, a fair fiddler "cam by" and "buskit his bow in her bonnie yellow hair."

Toform him gooth the loud minstralcy,
Till he cam to his chambre of parements,
Ther as they sownen diverse instruments,
That it is lyk an heven for to here.'

¹First Series, vol. V., p. 591.

By the viol of the foregoing citation is one to understand the violin of today? This can hardly be, for the miller's viol has only three strings, one of which is called a treble, another a second string. Even in the versions in which the instrument is called a fiddle, the fiddler to string his fiddle takes only three "taits" or three "links" of her yellow hair. In one version, it is true, he makes of these three links only one string. On the whole, however, it is very likely that the viol of the ballad is nearer to the *vielle*, the classic instrument of minstrelsy, than to the fiddle of today. In his discussion of the *vielle* Gautier says that the number of strings varied from five to two, but that the usual number was four.¹ At any rate, that *The Two Sisters* yields such detailed information as to the parts of the fiddle or the harp, attests to the popular acquaintance with these instruments and the minstrels who played upon them.

In reviewing minstrelsy in the ballads it is impossible to ignore the many instances where the characters of the ballad story are, so to speak, minstrels unto themselves. It has already been noted that music as a genteel accomplishment was cultivated by king and nobility alike, and it is not improbable that the ballad will justify the inference that the common people, as well, included among their lowly accomplishments some skill in plucking a rollicking air or a sentimental strain from the strings of a harp. A few citations should suffice to show that the harp yielded not only to the sweep of aristocratic fingers but to the stroke of peasant hands as well.

King Orfeo, in the ballad of that name, finds in his music a companion for grief and joy alike:

Dan he took oot his pipes ta play,
Bit sair his hert wi dol an wae.

And first he played da notes a noy,
And dan he played da notes o joy.

An dan he played da god gabber reel,
Dat meicht ha made a sick hert hale.

Strutt, speaking for his own times,² says that with the fair sex the study of music was exceedingly fashionable; and it is well known that during Elizabeth's reign, among the requisites of a young gentlewoman's education was some skill in playing

¹Gautier, *Les Épopées Françaises*, p. 71.

²Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, p. 228.

upon the virginals, lute, and cittern. In *Fair Annie*, the heroine, bereft of her consort's love, bemoans her bitter fate by singing to the music of her virginals:

Fair Annie took out her virginals,
And sadly did she play;

In *The Famous Flower of Serving-Men*, Elise, disguised as Sweet William, sings the story of her life to the accompaniment of her lute:

Upon the lute Sweet William plaid,
And to the same he sung and said,
With a pleasant and most noble voice
Which made the old man to rejoice.

So widespread was musical culture that although Elise, or Sweet William, was chamberlain to the king, yet the ballad makes nothing of her being able to sing and play the lute:

'I had my musick every day,
Harmonious lessons for to play;

Nor was the musical training of the masculine sex neglected. Earl Patrick, in *Burd Isabel and Erl Patrick*, thus commits his son to the care of clerk John:

'Ye'll take here my son, clerk John,
Learn him to dance and sing,
And I will to some unco land,
Drive love out of my mind.'

As a representative in ballad story of those of the lower classes who knew how to tune a harp, there is Heyvalin, a skipper, in *Young Bearwell*. He, like the hero of the story, comes to a land where the king and his court are playing ball, and is requested to stay and play:

And there the king and all his court
Were playing at the ba;
Gave him a harp into his hand,
Says, Stay, Heyvalin, and play.

Of the ballad pictures of royal harpers, blind fiddlers, strolling musicians both ancient and fair, maidens with their lutes, and Fair Annies with their virginals, minstrels old and young, rich and poor, what can be better as a closing scene than the following from *Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet*, where one hears minstrelsy making merry in castle and hall, while Lady Maisry's tears down pour:

Sweetly played the merry organs,
Intill her mother's bower;
But still and dum stood Lady Maisry,
And let the tears down pour.

Sweetly play the harp sae fine,
Intill her father's ha;
But still and dum stood Lady Maisry,
And let the tears down fa.

or this from *Rose the Red and White Lily*, where knightly music lends enchantment to the lovers' bower:

The knights they harped i their bower,
The ladies sewd and sang;
There was mair mirth in that chamer
Than a' their father's lan.

III

THE DANCE

Naturally, the first question arising in a study of the dance in the ballad has to do with the types of dancing. In the first place, are the dances of the ballads of the older or of the more modern kind? Then, if there are old dances mentioned, what are some of their characteristics? Further, what evidence, if any, is there of later fashions in dancing? An attempt to answer these questions involves a discussion of such points relative to the dance as, dance formations; participants in the dance, sex and number; occasions of the dance; accompaniment of the dance, whether vocal or instrumental; place of dancing, whether indoors or out of doors; time of dancing; and other matters which the ballads will suggest in the course of this paper. As regards the order of taking up these several points and the time given to each, nothing, perhaps, need be said except as respects the order and space allotted to the accompaniment of the dance. The discussion of the dance accompaniment assumes large proportions, not only because it is of itself important, but because it throws more light, than any other feature of the dance in the ballad, upon the period of the dances mentioned.

Of the older types of the dance one finds but two instances in which the specific name of the dance is given. In both cases it is the morris dance which is thus particularly mentioned.

In *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, and Marriage* one sees the morris dance in a sportive and merry setting:

For I saw them fighting, and fidd the while,
And Clarinda sung, Hey derry down!
The bumpkins are beaten, put up thy sword, Bob,
And now let's dance into the town.

Before we came to it we heard a strange shouting,
And all that were in it looked madly;
For some were a bull-back, some dancing a morris,
And some singing Arthur-a-Bradly.

Clearly, the morris dance was so well known that to include is as one detail in a picture, mere mention of its name was enough. It has had a long popularity in England and was a favorite dance on festive occasions. When danced in connection with the May games several well-known characters of Robin Hood balladry were associated with or took part in it. In some descriptions of the morris one finds the following characters represented: Robin Hood, Maid Marian, Little John, and Friar Tuck. Again, the characters who took part were a Lady of the May, a Fool, a Piper, and two or more dancers. The morris dance is either stationary or processional.¹ The dance of the ballad seems to have formed part of a procession through the town. It has here, however, no part in the story of the ballad and receives only casual mention in the description of a merry frolic. But what may be said as to the song, "Arthur-a-Bradly"? Was it a dance tune or song, and was the singing of it an accompaniment to the morris? The usual accompaniment to the morris was instrumental, however; originally the pipes and tabor gave the dance its measure; today the fiddle is used. In connection with "Arthur-a-Bradly" it is interesting to note "Moll Syms" of *The Two Sisters* as the only instance in which the ballads mention a dance tune specifically.² To this popular sixteenth century dance tune the "two shinnes" of the drowned sister dance:

What did he doe with her two shinnes?
Unto the violl they danc'd Moll Syms.

One meets again with the morris in *Flodden Field*:

Jack with a feather was lapt all in leather,
His boastings were all in vaine;
He had such a chance, with a new morrice-dance
He never went home againe.

¹Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, I, p. 201.

²Not with reference to dance tunes, but to the names of dances, it is not uninteresting to note Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, VI, 143:

In Professor Child's introduction to *Flodden Field* one reads: "'Jack with a feather' is said in contempt of King James' levity or foolhardiness." One may safely add, I think, that this allusion to the feather has reference to the costume of a morris dancer. In an old description of the dresses of morris dancers¹ each dancer wears a single feather in his cap. In "lapt all in leather," as pointed out by Professor Child, reference is made to the wrapping by the English of the dead Scottish king's body in lead or in leather. Without doubt, here also, the maker of the ballad has still in mind the costume of a morris dancer. This is a costume for a "new morrice-dance." As seen in descriptions of this dance the costumes of morris dancers did vary. Something as regards costume was left to individual taste, and naturally one morris, in costume as well as in movement, differed from other morris dances. The "new morrice-dance" of the ballad justifies the inference that the invention of a new morris was not unusual. To create a new dance, a dancer did not have to alter the general characteristics of the morris, but had only to introduce innovations of a minor character, such as a slight change in step, and, as the stanza above leads one to conclude, a slight change in costume.

