SOME MASKING CUSTOMS OF GERMAN-SPEAKING CENTRAL EUROPE: A DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY

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SOME MASKING CUSTOMS OF GERMAN-SPEAKING CENTRAL EUROPE: A DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

April 1973

ABSTRACT

Masking festivals and Carnival celebrations are well known in all Christian civilizations. It is now generally assumed by the European scholars whose writings I have read for this dissertation that they have their origins in old heathen beliefs which have long been forgotten. The principal carriers of masking customs are the young, preferably unmarried men of the communities. In their disguise they try to chase away evil spirits during the longest nights of winter around Christmas time, or welcome spring and new life in general with their various Carnival activities.

In German-speaking Central Europe the best preserved masking customs are found in the Alpine regions of Austria, Switzerland and Bavaria in Southern Germany. Masking customs practised around Christmas time or mid-winter are usually internal affairs, not intended to be tourist attractions. They used to be rather wild, boisterous and noisy affairs where the young men dressed in frightening costumes, equipped with a variety of noise-making instruments, hoped to "cleanse" the countryside from wicked demons. At the same time they tried to encourage fertility by stamping the ground with their feet or by hitting it with the

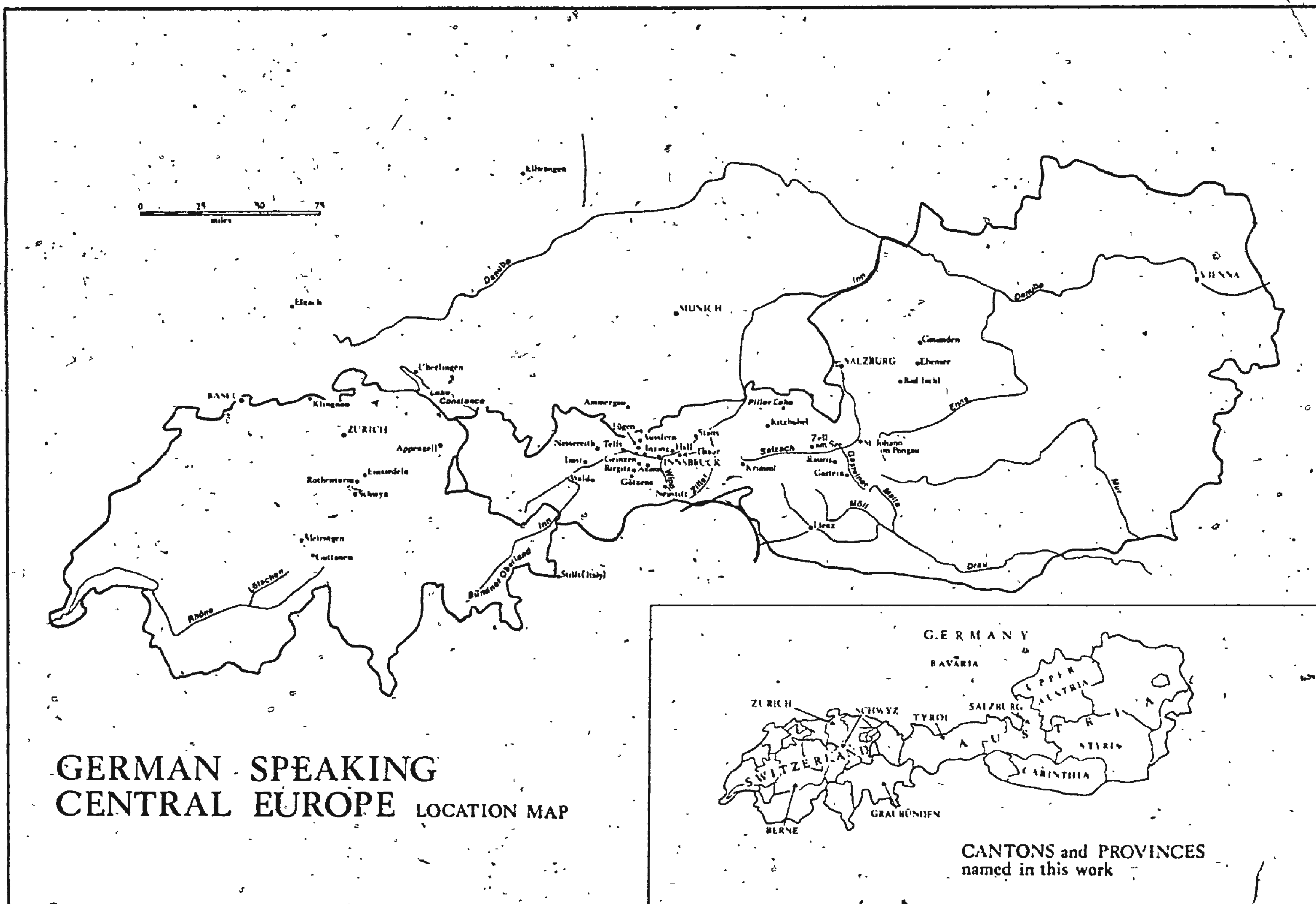
poles they carried. In more recent times these customs have, however, either been taken over entirely by children or lost the element of fear altogether. Masking customs at Carnival time are all tourist attractions. At these occasions young men, often dressed in very elaborate costumes, wearing specially made and beautifully decorated hats march, skip and dance - often in pairs and accompanied by bells - in parades and processions.

The "Morgenstreich" of Basel distinguishes itself by its timing as it takes place at 4 a.m. on the first Monday and Wednesday afternoon in the Lenten season. The various participating groups each ridicule some local, national or international event not only with the costumes of their drummers and pipers who carry small lanterns on their heads but also with the huge hand painted transparent lanterns inscribed with satirical poetry.

Newfoundland also enjoys a vivid masking tradition during the twelve days of Christmas when social barriers are broken down and a short period of licentious behaviour is permissible. In Newfoundland where parades have been replaced by the house-visit which focuses on the guessing game, maskers have to wear a complete disguise whereas a partial one often suffices in Europe. Since Newfoundland mummers are not obliged to chase away demons or re-fertilize nature, the noise element is not as important in their activities.

PREFACE

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mrs. Brückner for her hospitality during my two visits to Basel and all the help she and her friends, particularly Dr. O. Straub, provided to facilitate my research in her native city. My thanks go also to Mr. M. Staveley for producing a map of the European regions where the masking customs described are practised, and to Dr. H. Halpert for the encouragement to write this thesis and for his early suggestions. Above all I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr. N. Rosenberg, for his meticulous and painstaking supervision of all the aspects of this work, and to Mr. D. Hufford for his very careful reading of my many scripts and his very useful suggestions. Last but by no means least, I would like to thank my husband for his proof reading and all the devoted assistance he has given me to complete this work.



GERMAN SPEAKING CENTRAL EUROPE LOCATION MAP

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Carnival celebrations or masking activities in one form or the other can be found in all Christian civilizations. Southern European "Mardi Gras" festivities and their New World counterparts are well known. Similarly, the maskers of the Central European regions used to celebrate the end of the winter by roaring and rampaging through fields and villages. In later years these wild activities have been considerably curtailed. However, the maskers still participate in parades and processions in a variety of roles. In Newfoundland, on the other hand, where masked parades used to be common until they were banned in the latter part of the last century, the "house-visit" including the guessing game replace the former more public boisterous activities.

This is a study of some organized masking activities in Central Europe, specifically in a few German-speaking communities in the Alpine provinces of Carinthia, Salzburg, Styria and Tyrol in Austria, the Southern Tyrol in Italy and villages in the three Swiss cantons of Schwyz, Graubünden and Wallis. I have not investigated the interesting masking traditions of Freiburg and the Schwarzwald (i.e. the Black Forest) in the province of Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

Merely for the record and to suggest some of the variations, I have included one unpublished report from that area, specifically from the small town of Elzach. Even though many political changes have occurred in this region of my research, it is unified in language, religion and custom.

It is my strong impression that the masking festivities have survived most vividly in predominantly Catholic areas. They take place at either of two times: around Christmas or in the Carnival season. The Christmas period often begins as early as December 5th, the eve of St. Nicholas day and ends on Epiphany, January 6th. The Carnival period may begin as early as January 6th and last through Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday when Lent begins.

As a contrast to the rural or small town Carnival activities, I have chosen an urban Carnival, that of the city of Basel, situated in north west Switzerland on the borders of France and Germany. In this stronghold of Protestantism the Carnival parade takes place during the first week of Lent, a period which would be considered unthinkable for such activities by their Catholic neighbours. I chose this not only because the published literature on the "Morgenstreich" is rich, but because I had the good fortune to witness this exciting event in 1969.

I became interested in the subject of masking customs when, about five years ago, as the only German-

speaking student in a Folklore class, I was asked to prepare a paper about the activities of the "Perchten" in the Austrian province of Salzburg. To my surprise I discovered that apart from a description by Violet Alford of "The Morgenstreich at Basel"[1] there were no English descriptions of masking customs in existence. Indeed, English-speaking scholars and researchers had ignored Central European masking customs altogether.

In preparing this survey of masking customs in Central Europe, I deliberately omitted reference to such related items as the masked dance, the sword dance and folk plays, all of which are already covered by a rich literature and in part have been described in English. I have concentrated on parades and processions that used to be held or are still practised in towns and villages of Austria, Switzerland and south west Germany, as well as the often related phenomena of formal and informal house-visits, using for the latter just a few of the more striking examples from the Alpine regions.

As I have already observed, these mid-winter customs can basically be divided into two groups: one is practised around Christmas time and consists of a number of rather

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[1] Violet Alford, "Two Urban Folk Festivals", Folklore, XLVIII (December 1937), 366-369.

wild and exuberant group activities; the other takes place at Carnival and consists of parades and processions, often including special dances. The former, on the whole, retain their community privacy; the latter today are often promoted as tourist attractions. Finally, I draw some comparisons between the Central European masking customs which I described and Newfoundland Mummering.

The prime objective of this thesis was to locate and present in English little known descriptive material on masking customs in German-speaking Central European communities, which in turn might be useful for further comparative studies here in Newfoundland. I have tried to complete the picture by also presenting the theories propounded by scholars who had collected much of the data I have used. I have, therefore, confined myself in my second chapter explicitly to a survey of the nineteenth and early twentieth century theories. These may be considered old-fashioned and out-of-date to many modern scholars, but it would have taken me outside the scope of what I proposed to do if I had examined modern theories. For most of the descriptions as well as interpretations of the European customs, I am indebted to European authors writing in German and French.

Since, as I have already mentioned, there are practically no descriptions of European masking customs in English,

nor so far as I can discover, even any literature referring to them, my first task consisted of locating and reading the principal works quoted in the bibliography. Next, I made a rather full English summary of what I regarded as the most relevant descriptive material chosen from what appeared to me to be the best, or most scholarly descriptions. Obviously I had to omit much detail and many interesting side issues. In other words, my descriptions are not a complete and literal translation, and anyone wishing to pursue the subject will, of course, resort to the original texts.

I fear that almost unconsciously I inserted occasional interesting bits from my other reading, much as if I were preparing a public lecture. Unfortunately, at the time, I failed to footnote these insertions and in a few instances I cannot find my original references. Since most of the sources I read in European libraries are not easily available in Canada, I should stress, however, that all of the sources I used are listed in my bibliography.

I should add that the task of selecting the chief sources was not easy. I was extremely surprised to find that many of the books and articles that I hoped would give me new information did little but copy almost verbatim from an earlier work, sometimes listing the source, sometimes not.

I should say at this point that for several of the customs only briefly discussed in scholarly sources, I was

fortunate enough to have been sent excellent and vivid newspaper descriptions. Undoubtedly, students familiar with the field might point out scholarly sources for the same area. I should emphasize, however, that in my research there were some few references to journals that I was not able to find in the libraries I used.

In my task I encountered many unexpected and unforeseen difficulties. When I was unable to obtain supposedly interesting and illuminating books and articles here in St. John's, even with the willing help of the local library staff and through inter-library loans, I thought I might fare better in Europe. Thanks to my husband's sabbatical leave, I spent the academic year 1968-69 in Lausanne, Switzerland, and had a number of opportunities to visit some of the Tyrolese villages, as well as St. Johann/Pongau and Gastein in the province of Salzburg in Austria, and Basel in Switzerland. To my great dismay, however, I discovered that European booksellers seemed quite uninterested in assisting in the search for materials. I had to depend mainly on the help of Austrian, German and Swiss libraries who deserve all possible praise for their always ready assistance. I am particularly grateful to the entire staff of the Folklore Library of the "Schweizerisches Institut für Volkskunde" in Basel, Switzerland, whose active interest and willingness to supply me - mainly by mail - with endless references helped me in no small meas-

ure. I am also indebted to Dr. Klaus Beitl of the "Verein für Volkskunde" in Vienna, and to Professor Hermann Bausinger of the "Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde" for their suggestions and supply of useful materials.

It soon became clear to me that most European Folklore scholars of recent times concentrated on the study of origins of masking customs, and established historical, sociological and psychological theories about these customs, but rarely gave descriptions of the customs themselves.

Although interesting work is now being done at the University of Tübingen, no one, to my knowledge, has as yet attempted to compile any kind of summary of Central European masking customs. The reason for this may be that such a task appeared too great an undertaking; with customs subject to constant change, it would be difficult to decide on a cut-off date. The danger of such a report remaining less than complete is always present, since very few areas have so far been thoroughly explored and investigated.

I also discovered that many of the masking customs I wanted to describe were so localized that they had escaped the attention of a good number of scholars. The people in the areas and regions concerned took them so much for granted that they saw no need to have them recorded. When I visited specific villages during the summer months in an effort to find local informants, I was usually sent from one person to the next, only to be told that the organ-

izer of the Carnival procession was on vacation and there was no one else in the community who could or was willing to give me adequate and reliable information.[2] Therefore, I often had to rely on reports from local newspaper clippings, including some that were undated.

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[2]At the occasion of my most recent visit to Europe I visited the Alpine village of Rauris in the Austrian province of Salzburg in the "Hohen Tauern" mountain range where the "Schnabelperchten" (see p. 69) are at home. I was fortunate enough to be able to interview the local school principal, Dir. Schönleitner who, as their organizer, gave me a detailed description of the local Perchten activities.

CHAPTER II

ORIGINS OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN MASKING CUSTOMS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

The fact that a great variety of masking customs have survived for many centuries in all parts of the world and are still very much alive in our modern sophisticated world, indicates that not only are they based on deep-rooted traditions, but, more importantly, fulfil basic needs and inclinations.

Central European masking festivals, which were formerly thought to derive from the Roman Bacchanalia and Saturnalia, are now considered to be present day survivals of the heathen beliefs and cults, according to the Swiss scholar and folklorist Karl Meuli.[1] It is true that the original beliefs which initiated these festivals have long been forgotten, but even now they preserve some of the characteristic features. Powerful forces must have been at work which prevented masking customs from dying, despite centuries of Church persecutions and prohibitions, and warnings and threats by a great variety of social groups.

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[1] Karl Meuli, Schweizer Masken, Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1943, p. 46.

The Roman Catholic Church showed considerable tolerance and moderation towards masquerades during the Middle Ages since they felt that pagan gods, temples and sacrifices were the more dangerous enemies. Like all other classes of society, clerics also had their own masked festivities with the usual exuberant activities and only excesses and lawlessness were attacked and condemned. However, the leaders of the Protestant Reformation were eager and determined opponents of masking, a "nuisance" which they considered a heathen, popish degeneration of the "Volksleben" or life of the people. Their strict moral codes completely "cleansed" certain regions of Switzerland, such as the Engadine and the cantons of Berne and Zurich, as well as large parts of Germany, of "masked demons". Finally, the period of the enlightenment and revolution worked havoc and destruction in many places so that we find only remnants of the great masking traditions of antiquity in Europe today.

Apart from Venice, Vienna, Munich and towns in Franconia and the Rhineland, such as Nuremberg, Mayence and Cologne which, though they enjoy a reputation for their Carnival season, are not going to be discussed here, it is a few small towns and villages in Southern Germany, Switzerland and Austria that were fortunate enough to be spared the modern invasion of fantastic and

wild masquerade creations. Only here can we find at least some of the old and unchanged customs and traditions. Original and genuine forms can only be found in two large "pockets", one of which is located in the Alpine regions of Austria, Bavaria and Switzerland and the other in the Scandinavian North.

In order to discover the original meaning of these masquerades, we must, according to K. Meuli,[2] carefully examine some of the oldest mask names, the oldest recorded transgressions and the masking customs of primitive people. Meuli, the classical scholar and folklorist maintains that it is beyond any doubt that the masking festivals of the Germanic tribes did not develop from the feasts of classical antiquity as has been frequently suggested. He sees them, however, closely interwoven with the legend of the "wild army" or "wild hunt"; more specifically he maintains that originally masked processions represented "the wild army" itself.

This legend held that at specific times, particularly during the longest nights, a wild army stormed through the air with the sound of horns, bells, barking dogs and cracking whips. They were the ghostly dead warriors who, at the time when spirits are free to leave the mountain where they

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[2]Karl Meuli, "Ursprünge der Maskenfeste", D'Basler Fasnacht, Basel: Basler Fasnachts-Comité, 1946.

normally dwell, moved like a storm through the world of the living. These sinister creatures are supposed to have been seen frequently as a wild troop of warriors, many with gruesome wounds, on foot or on dark horses. Owls and ravens fly in front of them, dogs run with them and a warning is sounded that the living better stay away. Onlookers who are insolent, inquisitive and irreverent are punished by sickness, blindness or madness. On the other hand, those who give hay to the horses and food to the dogs, who lay out bread and beer for the warriors are rewarded and their fields will thrive and their homes be blessed. The wilder the storm, the better the chance for good growth.

It must be presumed that legend and custom developed simultaneously. Although tales of the "wild army" have only been transmitted from the eleventh century on, the beliefs and customs surrounding them must be much older; the "wild army" was apparently the physical embodiment of the army of the dead which numerous Germanic tribes had believed in.

Old mask names which originate from pure Germanic roots are surprisingly numerous. Let us just consider one or the other as examples: The oldest officially recorded penal law against masked foolery refers to the Langobardic "walapauz" about 643. "Wala" means "the dead of the battlefield", "Pauz" is related to "Butz", "bogy", the devil and

other frightening spirits. The Langobardic mask, therefore, represented the spirit of the killed warrior belonging to the "wild army" who was recognized by the weapon with which he was armed, similar to that carried by numerous Carnival figures today. Like the "Roitschäggätä[4] in Switzerland and the "Faschingsläufer"[5] in Upper Styria, Austria, and all the others, the "Walapauz" came to beg, to steal, to reprimand, according to the rights of masks, and he certainly never came alone. Fortunately, the "Walapauz" overstepped their masking rights, otherwise they would not have found their way into the statute books and we would have no knowledge of their existence. The custom, in these books, is prohibited as a disorderly misconduct which suggests, according to Meuli,[6] that the custom itself must have been a lot older.

Similar circumstances apply to another Langobardic word, "mascus" or "masca".[7] This word, too, is in all probability Germanic. It signifies first a mesh or net, then a corpse wrapped in a net to prevent its return as a spirit and finally the dead spirit itself.

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[4]See Chapter IV, p. 39.

[5]See Chapter VI, p. 82.

[6]Karl Meuli, Schweizer Masken, Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1943, p. 60.

[7]Karl Meuli, "Masken", Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, ed. E. Hoffmann-Krayer and Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1932/33, V, Sp. 1757-1761.

The Langobards had, apart from the "Walapauz" who belonged to the "wild army", another death spirit appearing as a mask, a returning evil spirit wrapped in a net. Even this so scarcely documented tradition indicates that the masked army of the dead consisted, from the start, of a variety of figures.

In the "Harlekin" we meet the leader of "the wild army". The mystery surrounding the word "Harlekin" which was the subject of considerable controversy for a long time, seems to have been solved by H. Flasdieck.[8] He deduces that "Harlekin" goes back to the word "harilo-king", "Heerkönig" or king of the army, and its home is the late old Germanic England. The development of this famous figure is as peculiar as it is instructive. An eleventh century Norman tale describes the dark and sinister train of the "familia Harlechini" of the "wild army" on New Year's night. A fourteenth century report, however, already describes these Harlekin people as wildly masked comical figures in a "chalivali" or caterwauling at the occasion of an unpopular wedding. Towards the end of the sixteenth century this harlequin, who has now become an acrobatic dancer and fun-maker, conquers with the help of the Italian comedians the stage of Paris and from there as a clown, the world. What

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[8] H. Flasdieck, "Harlekin. Germanischer Mythos in romanischer Wandlung", Anglia, LXI (1937), 225-336.

a transformation from the grim king of the army of the dead to the comical mask! The development of the ghostly "king of the army" to the Carnival figure can only be understood if one presumes that legend and custom are simultaneous and equally old, and that the belief in the procession of the army of the dead was from the beginning never without tangible form but represented through "Walapauz" and similar figures in a masked procession.

