

THE MASQUE OF BLACKNESS,

PERSONATED AT THE COURT AT WHITEHALL, ON THE TWELFTH-NIGHT, 1605.

Salve festa dies, meliorque revertere semper. — OVID.

THE honor and splendor of these Spectacles was such in the performance, as, could those hours have lasted, this of mine, now, had been a most unprofitable work. But when it is the fate even of the greatest, and most absolute births, to need and borrow a life of posterity, little had been done to the study of magnificence in these, if presently with the rage of the people, who, (as a part of greatness) are privileged by custom, to deface their carcasses, the spirits had also perished. In duty therefore to that Majesty, who gave them their authority and grace, and, no less than the most royal of predecessors, deserves eminent celebration for these solemnities, I add this later hand to redeem them as well from ignorance as envy, two common evils, the one of censure, the other of oblivion.

Pliny,¹ Solinus,² Ptolemy,³ and of late Leo⁴ the African, remember unto us a river in Æthiopia, famous by the name of Niger ; of which the people were called Nigritæ, now Negroes ; and are the blackest nation of the world. This river⁵ taketh spring out of a certain lake, eastward ; and after a long race, falleth into the western ocean. Hence (because it was her majesty's will to have them blackmoors at first) the invention was derived by me, and presented thus :

First, for the scene, was drawn a landschap (landscape) consisting of small woods, and here and there a void place filled with huntings ; which falling, an artificial sea was seen to shoot forth, as if it flowed to the land, raised with waves which seemed to move, and in some places the billows to break, as imitating that orderly disorder which is common in nature. In front of this sea were placed six tritons,⁶ in moving and sprightly actions, their upper parts human, save that their hairs were blue, as partaking of the sea-color : their desinent parts fish, mounted above their heads, and all varied in disposition. From their backs were borne out certain light pieces of taffata, as if carried by the wind, and their music made out of wreathed shells. Behind these, a pair of sea-maids, for song, were as conspicuously seated ; between which, two great sea-horses, as big as the life, put forth themselves ; the one mounting aloft, and writhing his head from the other, which seemed to sink forward ; so intended for variation, and that the figure behind might come off better :⁷ upon their backs, Oceanus and Niger were advanced.

Oceanus presented in a human form, the color of his flesh blue ; and shadowed with a robe of sea-green ; his head grey, and horned,⁸ as he is described by the ancients : his beard of the like mixed color : he was garlanded with alga, or sea-grass ; and in his hand a trident.

Niger, in form and color of an Æthiop ; his hair and rare beard curled, shadowed with a blue and bright mantle : his front, neck, and wrists adorned with pearl, and crowned with an artificial wreath of cane and paper-rush.

These induced the masquers, which were twelve nymphs, negroes, and the daughters of Niger ; attended by so many of the Oceaniæ,⁹ which were their light-bearers.

The masquers were placed in a great concave shell, like mother of pearl, curiously made to move on those waters and rise with the billow ; the top thereof was stuck with a cheveron of lights, which indented to the proportion of the shell, struck a glorious beam upon them, as they were seated, one above another : so they were all seen, but in an extravagant order.

On sides of the shell did swim sixe huge sea-monsters, varied in their shapes and dispositions, bearing on their backs the twelve torch-bearers, who were planted there in several graces ; so as the backs of some were seen ; some in purple, or side ; others in face ; and all having their lights burning out of whelks, or murex-shells.

The attire of the masquers was alike in all, without difference : the colors azure and silver ; but returned on the top with a scroll and antique dressing of feathers, and jewels interlaced with ropes of pearl. And for

the front, ear, neck, and wrists, the ornament was of the most choice and orient pearl ; best setting off from the black.

For the light-bearers, sea-green, waved about

¹ Nat. Hist. 1. 5. c. 8.
² Poly. Hist. c. 40, and 43.
³ Lib. 4. c. 5.
⁴ Descrip. Afric.
⁵ Some take it to be the same with Nilus, which is by Lucan called Melas, Signifying Niger. Howsoever Pliny in the place above noted, hath this : Nigri fluvio eadem natura, quæ Nilo, calamum, papyrum, et easdem gignit animantes. See Solin. abovementioned.
⁶ The form of these tritons, with their trumpets, you may read lively described in Ov. Met. lib. 1. Cæruleum Tritona vocat, &c.; and in Vir. Æneid. 1. 10. Hunc vehit immanis triton, et sequent.
⁷ Lucian in PHTOP. ~~Αἰθρα~~ presents Nilus so, Equo fluviatili insidentem. And Statius Neptune, in Theb.
⁸ The ancients induced Oceanus always with a bull's head : propter vim ventorum, à quibus incitatur, et impellitur : vel quia tauris similem fremitum emittat : vel quia tanquam taurus furibundus, in littora feratur. Euripid. in Orest. ~~Ὠκεανὸς δὲ τρυφονόμοις ἀνέμοις ἰκνύμεν, κτελέει ἄρπη.~~ And rivers sometimes were so called. Look Virg de Tiberi et Eridano. Georg. 4. Æneid. 8. Hor. Car. lib. 4. ode 14, and Euripid. in Ione.
⁹ The daughters of Oceanus and Tethys. See Hesiod. in Theogon. Orph. in Hym. and Virgil in Georg.

the skirts with gold and silver ; their hair loose and flowing, gyrlanded with sea-grass, and that stuck with branches of coral.