Unfortunately the morris dance—one ought here to except the reel—is the only dance mentioned in the ballads by name. That a dance is spoken of as a ring or circle dance gives, it is true, something as to its general nature, but tells little as to its exact character. All folk dances were in general either circular or processional.² But it is worth while if one can learn from the ballad whether or not the dance in question is of the old or of the modern type. Fortunately, to furnish this information the ballad need only give the general nature of the dance; that is, it is quite enough, as a rule, in determining the period of a certain dance if one learns that it is a ring-dance or *ronde*.

Before going further, it may be well to distinguish in a general way between the dancing of the older type and the dancing of today. The manner of dancing with which we are generally familiar is that of couples who glide over the floor and whirl each other around more or less rapidly. In the early

Wher as I moste daunce and singe
The hovedance and carolinge
Or forto go the newefot.

¹ Kidson and Neal, *English Folk-Song and Dance*, p. 136.

² Kögel, *Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur*, I, i, 6, speaking of the begin-

dances there was undoubtedly dancing by couples, but in such dancing the couples did not, as a rule, form an independent unit of the dance as in the ballroom of today, but existed only for the sake of a larger unit. For example, one might speak of the dancers in a mediaeval German *Bettlertanz* as dancing in couples, but it is noteworthy that the couples formed a circle about a central couple and did not dance without reference to the dancing of the entire group. Dancing by couples, although in a sense present in some of the old dances, was not one of the dance's principal features. Nor was the pleasure of the dance then, as it is today, so largely dependent upon participation by both sexes. In many dances the participants were women altogether; in others, as in the morris, the dancers were chiefly men. Some of the most striking characteristics of the early dances were dancing in the open, dancing to the accompaniment of song, dancing in group formations, dancing on was free and unrestrained and often the result of great muscular festive and holiday occasions, dancing in which the movement activity, dancing in which there was a fore-dancer or one who led the dance.¹

Of the older type of dancing known as ring-dancing, one comes across an instance in the Campbell version of *The Earl of Errol*:

When he came to Edinboro,
He lighted on the green;
There were four-and-twenty maidens
A' dancing in a ring.

The dance here is danced in the open on a green, the dancers are all maidens, and the dance is of the ring or circular formation. From the number of dancers being four-and-twenty one can hardly infer that such a number was peculiarly appropriate for ring-dancing. If one is to draw any inference respecting the use here of this particular number, it must rather be that this is only another illustration of the popular fancy for certain numbers; such as, the numbers three, seven, three-and-

nings of early German poetry, says: "Für die Form folgt aus dem Zusammenhange der ältesten Poesie mit dem Reigentanze (round dance) und den processionsähnlichen Umzügen zweirelei."

¹Cf. Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, II, 552:

Yet made he tho as fresh a countenaunce
As though he shulde have led the newe daunce.

thirty. Four-and-twenty seems to have been an especial favorite and is likely to occur anywhere, as in the well-known nursery song's

Four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.

If one reads the above stanza of *The Earl of Errol* in connection with a stanza from another version of the same ballad one is led to conclude that the dancers are of the peasant class. As the story goes, it is Lord Errol's purpose to choose for himself a maiden from among the dancers, and

....he has chosen a tapster lass,
And Meggie was her name.

A tapster lass was no less a personage than a barmaid. All classes danced; the nobility were followed by the middle classes, and the middle classes imitated by their inferiors. But it is very probable that in its introduction among the classes a particular dance might have moved upward as well as downward in the social scale. The conjoint dance and song no doubt often found its way from the village green to the courtly hall. It is altogether probable that most dances had their origin in the spontaneous and natural life of the people, and were later adopted by the nobility, and by them refined though not necessarily improved.

In the stanza following the above stanza from *The Earl of Errol* one sees the four-and-twenty maidens no longer dancing in a ring, but

There were four-and-twenty maidens
A' dancing in a row;

The terms *ring* and *row* can hardly be considered as convertible. According to the movement, the dance of mediaeval times might be either a dance in which the dancers stepped or danced forward, or a dance in which the dancers remained in one place and moved in a circle.¹ Böhme goes on to say that in the ring dances the dancers joined hands and built a circle and then danced in a ring, or the circle was broken up and a long row formed, in which the dancers, men and women, danced singly or in pairs behind one another. The *Reie*, according to Schultz, was not a dance in a closed circle but a dance in a chain or row.² It is very likely that in the instance taken from

¹Böhme, *Geschichte Des Tanzes in Deutschland*, p. 3.

²Schultz, *Das Höfische Leben*, 1, p. 545.

the ballad the maidens passed from the circle into a row or chain formation.

Again, in *Fair Janet*, Sharpe's Ballad Book, there is ring-dancing:

When dinner it was past and done
And dancing to begin,
'O we'll take the bride's maidens,
And we'll go fill the ring.'

O ben cam the auld French lord,
Saying, 'Bride, will ye dance with me?
'Awa, awa, ye auld French lord,
Your face I downa see.'

O ben than cam now Sweet Willie,
He cam with ane advance;
'O I'll go tak the bride's maidens,
And we'll go tak a dance."

'I've seen ither days wi you, Willie,
And so has mony mae,
Ye would hae danced wi me mysel,
Let a' my maidens gae.'

'O ben than cam now Sweet Willie,
Saying, Bride, will ye dance wi me?
'Aye, by my sooth, and that I will,
Gin my back should break in three.'

She had nae turned her throw the dance,
Throw the dance but thrice,
When she fell down at Willie's feet,
And up did never rise.

Although the space given to the dance in this ballad, six stanzas out of a total of thirty, is perhaps too great in proportion to the importance of the part played by the dance in the ballad story, yet the dance, here at least, forms an integral part of the plot. In choosing her partner, if one may speak of partners in a ring dance, Janet shows her aversion for the "auld French lord" and her preference for Sweet Willie. Moreover, the dance brings the ballad to its tragic close. In this instance, then, the dance is not brought in so casually as in other ballads. As stated in Professor Child's introduction to *Fair Janet*, the part played by the dance in the German and Scandinavian versions of the story is much more prominent than in the version just cited. In the Swedish version, Kirstin, the Janet of the Scottish ballad, is forced to dance as a test of her physical condition, and succeeds in dancing down successively all the courtiers, the king, and the queen. The Scottish

version may be said to possess greater pathos than the others, in that Janet in her weakened condition refuses all offers, but admits her lover, alone, to a dance, even though she feels that her yielding to him may mean the forfeiture of her life.

It is not clear in *Fair Janet* whether or not the bride and her partner make up part of the ring of dancers or whether they dance within the ring. In the German *Bettlertanz*, mentioned above, the dancers, while dancing, formed a circle about a central couple. The *carole* dance, a ring-dance made up of men and women in couples, seems to have moved about a couple in the middle of the ring.¹ If the dance of the ballad resembled either of these dances it is more likely the former. On such an occasion as a wedding the dance chosen would be one which would serve to give prominence to the bride and bridegroom. What could be better than for the other dancers to dance about the happy pair? Then, again, for the sake of the story, Janet can show her dislike for the French lord, and her love for Sweet Willie to greater advantage, if she is to be one of a couple which dances somewhat independently of the other dancers, that is to say, a couple within the circle of dancers and not one forming part of the circle.