According to these earliest testimonies of mask names, the Germanic masks represent spirits of the dead, though death spirits of a particular kind; they are warriors killed on the battlefield, belonging to the "wild army". According to E.M. Meyer[9] no myth is so widespread, so deeply rooted and so tenaciously preserved by most Germanic people as the flights of "the wild army" and no myth is so closely interwoven with custom. The masking customs are very often re-enactments of legends, the legends, the reflection of customs in narrative. This becomes evident as custom determines, shapes and enriches the legend and the legend the custom. Whether myth or custom came first is very difficult to ascertain, as in many other similar instances; it is, however, certain that legend and custom resemble each other in many details.

The Scandinavian North, which has preserved numerous

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[9]E.H. Meyer, Mythologie der Germanen, Straßburg, 1903.

and unmistakable elements of the old feast of the visit of the dead in its "Julfest" or Christmas festival, has many legends about the train of ghostly creatures at Yuletide. In Norway they are often described as a swarm of riders or a train of horses running very closely together and accompanied by much noise. In Sweden these ghostly creatures storm at Yuletide across fields from farm to farm. Youths with blackened faces or masks, covered in furs or straw costumes, race on sweat-covered horses through the night. R. Wolfram describes this event as follows:

> They rode or ran around the houses and beat the walls of the dwellings with sticks and rode so that splinters flew around and made all kinds of noise and mischief. They exchanged horses so that the farmer found his neighbour's horse in his stable and his own at his neighbour's. They squeezed a horse into a barn so that a wall had to be knocked down to free it again. They put a cart on the roof of the stable and carried the outhouse into the woods. They turned everything upside down in stables and barns. The dung was put into the feeding trough and the fodder behind the animals where the manure was normally kept.[10]

A wild storm had indeed raged across the farm, a storm of wild and crazy mischief. But this "wild army" did not roam as shapeless belief through the air: here were living, wild youths with strong arms, representatives of the ghostly train in flesh and blood. They, too, brought good fortune with their wild roars; they, too, took away blessings from

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[10] R. Wolfram, "Julumritte im germanischen Süden und Norden", Oberdeutsche Zeitschrift für Volkskunde, II (1937), 6ff.

a house that refused them sacrificial gifts.

These records from the Germanic North are of particular value. Here, in these very old Germanic regions, the old feast of the visit of the dead has been preserved in its very original, sinister and unchanged form.

The sinister processions in custom and legend have their origin in such processions of the dead. Here, however, they apply to the world of the living; the feelings of the community extend not only over the living but include in custom and legend also the dead. The legend brings the explanation or interpretation of our feelings which are expressed in the customs. Both custom and legend show a feeling for the dead which, however, moves in two different directions. The spirits of the ancestors arriving as guests are, on the one hand, the dear members of the family with whom one likes to be united in thoughts and love; on the other hand, such a union with the dead creates sinister feelings.

Though much is still uncertain, the old festivals celebrating the visits of the dead can, nevertheless, be clearly seen in a variety of changing forms.

Begging, blessing and punishing are always included, whether in the form of wild devastation, as if caused by a storm, or of just a simple beating, of a death-bringing curse or a biting sarcastic reprimand. All these elements are deeply rooted in the rights and beliefs of the dead.

The recurrent running, jumping and dancing, the silence as well as the noise-making - all expressions of ghostly creatures - are practised by Central European maskers in the customs described in the following chapters.

Their outer form can be least of all understood, be it animal disguise or grotesque or comical mask; but even if something appears distant and strange to our understanding, it does not mean that it has always been so. These customs already seemed ancient and strange to the Greeks and Romans and we are even more distant from the times when such forms were appropriate expressions of true belief.

If these customs really go back to very ancient times, as Meuli suggests, they must have gone through a variety of changes and produced many different forms in their development. If they have been as important as is assumed, they must have been closely associated with all stratas of society. No one keeps or kept away from them: rich and poor, old and young, townspeople and countryfolk, clerical and secular authorities, they all participate, in their own way in masking festivities. They emphasize, according to need or wealth, begging or giving, reprimanding wildly and cruelly or teasing harmlessly with paedagogical pedantry or with the humour of an artist. It is obvious that the rich, attired in a mask, are not anxious to beg or steal

food; they are expected to show their generosity, as in Einsiedeln, Switzerland, where the masked participants of the procession used to throw quantities of sandwiches into the crowd of young bystanders.

In large cities, where people do not know each other as in small villages, common begging by masked people is generally forbidden and landlords keep their Carnival cakes and cookies for those masks that hide good friends and come by special invitation.

The sixteenth century Nuremberg cobbler-poet, Hans Sachs, wrote about this custom which later developed into a festive meal. He reported that the gentlemen of the Council remembered marching through the streets in their youth, reprimanding and begging and enjoying a big festive meal afterwards.

Eventually, the reprimanding and begging was discontinued as being inappropriate, and only the meal, paid for by treasury funds, remained. Similarly, societies and guilds paid visits to each other without stealing or reprimanding, but merely for an exchange of drinks and stately speeches. The mature gentlemen of the guilds were no longer interested in participating personally in masked processions; but as masks were considered essential, they dispatched their ablest employees to perform the meaningful custom and it was their task to dance, to chase and to beg and to be dipped into water. It was no longer appropriate

for distinguished gentlemen to shower the lady of their choice with beatings that were supposed to bless; instead, neat little birch canes were presented to which slips of paper were attached which were inscribed with flattering and amusing rhymes. As the rhymed reprimands became more artistic and sophisticated, they eventually developed into the Swiss "Schnitzelbänke" which are discussed later.[11]

This is only one typical example of the constant change of customs in the town, as they were adapted to times and circumstances. In villages, on the other hand, wild and noisy customs had to give way to single bigger visual events such as parades and processions, as they were curbed by the authorities.

Interesting parallels can be found if we study the masking customs of primitive people, as Meuli suggests. Although their beliefs and customs cannot be considered identical with those of our stone age forefathers, there are, nevertheless, astonishing similarities which may help us to discover beliefs and customs of long ago of which we have no written records.

Not all people of the world have masking customs and masking festivals. They are, for instance, non-existent among the shepherd tribes of mountainous North Asia and Arabia; it seems that in non-western cultures they are

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[11] See Chapter VI, p.160.

peculiar to agricultural tribes.

The religion of these tribes is dominated by the belief in the powers of the dead. It is the spirits of the departed who bring fertility to the fields, the blessings of children to the women, good fortune and happiness to the household and the tribe. When angered, the spirits of the dead will burn the fields, dry up wealth, allow children to die, cause sickness, hinder growth and bring evil to the entire tribe. These spirits hold jealous vigil over the traditions which, after all, are of their own making and, like the fathers in a home, the spirits of the forefathers punish everyone who causes mischief or unrest or commits evil deeds. They only appear at specific times: they come to fetch the recently deceased to take them to their kingdom; they come to dedicate the youths into men, bringing them knowledge, strength and abilities which make them into fully accepted, procreative, conscious members of their tribe; finally they come at festival time when the underworld opens up for the great feast of atonement of the ancestors.[12]

They are represented by masked figures of all shapes and kinds. There are masks showing the front part of a skull, masks trying to represent a certain dead individual by wearing his dress and decorations, masks showing forms

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[12]Karl Meuli, Schweizer Masken, Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1943, pp. 44-48.

in which souls according to belief reappear, often in animal guise. There are masks trying to represent the fantastically gruesome, the frightening or the noble side of death; masks showing ancestors in the shape of other superior beings, such as animal gods, fertility demons, water and windspirits, and even stars.

These monstrous armies of the dead appear in all their gruesomeness in an unending variety of shapes from the unknown world and disappear again to whence they came when their allotted time is up. Their steps are dance-steps; their voices are unnatural and ghostly; and their appearance is accompanied by strange noises, produced by drums, rattles, flutes and bells. All these characteristics apply equally to our Central European maskers described in the following chapters.

At first they seem angered and revengeful; their anger is directed towards transgressors, the wicked, the lazy, the quarrelsome and talkative women, the unfaithful, the hated. They bring terrible punishments, like destruction of homes, beatings, reprimands, even death! But no earthly power would dare to deny or obstruct the right of these spirits. Since no human conscience can ever be perfectly clear, everyone is afraid of these spirits, their paths are cleared and only homes serve as safe shelters for the "sinners".

On the other hand, there is great anxiety to show penitence and willingness for sacrifice: beatings, lootings and harsh reprimands are accepted and, in return, gifts of food and drink are offered to the guests from the other world since they, too, like to enjoy worldly pleasures. Penitence and sacrifice lighten the conscience and instill peace and happiness and make the spirits benevolent. In recognition they foretell good fortune and fertility and leave in pledge of their prediction tangible things, like blessed twigs or bundles of ears of corn which, mixed into the seeds, will ensure a rich harvest in the coming year. And, as a thunderstorm clears the sky, it is thought that the coming year can only be a good one, if the roaming masks are excessively wild and frightening. The feast, therefore, is largely a ceremony of atonement. Within this new wider interpretation, Meuli[13] sees some justification for the old explanation that masking festivals are "fertility magics".

The wearers of the masks who play the almighty spirits of the dead are the important men of the tribe, usually organized into a secret league, who under strict observance of the secrecy of the mask operate a reign of terror over the less fortunate members of the tribe, such

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[13]Karl Meuli, "Ursprung der Maskenfesta", D'Basler Fasnacht, Basel: Basler Fasnachts-Comité, 1946.

as women, children, slaves and the weaker ones in general. But it would be wrong to regard all "masked actors" as cunning imposters taking advantage of their position. They believe in the spirits of the dead and are fully convinced of their presence and might. They experience them not as mere onlookers, for they are possessed by them. The power of the spirits which they experience gives them the right and confidence to behave like absolute rulers. During these periods of legal anarchy and licence they feel free of moral and social obligations, responsibilities and restrictions and satisfy deep rooted desires and aggressive tendencies. Thus, maskers behave often in a shameless and greedy manner.

Moreover, there is the joy of the game! When games cease to be childish, they take on a ritual character. The players often wish to distinguish themselves from the non-players and this they do by wearing masks. They are anxious to get away from every-day life and to take part in the general happiness of a mad society. One condition is not to look as one does every day; strange attire or comical appearance help to create a foolish mood. For, although the whole festival is a business of serious belief, there is ample room left for fun and enjoyment. Fortunately even here, there is only one small step from the dignified to the ridiculous.

CHAPTER III

I. MASKING TIMES

The most important times of the year for masking activities in Central Europe are around mid-winter and at Carnival, when winter is about to end. Within these periods, the twelve nights between Christmas and January 6th enjoy the greatest popularity. In German, these nights are often referred to as "Rauchnächte" which according to Cassel's[1] dictionary means "nights when spirits walk". Literally translated, however, it means "smoke nights" which are the nights when house and barn have to be fumigated as a protection against wild, disguised figures who roam around the countryside at that time. It is during this period that according to legend and folktale the "wild army" tears across the land and "Frau Perchta", a demon-like creature and her retinue make their visits. Within these twelve nights it is Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Old Christmas Day, and the evenings preceding them, which are usually chosen for masking activities. Close connections between these par-

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[1]Cassell's German & English Dictionary, ed. Harold T. Betteridge, 3rd ed.; London: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1960, p. 371.

ticular days explain the similarities of their customs.

If we accept the basic idea that masking customs originate and have their roots not in Christian festivals to which they attached themselves in the course of time, but in heathen customs, it is clear that the time for masking was fixed around the beginning of the New Year when nights are longest. Whilst the year of the Roman Empire used to begin on March 1st, as we learn from E. Fehrle in Feste und Volksbräuche im Jahreslauf Europäischer Völker[2] the top civil servants of the Empire decided in 153 B.C. to start their year's duties on the first of January. Although this date was then officially considered to be the beginning of the year, the changeover was only gradual.

In contrast to the heathens, Christianity celebrated its start of the year not on January 1st but on January 6th, when the baptism of Christ was thought to have taken place; and with His spiritual birth the beginning of His heavenly mission was celebrated. It was only around 354 A.D. that the feast of Christ's birth was separated from the day of his appearance. At this time December 25th became His birthday and was also celebrated as the beginning of the year.

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[2]Eugen Fehrle, Feste und Volksbräuche im Jahreslauf Europäischer Völker, Kassel: Himmelthal-Verlag, 1955.

Similarly, December 25th was for the Egyptians, Syrians, Greeks and Romans the birthday of their sungod, "the Invincible". This god was greatly honoured in the Roman Empire and his fame was very widespread. The birthday of the then much admired Persian light god Mithras was also fixed on December 25th. It can thus be seen that Christ was still celebrated as the sun that brought light to the world when heathendom was outwardly overcome and Christendom eventually became the declared religion of the Empire.

It was thought by the Church Fathers that the old oriental heathen beliefs could be conquered most easily by a change of date of the festivities. Consequently, the year's beginning was made flexible and was celebrated at varying times. During the reign of the Carolingians, the Imperial Chancellery ruled that the year should start on December 25th; although this decision was very popular, all other beginnings were by no means discarded. Finally, a Church conference in Cologne decided in 1310 that December 25th was the definite date of the year's beginning for Germany. For a long time the issue seemed more or less settled until at the time of the Reformation many places once again considered January 1st as the beginning of the year, though this was by no means the general trend. Martin Luther, for instance, continued to regard December

25th as the year's beginning. In order to put an end to this long controversy Pope Innocent XII declared January 1st to be New Year's Day in 1691. Even after the issue of this decree, other "New Year's Days" were still observed for a long time and this is one reason why we find customs with the same basic content spread over a comparatively long period. To these twelve important nights the preparatory days before Christmas, the period of Advent which includes the four Sundays before Christmas must be added as a time for masking customs.

The second important period for masking activities in Central Europe is between Candlemas, February 2nd, "the beginning of the bright time", when daylight is one hour longer than it was on the shortest day and when, according to a variety of weather rhymes, "the bear, the wolf and the lynx begin to look around in their caves to see whether or not spring is about to arrive", and Ash Wednesday. This period is referred to as "Fastnacht, Fasnecht, Fasnacht, Fasnet" or Carnival. "Fasnacht" or "Fasnecht" has its root in the word "faseln" which means "to talk or to behave foolishly" and perhaps also in a sixteenth century meaning of the word "to thrive or to be fertile";[3] a "Faselschwein", for instance, was considered to be a breeding pig. Another interpretation,

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[3]Konrad Duden, Der Große Duden: Etymologie, Mannheim: Bibliographisches Institut, 1963.

according to Ed. Hoffmann-Krayer's handbook Feste und Bräuche des Schweizer Volkes, explains "Fastnacht" as the night before the beginning of the long pre-Easter fast; this theory is supported by analogies in other languages: in French-Switzerland the period is referred to as "Carême entrant" or the entering of Lent and in Italian "Carne vale" which can be translated as "farewell to meat or flesh".

The first period around Christmas is generally a time for sinister, wild processions and activities, public trials and a variety of begging customs which are all described in Chapter IV. The latter period is chosen for a wide variety of organized activities. Some of these merely stand out for the skill and dexterity of the young men involved and not for the beauty and inventiveness of their costumes; others have developed a high degree of sophistication in the shaping and decorating of their hats (Scheller and Roller, Schleicher etc.) and the making of their very varied elaborate costumes (for example in the "Morgenstreich" of Basel). This second group is described in Chapter VI.

This great range of customs shows clearly how anxious people were and are to forget their every day concerns and worries and to enjoy themselves at least once a year in a role and costume that gives them a differ-

ent appearance and personality. It must be pointed out, however, that many old customs occur simultaneously at Carnival time. In many cases it is hardly possible to see all the connections, since old traits have disappeared and others have been changed. If one is anxious to discover their history or origin, it is necessary to go back to older forms.

II. THE MASKERS

The principal carriers of masking customs in Central Europe are youths or young men who are usually unmarried. Females and married people play a subordinate role. Frequently each age group has its own distinct attire. Single men can be distinguished from the married and different trades and occupations recognized by their different costumes. Yet, always and everywhere young unmarried men are the core of all Christmas and Carnival masking activities since they have the greatest vitality. It is this group that finds it most trying to be confined to the one room in the house that is lit and heated during long winter evenings and it is this group that yearns for freedom and friendship as daylight begins to increase.

In the seclusion of mountain villages where electricity, newspapers, radios and television were practically unknown until recently and where there has been little or

no communication with the outside world until a short time ago, youths were craving for activity and therefore delighted to form groups and clubs for their own fun and entertainment. At the same time, as the young, new and vigorous generation, they were anxious to be and remain free from outside influences and aggressions and saw themselves as the guardians of their old established customs. This seems a rare phenomenon, since the young as a rule rather tend to overthrow the old for the new.

Whether in a country village or in towns, a well developed community spirit was and still is essential if petty quarrels and rivalries are to be easily laid aside and forgotten during the time of the festivities.

The leading maskers participating in the various activities are usually those young men who enjoy a good reputation in their community and can be trusted to fulfil their duties and obligations competently and reliably. Since it is generally agreed and understood that it is a great honour to be allowed to take part, everyone is anxious and eager to perform his given task with utmost efficiency and to the best of his ability. Moreover, everyone, even today is conscious that masking is really a serious business and that not so long ago it was generally believed that the success or failure of the crops and the entire well-being of the community was dependent on the efficiency of the maskers.

In many instances maskers have to succeed in a test of strength before they are allowed to participate; in others, prospective participants have to play minor roles first and then gradually, as they become older and more efficient, graduate to play the more important parts. After years of training and eager anticipation they learn to fully appreciate the honour and the responsibility of their particular tasks. Sometimes certain roles are reserved for particular families in the community who pass on their masks and costumes from generation to generation.

As will be seen in the following chapters, an endless variety of costumes enlivens the landscapes during winter and pre-spring masking activities. Some regions have a preference for animal masks, using furs, pelts, horns and antlers for their costumes as a reminder of their very old deep attachment to the hunters. In other regions costumes made of plants are preferred, as spring and growth figures appear clad in costumes made of green leaves or corncobs, whilst winter demons rustle around in dry straw costumes and suits made of fir cones.

Generally, maskers are eager to emphasize the same sharp contrasts as are experienced in real life in their activities and with their costumes; there is constant feasting in contrast to the complete fast that follows; there are wild and frightening creatures who rob and storm

through fields and villages in contrast to benevolent figures who bring gifts and blessings; there are those wearing rough and ugly masks in contrast to the handsome and smooth smiling "faces"; in contrast to masks of ugly old men there are youthful looking masks who could be interpreted as maidens and men or spring facing and eventually conquering winter.

As we see in the figure of "Frau Perchta"[3] who personifies a double-faced notion, i.e. a dark depressing one on the one hand and a light elevating one on the other, two distinct figures developed in masking activities which in some instances grew into two distinct groups, always emphasizing and underlining contrasts.

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[3]See Chapter V, p. 54.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZED MASKING ACTIVITIES PRACTISED BY LOCAL GROUPS IN SOME GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES OF CENTRAL EUROPE

This chapter deals primarily with masking customs practised at or around Christmas time or mid-winter, when the nights are longest. All customs discussed in this chapter are local internal affairs, not intended to be observed or interfered with by outsiders or even neighbours and are, therefore, not developed as tourist attractions.

According to local legends[1] country people are anxious to chase away wicked demons in mid-winter. Their men, therefore, dress up in frightening costumes, held together by belts studded with heavy bells, hide their faces behind gruesome devils' masks and run and roam through the fields whilst making a terrific din with a variety of noise-making instruments to "cleanse" the land from evil spirits. They encourage fertility of the soil

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[1] Ignaz V. Zingerle, Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes, Innsbruck: Wagner, 1871; Gustav Gugitz, Das Jahr und seine Feste im Volksbrauch Österreichs, Wien: Verlag Brüder Hollinck, 1950, II, pp. 327-332.

by stamping on it or hitting the ground with poles or sticks. Once their task is successfully accomplished (the success depends entirely on the ugliness of their masks and costumes and the volume of noise they are able to produce), the people at home, who were anxiously waiting for this kind of "purification" as well as the blessings brought to them, gladly offer welcome refreshments which vary considerably. Often alcoholic beverages are offered to special guests.

Although the dates of my sources vary considerably and I am in several instances unable to determine whether or not these customs are still known and practised today, I think it is safe to assume that, in general, most of them are either taken over by children (see p. 48) or practised as remnants of a tradition by groups of young men in less elaborate costumes and masks, with the genuine element of fear missing altogether (see p. 40). The hospitality aspect, however, which is also common to all customs in this chapter has moved more into the foreground.