These thus presented, the scene behind seemed a vast sea, and united with this that flowed forth, from the termination, or horizon of which (being the level of the state, which was placed in the upper end of the hall) was drawn by the lines of prospective, the whole work shooting downwards from the eye ; which decorum made it more conspicuous, and caught the eye afar off with a wandering beauty : to which was added an obscure and cloudy night-piece, that made the whole set off. So much for the bodily part, which was of master Inigo Jones's design and act.

By this, one of the tritons, with the two sea-maids, began to sing to the others' loud music, their voices being a tenor and two trebles.

SONG.

Sound, sound aloud
The welcome of the orient flood,
Into the west ;
Fair Niger,¹ son to great Oceanus,

Now honor'd, thus,
With all his beauteous race :
Who, though but black in face,
Yet are they bright,
And full of life and light.
To prove that beauty best,
Which, not the color, but the feature
Assures unto the creature.

Ocea. Be silent, now the ceremony's done,
And, Niger, say, how comes it, lovely son,
That thou, the Æthiop's river, so far east,
Art seen to fall into the extremest west
Of me, the king of floods, Oceanus,
And in mine empire's heart, salute me thus ?
My ceaseless current, now, amazed stands
To see thy labor through so many lands,
Mix thy fresh billow with my brackish stream ;²
And, in thy sweetness, stretch thy diadem,
To these far distant and unequall'd skies,
This squared circle of celestial bodies.

Niger. Divine Oceanus, 'tis not strange at all,
That, since th' immortal souls of creatures mortal,
Mix with their bodies, yet reserve for ever
A power of separation, I should sever
My fresh streams from thy brackish, like things fix'd,
Though, with thy powerful saltness, thus far mix'd.
“ Virtue, though chain'd to earth, will still live free ;
And hell itself must yield to industry.”

Ocea. But what's the end of thy Herculean labors,
Extended to these calm and blessed shores ?

Niger. To do a kind, and careful father's part,
In satisfying every pensive heart
Of these my daughters, my most loved birth :
Who, though they were the first form'd dames of earth,³
And in whose sparkling and refulgent eyes,
The glorious sun did still delight to rise ;
Though he, the best judge, and most formal cause
Of dames beauties, in their firm hues, draws
Signs of his fervent'st love ; and thereby shows
That in their black, the perfect'st beauty grows ;
Since the fixt color of their curled hair,
Which is the highest grace of dames most fair,
No cares, no age can change ; or there display

The fearful tincture of abhorred gray ;
 Since death herself (herself being pale and blue)
 Can never alter their most faithful hue ;
 All which are arguments, to prove how far
 Their beauties conquer in great beauty's war ;
 And more, how near divinity they be,
 That stand from passion, or decay so free.
 Yet, since the fabulous voices of some few
 Poor brain-sick men, styled poets here with you,
 Have, with such envy of their graces, sung
 The painted beauties other empires sprung ;
 Letting their loose and winged fictions fly
 To infect all climates, yea, our purity ;
 As of one Phaëton,⁴ that fired the world,
 And that, before his heedless flames were hurl'd
 About the globe, the Æthiops were as fair
 As other dames ; now black, with black despair :
 And in respect of their complexions chang'd,
 Are eachwhere, since, for luckless creatures rang'd ;⁵
 Which, when my daughters heard, (as women are
 Most jealous of their beauties) fear and care
 Possess'd them whole ; yea, and believing them,⁶
 They wept such ceaseless tears into my stream,
 That it hath thus far overflow'd his shore
 To seek them patience : who have since e'ermore
 As the sun riseth,⁷ charg'd his burning throne
 With volleys of revilings ; 'cause he shone
 On their scorch'd cheeks with such intemperate fires.
 And other dames made queens of all desires.
 To frustrate which strange error, oft I sought,
 Tho' most in vain, against a settled thought
 As women are, till they confirm'd at length
 By miracle, what I, with so much strength
 Of argument resisted ; else they feign'd :
 For in the lake where their first spring they gain'd,
 As they sat cooling their soft limbs, one night,
 Appear'd a face, all circumfused with light ;
 (And sure they saw't, for Æthiops⁸ never dream)
 Wherein they might decipher through the stream,
 These words :