In the other Child versions of *Fair Janet* nothing is said about a ring-dance. Like a Janet at a modern ball, Janet of the ballad receives invitations to dance. As in the version cited above she refuses to dance with anyone but Sweet Willie, and

....she's taen Willie be the hand
The tear blinded her ee;
'But I wad dance wi my true-love,
But bursts my heart in three.

Clearly, this is dancing by couples, but one can hardly think of the couple here as in the modern conception of a dancing couple. The couple simply hold hands and are not joined in embrace. Moreover, it seems that representation of both sexes was not essential to the pleasure of dancing by couples. As noted above, Kirstin, of the Swedish version, dances down the queen, and Janet of *Fair Janet* is asked to dance with her mother:

Up then spak the bride's mother,
Said, 'Bride, will ye dance wi me?'
'Away, away, my mother dear!
There nae dancin wi me.'

¹Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, p. 193.

It is true that in modern dancing women occasionally dance together, but not preferably, as a rule, when a partner of the opposite sex is available.

Except in the Sharpe text one does not find the dance called a ring-dance, nor is there in the other versions, unless the reel may be thought of as a ring-dance, any evidence whatever to show that Fair Janet and Sweet Willie took part in a circular dance. In one version the dance is called a "shamefu reel":

Then out it spake the bridegroom's man,
Mischance come ower his heel!
'Win up, win up, now bride,' he says,
'And dance a shamefu reel.'

And in still another version

She had na run a reel, a reel,
A reel but barely three,
Till pale and wan grew Fair Janet,
And her head took Willie's knee.

There are Irish, Scotch, and English reels.¹ In England, where the reel is found almost solely in connection with the Sword Dance, as performed in the North Riding of Yorkshire, it is danced by three couples; in Scotland it is usually danced by two couples; and in Ireland it is played very fast and is always danced singly. The chief feature of reels is their circular character, the dancers standing face to face and describing a series of figures of eight.² The dance in the ballad is a Scottish reel but it is not clear just how many couples were dancing. Although usually danced by only two couples the reel was sometimes danced by three, or even four couples, and according as there were two, three, or four couples, was called foursome, sixsome, or eightsome.³ It is difficult to say just what connection, if any, there is between the reel and the ring-dance of the versions cited. That they are both mentioned in Scottish ballads may be reason enough for concluding that they have something in common, especially when one learns that the only true national dances of Scotland were the Reel; the Strathspey, merely a slow form of the Reel; and the Highland Fling.

¹Just what is the "up-spring" reel in *Hamlet*, I, iv, 9?

HAMLET: The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;

²Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

³Burns' song, *The Exciseman*, speaks of threesome and foursome reels.

Can it be that the circular character of the reel would classify it as a ring dance? Strictly speaking, however, a ring-dance is one in which the participants, by joining hands or not, formed a circle or ring of dancers; whereas it is possible, on the other hand, to speak of a dance by a single dancer as being circular, simply because the figure of the dance is a circle.

In one version Janet dances alone. In Scotland, as well as in Ireland, the reel dance must have been danced singly, for Janet first asks someone to dance the reel, not with her, but for her. Upon Willie's offering himself, however, she decides to dance by herself:

Then out it spake the bride hersell,
O na, this mauna be;
For I will dance this dance mysell,
Tho my back should gang in three.

In the Motherwell text, Sweet Willie tries to dissuade her from dancing at all and offers to dance both for himself and her:

'Oh no, oh no,' said Sweet William,
Let no such things eer be;
But I will cut my glove in two,
And I'll dance for thee and me.'

She hadna danced the floor once owre,
I'm sure she hadna thrice,
Till she fell in a deadly swound,
And from it neer did rise.

Here, also, it seems that the dance may be danced by a single dancer. The pretty custom of cutting the glove, and its significance here, is explained by Professor Child as follows: "Lovers were wont to cut a glove and each take a part. Sweet Willie will take in his hand the half of his glove which represents Janet and dance for two." If there were numbers dancing, and if the dance depended for its execution upon so many couples, it is hard to see just how Sweet Willie could dance for two. In the Kinloch version Willie says:

'I'll lay my gloves in the bride's han,
And I'll dance for the bride.'

Here, too, no doubt, though not so charmingly as in the Motherwell version, the gloves serve as a bond between the two lovers.

The circular character of the reel is again brought out in *The Wylie Wife of the Hie Toun End*:

In Edinburgh, on a summer evening,
Our gentlemen sat drinking wine,
And every one to the window went,
To view the ladies, they went so fine.

They drank the wine, and they spilt the beer,
So merrily as the reel went round,
And a' the healths that was drucken there
Was to bonnie lass o the hie toun end.

The dancing here is out of doors and the dancers are apparently all ladies. The reel probably "went round" upon a nearby green, and, beneath the approving eyes of the merry gentlemen, grew, no doubt, in enthusiasm and graceful precision. There is no evidence to show whether the dancing was singly or by couples.

To dwell for a moment longer upon dancing by couples, may one not infer from the figure of the sun and the moon dancing in the Herd version of *Lizzie Wan* that dancing was often by couples?

'And when will thou come hame again,
O my son Geordy Wan?'
'The sun and the moon shall dance on the green
That night when I come hame.'

If mentioned at all in descriptions of dancing, the units of a dancing group are usually spoken of as couples, or as single dancers. As already noted above, however, the reel in England, usually found associated with the Sword Dance, was danced, as a rule, by three couples. Is it not very probable that in the romance, *Thomas Rymer*, the dance described is a reel of this nature?

Knyghtis dawnesede by three and three,
There was revelle, gamene, and playe;
Lufly ladyes, faire and free,
That satte and sange one riche araye.

It is possible that dancing by three couples should be so described. Here the dancers are men. Each group of three may have danced independently of the other groups, or the movement of each group may have been subordinate to, and involved in, the execution of a larger group movement. To the ballad's usual incidental treatment of the dance must be charged the little light thrown upon this interesting example of the dance. It is not clear whether each group joined hands in a

small circle or whether they danced side by side with or without holding hands. The "luffly ladyes . . . satte and sange one riche araye," and evidently took no part in the dance. It would be interesting to know whether their song was meant as an accompaniment to the dance of the knights. But this is a matter which should be reserved for the discussion of the accompaniment to the dance.

Since attention has been drawn to dancing by couples, by "three and three," and singly, it may be well, before returning to the ring-dance, to cite an instance of what seems to be *solo-dancing*, that is, dancing by one dancer. One of Böhme's classifications of the dance is based upon the number of participants.¹ He defines a solo-dance as a dance by a single person or by a pair of dancers; group dancing as dancing by a small number of pairs, as in quadrilles. In the Kinloch text of *The Cruel Brother*, the mother of the bride dances:

Her father led her through the ha,
Her mither danced afore them a'.

The occasion for the mother's dancing is the betrothal of her daughter to a gentleman from "oure the sea." The wedding over, the bride is being led out to her horse that she may ride away with her lord, the bridegroom. A wedding, always a gay and festive event, was usually a time for dancing. If here the other members of the bridal party are dancing, one cannot, of course, consider this as a solo-dance, but rather a short processional dance led by the mother. "Her father led her through the ha," and it is possible that his leading was a movement in a dance of which the mother was the foredancer. As for the significance of the dance, it may have been a ceremonial dance in which the parents bid farewell to their daughter, and give her into the keeping of her husband. Here, as elsewhere, the ballad leaves a good deal unsaid concerning the particular nature of the dance in question.

As the only other instance of ring-dancing or dancing in a circle, there is the dance of the gypsies in the *Gypsie Laddie*, possibly a seventeenth century piece:

¹Böhme, *Geschichte Des Tanzes in Deutschland*, p. 3:

"Nach der Zahl der Tanzenden giebt es Solotanz, bloss von einer Person oder einem Paare ausgeführt, Gruppentanz, von einer kleinen Anzahl Paaren getantz, z. B. Quadrillen, und ihr Gegensatz der Chortanz."