All customs described here are wild and noisy affairs with the exception of the "Maschkererzug", where silence plays a major part. Nevertheless, I think it must be included in this group because of its timing - the "Maschkererzug" takes place on the eve of Old Christmas Day. Its participants are ghostlike creatures who form-

erly may well have represented, as Meuli suggests,[2] the spirits of the dead who arrive in complete silence to inspect their former homes before tasting the drink prepared for them. The dance which they dance with each other merely rounds up this social occasion or perhaps emphasizes their unity and friendship amongst themselves. Without saying a word or murmuring a sound, they depart again as silently as they had come.

"Berschtln", a custom from the lower Inn Valley in the Austrian Province of Tyrol.

Otto Swoboda[3] describes this ancient custom which is still practised in a very few isolated villages of the lower Inn valley during the night of December 5th. Only here has this very old custom survived; elsewhere in the entire Alpine region, it has been replaced by the St. Nicholas custom. It seems to antedate the introduction of the Gregorian calendar and go back to a time when the night from December 5th to 6th was considered to be the longest night of the entire year.

While other Alpine villages enjoy the visit of St. Nicholas, the "Holy Bishop", with his chain rattling companion on that night as soon as darkness falls, com-

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[2] See Chapter II, p. 17.

[3] Otto Swoboda, "Berschtln vertreiben böse Geister", Wiener Zeitung, CCLXXXIII (December 6th, 1969), 8.

plete silence reigns in the peasant settlement around Unterangerberg in the lower Inn valley. Here, the farms are widely scattered in a lonely, barren landscape, separated from the outside world by the snow. Old people think that there is something spooky and menacing about this night. They consider the air filled with strange phantoms. The women sit quietly in their warm rooms, busying themselves with handwork, whilst the men pass the evening at the inn, singing songs and telling stories. Late at night, quite suddently, muffled sounds of horns are heard in the distance which stop again just as abruptly as they had started. The following silence weighs oppressively on the people. The night seems endless.

Suddenly, with thundering noise, the parlour doors fly open and a crowd of frightening figures invade the interior with a devilish noise. They are the traditional "Berschtln",[4] as they are called by the Tyrolese in their local dialect. The "Berschtln" hide behind gruesome devils masks, their costumes bedecked with tassels, made of corn leaves. With big tin drums, hartshorns and cowbells they make a deafening noise, jump onto benches and tables and perform crazy dances. An energetic witch-like figure leads

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[4]The word may derive from the German word "Bürste", brush, whisk, and the Austrian diminutive "Bürstl" (little brush) or from the verb "bürsten", to brush or clean.

and conducts them by swinging a big broom, with which she pretends to sweep the whole house from top to bottom. According to an old belief, the "Berschtln" come to drive out the wicked spirits who have settled in farm and field during the long winter nights.

Whilst they divert the attention of the evil spirits with dull sounding horns and try to imitate them, they approach the farms quietly and cautiously in order to include the element of complete surprise in their attack on the demons. They are said to bring blessings to men, animals and germinating farm products, above all to the corn which used to be the staple food of the farmers of this valley. After a brief but noisy stay, the "Berschtln", fortified with doughnuts, beer and red wine, leave the parlour as unexpectedly as they had entered and disappear silently into the dark winter's night in order to proceed over hidden paths to the next farm, to raid another household.

Several such groups consisting usually of eight to ten men make their rounds on that December night. Young and old are equally enthusiastic to play their part in this old tradition, since they know that the next harvest will depend on the success of their wild and frenzied outing. All participants either wear ugly and repelling wooden masks, of which they are very proud, or blacken their faces with soot so as not to be recognized by the

"revengeful spirits".

To make the task of chasing away all the remaining winter demons complete and to celebrate the forthcoming rebirth of nature, the above ritual is once more repeated the following night, December 6th.

"Roitschäggätä of the Lötschen Valley in Switzerland.

According to Karl Meuli, the behaviour of the "Roitschäggätä (those chequered with smoke or soot from the chimney) of the Lötschen valley was equally boisterous and wild, when they used to "run" week after week from Old Christmas Day until Shrove Tuesday.[5] Since the Lötschen valley in the canton of the Valais or Wallis was completely cut off from the outside world until the Lötschberg railway was built in the early years of the twentieth century, it is here that the oldest known Swiss masks are found.

Meuli tells us that the "Tschäggätä", the motley or variegated, also known as "Roitschäggätä" offered a fierce and sinister sight in their ancient wooden masks. They were wrapped in sheep skins and wore fur boots on their feet; around their middle was a heavy belt, hung with "Trichlä" or cowbells. As weapons they carried sticks or clubs and rafthooks in their hands. Formerly, a wooden syringe also belonged to their outfit. It was used to

[5]Karl Meuli, Schweizer Masken, Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1943, pp. 13-16.

punish the cheeky and impertinent by shooting a portion of damp soot, fresh from the chimney, or the liquid from a dungheap or even blood into their faces.

Led by a herdsman in a white hooded smock, the "Tschäggätä" stormed roaring into the villages like wild bulls, making a tremendous noise with their bells. Swinging their weapons about, they threatened everyone. Women, children and even younger boys quickly retreated into the houses and carefully bolted their doors and windows. Usually the "Tschäggätä" directed their attentions mainly to homes where pretty young girls were hiding.

The masks of these monstrous creatures were of unuaual size; they measured sixteen to twenty inches in height and were carved from the native "Arve" tree (cembra pine). Crudely painted, they were often fitted with real animal teeth and goat hair.

These fearsome creatures moved in groups of about twenty from village to village along the Lötschen valley, shouting and jumping, hollering and stealing until darkness finally fell and the "monsters", now hot and tired in their fur costumes, were happy to be fed with meat and cream by the villagers.

Today remnants of this very ancient custom (Meuli traces most of its features back to the late Middle Ages), are still alive in several villages where the clergy was unable to suppress it completely. But today's "Roitschäggätä"

are much younger and although they invariably wear the old fierce-looking masks and costumes handed down by their families, their effect is no longer frightening but rather comical.

Despite intensive efforts, I have not been able to discover from written documents or from eye witnesses whether the "Roitschäggätä" of today still have to succeed in a test of strength in order to join the ranks, as was customary in the old days.

"Hoale" of Stilfs in Southern Tyrol, Italy.

Another rather noisy, boisterous masking custom is pefformed by the "Hoale" of Stilfs or Stelvio, a little village in the Southern Tyrol which used to belong to the Austrian Empire but has been part of Italy since the end of the first world war.

The "Hoale", a group of youths between the ages of fifteen and eighteen have chosen the eve of St. Nicholas, Christmas, New Year and the Thursday before Lent for their noisy activities. They have no elected leader but the socially most prominent boys are in charge. There is no strict organization whereby privileges and duties are clearly defined; here, certain age groups assemble at specific times to provide noisy entertainment. The word "Hoale", used both in the singular and plural, for young-oxen pulling carts, is here applied to unruly youths.

According to A. Dörrer[6] two or three dozen youths storm into the village on St. Nicholas eve, screaming and blowing hartshorns. Women and children flee frightened into their houses. The youths wear magnificent masks with appendages or have gaily painted faces. Their appearance shows much similarity with that of the "Roitschäggätä" described above, though Dörrer considers them even more original and their masks more primitive.

The "Hoale" organize themselves into small groups according to age. The younger ones are allowed to perform at smaller functions such as weddings, whilst for bigger occasions all the "Hoale" of the fifteen to eighteen age group band together. Only if numbers are too small are the younger boys called upon. Rarely are older ones asked. During the two world wars when the "Hoale"'s ranks were sorely depleted, older men showed great eagerness to participate; but in order to avoid unpleasantness, they had to ask the younger people's special permission to be allowed to join.

The eighteen year olds are in charge; they decide what is to be performed, who is to take part and which job is to be assigned to each individual. In general, everything depends on the efficiency of each and everyone.

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[6] A. Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1949, pp. 30-31.

The fifteen year old "Hoale" knows that he is allowed to participate for the first time as a member of the entourage of St. Nicholas; he can also count on portraying the pack-animal, the donkey, the following year and later the bellringer and finally the "ugly one" or "Kloser".

Relying upon information obtained from a local storekeeper, Josef Pardeller, who made a handwritten collection of local customs, Dörrer[7] gives an even more extensive description of this Nicholas custom which is locally called "Klosen".[8] The "Hoale" wrap themselves in rags, wear home-made fearsome looking wooden masks and carry chains in their hands. The "Scheller" or bellringer squeeze their legs into tight fitting clothes which are embellished with colourful patches, the upper part of their body into furs and the head into a fur cap with long ears. The belt around their waist is hung with as many cowbells as are available because the sound of the bells is supposed to chase away demons and make the grass and corn grow.

The "Schianen" or "Weisen", the beautiful or wise, who are the youngest group, represent, like the Swiss

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[7] A. Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1949, pp. 164 - 165.

[8] "Klosen" derives from the high German word "Klaus", the shortened form of Nikolaus.

"Kläuse", St. Nicholas and his entourage, but nowadays only play a subordinate role. St. Nicholas himself appears in a long, white gown with mitre and crosier. Accompanying him are rod carriers, light bearers with lanterns and two or three angels dressed inwhite. The person in charge is called the "Scharsch" or leader who wears an old uniform and sees to it that the event is executed in an orderly manner. This group used to bring gifts when they were still allowed to enter houses and homes.

In those days, "Santa Klos" was accompanied not only by the figures just mentioned but also by a basket carrier with a basket full of gifts and a number of "donkeys". If he was asked to enter a house, he mounted the "donkey", as did also his retinue, and rode into the parlour. There, he questioned the children, admonished the adults and distributed gifts. If anyone was to be reprimanded, one or two "Schiache" or "ugly or bad ones" crept also into the house. If a child had been particularly bad, the "Schiache" grabbed it, put it into his hamper and dumped it outside the house in a dark corner. In most cases, however, the strawdoll which he carried as a frightening figure in his basket, sufficed to scare the children. "Santa Klos" left, as he had arrived, riding on his "donkey".

The St. Nicholas cult began in Europe only after the remains of the saint were transferred to Bari in Southern Italy in 1087. Apparently the figure of this saint was introduced by Christians during the twelfth century into the already existing customs that took place during the twelve nights between Christmas and Twelfth Night.

Schoolboys bring the costumes to a designated spot outside the village, where the "Scheller" dress. With bell ringing, screaming, shouting and rolling on the ground, the "Scheller" enter the village and team up with the "Schiachen" who have donned their costumes elsewhere outside of town, by the upper mill. Ten to fifteen "Scheller" make a terrific din throughout the village. They are accompanied by ten "Schiache" who skip along with them in measured and dignified dancing steps. They utter muffled sounds and rattle their chains. Meanwhile, night has fallen and every participant runs or creeps through the village until he has caught someone who has to ransom himself by paying for a drink at the local inn. The "Schiachen" try to invade houses wherever they can and cause mischief, particularly if young girls happen to live there. They beat with their chains against the sides of houses and barns and on window shutters. After midnight, the entire crowd gathers once more for the last noisy procession through the village.

"Stopfer" of the Bündner Oberland in Switzerland.

I am uncertain whether or not any remnants of this custom still exist in the Swiss region of the Bündner Oberland today. Despite the fact that the description that follows is very brief and dates from a long time ago, I feel that "the procession on the Stopfer" should not be omitted here since it obviously belongs to this group and a number of European folklorists of this century have referred to the very old record of this custom in their work.

Hans Dietschy[9] states that Tschudi, who is considered not only to be the father of Swiss history but also the father of Swiss folklore, first mentioned the "Stopfer" or prodders in 1571. According to him, every few years during Carnival time people disguised themselves with red facemasks, armed themselves with weapons and attached bells to their backs. Equipped with long poles, they succeeded in making terrific leaps which they could normally not do, and by loudly clashing their armour, they created a resounding din. By hitting the ground hard with their poles, they were supposed to further the growth of the corn. That the "Stopfer" appear armed is neither

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[9] Hans Dietschy, "Der Umzug der Stopfer, ein alter Maskenbrauch des Bündner Oberlandes", Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde, XXXVII (1939-1940), 25-43.

extraordinary nor new, since according to Meuli[10] masks are supposed to symbolize the "wild army" of the departed souls, in order to increase not only the fertility of the fields but also, more generally, the vital energy of men and nature.

The report further states that as a rule there was a demonic "surplus figure" within their midst who disappeared again after the event without leaving a trace behind.

According to an oral communication from Meuli to Dietschy, he saw in the appearance of the "Stopfer" a defensive action whereby the "Stopfer" chased away maskers of neighbouring regions and jealously guarded the fertility of their own fields against foreign invaders.

"Klöckln" or "Anklöckln", practised in Carinthia and Styria in Austria.

Repeated prohibitions by Church and state have undoubtedly contributed to the fact that the custom which I am going to describe now, which used to be widespread in the south-eastern part of the Alps, can now only be found in isolated valleys of Carinthia, such as the Drau, Möll and Malta river valleys and in Styria, in the upper valley of the Enns. Outside of Austria this custom is also found in very few places in Switzerland, Southern Germany and Alsace. It can similarly be safely assumed that all the

[10] See Chapter II, pp.11-13.

wilder elements which formerly belonged to this custom were gradually suppressed by the authorities.

"Klöckln" is primarily practised on the last three Thursdays before Christmas, days considered holy in pagan times and dedicated to a powerful heathen deity. The expression "klöckln" or "anklöckln" comes from the German word "Klopfen", to knock or to beat.

According to Otto Swoboda[11] who recently published an excellent description, this custom is nowadays mainly practised by children and youths. Equipped with sticks, rods or hammers, they visit the farms on the cold Thursday nights before Christmas. Formerly they dressed in straw costumes or animal skins and wore masks. They now merely blacken their faces and omit even this sometimes.

Once a group of "Klöckler" reaches a farm, they gather in front of the entrance and knock on walls and doors, begging to be let in. A comical dialogue in rhymes between the farmer and the "Klöckler" follows. Sometimes this is sung to old traditional tunes. The "Klöckler", in their blessing and begging songs, assert that they have come to bring good health and happiness, long life and the blessing of children to the farmer, his wife and everyone on the farm and to wish them a fruitful and prosperous New Year with a rich harvest.

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[11] Otto Swoboda, "Heut ist uns eine heil'ge Klöcklnacht", Wiener Zeitung (The article was unfortunately sent to me without a date), Wien.

As a reward, the group is offered food and drink in the parlour. Before their departure they are given "Klöckler Würstln", sausages specially cooked in their honour, or sweetbreads, specially prepared for the occasion, as well as nuts and dried fruit. With deafening noise they take their leave from their hosts and wander across the snow covered fields to the next farm, stamping with their feet on the fields or even performing high jumps and leaps to bring fertility to the soil and a rich harvest.

Swoboda asserts that according to an ancient belief and custom, all females who cross the path of the "Klöckler" have to be beaten by them to assure revival and continuity of fertility.

In Southern Tyrol some of the "Klöckler" still pay their visits in full disguise and carry with them a variety of noise-making instruments, such as tin plates, bells, horns of a buck or, in the Sarn valley, proper accordions.

The most colourful of all surviving "Klöpfler" customs is practised once every ten years in Stans in the Inn Valley near Schwaz in the Tyrol and is known as the "Anklöpfeln in Stans" or the "knocking at the door at Stans". Bacchus, the god of wine, together with a high priest are the main figures, reminding us of the old Roman Bacchanalia.

Maschkererzug. A custom practised in villages of the Inn valley in the Austrian province of Tyrol.

Eugen Fehrle[12] describes a custom, practised in villages of the middle regions of the Inn valley which has much in common with the previous one; here, however, the noise element is missing and the emphasis is placed on the silent approach and departure of the maskers.

The "Maschkererzug" or the procession of maskers sets out on the eve of Old Christmas Day. At this occasion tall figures, dressed in white tightly fitting clothes, with mouth, nose and eyeholes painted blue and black to simulate a skull, with a white "horse rider" in their midst, march in complete silence into the parlours of the farms. There, they quietly approach the large table where a jug of cider is set out for their welcome. Slowly and deliberately, one by one, the masks lift the pitcher to their lips before the accordion player begins to play a slow waltz. They dance a few measures of this dance with each other and then retire into the dark night, as silently as they had come.

A slight variation of this custom is reported from one of the villages of the same valley, where the "Besenweible" or woman with a broom, a youth dressed in women's clothes who carries a broom, sweeps them one by

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[12] Eugen Fehrle, Feste und Volksbräuche im Jahreslauf europäischer Völker, Kassel, 1955.

one into the dark of the night.

The "Glöcklerlauf" of Ebensee in Upper Austria.

A very similar custom was described by Paul Geiger[13] in 1936 and more recently by Johann Lahnsteiner[14] from a village of the Austrian Lake district, which takes place on the same day.

Johann Lahnsteiner reports that the actors in this "Glöcklerlauf" or procession of bellringers of Ebensee, his native village, are youths and men who dress in white robes and wear transparent "figures", called "Glöcklerkappen" on their heads.

These "caps" consist of a board in which a semi-circular opening is carved. Into this opening an old felt hat is inserted to soften the sharp edges of the wooden board. A strong chin-strap is fixed to the hat and board to prevent the "cap" from slipping with the movements of the wearer. Erected on the board is the "figure", a star, a house, etc., made of wooden sticks. This wooden frame is covered with coloured paper which is also used for decorations. Through a small opening at the side, a burning candle is inserted into the hollow

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[13] Paul Geiger, Deutsches Volkstum in Sitte und Brauch, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1936.

[14] Johann Lahnsteiner, "Die Rindbacher Holzmasken", Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde, New Series, VI (1952), 12.

part of the "cap" and placed on a candleholder which is attached to the top of the hat, whereby the "cap" is lit up. The border of the hat is decorated with paper fringes which hide the "Glöckler's" face and make him unrecognizable. On his back he carries a set of cowbells, hanging from a harness. He usually holds a white pointed staff in his hand.

As soon as the vesper bells stop ringing on the eve of Old Christmas Day, the procession moves off: it is led by the "leader" or "spy" who wears ordinary clothes and no costume. He has neither a "cap" nor bells. Since it is his job to keep the paths clear, he runs about ten steps ahead of the others. In front of the homes of the most important and esteemed people of the community and in front of the inns, the "Glöckler" run around in a circle. This little "dance" is looked upon as a great honour and, therefore, rewarded with gifts and donations. But the writer assures us that it is only since the turn of the century that the "Glöckler" have enjoyed such a warm welcome. Previously, their "dance" was considered to be a heathen custom which was prohibited by ecclesiastical and a goodly number of secular authorities. Only a hundred years ago, the police had orders to catch any "Glöckler" they could lay their hands on; those caught were enlisted in the army. Despite this threat, young men congregated secretly and "ran", as soon as their spies

had ascertained that their field of operation had been cleared and made safe. According to old people's tales, a "Glöckler" who had been slain or shot, could not be buried in a cemetery but had to be interred on the spot where he had died from his wounds.

CHAPTER V

"PERCHTENLAUF" AND "WAMPELERREITEN"

There are two Alpine masking customs which for their character and timing neither quite fit into the preceding nor the following chapter, a phenomenon frequently encountered in many neat classifications of folklore materials. They are therefore described in a separate chapter.

I will first discuss the "Perchtenlauf" which differs from the other masked parades in that it usually takes place on the eve of Old Christmas Day. Occasionally it occurs also on the other two "Rauchnächte" or smoke nights, i.e. Christmas and New Year's Eve.

"Perchten" belief, "Perchtenlauf" and some variations in the Austrian provinces of Salzburg and Tyrol.

The oldest reported masking customs of the Alpine regions are those connected with "Frau Perchta". The origin of this figure is obscure but her appearance is tied to the middle of winter and Christmas time. This is, in old Germanic tradition, the time when country people are most concerned with the spiritual world because nature is lifeless and asleep.

According to Germanic belief, "Frau Perchta"

is a demon-like creature, half human, half goddess. She appears in one of two roles: either as a benevolent fairy in a blue cloak, crossing the countryside, blessing the people, bringing fertility to the land and symbolizing the good and the beautiful; or as a ravaging, dark, ugly looking demon who personifies everything wicked, ugly and bad. "Frau Perchta" is supposed to be particularly powerful during the "Perchtnacht", January 6th or Old Christmas Day, and this is the reason why in many places houses are still fumigated on that evening (hence the term "Rauchnacht" or smoke night for this evening).