¹ All rivers are said to be the sons of the Ocean ; for, as the ancients thought, out of the vapors exhaled by the heat of the sun, rivers and fountains were begotten. And both by Orph. in Hym. and Homer, *Il.* §. Oceanus is celebrated *tanquam pater, et origo diis, et rebus, quia nihil sine humectatione nascitur, aut putrescit.*

² There wants not enough, in nature, to authorize this part of our fiction, in separating Niger from the ocean, (beside the fable of Alpheus, and that, to which Virgil

- alludes of Arethusa, in his 10. Eclog.
 Sic tibi, cum fluctus subter labère Sicanos,
 Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam.)
 Examples of Nilus, Jordan, and others, whereof see Nican.
 lib. 1. de flumin. and Plut. in vita Syllæ, even of this our
 river (as some think) by the name of Melas.
³ Read Diod. Sicul. lib. 3. It is a conjecture of the old
 ethnics, that they which dwell under the south, were the
 first begotten of the earth.
⁴ Notissima fabula, Ovid. Met. lib. 2.
⁵ Alluding to that of Juvenal, Satyr. 5. Et cui per
 mediam nolis occurrere noctem.
⁶ The poets.
⁷ A custom of the Æthiops, notable in Herod. and Diod.
 Sic. See Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 8.
⁸ Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 8.

That they a land must forthwith seek,
 Whose termination, of the Greek,
 Sounds T A N I A ; where bright Sol, that heat
 Their bloods, doth never rise or set,¹
 But in his journey passeth by,
 And leaves that climate of the sky,
 To comfort of a greater light,
 Who forms all beauty with his sight.

In search of this, have we three pryncedoms past,
 That speak out Tania in their accents last ;
 Black Mauritania, first ; and secondly,
 Swarth Lusitania ; next we did descry
 Rich Aquitania : and yet cannot find
 The place unto these longing nymphs design'd.
 Instruct and aid me, great Oceanus,
 What land is this that now appears to us ?

Ocea. This land, that lifts into the temperate air
 His snowy cliff, is Albion the fair ;²
 So call'd of Neptune's son,³ who ruleth here :
 For whose dear guard, myself, four thousand year,
 Since old Deucalion's days, have walk'd the round
 About his empire, proud to see him crown'd
 Above my waves.—

*At this, the Moon was discovered in the upper part
 of the house, triumphant in a silver throne, made
 in figure of a pyramis. Her garments white and
 silver, the dressing of her head antique, and
 crowned with a luminary, or sphere of light :*

which striking on the clouds, and heightened with silver, reflected as natural clouds do by the splendor of the moon. The heaven about her was vaulted with blue silk, and set with stars of silver, which had in them their several lights burning. The sudden sight of which made Niger to interrupt Oceanus with this present passion.

O see, our silver star !
Whose pure, auspicious light greets us thus far !
Great Æthiopia goddess of our shore,⁴
Since with particular worship we adore
Thy general brightness, let particular grace
Shine on my zealous daughters : shew the place,
Which long their longings urg'd their eyes to see,
Beautify them, which long have deified thee.

Æthi. Niger, be glad : resume thy native cheer.
Thy daughters labors have their period here,
And so thy errors. I was that bright face
Reflected by the lake, in which thy race
Read mystic lines ; which skill Pythagoras
First taught to men, by a reverberate glass.
This blessed isle doth with that T A N I A end,
Which there they saw inscribed, and shall extend
Wish'd satisfaction to their best desires.
Britannia, which the triple world admires,
This isle hath now recover'd for her name ;
Where reign those beauties that with so much fame
The sacred Muses' sons have honored,
And from bright Hesperus to Eous spread.
With that great name Britannia, this blest isle
Hath won her ancient dignity, and style,
A WORLD DIVIDED FROM THE WORLD : and tried
The abstract of it, in his general pride.
For were the world, with all his wealth, a ring,
Britannia, whose new name makes all tongues sing,
Might be a diamant worthy to inchase it,
Ruled by a sun, that to this height doth grace it :
Whose beams shine day and night, and are of force
To blanch an Æthiop, and revive a corse.
His light sciential is, and, past mere nature,
Can salve the rude defects of every creature.
Call forth thy honor'd daughters then :
And let them, 'fore the Britain men,
Indent the land, with those pure traces

They flow with, in their native graces.
Invite them boldly to the shore ;
Their beauties shall be scorch'd no more :
This sun is temperate, and refines
All things on which his radiance shines.