The lord he hearkened to his fair dame,
 And O the gypsies war glad ay!
 They danced round and round their merry
 Jockie Faw,
 And roosed the gypsie laddie.

The dance of the gypsies seems to have been of a peculiarly lively and fantastic character, for in another version of the same ballad, by their dancing "so neat" and "so fine" they entice Lord Cassle's lady away. In the version cited above, the gypsies are fifteen in number, a number great enough to have made an imposing dance, and to have formed a circle large enough for varied and picturesque movements. The steps of their dance were, no doubt, as capricious and vagrant as the motley and vagabond colors of their strange costumes. The gypsies were noted for their graceful dancing. Their talent as musicians has long been well known; they are good harpists, but their favorite instrument is the fiddle. The women, as well as the men, are good dancers, and dance to the accompaniment of the fiddle. It is said that in 1530 they "dansit before the king in Holyrudhouse" in Scotland. Descriptions give several kinds of gypsy dances, one of which is of a rapid whirling character. The dance in *The Gypsie Laddie* moves about a central figure, Jockie Faw, the gypsy leader, and is danced in his praise or honor; that is, by their dancing the gypsies "roosed" or praised their leader. The dance may have been a traditional gypsy dance; it was possibly a folk-dance borrowed in their wanderings; or it may well have been a spontaneous and impromptu expression of joy and praise. The occasion of a dance, no doubt, contributed much to its character.

Among the occasions for dancing mentioned in the ballads, is the match at dancing, the object of which was for one dancer to dance another down. In the first instance of such a dance in the ballads the chief qualifications of the contestants seem to have been relative to their physical strength rather than to their grace or artistry. We are reminded of a scene in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*:

The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
 By holding out to tire each other down!

In the Swedish versions of *Fair Janet*, if we remember, Janet proved her bodily vigor by dancing down a great number of courtiers. No doubt the test dance was of such a nature as

greatly to tax the dancer's powers of endurance. In the ballad presently to be discussed, the contestants dance for a prize. Schultz speaks of prize dancing at special festivals, in which the best dancer carried home the prize.¹ In such dancing, however, the prize was evidently awarded not so much for endurance as for skill in dancing. A very interesting instance of dancing for a prize is given in the Herd version of *The Bonny Lass of Anglesey*:

Our king he has a secret to tell,
And ay well keepit it must be;
The English lords are coming down
To dance and win the victory.

Our king has cry'd a noble cry,
And ay well keepit it must be;
Gar saddle ye, and bring to me
The bonny lass of Anglesey.'

Up she starts, as white as the milk,
Between him and his company;
What is the thing I hae to ask,
If I should win the victory?"

'Fifteen ploughs but and a mill
I gie thee till the day thou die,
And the fairest knight in a' my court
To chuse thy husband for to be.'

She's ta'en the fifteen lord(s) by the hand,
Saying, 'Will ye come dance with me?'
But on the morn at ten o'clock
They gave it oer most shamefully.

Up then rais the fifteenth lord—
I wat an angry man was he—
Laid by frae him his belt and sword,
And to the floor gaed manfully.

He said, 'My feet shall be my dead
Before she win the victory;'
But before 't was ten o'clock at night
He gaed it oer as shamefully.

All this commotion over a dance, even in balladry, must preclude once for all any idea of the unimportance of sports and pastimes in the life of the folk. As already mentioned in this study, *The Bonny Lass of Anglesey*, in its two versions, is the only one of the Child pieces in which the dance makes the story. The motif here of the dance is a match, whereby the

¹Schultz, *Das Höfische Leben*, 1, p. 547: "Man tanzte bei besonderen Festen um den Hahn oder um den Maibaum und den Hammel und der beste Tänzer trug den Preis heim."

English lords are "coming down to dance and win the victory." In the prefatory discussion of the ballad, Buchan is quoted as saying of his version: "It is altogether a political piece, and I do not wish to interfere much with it." This allusion to the ballad's political significance leads one to suppose that a great deal depended upon the match at dancing. Looked at in this light, the contest at dancing was possibly intended to decide a contest of far greater moment. It is not very likely that this occasion was made merely to discomfit fifteen English lords as to their powers of endurance in the dance. It all reads more or less like a fairy tale, but when we remember that the story is of the days of royal caprice as well of royal prerogative, it is not surprising to find that the fate of nations is represented as decided in this childish fashion. After all, it is hardly more extraordinary than an agreement to determine the supremacy of one army over another by a joust of two enemy warriors between the lines. At any rate, the prize offered the bonny lass, fifteen ploughs and a mill,—a plough for every one of the fifteen lords—and the choice of the king's bravest knight for her husband, warrants the conclusion that here may have been matter of great importance. By "plough" is meant as much land as one plough will till in a year.

To be associated even in myth or legend with kings and lords, must mean that dancing matches were very popular and of frequent occurrence. Like the bonny lass of the ballad, there were undoubtedly dancers, both men and women, who gained a useful notoriety comparable to that of a wrestler or prize-fighter today. For her feats to have reached the royal ear the bonny lass must have typified dancers of great fame, gifted by nature and made skillful by constant practice. In the Herd text "She's taen the fifteen lords by the hand," as though she danced with them all at once, but this is hardly likely; besides, we find in Buchan's version, called *The Bonny Lass o Englessie's Dance*, that "She's taen the first lord by the hand," as if she was to dance with them one at a time. Further, to show that she danced successively with the lords, the Herd version has the fifteenth lord dancing alone with her. The contest must have been of an especially strenuous nature to have resulted in the defeat of the fifteen lords, who, let us hope, were inured to the rigors of military life and not weakened by the ease and luxury of baronial hall! One can only attribute the victor's triumph to

unusual strength and agility. The dance must have been very quick and lively, for in both versions the last dancer relieves himself of sword and belt and swears that his feet shall be his "dead" before he will yield.

In Buchan's version he "danc'd full fast, but tired at last." In Herd's text the dance seems to have lasted throughout an entire day. "On the morn at ten o'clock," all the lords but one had given it over, and this one danced until ten o'clock at night, when he too, gave the palm to the lass. Before saying that dancing for such a length of time would have been physically impossible, the reader should recall the "Nine Daies Wonder," a solo-morrice, danced by one, William Kemp, at the age of seventeen in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Kemp danced all the way from London to Norwich.¹ Of modern times a very long dance is recorded in *Le Matin* of Paris, October, 1911. Two couples among eight succeeded in waltzing from ten o'clock in the evening until the following midday, when they were ordered by the jury to terminate the match. After the fourteen-hour dance, Legaldi, who was adjudged champion, fainted.

The only other instance of dancing for a prize is given in *Rob Roy*:

I'm as bold, I'm as bold,
I'm as bold as he, lady;
In France and Ireland, I'll dance and fight,
And from them take the gree, lady.

To take the "gree" means to take the prize. Dancing must have been a favorite pastime and one held in general esteem, to have been mentioned side by side with the glory of fighting. Is "Roy's fame" in the following version the fame of dancing?

'And now we hear the bag-pipe play,
And we maun hae a dance, ladie,
And a' the country round about
Has heard of Roy's fame, ladie.'

In the ballad, as a general thing, dancing is for amusement without reference to any specific event or ulterior purpose; for particular occasions, such as weddings, or even, as seen in *The Bonny Lass of Anglesey*, for a match. One of Robin Hood's merry pranks, in which he relieves the Bishop of "three

¹ William Kempe's *Nine Days Wonder*, ed. Dyce, Camden Society, vol. xi.

hundred pound," reaches its climax when Robin compels the Bishop to dance; *Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford*:

Robin Hood took the Bishop by the hand,
And he caused the music to play,
And he made the Bishop to dance in his boots,
And glad he could so get away.