There are many different ways in which the "Perchten" belief has been carried on in the Alpine regions over the years. Documented records of the "Perchtlspringen" or "jumping of the Perchten" were, according to Dörrer[1] found as early as the seventeenth century in the Eastern regions of the Tyrol, near Kitzbühel and Lienz, and from then onward frequent references to this wild activity are available in the court books of these districts. But it seems that in general the wild outings where fierce looking youths jumped with the aid of poles and roamed by night through the countryside and frightened young and old alike with their ugly looking masks, wild costumes and their roars, came more or less to an end with the closing of

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[1]Anton Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1949, p. 170.

the nineteenth century.

Today the "Perchtenlauf", which is observed under different names in several valleys of Salzburg and the Tyrol, is most prominent. Though the old pagan origins and motives, i.e. to implore the demons to be benevolent have long since disappeared, the belief that "Perchtenläufe" serve a good purpose remains, nevertheless, and it is for this reason that the "Perchten" are warmly welcomed and are offered hospitality when they arrive at the farms. Their arrival is not only considered to be a good omen for the year as far as the harvest is concerned, but the "Perchten" are also seen as messengers of good fortune for all members of the household.

The dual role in which "Frau Perchta" is known in tradition is also shown in the two-fold role of the "Perchten", the good, beautiful ones and the bad, ugly ones, who are the main participants of the "Perchtenlauf" which is usually held on the eve of January 6th, but can also take place on the eve of one or the other "Rauchnächte" (smoke nights), i.e. Christmas or New Year. The event is not necessarily a yearly affair as the old wild custom used to be; it usually takes place either every other year or at intervals of four years, but this decision is left to the participants. The word "Perchtenlauf", meaning "run of the Perchten", originates from a time when

"ugly Perchten" ranted and roared wildly across the countryside. The modern "Perchtenlauf" is a stately procession.

A very good example of a "Perchtenlauf" occurs in Gastein in the Austrian province of Salzburg and has been described by Heinrich von Zimberg.[2]

The "Perchtenlauf" of Gastein is directed by the "Perchten" captain, who until 1928 wore a military uniform to show by his outward appearance his dignity and authority over all the other "Perchten". Since 1936 the "Perchten" captain has appeared in the local costume of Gastein and his authority is symbolized by a drawn broad sword. It is he who announces to the residents of the valley, if and when "geperchtelt wird", i.e. when the procession takes place. The news of the impending "Perchtenlauf" is spread by messengers, and on the particular Sunday, all participants meet at a chosen inn to discuss the preparations.

Here it is decided who takes part and what role everyone plays. Although the great majority of the participants is the same, year after year, those who have died or grown too old have to be replaced by the younger generation. Young men, who used to have the parts of

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[2]Heinrich von Zimberg, Der Perchtenlauf in der Gastein, Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1947.

female companions of journeymen last time, can no longer play these roles because their faces have become more manly and they are therefore no longer suited to play girls. Other parts are given to them and the rising generation take their places.

The interest is keen and everyone is anxious to play an active role. Frequently, there are not enough masks to satisfy all those who wish to participate. Everyone is responsible for locating his own costume and restoring it if necessary, since the elaborate headgear of the "Schönperchten" or "beautiful Perchten" and the masks of the "Schiachen Perchten" or "ugly Perchten" and many other costumes have been kept safely by chosen families during the intervening years. Many hours are thus spent in preparation for the great event.

From local records it can be learnt that the honour to be a "Percht" is reserved for particularly chosen families, since the same family names appear again and again.

When Twelfth Night dawns, the "Perchten" prepare early for the procession. Although it is often very cold and weather conditions uninviting for a day outdoors, everyone hurries to the secret assembly point which is only known to the participants themselves, as idle onlookers would be most unwelcome. Here the captain care-

fully inspects every member before giving his final orders for the parade. It is appropriate to refer to "orders" in this case, since the "Perchten" believe in strict discipline and voluntarily submit to the commands of the captain. Any irregularity, especially drunkenness, during the parade results in permanent exclusion from the community of "Perchtenläufer".

As the procession is about to begin, the heavy headgear is mounted on the shoulders of the "Kappenperchten" (Perchten with big caps) with the help of numerous assistants who accompany the parade and carry the heavy masks during long marches between villages.

When the "ugly Perchten" are ready to start their mischief, the captain gives orders for the music to start, and organizes a trial dance with the "Kappenperchten". Only when he is certain that all is well does he give the signal for departure. Slowly the parade begins to move off.

The parade is usually headed by a rider on a hobby horse of some sort who makes way for the procession. Sometimes, however, he rides a real horse in which case the whole procession takes on a more solemn character. He is followed by the "Hanswurst" or clown and by the "Klaubauf" or first devil, carrying a pitchfork in his right hand.

After him come the witch and the goblin; the former is richly decorated with pinecones, whilst the latter is completely covered by a costume made of tree moss. With their funny tricks they entertain the entire procession as well as the spectators. They are particularly amusing when they climb roof tops and throw snowballs down into the crowd. They are followed by the band which usually consists of five to seven men.

Immediately after the band comes the captain, marching with drawn sword to emphasize his dignity. Like all "Schönperchten" he has a long black beard of cotton wool. He is followed by ten to twelve "Perchten" with ornate headgear who are escorted by "wives". They wear traditional local costumes, i.e. saucepan-like hats decorated with gold tassels, black silk dresses and coloured aprons. All so-called "females" in the procession are disguised men since no girl is allowed to take part. There is one exception to this rule, however: Two seamstresses who are in charge of any on-the-spot repairs march alongside and are the only females playing an active part, though they do not actually belong to the procession.

The "Perchten" group is led by the "first Percht" who is distinguished by wearing the most elaborate headgear of all, which is decorated with brilliant stones and shining gold. These "Kappenperchten" give the procession

a particularly festive character.

In the valley of Gastein "Kappen" or caps are made of simple big wooden boards in a variety of shapes which are then decorated according to the taste of the wearer. They are attached to a wooden frame which is connected with a carrying device, made of a headband and a belt and held together by an iron rod. This iron rod is elongated so that it stretches from the back of the head down to the waist where it is attached to a leather belt which keeps it in position. This assures that the extremely heavy headgear does not slip off. The wooden frame is covered with white linen or red velvet cloth. Onto this material mirrors are attached and then all other decorations in an orderly pattern. It is often necessary to borrow jewellery from several peasant families in order to decorate the headgear in a dignified and elaborate way. It is not unusual to find ten clasps and a variety of necklaces, watchchains and brooches or similar jewellery on one single "cap". When no jewellery is available, it is replaced by glistening tinsel and a variety of Christmas tree decorations. As a final touch the brush of a chamois is attached to show that the wearer honours the hunter. A fully decorated "cap" weighs between fifty and a hundred pounds, depending on the strength of its wearer. He needs the assistance of two or three people when putting it on and is able to move with some

freedom only when the headgear is firmly fixed to his leather belt. Hence he walks slowly and carefully, giving an appearance of dignity that influences the whole procession.

A feature of this parade which is peculiar to the valley of Gastein is the "Turmkappe" or "tower cap". This "cap" is made of a wooden frame in the shape of a fish trap, two or three yards high, with a representation of a cock attached to the top, and otherwise decorated in a manner similar to that of the other "Schönperchten".

The last of the "Schön- or Kappenperchten" is the "Tafelpercht", one of the ugliest figures in the entire procession. His headgear has the same basic shape as the others but it is decorated with an assortment of revolting objects, such as dead rats, mice, birds, vipers etc. This "ugly Percht" is supposed to suggest that the farmer has to rid his farm of all rubbish before the arrival of spring. This figure shows that even within the ranks of the "Schönperchten" the double role of the beautiful and the ugly is preserved. The companion of this ugly "Kappenpercht" is also an "ugly girl", represented by a rough-looking boy who dirtied his face with soot or clay.

The "Schönperchten" are followed by a group who do not exhibit the careful decorum of the "Schönperchten".

The first of these are the "Wild Perchten" or "Venison Perchten" who appear in hunting clothes, are equipped with hunting knives and have their wooden headgears decorated with replicas of the three most important local varieties of venison - chamois, hart and doe. A particularly beautiful "Percht" is the "Jäger Percht" or "Hunter Percht" whose headgear is richly decorated with such hunting trophies as the antlers of harts and does or the brushes of the chamois, stuffed birds in varying sizes from the wren to the golden eagle, and also small stuffed mammals. Because of these elaborate decorations their appearance is rather fantastic and clearly reflects the great local interest in the hunt. The hunter himself is accompanied by the poacher; they fight and wrestle constantly during the procession, adding much to the hilarity of the occasion.

This little group is followed by three pairs, King Herod, the Turk, and the Moor, each accompanied by his "wife", bearing witness to the Christian influence. The attire of these figures is more or less left to the imagination of the individuals. However, King Herod is characterized by his sceptre and the Turk and the Moor by long swords and whistles. It is King Herod's task to pronounce judgement over the people who are brought before him after being arrested by the "Schiachen Perchten" or "ugly Perchten". These trials are usually most witty and amusing.

The King is followed by the "Schiachen Perchten". This group includes two witches who both carry broomsticks, the fools and the devils whose duty it is to control the thronging crowd. It is the job of the witches and fools to play a variety of tricks with the goblins, designed to animate the entire procession. Woe to those who cross the witches paths; they will either be swept away with the brooms or be brought before the King for judgement. The fools appear in two forms, a handsome and an ugly one. The ugly one carries a cow's tail filled with sand with which he hits those towards whom he is well disposed, while the handsome one is armed with a large rag-doll, depicting a baby, attached to a long cord which he throws into the midst of onlooking girls and then retrieves again. If the rag-doll happens to fall into the girl's arms or into her lap, it is interpreted as a certain sign that she will become pregnant within the year. It is understandable, therefore, that all young girls scatter screaming in all directions when they see a "handsome fool" throwing his rag-baby.

The devils, the last survivors of the olden days when swarms of ghostly spirits used to roam and roar across fields and mountains by night, also belong to this group. They wear diabolical appearing, elaborately carved wooden masks, decorated with various kinds of antlers. Their bodies are covered with lambskins, held together with wide

leather belts. These belts have "rolls of bells" on the back, consisting of iron or copper balls with smaller metal balls inside them, which not only make a noise whenever the person wearing it moves, but also create a strange, rolling and tinkling sound. If these "devils" wish to be particularly noisy, they have to take high jumps and this, in turn, encourages other "ugly Perchten" to leap into the air, so that a continuous noise and the ringing of bells accompany the procession.

To show the particular attachment of mountain farmers to the forests from which they derive much of their livelihood, two "Waldmanderln" or little wood men are also included in the parade. They are goblin-like figures: one is a "cone-man", who is completely covered with pine-cones, the other a "moss-man" who wears a costume made of mosses which is so thick that his face can hardly be seen.

Haphazardly, the remaining figures join the procession: the ragman, the basket weaver, the quack, the scissors grinder, the herb digger and the chimney sweep, with other artisans playing a part in the peasant's daily life; some offer their wares, others enjoy playing different tricks. The most dreaded of all figures in the parade are two tailors with their big, long, extending and stretching scissors. One of them has the task of snatching hats from people's heads, whilst the other tries to

sew people together so that they lose their freedom of movement. Sometimes "Schnabelperchten", "Perchten" with long thin beaks, representing birds, also walk in the procession. The last of the figures is the "bell-carrier", carrying numerous cowbells, producing a variety of sounds, on a wooden cart which is richly decorated with boughs and twigs. He symbolizes spring when the farmer, accompanied by the sound of cowbells, drives his cattle up into the Alps. The train ends with the "bear driver", leading his "bear", another masker, on a long chain, in an effort to prevent the crowd from getting too near to the procession.

This long parade slowly moves from farm to farm; whilst the "Schönperchten" perform their slow dance to the tune of a simple, slow waltz, the "Schiachen Perchten", such as the witches, goblins, fools and devils play their tricks, enter houses, frighten the girls from their hiding places and bring them before the King to be judged.

Thereafter, the captain conveys his wishes for good health and happiness and God's blessings for the coming year and then the entire group bows deeply to show their sharing his wish. In appreciation the landlord now offers them "hospitality" and after these refreshments the procession moves on to the next farm, on their way to the next village. Every farmer is well aware of the great honour bestowed on him when the "Perchten" dance at his

farm, so much so, that their arrival is considered as a good omen even today just as it was a hundred years ago.

The "Perchtenlauf" closes with a happy social evening at the local inn. Here the "Perchten" not only recuperate from their strenuous eight to ten hour march, but also re-live their experiences of the day and celebrate with dancing and singing until the early morning hours. The "gracious young women" who were not allowed to partake actively in the proceedings of the day now get their chance and have to make up for lost time. Only when the music finally stops in the early morning hours does everyone walk home, heavily laden with headgear and costumes which are put back into storage for the next time, which may be just for a year but possibly for four or five years. Those too young to have played an active part are looking forward to the time when they too will be able to join in the fun.

Whilst facemasks were formerly worn by all "Perchten", they are now only used by devils and those representing animals. They are so grotesque that their purpose is rather to emphasize the supernatural appearance of the figure than to hide the identify of its wearer. With their extreme ugliness they frighten children and adults alike. These masks, some of which have been in use for eighty years, are products of local folk craftsmen; most are carved from local wood.

Local records show quite clearly why the earlier form of "Perchtenläufe" have disappeared. Formerly, crowds of wild young men, covered in animal skins with tails and wearing masks decorated with horns, used to race with pitch torches across the fields, jumping over fences and ditches, invading farms with threats and disappearing equally fast with lots of noise. As they were offered brandy at every farmhouse, they soon fell into wild excitement and hooliganism. It was considered very unwise to cross their paths.

If the "Perchtenzug" of one village met that of another it was not rare that a wild and often bloody fight would ensue which invariably resulted in serious injury or even death. Although young men who portrayed "ugly Perchten" always put something blessed in church into their shoe or pocket in order to protect themselves against the devil, it was common belief that they were in league with the devil. Consequently, the Church refused proper burial in a cemetery to all those who died wearing a mask. These poor victims had to be interred at the spot where the accident took place. A number of old crosses scattered over the mountainous landscape verify these events.

According to a report by Hans Richter in the Wiener Zeitung of January 28th, 1967[3], a very special

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3Hans Richter, "Von Schönen und Schiachen Perchten", Wiener Zeitung, XXIII (January 28th, 1967), 8.

variety of "Perchten" are still to be found in Rauris, the old gold mining village in the "Hohen Tauern" mountain range in the Austrian province of Salzburg. In this Alpine village groups of young men move from house to house in the night of January 5th, dressed as demons in strange outfits with bird-like heads. These "Schnabelperchten" or "Perchten" with beaks, locally also known as "Tresterer", wear long wide coats, decorated with colourful big patches, which used to be worn by old women, loose, white long-sleeved blouses, coloured woolen stockings and big yellow shoes made of straw. Over their heads they wear brightly coloured neckerchiefs whilst their face is covered by a huge beak. This beak-mask is unique in its simplicity: it is made of two hand towels with four sticks and a neckerchief around the back. This mask is so cleverly tied round the sticks that the beak can be opened and closed simultaneously with the mouth of the wearer if he so wishes. According to an old local legend these fearful creatures are responsible for order and tidiness in the homes.

For this reason they carry a basket for "bad children" on their back and a broom in their hand to sweep the parlours clean. They also have a big pair of scissors attached to their "robes" to enable them to cut open the stomachs of farmers' wives and sweep into them any dirt

they may find.

However, if they discover that the parlour is clean and tidy, they express their satisfaction with extremely loud cackling. The "Schnabelperchten" are not meant to be show pieces or tourist attractions; they are not anxious to be seen in public; their appearance is based on very ancient traditions and they aim to remain part and parcel of this small community.

In an article in the Swiss journal Schweizer Volkskunde[4] there is a description of a similar figure known by the name of "Schnabelgeis" or "beak-goat" which used to be seen in Meiringen, Willingen and Guttanen in the Swiss canton of Berne. It is not stated in the article at what time of the year the "Schnabelgeis" made its appearance. This mask had a movable lower jaw; with the help of a string, the wearer could produce a rattling noise by making the lower jaw touch the upper one. The task of this "beak-goat" was to peep through the windows of the houses to see that everything was clean and tidy and to frighten the children.

In Willingen a tall youth who had his shoulders covered with a large neckerchief carried a stick to which the head of the "Schnabelgeis" was attached. The beak

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[4]M. Soder, "Wintertage und ihre Bräuche", Schweizer Volkskunde, X/XII (1936), 86-87.

was that of a goose, a swan or a stork. This "Schnabelgeis" figure accompanied the procession and pricked those with his beak who were known to be untidy and could not keep order. Sometimes the younger boys who participated in the parade in costumes decorated with bells, fled to their homes in terror when they noticed the arrival of the "Schnabelgeis".

The Folklorist and Germanist I.V. Zingerle from Meran in South Tyrol, Italy, describes the "Perchtenlauf" around the middle of the nineteenth century as follows:

> The "Perchtenlauf" used to take place on the last day of Carnival. It was a kind of procession of disguised participants who were called "Perchten". They were divided into beautiful ones and ugly ones. The first were beautifully dressed and decorated with ribbons, braids and laces; the latter wore very ugly costumes covered with mice, rats, chains and bells. All carried poles. The poles of the beautiful "Perchten" were trimmed with colourful ribbons, those of the ugly ones were topped with a devil's head. Thus equipped they ran and jumped through the streets and even entered some houses. Amongst the ugly "Perchten" was always an "Aschenschütz" or ash shooter, whose job it was to shoot ashes or soot with an airgun-like weapon into people's faces. The beautiful "Perchten" sometimes distributed gifts. It was a loud and happy occasion, unless the "Wild Percht" herself got mixed up in the event. If this ghostly figure appeared, the game became dangerous. Her presence manifested itself when the others suddenly turned wild and frantically jumped over the fountain. In this case everyone soon scattered in fright and tried to find shelter in the nearest house. It was said that "the wild one" could no longer do any harm if one was under the eaves of a house. But if she were to catch a "Percht" she could tear him to pieces.[5]

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[5] I.V. Zingerle, Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes, Innsbruck, 1871, p.138. Translation by S.H. Jackson.

Although Zingerle does not specifically state whether or not the "Wild Percht" is another masker or not, I rather suspect that this ghostly figure he refers to is seen as a symbolic character.

Around 1850 "Perchtlspringen" or the jumping of the "Perchten" was still common in Krimml, Radstadt, Schladming and Flachau, all places in the Austrian province of Salzburg.[6] From other sources we learn that the last "Perchtlspringen" took place in Oberlienz, East Tyrol, in 1871 when a fire started in the house where the masks were stored, which not only destroyed all the masks but also caused severe damage to the entire village. The inhabitants interpreted this tragedy as punishment for the continuation of a heathen custom and stopped it forthwith.

Today the "Perchtentanz" or dance of the "Perchten" is known as a "show" in the region of the Pinzgau and the Pongau. The "Perchtenlauf" or "Berchtenlauf" or the running of the "Perchten" takes place in St. Johann im Pongau, Krimml, the Gastein valley and Zell am See, all towns or villages in the Austrian province of Salzburg, and occasionally in the Möll valley in the Austrian province of Carinthia.

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[6] W. Hein, "Tänze und Volksschauspiele in Tirol and Salzburg", Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft, III (1894), 46ff.

"Wampelerreiten" in Axams in the Austrian province of Tyrol.

The "Wampelerreiten" of Axams includes some of the features common to all other customs described in the previous chapter but it also differs from them in many ways. It is practised in the subalpine mountain villages of the Tyrol, such as Götzens, Birgitz, Grinzen in the Sellrain valley and especially Axams.

A. Dörrer[7] points out that it is not a "show" for others but an expression of exuberant joy over the impending arrival of spring, as well as an amusing test of masculine strength. He describes the "Wampelerreiter" or padded rider wearing a coarse white linen shirt, amply padded ("wampet") by huge amounts of hay, particularly over the chest and arms. His long pants are tied with straw over heavy boots. Over the pants goes a woman's red underskirt, which is tied with an old wide leather belt of the type worn by hunters. At night the "Wampelerreiter" wears a wooden mask, made by local craftsmen, whilst he covers his face with a wire mask or a stocking in the daytime. His head is covered either by a tall cone-shaped cardboard hat or an old felt hat. When he "rides", he wears a cap. In his right hand he carries a club.

[7] A. Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1949, pp. 344-348.

In this attire, the youths set out from a predetermined inn every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at four o'clock in the afternoon during Carnival time. Judging by their activities, they should be called "creepers" rather than "riders", as it is their task to creep twice around the village without being thrown to the ground. Previously, this group was led by one or two skipping "Schneuztücheltuxer", youths wearing blue aprons with handkerchiefs ("Schneuztücheln") on their hats and carrying long whips to lure spectators from their homes. Nowadays, however, they have become rather rare.