Here the Tritons sounded, and they danced on shore, every couple, as they advanced, severally presenting their fans : in one of which were inscribed their mixt names, in the other a mute hieroglyphic, expressing their mixed qualities.⁵ Their own single dance ended, as they were about to make choice of their men : one, from the sea, was heard to call them with this CHARM, sung by a tenor voice.

Come away, come away,
We grow jealous of your stay ;
If you do not stop your ear,
We shall have more cause to fear
Syrens of the land, than they
To doubt the Syrens of the sea.

Here they danced with their men several measures and corantos. All which ended, they were again accited to sea, with a SONG of two trebles, whose cadences were iterated by a double echo from several parts of the land.

Daughters of the subtle flood,
Doe not let earth longer entertain you ;
1 *Ech.* Let earth longer entertain you.
2 *Ech.* Longer entertain you.

'Tis to them enough of good,
That you give this little hope to gain you.
1 *Ech.* Giive this little hope to gain you.
2 *Ech.* Little hope to gain you.

If they love,
You shall quickly see ;
For when to flight you move,
They'll follow you, the more you flee.
1 *Ech.* Follow you, the more you flee.
2 *Ech.* The more you flee.

If not, impute it each to other's matter ;
They are but earth, and what you vow'd was water.
1 *Ech.* And what you vow'd was water.
2 *Ech.* You vow'd was water.

Æthi. Enough, bright nymphs, the night grows old,
 And we are grieved we cannot hold
 You longer light ; but comfort take.
 Your father only to the lake

¹ Consult with Tacitus, in vita Agric. and the Paneg. ad Constant.

² Orpheus, in his Argonaut. calls it *Αἰθιόιον Ἰάπων*.

³ Alluding to the right of styling princes after the name of their principedoms : so is he still Albion, and Neptune's son that governs. As also his being dear to Neptune, in being so embraced by him.

⁴ The Æthiopians worshipped the moon by that surname.

See Step. *περὶ τῆς* in voce *ΑΙΘΙΟΙΟΝ*.

⁵ Which manner of symbol I rather chose, than imprese, as well for strangeness, as relishing of antiquity, and more applying to that original doctrine of sculpture, which the Egyptians are said first to have brought from the Æthiopians. Diod. Sicul. Herod.

Shall make return : yourselves, with feasts,
 Must here remain the Ocean's guests.
 Nor shall this veil, the sun hath cast
 Above your blood, more summers last,
 For which you shall observe these rites :
 Thirteen times thrice, on thirteen nights,
 (So often as I fill my sphere
 With glorious light throughout the year)
 You shall, when all things else do sleep
 Save your chaste thoughts, with reverence, steep
 Your bodies in that purer brine,
 And wholesome dew, call'd ros-marine :
 Then with that soft and gentler foam,
 Of which the ocean yet yields some
 Whereof, bright Venus, beauty's queen,
 Is said to have begotten been,
 You shall your gentler limbs o'er-lave,
 And for your pains perfection have :
 So that, this night, the year gone round,
 You do again salute this ground ;
 And in the beams of yond' bright sun,
 Your faces dry, — and all is done.

*At which, in a dance, they returned to the sea, where
 they took their shell, and with this full SONG*

went out.

Now Dian, with her burning face,
Declines apace :
By which our waters know
To ebb, that late did flow.

Back seas, back nymphs ; but with a forward grace,
Keep still your reverence to the place :
And shout with joy of favor, you have won,
In sight of Albion, Neptune's son.

So ended the first Masque ; which, beside the singular grace of music and dances, had the success in the nobility of performance, as nothing needs to the illustration, but the memory by whom it was personated.

	THE NAMES.	THE SYMBOLS.
1. { THE QUEEN { CO. OF BEDFORD.	EUPHORIS, AGLAIA,	} A golden tree, laden with fruit.
2. { LA. HERBERT { CO. OF DERBY.	DIAPHANE, EUCAMPSE,	} The figure Isocædron of crystal.
3. { LA. RICH { CO. OF SUFFOLK.	OCYTE, KATHARE,	} A pair of naked feet in a river.
4. { LA. BEVILL, { LA. EFFINGHAM,	NOTIS, PSYCHROTE,	} The SALAMANDER simple.
5. { LA. EL. HOWARD, { LA. SUS. VERE,	GLYCYTE, MALACIA,	} A cloud full of rain dropping.
6. { LA. WORTH, { LA. WALSINGHAM,	BARYTE, PERIPHERE,	} An urn sphered with wine.

The Names of the OCEANIÆ were,¹

DORIS,	CYDIPPE,	BEROE,	IANTHE,
PETRAEA,	GLAUCE,	ACASTE,	LYCORIS,
OCYRHOE,	TYCHE,	CLYTIA,	PLEXAURE.

¹ Hesiod in Theog.