Perhaps we are justified in quoting this little incident, which must have been highly diverting, when we recall a favorite pastime among our cowboys and miners, that of making the tenderfoot dance to the tune of a forty-four. Then, it is not improbable that this incident may have some bearing upon the general attitude of the clergy toward dancing. Robin Hood, in his hearty contempt for churchmen who are rolling in wealth, must here have had in mind to mock the pretended piety of the Bishop, who, no doubt, had often condemned dancing as a wicked pastime. Dancing has long been a favorite theme for the admonitions of moralists. The clergy, says Schultz, called dancing an invention of the devil,¹ and according to Chambers, the mediaeval folk-dances were a problem for the missionaries of the West.² But one cannot read far in a study of the dance without coming across dancing by the clergy themselves, on such occasions as weddings, and to the accompaniment of ballads religious in content.

In the above stanza it is not clear just what is meant by the Bishop's dancing "in his boots." In *Fair Janet* there is an allusion to "boots":

Then out it speaks him Sweet Willie,
And he spake aye thro pride;
'O draw my boots for me, bridegroom,
Or I dance for your bride.'

As a motif for the dance a funeral might serve as well as a wedding.³ In *The Brown Girl* one is met by a rather unexpected occasion for dancing:

I'll do as much for my true-love
As other maidens may;
I'll dance and sing on my love's grave
A whole twelvemonth and a day.'

In balladry, at least, it seems that it was customary for

¹Schultz, *Das Höfische Leben*, 1, p. 549: "So beliebt der Tanz bei den Vornehmen wie Geringen war, die Geistlichkeit hatte viel gegen ihn einzuwenden, für sie war er eine Erfindung des Teufels."

²Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1, p. 161.

³Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, I, p. 167.

a maiden to dance and sing upon her love's grave. Nowadays, if we have fond, true lovers at all, we expect the grief of the bereaved one to take quite another form than dancing and singing. But one should remember that in days past the dance might be expressive of any emotion, and was not so empty of feeling as is the dance one commonly knows today. In the citation above, the object of the dance is not manifest, whether it be a dance of love, of grief, or a dance meant to give repose to the dead lover; but in the other version of this piece, the purpose savours of revenge, or at least mockery:

'O never will I forget, forgive,
So long as I have breath;
I'll dance above your green, green grave
Where you do lie beneath.

It is not altogether unlikely that the dance here was meant to desecrate the grave. At any rate, *The Brown Girl* brings to mind Robert Manning's tale of the sacrilegious carollers, who, for their irreverence in the churchyard, are made to dance for twelve months without shelter and without food.¹

As interesting, perhaps, as the occasion of dancing is the place of dancing. Where are the dances of the ballad danced, in or out of doors? One will find most of them, I think, out of doors. That the Brown Girl danced above the "green, green grave," means, of course, that she danced in the open. More often than not, perhaps, one finds dancing on the "lay," lea, on the green, or in the wood. In *Katharine Jaffray* fifty young men and as many maidens dance on a "lay":

He gat fifty young men,
They were gallant and gay,
An fifty maidens,
An left them on a lay.

When he cam in by Callien bank,
An in by Callien brae,
He left his company
Dancing on a lay.

The story of the ballad, that of a young Scots laird's successful attempt to carry off his love, Katharine Jaffray, on the day set for her wedding to a wealthy English lord, inclines one to think that the company of young men and maidens were to act as a marriage train for the subsequent wedding of the

¹Robert (Mannyng) of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne*, Part II, p. 283. Edited by Furnivall, 1903, E. E. T. S.

young Scot and Katharine. In other texts of the ballad there is no dancing, and in Lochinvar's company there are no maidens but only a number of young men to back him in his daring enterprise. It would be interesting to know as to the exact features of the dance in this instance. That it was in the open, where movements even by so large a body could be easily executed, may suggest a large group dance. No doubt, joy and excitement are likely to reach a greater height if the animation and enthusiasm of the dancers is expended in a common movement, rather than dissipated in a number of independent steps.

One is still out of doors in *Geordie*, probably a sixteenth century ballad:

The ladies, when they had me seen,
Would ner have been affrighted,
To take a dance upon the green,
With Geordy they delighted.

One cannot help thinking that a dance on the green must have been of a romping, high-spirited movement, rather than of a movement, slow and sedate. Even among the nobility and the upper classes in general, out-of-door dancing, however well it kept within the bounds of decorum, wrought the dancers up, in all probability, into a state of exceeding hilarity. In speaking of courtly dancing, Schultz says that although the dances of the nobility were more dignified and sedate than the corresponding dances of the peasants, yet they were by no means devoid of life and enthusiasm.¹ The dancing of the peasants was of a leaping and hopping character.² An inferior dance meeting, according to Strutt, was called a hop. And here it may be that we have the origin of the modern "hop," meaning a ball. In Fanny Burney's novel, *Evelina*, there is a "low-bred" young man who "begged the favour of hopping a dance" with the heroine. But the ballad, as in the citation from *Geordie*, leads one to conclude with Schultz, that neither dignity nor lowliness of station detracted from the pleasure and delights of dancing.

Where else than in the greenwood should one surprise Robin and his merry followers at a dance? In *Robin Hood and the Ranger* the occasion of the dance is a wedding, and the dancing floor the green sward beneath the trees of Sherwood. The time is night, and no doubt the tall, lithe forms in Lincoln green whirl and flash fantastically in and out of the yellow-

¹Schultz, *Das Höfische Leben*, 1, p. 548.

²*Ibid.*, p. 545 ff.

red light thrown across the grassy carpet by many a high blazing fire:

What singing and dancing was in the green wood,
For joy of another new mate!
With mirth and delight they spent the long night,
And liv'd at a plentiful rate.

It was not unusual for the foresters to disport themselves in the dance. Although no instrumental accompaniment is mentioned here, the outlaws were not without music and musicians. As was seen in *Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford*, the Bishop began to dance when the "music struck up." Robin, himself, is something of a musician. In *Robin Hood and Allen A Dale* he calls himself a "bold harper":

'I am a bold harper,' quoth Robin Hood,
'And the best in the north country.'

Several things may be said for dancing among the outlaws: the dancing was in the open, the participants were men ordinarily, the accompaniment was usually instrumental, and dancing seems to have been one of their favorite diversions. Their dancing was probably of an athletic and very active nature, but not necessarily therefore without grace and rhythm, for an out-of-door life, perfect health, and happy spirits, are all productive of that gracefulness and ease in figure and bearing which lend charm to the dance. It is interesting to note in connection with dancing among the outlaws, that Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, Little John, and Maid Marian, were often associated with the morris dance during the May games.¹

Even at a formal ball in the city one finds dancing in the open; as in *Lizie Lindsay*:

Now there was a ball in the city,
A ball o great mirth and great fame;
And fa danced wi Donald that day
But bonny Lizie Lindsay on the green!

In the Middle Ages and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries each village and city had its *Tanzplätze*, dancing courts or plots, according to Böhme.² Here, the city, which is Edinburgh, has a green. The dancers are not of the peasant class, for in the story *Lizie Lindsay* is a "lady," and Donald

¹Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1, p. 195 ff.

²Böhme, *Geschichte Des Tanzes in Deutschland*, pp. 37, 82.

a young "laird." That it is a dance in which ladies and men dance together is shown by Donald's dancing with Lizie. In a further text of this ballad dancing is not mentioned, but the "young lairds and ladies went forth to sport and play." In still another version the ball is spoken of as an assembly:¹

There was a braw ball in Edinburgh,
And mony braw ladies were there,
But nae ane at a' the assembly
Could wi Lizzie Lindsay compare.

A green in town or city was ordinarily a courtyard, or it may have been a piece of public grassy land. The green of *Lizie Lindsay*, to accommodate a ball of such fame as that of the ballad would have had to be quite large.