Five to ten "Wampelerreiter" move stealthily along the houses, their backs protected by walls, fences and benches. Whenever they are in the open, they run, turning round and round all the time, using their sticks to feel their way or to defend themselves. The spectators try to interfere; a daredevil, for instance, may jump forward and try to knock the "Wampeler" down from behind and "ride" him into the ground, without actually fighting with him. If he does not succeed in his first attempt, he must let him go. It is the task of each "Wampeler" to prowl twice around the entire village. If he succeeds without being thrown to the ground and emerges with his shirt clean and white, he is fêted as the hero of the day and treated at the local inn. More often than not, however, the "game"

ends with bruises and torn shirts even today. Dörrer sees in the basic idea of the wrestling on the ground the desire of the villagers to refertilize the ground by beating it. Records of many serious attempts to stop this rough Carnival custom are found in local archives dating back to the nineteenth century.

Other Carnival figures that make their appearance at Axams at that time are the "Tuxer", well known Tyrolese types from the Tuxer valley where they used to enjoy an excellent reputation as proprietors of Alpine dairies as far back as 1700.

In Axams they represent "high class society" at these occasions. To dress such an elegant "Tuxer" has become extremely difficult, since many fancy silk aprons and silk handkerchiefs are needed and the ladies are either quite reluctant to loan theirs to the boys or do not own any, as city clothes have become so common, even in the country. The costumes of the "Tuxer" are antique and extremely artistic. Over their warmest every-day clothing they wear white shirts with silk handkerchiefs as ties. Silk aprons are wrapped around the pant legs to make them look life plusfours. The calves of their legs are covered with white stockings and their shoes are tied with colourful laces. Silken neckerchiefs hang from their shoulders, and their chest is similarly graced with a

silken doublet. More silk neckerchiefs are fastened to their tall hats and fall down over their shoulders. The front of each hat is enhanced by two cock features. The face is hidden behind a dainty, pretty-looking wooden mask.

Because the "Tuxer" can, as a rule, only be seen on one day during the Carnival season now, namely Thursday before Lent, everyone turns out to admire these dignified, erect figures. If pretty girls happen to cross their path, it is their privilege to catch them and conduct them, arm in arm to the nearest inn where they have to treat them to a glass of wine, brandy or liqueur.

On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, members of the "Tuxer" group visit those houses where they know that they will not only find pretty girls anxious to dance, but also a glass of an alcoholic beverage. Having danced with every girl in the house, they move on. They always disguise their voice in order not to be recognized.

The third group to be seen at Carnival time in Axams are the "Laniger", a group dressed in coarse dirty rags. Their appearance and behaviour is fierce, and they are the terror of all females. Since their "outfit" is easy to come by and since young people always enjoy wild fun, there is never a shortage of "Laniger", whose number is increased by the schoolboys.

The parade in its entirety is, like all others, eagerly watched by spectators, but in this instance, the spectators are drawn from the villagers themselves who watch the beauty of the costumes and try to impede the "Wampelerreiter" in their attempt to reach their goal unharmed.

CHAPTER VI

CARNIVAL PROCESSIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE

In this chapter we turn from the Christmas disguises to those of the parades and processions usually held at Carnival time in the Austrian provinces of Salzburg, Styria and Tyrol, the Black Forest of Germany, and Basel in Switzerland.

Participation in these parades is strictly limited to males, mostly to the young, unmarried men of the community. Women and girls are merely allowed to help in the preparation and sewing of the costumes, and sometimes permitted to accompany processions as seamstresses for possible on-the-spot repairs.

Within all these Carnival parades a distinct pattern can usually be observed. In the "Schemenlauf" of Imst on the river Inn in the Austrian province of Tyrol, "Scheller" and "Roller", two male masks, move and dance as pairs, which means that every "Roller" has for his partner a "Scheller". All other characters in the parade whether they are beautiful or ugly, kind or wicked, dance and play with a partner and not independently. By contrast, the "Carnival runners" of the Mur valley in the Austrian province of Styria, always "run" in single file

as do the "Schleicher" of Telfs of Tyrol who otherwise share many of their characteristics with the "Schemen" of the region. In the "Morgenstreich" in Basel the maskers neither parade in pairs nor in single file but are all gathered in larger groups as musicians or lantern bearers, all costumed to represent their particular theme.

Carnival processions always consist of various groups. Some act as the performing artists and musicians, others are responsible for mischief and often wild and rough entertainment; others are chosen to dispense public justice and to poke fun at local happenings, whilst yet other groups announce the forthcoming events of the Carnival and are responsible for keeping order.

All Carnival parades pride themselves on some special feature in which outstanding skill and dexterity, efficiency and artistry are displayed by the performers. In most of the following examples a special formal dance which is performed to the ringing of large and small bells is the highlight of the occasion. The "Roller" and "Scheller" perform a square dance encircling prominent people, and the communities in the Mur valley pride themselves for their round dance which the "Schellfaschinge" perform to the muffled sounds of the big bells of the "Glockfaschinge". At all these occasions the noise element plays an essential part. In most masked parades a variety

of bell ringings dominates the scene, but at Basel the air is filled with the sound of drums and pipes, whilst long whips are used at Nassereith to make a noise reminiscent of pistol shots.

Other Carnival processions draw attention to the interesting types of the times and criticize local, national and sometimes even international happenings and events. In the Black Forest villages, the readings from the big "Book of Fools" which refer satirically to interesting, humourous local events highlight the occasion, and in Basel the artistically painted lanterns with satirical poems expressing social criticism attract the greatest admiration from the spectators.

Apart from the "Faschingrennen" of the Upper valley of the Mur, which to my knowledge is still an internal affair, intended to strengthen the community spirit and to display the dexterity and skill of the participants, all other parades have become tourist attractions and are advertised on local notice boards and the "Morgenstreich" in the newspapers of Basel. They attract people from near and far who are anxious and eager to watch the skillful elegant dances of the maskers, to admire the often very beautiful costumes of the participants and to join in the gay atmosphere of the occasion.

Whilst the masking activities described in Chapter

IV are intended to chase away wicked demons, Carnival parades celebrate the arrival of spring and the awakening of new life.

Finally, all Carnival parades include some kind of gift soliciting, usually for some worthy community project or at least to defray expenses not only for the participants themselves, but also for the groups or societies to which they belong.

All masked parades described here take place during the Carnival season, between Old Christmas Day (Dreikönig, Epiphany) and ending on Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras), the day before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, concentrating on the final days before the start of the fasting season. The only event of this type which falls outside of the Carnival season is the "Morgenstreich" of Protestant Basel which is scheduled for the first Monday and Wednesday in Lent, distinguishing it from all other Carnival events which are tied to the Roman Catholic areas of Switzerland.

"Faschingrennen" in the Valley of the Upper Mur in the Austrian Province of Styria.

A custom very closely related to "Perchtenlaufen" is described in some detail by Karl Stöffelmayer.[1]

[1] Karl Stöffelmayer, "Das Obermurtaler-Faschingrennen", Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde, VII (1953), 37-45.

In the Alpine valleys of the Tauern-mountain range in Upper Styria, descending from the north to the river Mur, a very ancient Carnival custom still survives which surpasses all other Carnival processions and activities known in the Tyrol and other Central European regions by its earnestness and complete lack of restraint. Stöffelmayer refuses, however, to disclose the names of the villages where these customs are still practised in the hope that this "wonderland of folklore" would remain untouched and unspoilt by outside influences and intrusions. Nevertheless, he confesses that the custom is only observed by people living on the north bank of the river Mur, even if communities spread to the other side of the stream share the same priest and the same school.

Most of these "Faschingrenner" or Carnival runners are unmasked and wear clothing which, though not worn every day, is nevertheless quite common and ordinary. They still, as of old, run in single file from farm to farm, across meadows and fields, and exercise everywhere their undisputed Carnival freedom and right. Every egg, hen or other small animal they can lay their hands on belongs to them and once taken has to be bought back in hard cash. No door or lock is strong enough to keep them out of house or stable. Their daring, pluck, skill and obtrusiveness force their entry on all inhabitants who, in fact, secretely long for their coming.

The leader of the group is a "sweeper". Though he normally wears a costume made of rags, he merely had a little red cap on his head as a distinguishing mark when Stöffelmayer watched the event in 1952. His clothing consisted of ski pants and the customary Styrian jacket. This "sweeper" is not chosen by the others, but has to fight for this honour.

On the Sunday before Carnival a regular wrestling match is staged on the floor of a barn and the man who has beaten all his competitors and proved himself to be the strongest emerges as the leader. It is his task to beat anyone trying to obstruct the procession.

If two groups of Carnival runners meet, they must immediately stop and the two "sweepers" have to wrestle with each other. If one of them is beaten, the second strongest in the line of the defeated group may demand a fight. He, too, had been selected because he had proved himself victorious in a fight and was considered to be the second strongest. His distinguishing marks are a white apron and a hatchet. If he, too, is beaten, the first "Schellfasching" or Carnival runner with bells can step into the breach, but if he loses, the entire group has to retire and withdraw forthwith.

The "sweeper" not only sweeps the path with his broom but also swings it gracefully in circles in the air.

He is followed by the second strongest, also known as the "Fleischhacker" or butcher, and twelve "Schellfaschinge". They are young men, wearing high caps or sugar-loaf-like hats, decorated with candies wrapped in multi-coloured crêpe paper and pointed tops with tassels and strips of the same paper, dangling in all directions. These high paper hats are usually held in place by means of a rubber band fastened under the chin.

"Schellfaschinge" wear white shirts hanging over their short leather pants. Large beautiful old multi-coloured silken handkerchiefs cover their shoulders, representing the last remnants of mothers' or grandmothers' splendid shoulder wraps. They are kept in place by a garland of "Schellen" or little bells, running from the right shoulder to the left hip, such as is hung around the neck of horses when taken out to pull a sleigh. In their right hand "Schellfaschinge" carry wooden swords which can be short like toy swords or longer, depending on the locality where they are used. They may well be remnants of the sword dance formerly practised in this region. Some "Schellfaschinge" carry poles instead of swords, almost as high as a man which are decorated with colourful bunches of artificial flowers.

Their group is followed by four "Glockfaschinge" or Carnival runners with big, heavy bells who are similarly

dressed but wear Styrian hats, decorated with small bunches of rosemary or myrtle and fluttering silk ribbons, similar to those worn by best men or escorts of bridesmaids at weddings. They carry big Alpine bells in each hand from which they derive their name. With these bells they are supposed to make as much noise as possible with as few intervals and interruptions which is indeed a very demanding task.

A fairly large group, locally known as the "Gfettlach", the mob in ragged clothes, provides the hilarity and laughter for the occasion and follows the procession screaming, shouting and begging until they arrive at a house where they attempt to outdo each other with their noisy and daring tricks. This group is dominated by the "horse" which is offered to each and everyone by the horse dealer, and then repeatedly re-sold again. If the "poor horse" collapses and dies after lengthly financial transactions and prior to its rebirth, the "butcher" comes and skins the animal by removing the blanket with which it is covered and demands his reward for the service he has rendered. Anyone who only appears to have any money to spare, is in permanent danger; it can easily happen that "the horse" passes by him and drops in front of him merely to oblige him to pay for the damages.

Meanwhile, the "Poppadudeln", a group of men in female disguise representing old and young mothers carrying their "Fatschenpoppa" or rag dolls in their arms, beg for pacifiers. They moan and cry with one rag doll on their breast and another one clinging to their back. There are also some without rag doll, obviously in an advanced stage of pregnancy who simulate collapse in front of a house, necessitating a dramatic, public forceps delivery by the doctor who is always a member of the "Gfettlach" group, and again the household is asked for a donation for the crying infant and the poor mother.

There is no limit to the inventiveness displayed by the members of the "Gfettlach" group; apart from the previously mentioned characters there is always a carrier of mouse traps, "cheap Jacob", with a basket on his chest from which he extracts old corsets and bras which he offers for sale.

The "Heangreifer", a snatcher or grabber hurries with dainty dancing steps ahead of the train or circles the homesteads. He is dressed in a costume of feathers. Every little feather of this young man's suit has to be stitched carefully and painstakingly on to the cloth and if the costume is to look particularly natural and impressive, the feathers must even show the fluffy pattern of a hen or cock. On his left thumb he wears a long spur

and a dead hawk or buzzard dangles on his back and often also on his chest. The "Heangreifer" prowls around houses like a cat, climbs to eaves and roof tops and steals any eggs and chickens he can find which the farmer's wife then has to buy back from him in hard cash. It is his habit to raise his hands as if bestowing his blessings, only to show the bystanders all the eggs he had collected from oat troughs and hen houses.

The group assembles at the village inn where the youths put on their costumes. At 6:00 a.m., immediately after the church bells called to prayer, three musicians, dressed in their Styrian Sunday costumes and playing the accordion, clarinet and trumpet, lead off the train. And although it is still too dark to be seen, the participants move off in small leaps and bounds, not too hurriedly or quickly though, rather like running almost on the spot and lifting knees up high, so that the musicians can still walk at normal speed and keep up with them. The "Schellfaschinge" carry their swords upright, as if they were candles. The custom demands that everyone in the line keeps "leaping".

The entire landscape is filled with the cacophonous melody of the cowbells which is only interrupted when their carriers stop in front of a farm to dance their "Kranzl" or "Radl" - a round dance. When they approach a house with their "music", they normally find it closed and tightly locked, but the inhabitants soon appear at the

windows, anxiously wondering whether they would be honoured with a dance. If the train decides to enter the yard, the "sweeper" raises his broom vertically, thus giving the sign for the dance to start. The four "Glockfaschinge" then form a rectangle and start swinging their big muffled bells.

The "Schellfaschinge" circle once around them clockwise, following the "sweeper", who then suddenly leaves the circle and runs in the opposite direction, starting to form an outer circle, in which he is followed by the "Schellfaschinge". For a short time there are two circles running counter-clockwise until the "Schellfaschinge" form once more a single circle. Suddenly the music and the dance stop and the ringing of the bells ceases; the time has come for the four "Glockfaschinge" to start their singing. They sing a harmonic, polyphonic, patriotic tune which they had chosen themselves and which is best suited to their young high voices. After the song the circle is dissolved in the same way but in a clockwise direction.

Meanwhile the "Heangreifer" has carried out his daring escapades and the "Gfettlach", who normally keep a respectful distance from the group, have arrived and are pestering and tormenting the onlookers who are milling around. The "Schotenklaner",[2] which can best be translated

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[2]Schoten = waste water left over in the preparation of cheese; klanen = to paste, to grease.

as the man who flings mud, squirts everyone with a red liquid and swings his rag brush. He has a number of pots tied with a rope around his waist.

At this time the doors and gates of the house and yard are opened and the participants of the Carnival train are asked into the parlour and offered refreshments. They are also given eggs which are buried in pots filled with oats. Finally the "Glockfaschinge" and "Schellfaschinge" have to dance with all the females of the house before leaving the premises.

The running is strenuous enough, but often it is not the only hard task. In one community in which the Carnival runners carry a staff instead of a sword, a chain is hung at chest height from one gate post to the other over which the "Schellfaschinge" have to jump with the help of their staff. In another community caricature figures and symbols are placed in inaccessible places of house or yard and the "Faschinge" or Carnival runners are not allowed to enter the houses until they have succeeded in hauling down or removing them. "Hänsl and Gretl" in old patched clothes may be sitting on a steep ridge of the roof, or figures, wearing grinning masks, look out from a skylight. Sometimes baskets, beautifully decorated with crêpe paper, containing bacon and eggs, are put into precarious spots and all ladders are removed and hidden to make the ascent more difficult for those who have to

fetch them down.

For the dance, money donations have become customary and every household has to count on spending three to four dollars in small cash on the dancers for this honour. People who happen to meet the Carnival train must also pay. And yet every family ardently hopes for a visit from the Carnival runners and deeply resents it if they are passed by.

Occasionally a train is unexpectedly confronted by a youth who turns his broom in the same direction as the "sweeper" of the train. In answer to such a challenge the entire procession stops immediately while the "sweeper" continues turning his broom. Anxious decisive moments follow until the "sweeper" suddenly throws his broom high into the air and attacks his opponent. Not a fight but a wrestling match ensues. If the "sweeper" succeeds in throwing his opponent to the ground, the procession can continue. If, however, the "sweeper" is beaten, he has to quit and the youth who knocked him down takes the lead or the procession disperses. Sometimes the "sweepers" of two trains, facing each other, start a wrestling match but this is a rare occasion nowadays; more often, for the past two generations, they unite and form a big wheel for a dance together at a predetermined spot.

It is a strenuous day for the youths who run without stopping all day over hills and dales from farm to

farm, rushing and panting in order to be back in the village before the church bells call for evening prayers. Old villagers remember youths who were taken by surprise by the church bells and tore off their Carnival clothes. Tradition has it that Carnival runners are exposed to grave danger after the chiming of the bells because the devil is then free to fetch from their midst any victim he may choose. Many legends are told about such happenings.

However, as a rule, the procession returns to the village before the bells start ringing and once again the previously described dance is performed in the same manner. Suddenly and without warning the "sweeper" stops, turns once around himself in the opposite direction of the dance and runs into the nearest house. The others continue their dance until the first "Schellfasching" reaches the spot from which the "sweeper" left and disappears in exactly the same manner into the house. Thus the dance continues with one after another leaving as soon as he has freed himself from the magic speel by turning his body in the opposite direction of the circling dancers. Finally, the last "Glockfasching" disappears, and after him the many different figures which belong to the "Gfettlach". The village sighs with relief that all is over.

This event takes place on Carnival Monday, the Monday before Ash Wednesday, every other year. It is

organized either by a farmer who announces the approaching festivity two weeks beforehand after church in the village square or by a society of men such as the local fire brigade or the musical band.

The proceeds from the donations run surprisingly high since food items like butter, meat, eggs and bacon are sold by public auction after the event. The money is used for community projects such as the purchase of new musical instruments for the band, the erection of a war memorial or the building of a new fire hall.

The epilogue of this Carnival custom is the "Schinderhochzeit" or mock-wedding which takes place on Shrove Tuesday to which everyone is urged to attend by the organizers. The village square is crowded already early in the afternoon on Shrove Tuesday. Everyone is eager to witness this amusing and entertaining event.

The "wedding procession" starts from the same house from which the Carnival procession had set out the previous day. It is led by the same musical band and followed by four men in white clothes. In their wide "Schieberpfoat", the work clothes worn in mid-summer at harvest time, these men cleverly imitate a priest, a sexton and two acolytes. One carries a censer, fueled with hair and claws instead of incense, which yield an abominable smell; a tin can replaces the font and the "holy water" is dispensed with

a foxtail. The "priest" carries a book in his hands.

Just as in a real wedding two pairs appear: the "Kranzler", escorts or ushers, carrying staffs decorated with ribbons and wearing hats, trimmed with myrtle and ribbons; and the "Kranzlerinnen" or bridesmaids by their side, wearing national costumes with flaxen tresses pinned to their heads. Their costumes are so well made that one tends to forget that at Carnival time all female roles are played by boys.

They are followed by the bride and groom. Whilst the groom is supposed to be ugly and dirty in dress and appearance, wearing a torn apron over a ragged suit, the "bride" is beautifully made up to give a rather charming impression. "She", too, wears the local traditional costume and has flaxen tresses, crowned by a bridal wreath made of the ears of corn.

Following the bridal pair walk all the young men who had taken part in the Carnival activities of the previous day. Marching in pairs, they are dressed in their Styrian Sunday-best, as is customary at ordinary weddings. Each wears a small spray made of ears of corn in his button hole. The whole procession moves in a wide arc through the entire village and eventually returns to the square where an altar, consisting of a rough wooden table and a similar stool has been erected.

The "parson" places himself behind this plain table and is surrounded by the "wedding company". The evil-smelling incense and the "holy water" are lavishly dispensed. The "parson" now reads the sermon in verse. Then he asks the bridal pair questions which resemble the customary questions, in that they have to be answered in the affirmative. The questions are asked in a mirth provoking way. For instance, the bride is asked whether she would be happy if her husband made her pregnant every year.

To show that the marriage bond is truly sealed, they receive a big iron ring. The "parson" then recites "the litany" which is actually a series of limericks referring to local events of the past year, while the sexton makes his collection. Finally, the entire wedding party retires to the nearest inn and the bride is delivered of a rag-baby by forceps. Stöffelmayer explains that it used to be customary to bury the rag-doll from this particular delivery that very same evening.

It is perhaps noteworthy how much importance village people still attach to these customs even today. Old farmers occasionally still mention that the corn and especially oats grow better if the Carnival runners have crossed over the fields. Even members of the younger generation do not dare to consider the event as mere entertainment but always as a serious task. They never refer to

it as being funny or jolly, but always as "very beautiful". It is also significant that none of the participants would dare to get drunk on that day - not even at night when the actual "run" is over. It is extraordinary to watch the excitement and enthusiastic participation of the entire village or rather the entire region; everywhere there is a spirit of good will and understanding, and the community spirit and solidarity come alive again. Friendship and affection awaken new strength. Only where "Carnival runs" still have the force that binds and cements a community, when it is an expression of strength and the will to live together, only then it fulfils its proper and significant function.

