

JULY 8, 1905.

MUSIC.

interest being supplied by the occasional introduction of vocal numbers.

Masks in their palmy days were always presented with the aid of beautiful scenery and mechanical effects, as well as splendid costumes and decorations, thus being in remarkable contrast to the meagre mounting of contemporary stage-plays; the most celebrated Masters furnished the songs and dances, and no expense was spared in rendering the performances as complete as possible.

The performances usually took place at Whitehall Palace, but sometimes for the entertainment of Royalty in the mansions of the nobility, or in the dining-hall of one or other of the four Inns of Court. The performers were for the most part amateurs of high rank, not only the nobility of both sexes, but even the King and Queen taking upon themselves the principal characters, though there is ample evidence that the songs were, as a rule, entrusted to professional musicians.

Such entertainments were much encouraged at the Court of King James the First, whose Queen, Anne of Denmark, was pre-eminent in dancing at a time when it was still cultivated as a fine art; and several of Ben Jonson's Masks were designed specially for her participation in their performance. Generally speaking, Ben Jonson's Masks may be placed at the head of the list so far as concerns literary merit, but the speeches are apt to err on the side of prolixity: and, amongst others, Thomas Campion seems to have had a more practical sense of the requirements of the stage. He was a versatile man, and, while enjoying a considerable practice as a physician, attained to eminence, not only as poet and dramatist, but also as a composer of music.

The Device (as it was called) of the 'Golden Tree' is that the fame of the approaching nuptials of the Earl of Somerset and the Lady Frances Howard having spread throughout the world, knights and squires from all parts, wishing to do honour to the occasion, have assembled and embarked in a flotilla for England. This laudable purpose has, however, been almost entirely frustrated by some evil-minded sorcerers, through whose machinations many of the knights have been shipwrecked and drowned, while others have been spirited away into space. A remnant of four who succeeded in landing were forthwith transformed where they stood into pillars of gold, from which state they can only be released by the exhibition of a branch plucked by royal hands from a certain 'Golden Tree'."

This story is made the means of introducing a large number of performers who indulge in music and dancing, not always strictly relevant it may be, but which served the purpose of providing entertainment for our forefathers. The list of *Dramatis Personæ* amounted to over sixty performers, and it is impossible to name them all here. It would equally be invidious to single out some for special mention when all worked so enthusiastically and well for the success of the evening; it must suffice to say that with the exception of some of the principals the cast was mainly composed of students of the Guildhall School of Music, and all are to be congratulated very heartily upon the manner in which they acquitted themselves.

Campion's libretto, which is to be found in a small quarto volume, now in the British Museum, was scrupulously adhered to, as was also such of the music as is extant. This comprises four songs by Lanière and Coperario, as well as others by the writer of the Maske, Thomas Campion himself, these last being surprisingly beautiful in their quaintness. The music for the choral numbers and the dances cannot now be traced, even the composers' names being lost, but the usual practice was to draw upon several contributors. In the present revival, it was decided, as far as the dances were concerned, to have recourse to such contemporary pieces as have come down to us, the composers thus laid under contribution being William Byrde, William Lawes, Giles Farnaby, Richard Farnaby, and Anthony Holborne.

A similar course, however, was not practicable as regards the choruses, and after a few unsatisfactory attempts at adaptation, Mr. A. H. D. Prendergast, in whose hands the whole of the musical arrangements, including the conducting of the performance, were placed, resolved to write the