All dancing in the ballads did not, however, take place in the open. In the romance, *Thomas Rymer*, where the knights danced by three and three, the dancing is in the elf-queen's castle; in *The Wee Wee Man* the pipers are playing on "ilka stair" and the ladies dancing in "ilka ha." In the Motherwell version of *Fair Janet* there is dancing "owre" the floor, but in another version, the dance, a reel, is on the green:

She hadna well gane thro the reel,
Nor yet well on the green.

Can it be that the second line, "Nor yet well on the green," implies that the reel was begun within the house and then carried out upon the green?

In Motherwell's version of *Prince Robert* the dancing is indoors:

Bat when he came to Sittingin's Rocks,
To the middle of a' the ha,
There were bells a ringing, and music playing,
And ladies dancing a'.

The "ha" is a castle or manor-house. The dancing room or place for dancing is in the "middle of a' the ha." Toward the close of the Middle Ages the nobility always danced in the halls of their castles or citadels. Country people made merry in dance and play in open places, on the streets, and on the

¹Compare a stanza from *Robin Adair*:

What made the assembly shine?
Robin Adair.
What made the ball so fine?
Robin was there.

heath.¹ Here the nobility is dancing in the "ha," or castle, and it is to be noted that the accompaniment is instrumental.

Tam Lin gives another dance in the open:

There war four-an-twentle fair ladies
A' dancin in a chess
An some war blue and some war green,
But Janet was like the gress.

The suggestion as to the meaning of "chess" forbids a very natural supposition that "dancin in a chess," is a peculiar dance formation, such as dancing in a ring or in a row. But this pleasing notion is quite upset if "chess" be defined as "chace," forest.

On the whole, one may say that according to the ballad, dancing in the open was more common than dancing indoors, irrespective of whether the dancers are of the upper or of the lower classes. The out-of-doors seems more in keeping with the animated and lively dances of our forefathers than do the narrow and rigid confines of a room. It is too much to limit with four walls the movements of so natural a means of expression as dancing, that is, dancing of early times. No doubt, the older dances caught much of their charm and color from the picturesqueness of a natural setting; such as, a river's brim, or where, to quote from a Danish ballad, *Knight Stig's Wedding*:

Gaily the maidens join in the dance
Each with crowns or roses and garlands.

In what sense can one speak of the artificial postures and mechanical contortions of some of our modern dances as arising from the broad and easy rhythms of nature? A far cry it is indeed from the modern ballroom to the unrestrained and healthy joy of dancing on a "lay," in a "chace," or in the merry greenwood, where, as in *Robin Hood and Little John*:

The whole train the grove did refrain,
And unto their caves they did go.

The citation above, from *Knight Stig's Wedding*, in which garlands are used in the dance, suggests a stanza from *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, and Marriage*:

Then a garland they brought her, by two and by two,
And plac'd them upon the bride's head;
The music struck up, and we all fell to dance,
Till the bride and groom were a-bed.

¹Böhme, *Geschichte des Tanzes in Deutschland*, p. 37.

In certain of the older dances the garland was intimately associated with the dance,¹ and in some instances the weaving of garlands seems to have been a preliminary to the dance proper; that is, before entering the dance, the women wove the garlands which they were to carry.² Böhme mentions an old dance as having been danced about a garland, which, at the close of the dance, was given to the best dancer.³ In the stanza above, it seems that the foresters came up two by two, and each couple in turn crowned the bride with a garland or bridal wreath. Here it is not clear, however, whether the crowning of the bride is a preliminary to, or a part of, the dance which follows, or whether the crowning and the dancing were separate features of a wedding ceremony. It is not at all unlikely that the garlands were used in the dance of the foresters. One may even think of the bringing of the garlands as in itself a sort of dance. It would be hard to imagine the offering of the outlaws as being made in a stiff, formal manner. Their advance toward the bride was no doubt touched with much of grace and rhythm. It must all have been a pretty sight,—the blushing Clorinda, with handsome Robin by her side, and the tall foresters in Lincoln green bearing by two and two a garland for the bride.

A not unimportant point, and one which is suggested by the foregoing consideration of the occasion and the place of dancing, is the time of dancing. Among the pleasures of spring, says Böhme, dancing took first place.⁴ In the winter time rooms were emptied for the purpose of dancing, and dances were often held in the barns.⁵ Since the dances of the ballad were usually held in the open, on the green or in the wood, one may infer that they were ordinarily danced in the spring or in summer.⁶ In *Tam Lin*, where four-and-twenty

¹In Stowe's *Survey of London*, p. 75, there is the following description of dancing for garlands: ". . . and the Maidens, one of them playing on a Timbrell, in sight of their Masters and Dames, began to dance for garlands hanged athwart the streets, which open pastimes in my youth, being now suppressed, worser practises within doores are to be feared."

²Steenstrup, *The Mediaeval Popular Ballad*, p. 13, (Translated by E. G. Cox.)

³Böhme, *Geschichte Des Tanzes in Deutschland*, p. 52.

⁴*Ibid*, p. 23.

⁵*Ibid*, p. 37.

⁶Compare Stowe, *Survey of London*, p. 76: ". . . all the Summer . . . the Maidens trip with their Timbrills, and dance as long as they can well see."

ladies are dancing in a "chess," Janet's costume is described as green like the "gress."

The ballad has more to say, however, about the time of day than the season of the year. In *Fair Janet*, dinner is "past and done" before dancing begins:

When dinner it was past and done,
And dancing to begin,
'O we'll take the bride's maidens,
And we'll go fill the ring.'

There is no evidence here to indicate whether the dinner is the midday meal or the last meal of the day. In the Motherwell text, however, it is "supper" instead of "dinner":

Supper scarslie was owre,
Nor musick weel fa'n to,
Till ben and cam the bride's brethren,
Saying, Bride, ye'll dance wi me:

Dancing in this version is indoors and probably by artificial light, unless one thinks of the season as being summer and the natural light of day as still lingering far into the evening.

The afternoon or evening seems to have been the favorite time for dancing. At either of these periods of the day, more than at any other, people were likely to be at leisure. The evening, at least, was the coolest part of the day; and dancing was apparently a favorite pastime with which to conclude a day of sports. The coronation dinner of Richard II was followed by a dance which lasted for the remainder of the day.

How many merrymakers in times past have finished the day as did Robin and his revellers in *Robin Hood and Little John*?

Then musick and dancing did finish the day;
At length, when the sun waxed low,
Then the whole train the grove did refrain,
And unto their caves they did go.

Where today, even among children, may one find the like, whole-hearted and joyous revels? It cannot be without a feeling of sadness that one dwells upon a past in which such simple and unaffected pleasures gave such boundless joys. Perhaps we may think of these sturdy outlaws as overgrown children, but if the heart cannot re-echo their glad refrain, at what a price have we become grown-ups?

A question of interest, and one which seems still to be open, is raised when one finds "playing at the ba," mentioned side by side with dancing. Just what was the connection

between dancing and the game of ball? Böhme mentions several instances in which the dance is bound up with ball playing, but unfortunately, upon the relationship between these two popular pastimes he does not throw much light. He does say, however, that among the Germans as among the Neo-Latins, it was customary to unite ball playing with singing and dancing, and goes on to say that out of this association of these two sports has come our modern expression, "ball," meaning a dance.¹ But all this serves rather to arouse than to satisfy one's curiosity. Still, it lends interest and importance to the following instance of dancing and ball playing in *The Twa Brothers*:

There was two little boys going to the school,
And twa little boys they be,
They met three brothers playing at the ba,
And ladies dancing hey.

In a further version of this same ballad, maids, not boys, are playing ball; dancing is not mentioned. Would it be safe to infer that the ball game in one text is the dance in the other? It is hardly likely that the expressions "ball" and "dance" are interchangeable in the ballad.