The "Schemenlauf" of Imst in the Austrian Province of Tyrol.

From a very informal and exuberant Carnival custom we move on to another Carnival event which is more like an orderly parade than anything else.

Since the end of the eighteenth century Imst, in the Austrian Tyrol, seems to have been the main centre for the "Schemenlauf" or "run of the Schemen" in its present form, though it has also been practised in modified fashion in neighbouring communities. Old documents indicate that in earlier centuries the "Schemenlauf" was quite common in the upper Inn valley, in Aussfern on the pass of See-

feld, in Inzing, around Innsbruck and Hall, in the Wipp valley and in Upper Bavaria around Salzburg.[3]

In some of these villages special forms of the customs developed or particular parts were emphasized. Dörrer, in his Tiroler Fasnacht points to Friedrich Lüers'[4] illustration in Volkskundliche Studien aus den Bayrischen und Nordtiroler Bergen and emphasizes that the principal figures of "Schellen" or people with big bells and "Roller" or people with smaller bells of Imst, Nassereith and Wald in the Pitz valley are also prominent in Ammergau in Bavaria. Hans Moser,[5] quoted by Dörrer, found that in the sixteenth century sword and ring dances were common there. He points out that many Tyrolese artisans and young peasants moved to this region in the seventeenth century when war and plague depopulated their homeland; they brought their customs with them and maintained close connections with the Tyrol.

For centuries Central Switzerland also had economic and folk cultural relations with the old Tyrol and the people of the Bregenzerwald in Austria. As shepherds,

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[3] Anton Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: 1949, p.228.

[4] F. Lüers, Volkskundliche Studien aus den Bayrischen und Nortiroler Bergen, München: Alpenfreund-Bücherei, 1922, Illustration 1.

[5] H. Moser, "Archivalische Belege zur Geschichte altbayrischer Festbräuche im 16. Jahrhundert", Staat und Volkstum, Festgabe für A.K. von Müller, Diessen: 1933, p. 182.

painters, bricklayers, woodcarvers and builders, the Tyrolese went to earn their living there.

Repeated battles between the Habsburgs and the Swiss brought the two peoples into frequent contact. During the Baroque period Carnival figures as well as buildings acquired the characteristics of East Alpine folk culture. Thus we find even today in places like Einsiedeln, Rothenthurm and other villages in the canton of Schwyz in Central Switzerland, the "Tyrolese", young men dressed in Tyrolese costume at Carnival time. Other Swiss figures in masks appear as "Tyrolese Schemen".

The name and notion of "Schemen" occurs throughout German speaking regions of Central Europe. The first written record of a "Schemenlauf" goes back to Abraham a Santa Clara, the folk preacher of the second half of the seventeenth century, a Swabian who had personal connections with Salzburg and Tyrol. He reported witnessing the "Schemenlauf" in Imst during a visit to that town:

> In several places as here it is customary that citizens and other common people organize a "Schemenlauf" once a year at the time of the wild and silly Carnival . . .[6]

The word "Schemenlauf" now applies to a local Carnival festivity celebrated every three, four or five years in the Tyrol which occurs mainly in and around Imst

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[6] A. Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: 1949, pp. 229-230.

where certain very ancient Carnival figures play the principal parts.

The words "scimo, scemo" in Old High German and "scheme" in Middle High German mean phantom or spirit and contain the root "ski", meaning to shine or to glisten.[7] These two features still characterize the nature of the Tyrolese "Schemenläufer" of today who are seen as "shining spirits" who are supposed to bring new strength to the growing corn and other farm products.

The words "Schemen" and "Larven" are first found in a Tyrolese vellum manuscript of the thirteenth century which originally belonged to a local monastery - either, according to the binding, to the Augustine canons of Neustift in the Wipp valley or, according to its locality, to the Cistercian monks of Stams in the upper Inn valley.[8] This glossary is arranged according to subjects. The above words are defined in the chapter on wild animals. They are said to mean phantom or demon and refer to the "Scheme" as apparition, appearance, silhouette, originally the soul of the dead.

The langobardic word "masca", which also became

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[7]Karl Meuli, "Maske, Maskereien", Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens, ed. E. Hoffmann-Krayer and Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1932-33, V, Sp. 1765-66.

[8]Dörrer found this reference in Althochdeutsche Glossen, Berlin: Steinmeyer und Sievers 1, 1879, p. 253.

part of the Tyrolese world of imagination, means a person in disguise, representing the spirit wrapped in a net.[9]

It is not clear why the "Schemenlaufen" has always been related to the days preceding Lent, whereas the "Perchtlspringen" has been associated with the custom of Martinmas and St. Nicholas Day and partly with the twelve nights before Old Christmas Day. However, it is noteworthy that the night of the "Berchten" or "Perchten" was subject to different demonic concepts and influences of the times, whilst Carnival was closely connected with growth and vegetation.

The institutions of the Church, such as the giving of gifts on Old Christmas Day on the one hand and the end of the licentious period on the eve of a forty days' fast on the other, also influenced the old customs. This influence helped the "Schemenlauf", since Carnival was for a long time not only tolerated but even approved of by the higher classes of society and the Church, whereas the "Perchten" activities with all the beliefs surrounding them were considered to be thorns in the flesh. But it would be unfair to see the different development of the two practices and customs only from an ideological point of view. The main reason was human nature which could no

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[9] Karl Meuli, Schweizer Masken, Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1943, pp. 60-61. See also Chapter II, p.13.

longer be satisfied with the chasing away of demons but felt a need to celebrate the awakening of a new life with the arrival of spring.

The western part of the Tyrol along the upper valley of the Inn, the Vintschgau and the eastern part of Switzerland are the main regions in which the "Alpine Schemenlaufen" has been celebrated since the Middle Ages.

In his chapter on the development of the "Schemenlauf" Dörrer[10] points out that there are drawings and etchings on the rocky walls of the Alps representing head decorations similar to those worn by the principal figures of today's "Schemenlauf" and animal masks such as those seen at the "Perchtlspringen" and in the related group of the "ugly Kläuse" of the Vintschgau in South Tyrol, Northern Italy. Nevertheless, he does not find it possible to trace the development of these masking and Carnival customs from their probable origin in vegetation cults or the fear of the demons to the forms and notions of today. We have, in fact, no proofs or records for most customs from the Middle Ages.

Until one hundred and fifty years ago, only those who opposed or resisted these customs referred to them. Only transgressions were recorded, on special days, when a person in strange disguise or wearing clothes of the opposite sex overstepped the line or committed a crime.

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[10] A. Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: 1949, p.238.

Such transgressions were not altogether surprising in a community of robust mountain folk with more violent inclinations then people have today. The fights of the authorities against the excesses of Carnival are as old as Carnival itself, which was always subject to ideological and social prejudices as well as differences in opinion owing to differences in age and character. But these documents neither describe the customs themselves nor their functions.

After many scattered attempts at prohibition in various regions all disguises and maskings, including the "Schemenlaufen" were forbidden by the courts in several communities around Innsbruck, according to the Innsbrucker Staatsarchiv of 1707 and genuine efforts were made to enforce the law.

In 1746 the Austrian Government introduced a masking tax, according to which every mask had to be stamped and a tax of eighteen crowns had to be paid. The nobility and middle class could now celebrate their "taxed masked balls" with the blessings of the authorities whilst the rural Carnival customs were prosecuted with ever-increasing vigour. Some isolated villages decided to give up their Carnival activities voluntarily, either to repent for a local catastrophe or to prevent one, while others were eventually successfully suppressed by the authorities. An order issued by the Emperor in 1774 forbade all masking customs in the Empire with the exception of masked balls

in the capital cities. The final blow to the "Schemenlauf" came at the trial of Pfunds in 1775 when severe punishments were handed down and all costumes and masks had to be handed over to the authorities.

However, the community of Imst always remembered their old customs and traditions and took advantage of every possible opportunity to practise them. They finally received some encouragement for their activities during the Romantic period at the beginning of the twentieth century and since that time we can find reports about "Schemenläufe" in various local newspapers.

Dörrer[11] gives an excellent description of a "Schemenlauf" which took place on February 20, 1938, between noon and 6:00 p.m. in the streets and squares of Imst. Only local youths and men in good standing were allowed to take part and were personally responsible for their costumes and masks. During the week following January 6th, when the most important meeting was held to determine the date, the leaders and all other relevant details, everyone was busy with numerous preparations. Everyday quarrels and enmities were laid aside and forgotten, and local and international politics were temporarily pushed into the background so that everyone could direct all his energies towards a common goal. While youths and men hammered, built and carved wood,

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[11] A. Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: 1949, pp. 264-305.

girls and women helped with the sewing and decorating of costumes. The evenings were spent in practising steps and dances and, above all, the ringing of bells.

When the great day finally drew close, every participant had to pay a modest fixed entrance fee into a common cashbox to cover the expenses for food and drink for the day of the procession. February 20th started with a church service, dedicated to the memory of all former participants. The remainder of the morning was devoted to the old custom, locally called "Vigatter" or assembly, which was the prologue, in the course of which public justice was freely and jokingly administered and penalties, punishments and reprimands inflicted on the offenders. As in other folk plays and processions, masked town criers on horseback led a multicoloured crowd of Carnival maskers and a band playing popular music. They announced either in prose or verse the forthcoming festivities and administered public justice over local events of the past year. It was natural that the keen participation in the "Vigatter" had somewhat diminished in recent years, since proceedings were no longer as uninhibited and personal as they used to be when the people of Imst were still isolated from the outside world.

Towards midday the main activities started with the arrival of masked figures who gathered in small groups at a pre-selected inn. At 12:00 o'clock exactly, shots

were fired to mark the beginning of the occasion and the leaders declared the road open. This particular day was blessed with brilliant sunshine by the time the crowd of almost three hundred and seventy youths and men participating in the "Schemenlauf" assembled. The thirty-two "Sackner" or bag-carriers, and twenty-eight "Spritzer" or squirters, found it hard to control the crowd who tried to obstruct the path of the procession which was already on its way.

Led by the first or leading "runner", the procession consisted of thirty-four "Roller" or people with little bells, and "Scheller" or people with big, heavy bells, eight "Laggescheller" and "Laggeroller" or figures caricaturing and mocking "Roller" and "Scheller", two "Kübele-Majen" or elves with little buckets, a group of thirty-two witches, with twenty-five musicians and fifteen "Labara" singers with their band (all to be described and explained in detail later). Next came the festive floats, led by one depicting the fight for survival of winter and summer, decorated with corncobs, flax and vines as symbols of fertility. Then came floats depicting the mountain railway, the mountain stream, the rag pile, the sausage machine, the radio station, the witches cauldron and the harvest. The group of "bears" and many other small masked groups followed.

As soon as the leading "runner" raised his brush, the dancing and jumping began. With constant movement, and a variety of activity the entire masked procession descended from the upper part of the town.

All figures walked in pairs; their dancing pattern consisted of their facing each other, then turning their backs towards each other while leaping high into the air and crossing both legs in order to make their bells ring as loudly as possible. This pattern was repeated hundreds of times. The "Schellers" movements were more restrained and cumbersome than those of the "Roller". They jumped heavily from one leg to the other so that their bells gave off regular, uniform sounds. Before the first pair ended its last leap, the second pair started and so the "dance" continued ceaselessly with great elegance, beauty and precision, enhanced by masks, costumes, decorations and bells of various sizes.

Suddenly one of the participants singled out a spectator, took him to the inn to be fortified with a glass of wine and one or two pretzels and then to a special dance of honour, executed by at least one pair of dancers and culminating in a special curtsy in front of him. In recognition of this honour the spectator was happy to give whatever donation he could afford. Similar special guests were sought out by a group of witches and led into a circle formed by "Roller" and "Scheller" who then per-

formed a dance in their honour.

On the lower town square, where everyone wanting to see and be seen gathered, a most colourful picture unfolded. Here, as witches chased around, their shrill music intermingled with the ringing and chiming of the bells of the principal maskers, the whole affair developed into a wild Carnival tumult in which masks and men, brilliance and beauty, culture and savagery, genuine emotion and sheer humour met and mixed. The order of centuries had given way to a confusion of lust and passion.

"Roller" and "Scheller", also known as "the people with bells", are still the most distinguished and elegant group in all Carnival processions. They are the pride and beauty of the "Schemenlauf" in Imst, the main figures in the masked play, the models for the Carnival types of the Bavarian Ammergau[12] and the oldest relations of the "Werdenfelser Schellenrührer"[13] in Bavaria, the Appenzeller "Schellen- und Rollenkläuse[14] in Switzerland, the "Glöckler" from Ebensee[15] in Upper Austria and many other

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[12] Friedrich Lüers, Volkskundliche Studien aus den Bayr.u.Nordtiroler Bergen, München: Alpenfreund-Bücherei, 1922, illustrated after p.2.

[13] O.Blümel, "Von der Fasennacht im Werdenfelser Land", Bayr. Heimatschutz, XXIII (1927), 127 ff.

[14] H.Moesch, "Des Klausen in Urnäsch", Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde, X (1906), 262-266.

[15] See Chapter IV, p.51.

masked pairs.

The "Roller" wear youthful, girlish, smooth masks but are dressed in male clothing, contrary to the "Gsellinnen" (companions of the "Perchten" in the eastern Alps) whose total appearance is feminine. The buckled shoes of the "Roller" remind us of the footwear of the bourgeois in days when true artisanship was still appreciated, at a time when commerce and transportation still played an important part in Imst. The white, heavily patterned kneesocks add to the delicate beauty and gracefulness of this figure. The black, tightly-fitted, embroidered knee-length deer skin pants, which date from the seventeenth century, contrast with the snowy white linen shirt with its high ruffled neck. Three bunches of flowers or rosettes and red and blue ribbons are sewn zigzag onto the long sleeves. The "Roller" wears a coloured sash diagonally across his chest. This is the Knight's sash, decorated with medals or dainty artificial flowers. Around the hips he wears "das Geröll" in belt-like fashion. This consists of a wide leather belt, covered on the outside with red cloth to which forty to fifty little ball-shaped bells, looking like sleighbells, are attached. From under the belt hangs, on the right hand side, a fine white lace handkerchief which is referred to as "the little handkerchief of the Roller". On the left side of the belt one or several double tassels

can be seen.

On his head he wears the oval "Schein", a huge head decoration in the shape of a mitre or monstrance, adorned with many precious popular objects. The frame is made of wire and thin wooden strips which are attached to the mask and fixed around the forehead. The wire mesh is filled with a profusion of brightly coloured artificial flowers; gold and silver threads glisten between them. Three tufts of glass feathers are fixed to the top. A mirror shines from the middle of the "Schein". The back of the head, the upper part of the neck and the shoulders are covered by a veil or a shawl, made of lace.

In the white gloved right hand the "Roller" carries a "brush" or "broom", a stick of willow wood with a frayed top. In better times its handle was bedecked with pretzels, supposed to replace the ancient gifts of appeasement. All children, big and small were sprinkled with the "wet brush" and given a "pretzel" as a token of conciliation.

In peasant times one of the masks always carried a little fir tree, a custom which could still be observed fifty years ago in rural communities around Innsbruck. The little tree represented the tree of life, as still preserved in the "paradise plays" in the Alpine and Eastern countries.

The "Roller" behaves gracefully and politely and appears happy and spring-like. He skips and jumps about, leaps into the air, bows graciously before the grumpy "Scheller", teases and tempts him and impresses the onlookers as "Lady Spring" confronting "Old Man Winter". In the past the "Roller" was rather looked upon as a youth facing the "Scheller", a mature man.

The "Scheller" who towers over him, is characterized by his massively moustached and heavily bearded mask. He wears a head decoration which is considerably larger and more serious in style. Its edges are trimmed with yew branches rather than glass feathers. While the "Roller's" face mask is milky white and cherry red, the "Scheller's" has a dark tone. Over his back and shoulders he wears a fringed cloth, embroidered in white, red and blue, which resembles a locally produced tablecloth in daily use in the region. The wide leather belt is laden with big cast-iron cowbells. Usually three to four of these project horizontally from the front and an equal number from the back. The "Scheller" carries a much longer, rougher stick, adorned with multi-coloured ribbons and ending in a fork to which, instead of the "brush", a pretzel or an apple is fastened. Pairs of "Schellers" wear special decorations of one colour, either blue or red, colours also chosen by young brides for the dowry in this region.

The "Scheller" responds to the dainty leaps and bows of the tinkling "Roller" with his heavy bells (sometimes weighing as much as forty-four pounds) and his heavy, clumsy step. Accompanied by ear splitting noise they perform their dance, usually without introduction or sign, indicating its imminent start.

The elegant and formal group of "Roller" and "Scheller" is followed by one or two pairs of "Laggeroller" and "Laggeschelle". Their task is to make fun of their predecessors by ridiculing the costumes and movements of "Roller" and "Scheller" with their own dress and gestures.

The "Laggeschelle" appears as an old shabby-looking woman with a wide-brimmed straw hat, decorated with corncobs. "She" wears a corset, a frayed floral scarf over her shoulders, a crinoline covered with corn leaves and a big floral-patterned apron. The skirt of corn leaves is the counterpart to the rag or paper dress which replaces the once popular savage-looking fur; it originated in the seventeenth and eighteenth century when corn on the cob was first planted in the region. Instead of cast-iron bells the "Laggeschelle" wears three or four wooden bells in front and back. With slow, short and uncertain steps and clumsy, stiff movements he ridicules the "Scheller's" dance.

The "Laggeroller" appears as a man in old Franconian costume or in a suit made of the straw of the corn on the

cob. His long coat and velvet kneepants are decorated with stitched-on corn kernels and white beans, whilst his hat is beautified with ears of corn and often resembles a huge corncob. Instead of bells he has nut shells sewn on his belt. The clothing of these mocking figures is obviously not strictly controlled and left more or less to the wearer's means and vivid imagination.

It is noteworthy that the "Laggeschelle" ridicules not only the movements and costumes of the "Roller" but is also drawing special attention to his femininity whilst the "Laggeroller" endeavours to make fun of the manliness of the "Schelle".

The "Kübele-Majen" come next. They derive their double name from "Kübele", the small wooden bucket they carry, and "Majen", green birch twigs which are placed in little buckets in front of houses and church on May 1st to chase away the witches after their orgy on Walpurgis Night and to celebrate the arrival of summer.

Their dress is the Sunday costume of an Alpine dairy maid. They wear a smart straw hat or a little coarse felt hat with a heathcock's tail as decoration, a mask of a friendly looking, youthful, pretty, round face with milky white complexion, one or two warts and a laughing mouth. A silken neckerchief, a gold or brightly coloured laced corset, a floral shawl, a heavy and richly pleated woolen skirt (as worn by peasant women), a little white apron,

white stockings and shoes with a bow complete the costume. In their little buckets they carry water, into which they dip a little white handkerchief to moisten the faces of their young and not so young "female" companions.

The old people of Imst think of them as "Almputzen" or mountain spirits, a smaller race of imps who spend the summer with their tiny cows on the mountain ridges, occupying the mountain dairies after the departure of the shepherds and their flocks on St. Martin's Day. They wish to remain undisturbed and take revenge on those who pry into their affairs.

The "Kübele-Majen" are often joined by the "Altfrankspritzer" (Old Franconian squirter) who wears a three cornered hat, an ostrich feather and a wig with a tress in the style of the late rococo period, and a "Mohrenspritzer" (Moorish squirter) or an "Engelspritzer" (angel squirter).

These characters appear either in black or brightly coloured clothing, wear either a Moor's mask or one with a pointed beard or else a delicate-looking girl's mask and a black or a light wig; a little mantilla either black, trimmed with white fur, or made of blue or red silk covers their shoulders and a golden band adorns their forehead. These types are well known from paintings of the baroque period and always popular with the spectators.

"Spritzer" release spurts of water from their long

thin metal "spray-guns" into the faces, backs or necks of unsuspecting onlookers. It may well be that these wettings were once performed in order to promote fertility but today they are simply Carnival jokes, similar to the waterings by the "Roller", the sprinkling of the "Majen" or the beatings by the witch-mother (to be discussed later). These squirtings remind us of the much cruder habit of the "Roitschäggätä" of the Lötschen valley in the Swiss canton of Wallis described in Chapter IV[16] where the "Roitschäggätä" fill their syringes, made of leather and wood, with water, dungwater, blood or soot and threaten the girls and women with them.

Next come the "Sackner" who derive their name from the round sacks or bags stuffed with corncobs which are attached by a knot to the top of their leather belt. One group of them wears a high sugar-loaf shaped hat and a short jacket of coarse gray wool. Formerly they dressed in a "merry-andrew" or clown's costume, but now they are characterized by their cone-shaped high hats; a serious full or half mask, a frill around the neck, the previously mentioned jacket and belt, wide, baggy breeches made of cloth in two colours and stockings of a contrasting shade.

Nowadays, however, their "female" counterparts are more often encountered. These wear a ragged white cap, a

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[16] See Chapter IV, p. 39.

short sleeved blouse, corset and shawl, a three coloured multi-pleated skirt, a bright floral apron, knee socks and buckled shoes. Their full masks are rather funny than ugly, portraying drastically beautiful and demonically grimacing faces.

In the "Schemenlauf" of 1938 it was the task of this group to keep order. They cleared the streets for the procession and frightened those who became impertinent. They threw their bags around and had their fun with those who were too curious.

They were followed by a group of witches who seem to have replaced wild men, bear drivers and other bogies that used to be popular in the "Schemenlauf" of Imst. The witches represent a mixture of notions from former and present times and contribute greatly to the confusion and gaiety of Carnival. They are distinguished from all other participants by their special witches' cart. Every one of them has to enter her name into the witches' book and they are kept under strict supervision of the witch-mother.

The witch of Imst is a paragon of female ugliness. Her full mask, consisting of several parts, is covered with warts on the cheeks, neck and forehead. There are bristles on her pointed chin and she has a crooked nose. Usually a snake is dangling from her nostrils. At least one witch also shows an ugly goitre. Her repulsive mouth, ringed with boar teeth, is movable, enabling her not only

to drink and smoke but also to snap at people. The half masks over nose and chin are almost constantly in motion. On her head she wears a rag cap over blond flaxen hair with hanging tresses. The local "Dirndl" dress, a white apron and a red skirt contrast sharply with this weird face.

The witch-mother wields her rod in such a way that no one has any doubt of her powerful position. Amongst the covey of witches may be one with a bird's head, or perhaps one with a fish tail, but generally they are rather uniformly attired.

They swing their twig brooms horizontally above their heads and leap and dance around the witch-mother. They are accompanied by a caterwauling noise, piercingly produced on old and new wooden instruments by fifteen to sixteen year old boys in clown clothes. These youths have to earn their reputation as noise makers in order to be allowed to participate in the next "Schemenlauf". With their broomsticks the witches threaten to knock off the hats of the spectators; afterwards they appeasingly brush the spectators' shoes. However, everyone is only too happy to partake in the fun. Moreover, woe to those who try to snatch the broom from a witch; they will be tormented and persecuted not only by the offended witch, but by all her sisters. Small personal differences used to be settled at such occasions but now the witches of Imst are reputed to be very tame.

The witch-master wears a three cornered hat, a mask with a large twisted moustache, a coloured tailcoat, a light waistcoat, knickerbockers made of the same material as the coat, red stockings and buckled shoes. He enjoys little prestige now, although he carries the witches' book and the conductor's baton as if he were still in full command.

As in most masked parades in the Tyrol, Turks have for centuries appeared next to wild men, witches and other frightening figures to remind the spectators of the former threat of a Turkish invasion from the East. In general, however, Carnival processions are meant to draw attention to the interesting types of the time.

Other figures met in almost every Carnival parade of the region are the bird-fanciers and bird dealers. They wear tailcoats like some other figures, a waistcoat of the same colour or in red, a leather belt, tight black leather knee pants, blue stockings and buckled shoes. They carry their birds in cages, attached to wooden frames which cover their entire back and tower over their head. A round flat cushion on the top of the head is supposed to lighten their burden. The main cage is attached to the frame on the back and many smaller, home-made bird cages are tied on all sides.

In no other Alpine masking custom has every movement of the principal figures, their characteristic appear-

ance, their deliberate circling, their approach and their withdrawal, their feather-light skipping and dancing been worked out so precisely and in such a distinctive and harmonious way as in the "Schemenlauf" of Imst. Not the slightest change seems to have occurred in their movements for at least two hundred years. The dainty dance steps, the rocking of the upper parts of the bodies, the measured bowing and curtseying and the surprising jumps are all accompanied by the ringing of silvery bells and the booming of big heavy bells.

All this makes a deep impression on the viewers and listeners; they admire the skill and dexterity of the performing young men and experience the happy sensation of participating in the age old symbolism of a "masked play". This is why more and more people are anxious to be "there", whenever a "Schemenlauf" takes place. The old traditions are painstakingly passed on from generation to generation, from family to family and the very young are encouraged to do well in this visual art and to prove their nimbleness and endurance.

The "Schemenlauf" in Nassereith in the Austrian Province of Tyrol.

Apart from Imst, "Scheller" and "Roller" perform, according to A. Dörrer[17] nowadays only in Ammergau

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[17] A. Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1949, pp. 309-319.

in Bavaria, Southern Germany, in Einsiedeln in the canton Schwyz in Central Switzerland, in the little village of Wald in the Pitz valley and in the village of Nassereith at the foot of the Fern pass, both in the Austrian Tyrol. The latter community owes its relative wealth to the local mining industry and to the traffic over the mountain pass. In peace time the people of Nassereith celebrated their Carnival every year. However, by 1939 it had dwindled down to a half-hearted, one-sided effort. In 1947 the old enthusiasm gripped the villagers once more and Carnival was celebrated in the usual way with renewed vigour.

Since 1924 records of the names of the participants, expenses and profits have been kept. We learn that in 1947, for instance, the profits were used to purchase new church bells.

The Carnival leader of Nassereith is the keeper of about one hundred and ten locally carved wooden masks and various other valuable Carnival items. Soon after Christmas everyone is reminded of the approaching Carnival season which starts in earnest with the last chime of the midday bells on Old Christmas Day. It is then that the "Carnival Schnöllen" sets in and continues for the following month. To produce this strange noise, which is locally known as "schnöllen" (a dialect word deriving from "schnellen" which means "to snap back"), the people use heavy long whips with short, strong, yet easily manageable

handles. They hold them constantly above their heads and swing them back and forth. At each sharp turn a loud bang, like the shot of a pistol, is produced. This kind of noise-making requires not only very strong arms, but also much practice and dexterity. The whips are specially and carefully made. The end of the whip, referred to as "the beard", is usually twisted from cotton threads which are acquired from the local factory by begging for scraps. The ideal "beard" in the eyes of the youth of Nassereith, however, is one made of silk, since it produces a clean metallic sound and lasts much longer.

Exactly a week before the last Thursday before Lent, the future "Scheller" and "Roller", still without masks, begin to practise their vigorous leaps and dances. Bells must not be brought into the streets at that time, but may be held out of open bedroom windows and tried out.

The most important day for Carnival activities in Nassereith is the last Thursday before Lent. In the morning everyone sets out for the "Vigatter" or assembly on the square where the towncrier announces, in rhymes and coarse witticisms, the proceedings of the festivities. After the chiming of the noon bells more than two hundred maskers assemble to start their march through the village. "Scheller", "Roller", "Majen", sweepers, the bear group and the "Karrner" (cart pushers) are the most commonly encountered types in the Nassereith Carnival.

The masks of the "Scheller" and "Roller" are very similar to those of Imst, apart from the head decorations. Here, the "Scheller's" moustache is always wide and extends right to the ears. Some wear a beard. The colour of their skin is a brownish red; their thick eyebrows and groomed beards are dark brown and black. Instead of the monstrance-like decoration worn at Imst, they wear a cap attached to the face mask. This looks like something between a crown and a bishop's hat. It is rimmed with a wide tin band. A little mirror is fastened to the front of this band. Plainly visible through the covering is the colourful silk cap, from which a veil or lace cloth hangs down over the shoulders. Women and girls contribute the most precious items of their Sunday clothing to the costumes of the "beautiful masks". Wide, glittering aprons are used instead of trousers to cover the upper legs and scarves are draped over the shoulders. Young men even squeeze into the girls' pretty Sunday bodices.

The old "Spritzer's" costume consisted of buckled shoes, white stockings, a long tailcoat, a three cornered hat and a wig with a tress. The winter harness of light cart horses is worn instead of bells.

"Spritzer" and "Majen" push back the spectators to make room for the principal maskers. A "sweeper" skips in front of the "Scheller", constantly facing him. In front of these two is usually a "Schnöller" carrying his

whip and wearing short pants, a white shirt and a pointed hat. He looks for a suitable spot where he can swing his heavy whip which, in honour of the occasion, is decorated with a green silken tassel.

In Nassereith the bear's group still attracts great attention and remains the sensation of the Carnival. The bear is covered with black sheep furs and wears a grim-faced mask. It is said that he used to be completely covered in corn tufts.

It is his task to keep dancing constantly and to assault people from time to time. First of all he attacks his keeper who wears a devil's mask and talks to him in bits of Italian and Latin. The accompanying piper frees the keeper from the bear's claws. The bear, however, quickly escapes his captor and hurls himself onto the next distinguished spectator. He may, for example, drag the mayor away into the inn.

Meanwhile, the collector passes his collection-bag around with which he even collects from people watching from the windows of first storey apartments. If the "Ruassler", a kind of chimney sweep, whose job it is to blacken people's faces with soot, participates, he wears a trooper's uniform and pants with different coloured legs.

The "Labara", a rhymed narrative, written in a huge book and carried on wooden boards or a cart, also appears as part of the masked parade. In it some drastic

and startling events of the past year in the life of the village are described in large letters and pictures. The rhymes are sung and the pages turned with a huge stick. Several festive floats follow, representing historical events or contemporary problems.

With the ringing of the evening bells the maskers lose their privileges in streets and squares, and those who have not retired pull their masks from their faces to show that they have returned to normal everyday behaviour.

Nassereith enjoys one Carnival custom peculiar to the village and not reported from other places. Every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday during Carnival time some disguised pairs, usually smart huntsmen with their falsetto-voiced sweathearts, visit the homes for a dance or to flirt with "the beauty" of the house. They are often accompanied by beggars and sometimes also by traders who try to sell their wares.

The "Schleicherlauf" in Telfs in the Austrian Tyrol.

Dörrer describes another distinctive Carnival masking custom of the Tyrol, "Das Schleicherlaufen" in Telfs.[18] This used to take place on some working day during Carnival, usually on the Thursday before Lent. However, since 1890, the event has been regarded as special

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[18] Anton Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: 1949, pp. 322-344.

local attraction and is held on a Sunday in order to accommodate the outsiders, particularly visitors from town who were supposed to help defray expenses. Since then, festive processions have only taken place every five years, except in war time when they were temporarily cancelled.

Like the "Schemen" in Imst, the "Schleicher" or creepers form the nucleus of the procession in Telfs. "Schleichen" means "creeping" and refers here to the quiet and noiseless approach of the disguised youths. Despite their large and small bells they are supposed to creep soundlessly to their destination where they announce their arrival with a loud leap into the air. "Schleicher" differ from the other Tyrolese Carnival figures and the "Perchten" in that they no longer appear in pairs but singly, each wearing an individually decorated hat. Dörrer cites W.M. Schmid's[19] opinion that this "Schleicherhut" (creeper's hat) is a survival of a former custom, according to which young men went out at night or twilight and carried an oil lamp or a candle in a kind of lantern on their hat. As recently as one hundred years ago the "Perchten" of the Pongau in the Austrian province of Salzburg, still had lights installed in their "Perchten" caps. Today the "Glöckler" still parade at Bad Ischl, Gmunden, Abersee and Ebensee in

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[19] W.M. Schmid, Bayr. Wochenschrift für Pflege von Heimat und Volkstum, III (1925), 115.

Austria,[20] whilst others have transferred their activities to the day-light hours, some for purely practical and financial reasons, others because of prohibitions by the authorities. In Basel, however, the famous "Morgenstreich", described later, still takes place in complete darkness and the participants still wear lanterns on their heads.

The "creeper's hat" of Telfs illustrates, according to local tradition, the dairy, cattle and agricultural industry including the blessing of the mountain dairies at which the burning light, as a life symbol, must never be missing. Today only one figure reminds us of light and blessing: the lantern bearer, and even he no longer has the old significance. He skips at the head of the procession with his long tail coat, red and yellow pant legs and stockings, and a dashing, colourful three-cornered hat with feather tufts at each corner. He swings a giant bull's eye glass lantern in a circle, as if he were trying to make room and clear the way.

At the lantern bearer's side is the goatherd. His little hat is decorated with mountain flowers and cock feathers; he has a horse harness round his hips. With an alphorn he gives the signals for the different parts of the pretty dances of honour. He keeps leaping backwards

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[20] See Chapter IV, p. 51.

in regular rhythmical movements and with every jump he touches the ground with both feet at the same time. Before each jump he produces a variety of high notes with his horn, beautifully carved from the alder tree. During the jumps he scatters "salt for his herd" - actually coloured wood shavings for the "creepers". He faces his "herd" all the time in order to keep an eye on them and prevent them from "going astray". When the dancing is over, he blows once more his horn. Since goats used to be much more plentiful in the upper Inn valley than they are now, goatherds were always more common than shepherds.

The goatherd is joined by the dairyman and dairymaid, wearing their characteristic, home-made mountain clothes, with blue, footless kneesocks. This dairy pair, in Alpine costume, represents all dairy workers and the chief industry of the country. Each of the two skips independently to the rhythm of the "creepers" bells, but only on one foot. They always stay in the circle of the "creepers", close to their "herd".

The innkeeper and the waitress were also, as of old, favourite types of the Tyrolese Carnival plays and processions, since the inn played an essential role in the postal system and commercial life of the region. But now their task in Telfs is merely to spot wealthy onlookers.

Once these are located, the goatherd leads the "creepers" in round and elliptical circles to the victim,

scattering coloured wood shavings along the way. When the "creepers" have surrounded the goatherd, the dairy pair, the waitress and the innkeeper, the latter raises his glass to drink to the health of the chosen man. Every time a glass is lifted, the "creepers" ring their bells. Formerly the innkeeper threw his glass into the air to be shattered into pieces, but since the wars this custom has been discontinued for economic and safety reasons. Now the goatherd blows into his horn and the "creepers" dance begins. They dance, depending on the amount of honour they wish to bestow, a whole, half or quarter circle. The innkeeper and the waitress, however, do not join in the dance.

Whilst the lantern bearer, the goatherd, innkeeper and dairyman do not wear masks, the youths who represent the waitress and the dairymaid have their faces covered with a wire visor which seems to have replaced the net mask, formerly also worn by the "creepers", to prevent them from being recognized. Supporting figures wear wooden and fabric masks.

Slowly the "creepers" move forward. They are the showpiece of the Carnival in Telfs. Between 1890 and 1935 their numbers have grown from seventeen to forty. Most ideas for their colourful costumes come from the youths themselves who enjoy letting their imagination run wild. In 1864 they are reported to have worn exceptionally high, monumental, pyramid-shaped paper hats; the brims of these

hats were decorated with many coloured bits of string and strips of cloth which were twisted into a big knot that was tied with a thick golden cord. Fastened around the hat were several predominantly red, silken neckerchiefs and coloured paper ribbons which fluttered gaily in the breeze, as the wearer jumped about. Other hats were tightly wrapped in silken neckerchiefs.

As the years went by, an ever-increasing variety developed. By 1895 the youths of Telfs were no longer satisfied to depict merely local dairy and farming scenes and incidents on their hats, but rather decorated them with tall towers, castles, dragons, smithies - anything that appealed to their fancy and inventiveness. Although, according to present-day local opinion, the "creeper's" hat is meant to portray something associated with or taken from the dairy or agricultural life, such as a ploughing farmer, a chamois hunter, a farmyard, a bird's nest with its young, or a giant butterfly, representatives of various trades or pictures from Märchen are equally common. It is perhaps noteworthy that local events or products manufactured in local factories are never depicted. These elaborate hats weigh up to sixteen pounds and reach a height of three feet.

Every "creeper" wears a differently decorated hat on his head. He takes great pride in wearing his elaborate head piece gracefully while skipping in order to make an effective noise. The designers of these hats take great pride

in their creations and keep their innovations secret until the day of the procession.

The "creepers" wear either black shoes or coloured and embroidered slippers; white kneesocks, coloured short or long pants of silk or other cloth with flying ribbons, braids, laces and fringes which in past times were meant to fend off demons and white shirts with a lace collar or a little short coat reaching down over the shoulders. All wear white gloves and a wide silk sash around their middle which hangs down over the left hip.

In their right hand they carry a small flag, showing either the Tyrolese colours (a red eagle on a white ground) or the marksman's colours (green and white). Formerly the "creepers" carried sticks decorated with rosettes made of coloured wood shavings; on to which twenty to thirty pretzels were tied. These were eventually distributed amongst friends, after a considerable amount of teasing. It was the duty of the recipient of the last pretzel to replenish the whole stick. As this practice not only led to arguments, but also proved extremely expensive, it had to be discontinued. The "creepers" now decorate their sticks, if they carry them, with paper flowers, ribbons and at the top a little flag. In their left hand is a folded white linen handkerchief which is said to have been used (as by the "Majen" of Imst) for moistening people's faces an action which was formerly thought to promote fertility.

"Creepers" do not adhere strictly to tradition in the number and size of the bells they wear. Around their middle they either wear two or three smaller ones or one or two bigger ones on a leather belt which is either embroidered or trimmed with coloured material. The bells are horizontally wedged towards the middle of the body. The "creeper" dances with a skipping step. He places one foot in front of the other nimbly and lightly to make his bells ring. Prior to 1890 the bells sounded and rang irregularly. With a double jump each individual shook his body vigorously and thus produced a tremendous noise. Since then the "creepers" leap only one at a time and the noise produced is therefore much more regular.

The round dance is only performed to honour special guests. Formerly it was an occasion on which leading personalities and prominent people such as the mayor, the factory owner, the innkeeper and the priest were presented with special gifts (a wood carving, a small deer, or a post-horn to the postmaster, etc.). Nowadays, however, the dance is used to solicit contributions and donations.

The "creepers" procession is often connected with a bear's play in which the "bear", covered with moss or sheepskins, roars, escapes from his keeper into a cave, is caught again by his master and a crowd of youths, and put into chains. A drop of hot spiced wine usually has a calming effect on the "wild animal".

"Wild men" or cavemen usually also play their part in Telfs. When the first shot is fired at 4:00 a.m. on the great day, the "wild men" who like the bear are completely covered in moss or black sheepskins leave their cave in the Kochen valley (formerly a mining centre for lead and coal). They wear dark, long-nosed devil's masks, usually carved by the owner, and assemble in accordance with their legendary profession as "guardian spirits of the Alpine dairies" in the upper village.

They are led by the "Carnival announcer" on horseback who wears a napoleonic two-cornered hat. In his hand he carries a scroll with the prologue which he reads wherever he finds a few people standing together. He is followed by a horse, pulling a sleigh or a cart with a barrel and a monkey on it. The monkey is supposed to be a reminder of the primeval forest and the primeval times. The monkey makes ridiculous faces and grimaces, beats tambourines and snatches hats and caps from those who are too curious or come too close to him.

The group first calls at one of the local inns to "fortify" itself for the hard day's work ahead. The "wild men" wear a yellow lion's head, made of cardboard, on top of their heads. Those who have a crown on their lion's head are called "Hanser" and are supposed to collect money. The others are there to keep order. In former times the "Hanser" held up a mirror to people to remind them of their

follies and stupidities. He might also spray them, blacken them with soot, or play some other trick on them, but in recent years he has become quite harmless and tame.

The customary figures of the scissors-grinder, bird catcher, tinker and quack doctor are usually also present. Since 1890 a newcomer has joined in the fun. On that occasion the weather forecasts were extremely poor for the chosen day and the neighbouring villages teasingly urged the people of Telfs to include "the sun" in the Carnival procession. Since then "the sun" is carried by the chimney sweep and the baker and deposited in the lower village. It must remain there, until the Carnival in the form of a wood or straw doll or a goat or a ram's head with horns, has been buried. This burial takes place at night and is accompanied by rhymes referring to local events. Sometimes the inhabitants of Telfs were not satisfied merely with rhymes but invented and performed whole Carnival plays, usually comedies or farces with criticizing and reprimanding tendencies.

"Huttlerlauf" in Thaur in the Austrian Province of Tyrol and Related Customs.

The "Huttlerlauf" of Thaur is a Carnival custom closely related to the previous ones and has been described by J.E. Waldfreund,[21] J.V. Zingerle[22] and more recently

[21] J.E. Waldfreund, "Volksgebräuche und Aberglaube in Tirol und das Salzburger Gebirg", Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde, III (1855), 337.