What may be said for the expression "hey" in the "ladies dancing hey?" Is "hey," as used here, merely an interjection of pleasure? This explanation seems especially hard when one comes across an allusion to the "hay" in *Love's Labor's Lost*, V, i:

Dull: I'll make one in a dance, or so; or I will play
On the tabor to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay.

"Hay" or "hey" is the name of a dance frequently mentioned by Elizabethan writers.² As to the derivation of the term, it may come from the French *haie*, hedge, the dancers standing in two rows, being compared to hedges. It is well known that the hay was an old country dance and that it was danced by both men and women. But even though the ladies in the ballad are dancing the hay, one can see no reason, according to the explanations of the hay given, to suppose that the hay was ever danced in connection with ball playing. The game of ball seems not to have been bound up with any particular dance, for it is found associated with dances of different kinds. In the *Odyssey* of Homer there is a detailed descrip-

¹Böhme, *Geschichte des Tanzes in Deutschland*, p. 229.

²Grove, *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

tion given of the dance and ball throwing which Halius and Laodamas performed before Alcinous.¹ Böhme mentions a wedding dance which was somehow joined with the game of ball. The young maidens and the women of the bridal train, skipping and leaping, throw a ball back and forth to each other while the bride sings.² Again, in a description of a "crown-dance," ball is mentioned, but here the ball playing takes place after the dance.³

One is again led to consider the relation between these two sports, when, in addition to the stanza from *The Twa Brothers*, one comes upon dancing and ball playing in a Scandinavian ballad, *The Rape of the Venedian King*:⁴

So merrily goes the beggar-dance
On the plain outside the wall;
Maidens are stepping the luck-dance
And knights are playing ball.

In *The Twa Brothers* the ladies are dancing, the brothers playing ball; in the Scandinavian ballad the maidens are dancing, the knights playing ball. Can one infer any more from this, however, than that dancing was especially popular with ladies, ball playing with men? Steenstrup is not acquainted with the "luck-dance" in the above stanza. After all, perhaps, it may be best not to insist upon too close a connection between the two sports as mentioned in the ballads other than that they were both open-air recreations, and that in both there was much activity, such as skipping and leaping. It is not strange that two such popular and kindred pastimes should occur together either in life or in song.

Another point of interest which the ballad holds concerning the dance is the introduction of foreign dances into England and Scotland. The origin of many dances, such as the morris and the reel, remains in obscurity, so that it is not known for certain just when they were introduced among the English and Scotch. But one must suppose that a dance like the morris, of

¹The description follows in part: "Now after they had made trial of throwing the ball straight up, the twain set to dance upon the bounteous earth, tossing the ball from hand to hand, and the other youths stood by the lists and beat time, and a great din uprose." *Odyssey*, VIII, 376-381. (Translated by Butcher and Lang.)

²Böhme, *Geschichte des Tanzes in Deutschland*, p. 181.

³Ibid, p. 164.

⁴This stanza is cited by Steenstrup, *The Mediaeval Popular Ballad*, p. 19.

which the general features, at least, were set and special, had but one origin and that it is not at all likely that it had several independent origins. The minuet, for example, is traced to the inhabitants of Poitou, France. According to Steenstrup, the modern fashion of dancing in couples was brought into Ditmarsh, a former territory of Denmark, from abroad in 1559.¹ The Sword-dance, so popular in England, is held by some authorities to be of Scandinavian origin. In *Rob Roy*, the version of *The Old Lady's Collection*, the hero of the ballad tries to reconcile his bride to a forced marriage by promising to "learn" her a dance upon his return from France:

'I'm gauin, (I'm gauin,)
'I'm gauin to France, lady;
Whan I come back
I'll learn ye a dance, lady.

'Set your foot, (set your foot,)
Set your foot to mine, lady;
Think nae mair of gauin back,
But tak it for your hame, lady.'

In dancing as well as in dress, France sets the fashion. Ever since the revival of dancing in Europe in the fifteenth century, France, it seems, has been the modern school of dancing, not only inventing dances of her own, but adopting dances from other countries and suiting them to the times. The ballet, for example, is said to have been invented in Italy and perfected in France. The above ballad makes it clear that it was not unusual when going to France, for one to learn, among other things relative to manners, the steps of a new dance. To appease his bride, Rob Roy offers to "learn" her a new dance much as a bridegroom of today promises to get the bride a new lavalliere. One has heard in ballad story of a suitor's offering "a paper of pins," "a coach of six, and every horse as black as pitch," and at last "a chest of gold," to his lady-love, but Rob Roy has a gift of more worth than all these, a new dance. A dance with the French "trimmings" would no doubt have been all the more appropriate for a lady. All this, at any rate, makes one think that dancing was very much the fashion, and that new and imported dances were greatly in demand.

Again, in another version of the above ballad, the new dance is French:

¹Steenstrup, *The Mediaeval Popular Ballad*, p. 11.

'We will go, we will go,
 We will go to France, lady,
 Where I before for safety fled,
 And there we'll get a dance, lady.

'Shake a fit, shake a fit,
 Shake a fit to me, lady,
 Now ye are my wedded wife,
 Until your dying-day, lady.'

Rob Roy has been in France before and has, while there, one may surmise, had a taste of the gay French life. The interest of the second stanza is not diminished by its calling to mind that for once, at least, the wife must dance to the husband's music. The "shake a fit, shake a fit," however, is not the language of a dance in which one dances to another's music, but rather that of a dance in which the steps and movements of one dancer are complementary to those of another. It would be interesting to know the name of the new dance which Rob Roy and his lady were to "get," but again, for any lack of more complete information one must blame the ballad's incidental treatment of the dance.

As to the accompaniment of the dance in the ballad, it will be found, as a rule, to be an accompaniment of instruments rather than of song. This fact may be taken to mean that the ballad dances are of the modern as opposed to the older types of dancing. Throughout the entire Middle Ages, says Böhme, the dance was sung to, and song was the oldest and often the only dance music.¹ In speaking of the various kinds of songs sung to the dance, he says that the love-song was the most appropriate and natural and therefore the most commonly used as an accompaniment.² For the first time, he remarks, towards the middle of the seventeenth century the "instrumental-dances" came in.³ Among the instruments of the dance, he mentions the drum and pipe, sometimes played simultaneously by a single person; later came cornets, trumpets, trombones, fiddles, and bell instruments.⁴ To this array may be added the bagpipe and

¹Böhme, *Geschichte des Tanzes in Deutschland*, p. 229.

²Ibid.

³Ibid, p. 245: "Alle Wahrscheinlichkeit spricht dafür dass das deutsche Volk noch das ganze 16. Jahrhunderts hindurch zu seinen Tänzen gesungen habe. Erst nach der Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts, seit dem Emporkommen der Instrumentalmusik in Theater, Konzert und Kirche verstummte allgemach das gesungene Tanzlied und an die Stelle der 'Gesungtänze' traten die 'Instrumentaltänze'."

⁴Ibid, p. 285.

the flute. The instrumental accompaniment was sometimes only that of one instrument, such as the bagpipe or the fiddle; at other times, that of several instruments in concert. The nobility, as a rule, used an accompaniment of orchestral dimensions, whereas the peasants or countrymen were, of necessity perhaps, usually content with that of a single instrument, the fiddle ordinarily, occasionally the drum, at times the flute.¹ Pipes of various kinds were no doubt heard frequently among the instruments of accompaniment.²

In the ballad there are several probable instances of vocal accompaniment.³ In one version of *The Wee Wee Man* there is dancing to the pipes, but in another version it seems that the dancers are singing:

And there was mirth in every end,
And ladies dancing, ane and a,
And aye the owre-turn of their sang
Was 'The wee wee mannie's been lang awa.'

It is possible that there was piping here as well as singing, for it was not unusual for the dancers to sing the dance-song while the piper piped or the fiddler fiddled. The "owre-turn" of the song was the refrain. In certain of the older dances it was customary for a fore-dancer or leader of the dance to sing a couplet, in answer to which the other dancers sang the refrain.

Again, in *Robin Hood and the Ranger*, one finds singing and dancing:

What singing and dancing was in the green wood,
For joy of another new mate!

It is not clear in *Robin Hood and Little John* whether the

¹Schultz, *Das Höfische Leben*, p. 547.

²As in *The Complaint of Scotland*, E. E. T. S. vol. 17, p. 65, ed. by Jas. A. H. Murray; here eight instruments are played to accompany the dance of the shepherds and their wives: "ane drone bag pipe," "ane pipe maid of ane bleddir and of ane reid," "ane trump," "ane corn pipe," "ane pipe maid of ane gait horne," "ane recorder," "ane fiddil," and "ane quhissil."

³Compare Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, IV, 2779:

'In chambre as to carole and daunce'.

Also Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchesse*, 849:

'I saw hir daunce so comly,
Carole and singe so swetely.'

accompaniment was instrumental alone, or whether the lusty voices of the outlaws joined in with the music:

Then musick and dancing did finish the day;
 At length when the sun waxed low,
 Then the whole train the grove did refrain,
 And unto their caves they did go.

It is true that in neither of the above stanzas from the Robin Hood ballads can one conclude with absolute certainty that there was singing with the dance, but it is hard to believe that two such natural and spontaneous modes of expression should, in the merry-making of a free and out-of-door people, be set off from each other.

In order to call attention to another possible instance of vocal accompaniment, it will be necessary to look again at the stanza from the romance, *Thomas Rymer*:

Knyghtis dawnesede by three and three,
 There was revelle, gamene, and playe;
 Lufly ladyes' faire and free
 That satte and sange one riche araye.

Are the ladies here in the elf-queen's castle singing to the dancing of the knights? It seems unlikely that they would be singing their "riche araye" independently of the dance. If they were singing to the dance, however, it is probable that there was instrumental accompaniment to their song, for in the castle, Thomas and the elf-queen find a variety of musical instruments:

Harpe and fethill bothe thay fande,
 Getterne, and als so the sawtrye;
 Lutte and rybybe bothe gangande,
 And all manere of mynstralsye.

However little certainty the ballad may yield as regards vocal accompaniment of the dance, there is nothing problematic as to the instrumental accompaniment. That the ballad, as a rule, speaks of music with the dance, even mentioning the kind of instruments played, may well lead one to infer that the dance was becoming more and more independent of song. Even in those of the Child pieces where singing is mentioned with the dance, one does not get a clear conception of the vital relation which obtained between the older types of dancing and the song or ballad. For the sake of comparison let us note for a

moment how much more definite and suggestive is the picture in the Danish ballad:

Stand up, stand up, my maidens all,
And dance for me a space;
And sing for me a ballad
About the sons of Lave's race!

Or better yet, perhaps, in the Danish ballad, *Proud Elsekilde*:¹

"Who is yon knight that leads the dance,
And louder than all the song he chants?"

Both these stanzas make specific mention of the song as sung with the dance. In the Child pieces there is nothing so explicit until one comes to consider the instrumental accompaniment. Then there are definite pictures as in the following stanza from *The Wee Wee Man*:

There were pipers playing on ilke stair,
And ladies dancing in ilka ha,

Or, from another version:

And there were harpings loud and sweet,
And ladies dancing, jimp and sma;

In the former of these two stanzas one is not only told that the instruments played are pipes, probably bagpipes, but is informed also as to the position of the players. In the latter stanza there are harps, the music of which is "loud and sweet."

In *Leesome Brand* is found an instance of minstrels' playing for the dance:

'Seek nae minstrels to play, mother,
Nor dancers to dance in your room;
But tho your son comes, Leesome Brand,
Yet he comes sorry to the town.

Schultz speaks of minnesingers as singing dance-songs,² and it is well known that among the functions of the minstrels or harpists was that of playing for dances. Minstrels and dancing are again associated in *The Earl of Mar's Daughter*:

'Get dancers here to dance,' she said,
'And minstrels for to play;
For here's my son, young Florentine,
Come here wi me to stay.'

The important role played by minstrels in connection with

¹This, as well as the preceding stanza, is cited by Steenstrup, *The Mediaeval Popular Ballad*, pp. 12, 23.

²Schultz, *Das Höfische Leben*, p. 548.

the dance is well illustrated in one of the earliest English moral plays, *An Interlude of the Four Elements*.¹

Nowhere in the ballad does one find more than one kind of instrument used with a given dance. The musicians may be several in number, but they all play the same instrument, as in *The Wee Wee Man*:

There were pipers playing in every neuk,
And ladies dancing, jimp and sma.

Or in another version of the same ballad in which the instrument is the harp.

At times there is but one musician, as in *Rob Roy*:

'We shall cross the raging seas,
We shall go to France, lady;
There we'll gar the piper play,
And then we'll have a dance, lady.

Of the instruments used to dance by, the bagpipe seems to have been the most popular, and this in spite of Leigh Hunt's animadversion that the music of the bagpipe was like a tune tied to a post. Its popularity in the ballad may be accounted for, no doubt, by the Scotch preference for this instrument. The ballad musicians are usually pipers. Only in one instance is fiddling mentioned with the dance. But in this one instance the fiddling is that of the "king of the fiddlers" in *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, and Marriage*:

For I saw them fighting and fidld the while,
And Clorinda sung, Hey derry down!
The bumpkins are beaten, put up thy sword, Bob,
And now let's dance into the town.

The dance here is probably a morris. It is processional in that it is danced into the town. As already noted in the discussion of the morris, the accompaniment, though formerly the pipe and tabor, is now, as a rule, the fiddle.

¹*An Interlude of The Four Elements*, dated by Schelling about 1517. Halliwell edition, Percy Soc. Publications (1848), xxii, p. 50:

Now we wyll here begyn to syng,
For daunce can we no more,
For mynstrelles here be all lackyng;
To the taverne we wyll therefore.

The *Wee Wee Man* must be called upon once more, this time to show that the music played with the dance was usually of a lively nature:

Pipers were playing, ladies dancing,
The ladies dancing, jimp and sma;
At ilka turning o the spring,
The little man was wearin's wa.

A spring is a quick, lively tune. In the plural it may mean merry dances.¹

On the whole, as regards the accompaniment to the dance, one may conclude that dancing in the English ballads is mainly detached from song. As noted above, it is an exception for singing to be associated with the dance. Because of this detachment of song from the dance, one may safely infer that the dances in the ballads are of the modern rather than of the older type. In dancing in the modern sense one finds no survival of vocal accompaniment, either on the part of the dancers themselves, or on the part of an accompanist. It is true that in children's games and play-party games there is singing, and perhaps it is permissible to go so far as to say that in some of the country dances of today the voice of the caller may, in a sense, be thought of as vocal accompaniment. At least, his voice, no less than the fiddle, gives the dance spirit and rhythm, and his "swing your partner" and "promenade all" are inseparably bound up with the bowing and turning of the dancing couples. The modern tendency, however, for the dance to become an independent art, to ignore the song and its content altogether, and to preserve a musical accompaniment only so far as music with its rhythm gives the time and measure to the dance, had very probably already set in even before the date of the ballads. The following descriptive line from *Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, and Marriage* may well cause one to fancy himself at a country dance of today, or in a modern ballroom:

The music struck up, and we all fell to dance

¹Compare Chaucer, *The House of Fame*, 1235:

To lerne love-daunces, springes,
Reyes, and these straunge thinges.

"Reyes" are round-dances.

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