[22] J.V. Zingerle, Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes, 2nd ed., Innsbruck: 1871, p. 135.

by J. Ringler[23] which I used as my chief source. The expression "Huttler" is a dialect word which derives from the late Middle High German word Hudel, meaning "rag". The "Huttler", therefore, preferably wear a costume made of rags, remnants of various materials or bits of wood. In the eighteenth century "Huttler" figures appeared together with the "Scheller" and "Roller" in the Stubai valley, in the villages of medium altitude south of Innsbruck, such as Vill, Lans, Mutters, Natters and in the Wipp valley. Their activities in the latter part of the nineteenth century in the region of Hall in Tyrol have been described by W. Hein.[24] He tells us that they used to rush into the homes of their choice like a wind storm, broke bottles, plates, lamps, spinning wheels and anything they could lay their hands on, danced noisily around and hit anyone they could catch. On the other hand, they gladly offered everyone a drink from their brandy bottle which was attached to their belt and threw rolls or at least small balls made of bread dough to everyone in the household. They were usually accompanied by some witches. The healthy and vigourous growth of flax and corn depended on their visit.

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[23] J. Ringler, "Das Huttlerlaufen", Tiroler Heimatblätter, XIII (1936), 107 ff.

[24] W. Hein, "Das Huttlerlaufen", Zeitschrift für Volkskunde, IX (1899), 109 ff.

More recently, after repeated unsuccessful efforts at suppression by the authorities, "Huttlers" have retreated to the villages of Mühlau, Absam and Mils and especially to Thaur. Their job is to torment the crowd with hard pats on people's backs or just to tease and threaten them by preparing for big blows which then end in a gentle touch.

In Thaur the group of "Huttler" or "Muller" come first as actors in the "masked play". They are known by different names - "Zottler", "Flöckler", "Klötzler", "Glöggler", "Zaggeler" - according to their costumes.

Around 1900 they are said to have worn a yellow, low, wide-brimmed, green linen felt or straw hat with a foxtail hanging from it. The left side of the brim of the hat was bent upwards and the hat itself decorated with a little mirror, artificial flowers and some cock feathers. Gradually peacock feathers, arranged like a fan, and complicated floral arrangements were added to the hat of the showy "Altartuxer". The face is covered by a carved, painted wooden mask with a moustache; through a half open mouth the upper teeth can be seen. The back of the head and neck are covered by a floral silk or woolen scarf with short hanging fringes which give the figure an Indian or female appearance. Attached to older masks are wigs made of horse hair. It is a peculiarity of the masks in Thaur that the hat and the mask are actually one piece. With the wig and the silk scarf they

form a single unit.

The "Huttler" wear wide sleeved blouses, buttoned right up to the neck, and long wide pants made of multi-coloured woolen corduroy; different coloured linen fringes, some of which are knotted, are sewn on to the pant legs in spiral patterns. Around their middle they wear a nail-belt, studded with tin pikes. The liqueur bottle and perhaps a sandwich are secured to this belt. Hob-nailed boots can be seen protruding from under the pant legs.

The "Zottler" carry a very long whip with a short handle. Instead of the fringes, the "Flöckler" wear small bits of materials, mostly in dark shades, regularly sewn on to their blouse and pants. The "Klötzler", on the other hand, specialize in attaching small painted wooden bits in the shape of shingles on to their costume with which they create a weird noise. These special noise-making costumes are similar to those that the "Schneggehüsler" wear in Switzerland and in the Black Forest in West Germany. The "Schneggehüsler's" costumes are made of the empty shells of the big edible snails found in this area. Over one thousand snail shells are needed for one costume.

In contrast to these fearful demonic figures the "Zaggeler" shows a youthful and friendly face. All the seams of his dark blue costume are trimmed with short yellow and red fringes and red and green tassels. The "Glöggler" are

distinguished by their sleigh bells which are attached to the seams of their suits.

The second group consists of the "Tuxer" and his "wife", who wear the old costume of the Ziller valley (the Ziller is a tributary of the Inn river in Tyrol) - a grey jacket, red waistcoat, dark grey shirt and a low black felt hat with two golden tassels in front. Their leader, the "Altartuxer" wears on his head a huge structure, called an "Altar", made of artificial flowers with a mirror in the middle. This "Altar" is trimmed with a shining array of peacock feathers and three or four dozen white cock feathers on the outside. The entire back of this headgear is covered by many coloured silk ribbons hanging over the colourful silk neckerchief. A big oval coat of arms is fastened to the leather belt. The face mask portrays a young man with a moustache and a goatee. The "Altartuxer" carries a little stick in his hand.

He and the "Tuxer-pair" are followed by the dairymen and dairymaidens in shirt sleeves and in the costume of Fügen, the innkeeper and the waitress. They only move in tiny steps and are accompanied by musicians who play the mouth organ, the accordion and the guitar and try to produce sounds that are supposed to resemble gunshots.

The third group with the "Fasserrössl" or hobbyhorse, is "borrowed" from a Carnival custom of Hall, a small town near Innsbruck in the Austrian Tyrol. The "Fasserrössl"

is surrounded by Carnival dancers wearing high, pointed green hats, red coats with white frills around the neck, yellow pants and a blue sash. Each carries a ribboned staff, a tin cup, a Turkish sword and a cane. The Carnival dancers, wearing fools' caps and whips, may also appear in striped, floral or chequered costumes. The witches who are usually also in this group wear old women's costumes and appear with broomsticks and swaddled "babies".

The parts played by the various maskers have changed considerably in the course of the past hundred and fifty years. The "Zottler" and "Zaggeler" have been joined by the "Tuxer" and "Melcher", fools and dancers have disappeared altogether and the old witches' costumes have become rare. "Altartuxer", on the other hand, have greatly gained in popularity. A pair of Turks still participate today and some bear or monkey groups are almost always present, whilst an "Old Women's Mill" usually follows the hobbyhorse.

"Huttler", like the maskers of Axams (see Chapter V, pp.73-77), direct their attention mainly towards women and girls. They leap wildly over tables and benches in inns and show their acrobatic skills in a variety of ways. Having been regaled with food and drink, they toddle off cackling and clucking.

Until 1914 almost every village surrounding the old salt mining town of Hall, and to the north of the river Inn, could boast its particular Carnival types. Absam, the village situated above Hall, had several to offer: the

"Bandltuxer" or ribbon Tuxer wore on his head rich tinsel decorations on a four-cornered frame with a mirror in the middle; long white and black cock feathers were inserted on the right and left sides and covered with splendid peacock feathers; on top of it all was a chamois brush. His back glistened with a colourful display of silk ribbons.

Next in importance was the "Hütltuxer" or hat Tuxer who wore sport shoes, white and green knee socks, leather pants, leather belt, white shirt, a grey jacket, not with green cuffs on the sleeves like the "Bandltuxer" but with black ones, a collar round the neck and a scarf around the shoulders, similar to a multi-coloured fringed tablecloth. His mask had a moustache and was topped by a black low felt hat with gold tassels, two long white cock feathers and artificial flowers.

The costumes of the "Fleckltuxer" or rag Tuxer and the "Zottler" or shaggy one were equally remarkable. Pants and waistcoat of the former consisted of small multicoloured, rectangular bits of material. He wore a white collar around his neck and an embroidered leather belt studded with coins around his middle. In his right hand he held a bread roll, in his left a stick. Over his face mask, equipped with moustache and a little pointed beard, was a pagoda shaped head decoration with rows of fringes. The back of his head and neck were covered with a flowing scarf. Pants and waistcoat of the "Zottler" were put to-

gether with brown, fur-like fringes. His hat was fitted with a real foxtail on the left and a set of fox teeth on the right, whilst a bunch of artificial flowers was in the middle. From the back of his head a purple coloured neckerchief flowed down over his shoulders.

The "Zottler" threw pretzels to his favourite friends whilst he danced; with his left hand he rythmically swung a short-handled whip. If the pretzel missed its intended target, the "Zottler" was laughed and scoffed at and subjected to mockery and ridicule during the subsequent weeks, since the reputation of the youths of Absam depended on their skill in throwing and dancing.

The "Bockreiter" or goat-rider of Absam was a rather fearful creature because of his habit of kicking doors open in revenge for some offence that had been committed in the village during the year. Wearing studded high boots and a long, flowing patched coat with a red collar, he raged and raved about. Over his beardless face mask was a paper cap with scissors and a ruffled feather to make fun of the tailor's guild. The back of his head and his shoulders were covered with a big red neckerchief. He "rode" on a "horse", consisting of a stick to which a billygoat head with wide horns and a red tongue as well as a big bell were fixed. A bushy tail was attached to the end of the stick. A witch drove the "rider" with her broomstick and held him by his horns. With her extremely ugly costume and terri-

fying, gruesome mask she tried to emphasize that she was worse than the "Bockreiter" himself.

The "Bockreiter" is a counterpart to the "Fasserrösslreiter" or barrel-hobbyhorse rider who still appears in Absam in all his glory and majesty with his richly costumed followers.

According to Dörrer[25] the "Fasserrössl" was created as a tribute to the coopers ("Fasser") of Hall who enjoyed renewed importance at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when an influential local doctor declared that it was harmful to health to pack salt in bags, and introduced casks for the purpose instead. (For reasons of economy the village returned to bags again after his death). The coopers also performed their own square dances which seem to have enjoyed great popularity until the latter part of the eighteenth century.

In Bozen in South Tyrol, Italy and in Hall, the "Fasserrössl's" task came to be one of keeping order and amusing people, though the dance was still performed there occasionally in the nineteenth century. Gradually neighbouring communities adopted and incorporated this character into their own Carnival processions. Thus it can still be seen in Absam, as mentioned above, and similar customs are

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[25] Anton Dörrer, Tiroler Fasnacht, Wien: 1949, pp. 371-373.

known in Hofgastein in Salzburg, Oberwölz in Upper Austria, Appenzell, Beromünster and Lucerne in Switzerland and Tottweil, Breisach and villages on the Rhine in Germany.[26]

The "Fasserrössl" in Hall is normally preceded by a youth in old woman's clothes and an old woman's mask, carrying a broom with which the path is swept clear for the hobbyhorse. The rider himself is represented by a tall man who wears a three-cornered or sea captain's hat. He is wrapped in a long, flowing coat and surrounded by a crinoline-shaped padded and stuffed frame, imitating the body of the horse. The head and the neck of the horse are carved from wood, whilst its "body" is made of a pole tied to a frame from which a tail-like stick protrudes. This entire dummy is usually covered by a woolen blanket with a slit for the rider. In his right hand the rider holds a rope with which he is able to move the head of "the horse".

He is usually accompanied by one youth offering "the horse" hay or straw from a large sieve and another patting its back. This little group is followed by the farmhand, the apprentice, the journeyman and the blacksmith. Encouraged by many cries and screams from the youthful spectators, the hobbyhorse jumps jerkingly through the streets until it suddenly comes to an abrupt stop. The smiths rush forward with their tools intending to shoe "the horse", but "the horse" kicks violently and forces them to

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[26]H.E. Busse, Alemannische Volksfasnacht, Karlsruhe: 1938, p. 100.

retreat or even knocks them to the ground.

The apprentice who was supposed to hold "the horse's" foot shouts at his master who rewards him with a hard slap behind the ear. These blunt exchanges and downright arguments and scuffles add much to the amusement of the audience and have become the greatest attraction of the Carnival in Hall. The "rider" whose task is often very strenuous refreshes himself from time to time with an alcoholic beverage. He is followed by a "bear" who trots on his hind legs growling behind him. Witches, "Zottler" and "Huttler" buzz about, accompanying this wild ride.

A related custom is reported by Victor Garamb[27] from the Piller Lake in Tyrol. There, on the eve of Twelfth Night, two boys covered with a sheet and with a home-made donkey's head in front, make up the "Anklöpfel Esel" or "knocking donkey".

This animal figure which carries a rider is led with a halter by a youth dressed as an innkeeper of the Inn valley. The group is followed by a large retinue of gypsies, vagabonds, witches, quacks and a veterinarian. Amongst much noise the entire group moves to a farm where the "donkey" is offered hay and water which he refuses, however, producing even more terrible noises. This causes the innkeeper to

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[27] Viktor Geramb, Sitte und Brauch in Österreich, Graz: Verlag der Alpenland Buchhandlung, 1948, pp. 204-205.

heap abuses, accusations and insults upon the rider for having made the donkey sick by riding him too hard. The rider has no other choice but to call for the assistance of the quack who tries a variety of cures with jokes and rhymes referring to local events of the year. Finally, the cries of the "donkey" become so pitiful that the veterinarian has to intervene and in the end succeeds to cure the "donkey". As a reward the farmer provides the crowd with bread, butter cheese and alcoholic beverages.

Carnival in Elzach, a Small Town in the West German Province of Baden-Württemberg.

Since I neither had the opportunity to witness Carnival customs in Southern Germany nor found adequate descriptions of them, I am indebted to Agnes Hostettler of Queen's College, Charlotte, North Carolina,[28] who recently spent a year in Freiburg, observing Carnival customs in the Black Forest region, for her findings which she kindly forwarded to me.

In some isolated towns of this region original and exciting Carnival festivities are still taking place. In the little town of Elzach, for instance, Carnival begins when the bells of the morning mass stop ringing on Shrove Tuesday and the night watchman announces the start of Carnival in a rhymed song. He soon walks through the town followed by a group of white-clad men with pointed hats carrying their torches "to

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[28] Agnes Hostettler, letter of January 8th, 1970.

declare the day open".

These, in turn, are followed by a group of "Schuddig" who are the principal masked figures of Elzach. A "Schuddig" is dressed in a bright red suit, made of strips of cloth; he wears a three cornered straw hat which is covered with snail shells. Each corner of the hat is decorated with a bright red woolen ball. His face is covered by a smooth mask with black moustache, heavily painted eyebrows, a red nose and red cheeks. Some "Schuddigs" carry big wooden scissors that can extend to several yards to enable them to snatch hats and caps from spectators - sometimes even from policemen. Some others have air-filled pig bladders fastened to sticks with which they hit the ground, producing loud noises. The huge "Narrenbuch" or book of fools is carried next in the procession and funny or embarrassing happenings of the past year are read out to the accompanying howls of all the "Schuddigs".

During the day there is a big colourful parade in which everyone, including women and children, participates. At night everyone meets at the inn for food and drink and the "Schuddigs" go "strählen", that is they move from table to table and reprimand the guests in a teasing way about their silly or foolish deeds of the past. Usually the victims accept this mockery with good humour and respond by paying for a round of beer or wine.

"Morgenstreich" of Basel.

The most exciting and sophisticated Carnival takes place in Protestant Basel in north western Switzerland. It was my privilege to witness this event personally in 1969. Many of the details related in the following pages stem from my personal observations; but as this is a subject I have long been interested in, some of the points derive also from my extensive reading on the topic. Major works have been footnoted.

Whilst Carnival has been "buried" in all Catholic regions in the week preceding Lent, Basel, the only non-Catholic town with important Carnival activities, purposely chose the beginning of the first full week of Lent for its celebrations. The citizens of this bastion of the Reformed Church do not observe Lent like their Catholic neighbours and fixed the time for their Carnival festivities in direct opposition to their rival cities.

Paul Kölner[29] emphasizes repeatedly that this firmly established national festival which the authorities of church and state tried to suppress for a long time could never be taken away from the citizens of Basel, since the city and all its inhabitants are too actively involved in it. Schools, stores and shops are closed, young and old

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[29] Paul Kölner, "Basler Fastnacht", D'Basler Fasnacht, Basel: Basler Fasnachts-Comité, 1946, 19 ff.

celebrate, and all enjoy themselves in their own way. Whilst a considerable number of people are personally involved and take an active part, the big crowd looks on critically and enjoys what it hears and sees. Those who disguise themselves in masks and costumes often do so to escape not only from themselves but also from the monotony of everyday life and to show themselves before their fellow citizens in different guise and personality. This Carnival fever seems to take hold of men in all walks of life, be it worker or professor, tradesman or businessman, servant or master. What we find today in the "Basler Fastnacht" as a firmly established peculiar tradition is only the last link of a development of some six hundred years in which old heathen spring customs and Germanic and Roman notions mixed and intermingled and religious beliefs joined worldly happiness at a time when the approach of the fasting season encouraged exuberance and excess.

Although records of traditions of the Middle Ages are very incomplete and intermittent, there is evidence to show that the authorities found it hard to curb the exuberant activities that gripped the entire town at such festivals. It is hard to imagine the power of wild pleasure and enjoyment which prevailed in the town at such festivities, when the emphasis was on eating and drinking. Apart from that, individuals or small groups dressed up as devils with their faces blackened with soot, were running about trying to tell

coarse jokes to passers-by or to blacken the faces of onlookers. The narrow streets were echoing with the noise of little bells and the frightening sounds of horns. Amidst it all, the shrill sounds of the pipes invited the crowds to wild dances in the main squares. Since almost everyone, rich and poor, young and old, appear to have been gripped by this wild Carnival fever, the authorities were only able to fight excesses.

Later, at the time of the Reformation, church and state seemed more determined than ever before to put an end to the heathen and unchaste Carnival festivities but succeeded only in setting some limitations. In 1546 the councillors of Basel decided that henceforth no further public Carnival celebrations were to take place, though private merry-making was tolerated. Stiff punishments and constant severe reprimands, administered by church and state prevented the worst outbreaks but the Carnival fun continued largely unabated. If these activities can be considered as a mirror of the times, they were an outlet for overflowing energy and vigour at a time when Basel blossomed forth as never before.

Kölner reminds us in his brief history of the Carnival in Basel that the wearing of masks was strictly forbidden until the nineteenth century, since the authorities looked upon it "as a great annoyance when people put themselves in animal outfits and changed their human faces given

to them by their kind creator, into inhuman and horrid caricatures". When, despite all warnings the popularity of masking customs increased rather than subsided in the eighteenth century, the city council threatened corporal punishment and even death to those who persisted in these "highly dangerous" activities.

Today these regulations seem very exaggerated to us but they fitted well in their times, when the state, in its narrow-minded, paternalistic way was accustomed to interfere in the private affairs of the individual. At the end of the eighteenth century, for instance, middle class women going to church on Sundays in silken coats, servant girls dressed in bonnets bordered with silver and gold, or citizens putting silver harnesses on their horses were punishable by law. In this light the interference of the city fathers at Carnival is perhaps less surprising.

Only the guilds and the suburban societies prevented the Carnival festivities from dying despite all the restrictions and prohibitions. These groups offered opportunities for masked parades within their ranks and within the confines of their districts and encouraged the art of drumming and fifing.

Finally, during the first years of the nineteenth century, the town council then in office was prepared to show more lenient and liberal tendencies, but even their modest concessions seemed too much for the church authorities.

They took the first opportunity to put an end to it all for "political, moral and religious reasons" and in 1807 the council saw itself once again compelled to forbid all masks, processions and masked balls. With the help of extra police they collected fines and strictly enforced the regulations.

However, during the following years these restrictions were gradually relaxed until all barriers of restraint fell strikingly in 1820, presumably because elaborate preparations for a magnificent parade were made by people of rank and reputation who themselves were members of the governing body.

Ten years later, military authorities once again tried to interfere. Eventually, in 1833 a society of artisans openly defied the laws and paraded with blackened and masked faces to the accompaniment of about one hundred and fifty drummers. The police did not intervene, and the festivities proceeded without incidents or insults of any kind. Thus the city of Basel soon found its way back to all its old Carnival gaiety. Since 1835 Carnival activities are recorded and described year after year in a colourful sequence, interrupted only by wars. When the question arose whether or not Carnival festivities should be observed in 1871, when Basel's immediate neighbours were involved in the Franco-Prussian war, the city fathers refused to interfere, since they felt that it should be

left to the citizens themselves to decide what the seriousness of the situation demanded. This gesture seemed to put a final stop to all abuses.

As the city grew and the local Carnival festivities grew with them, they had to be financed by various means: "Carnival shares" were sold, lotteries were conducted, pre-Carnival collections were organized by the "Cliquen" or societies who, as successors of the guilds were and still are the real bearers of the tradition. Finally in 1911, it was decided that a Carnival badge should be manufactured and sold, as well as an information guide, the proceeds of which were to be divided among the societies according to their merits and achievements.

Since early in the nineteenth century the Carnival at Basel has been celebrated very much as it is today. There are many weeks of elaborate preparations for all the societies, during which painters, poets, drummers and piccolo players busy themselves not only by day but also throughout many hours of the night.

Carnival starts its short reign on the first Monday in Lent. However, it does not make its entry in broad daylight, but in the pitch darkness of a cold winter night at 4:00 o'clock in the morning when all the lights in town are extinguished. As the bells on church and city towers strike four, drums and fifes can be heard from all corners of the town. The people of Basel call the beginning of their

Carnival the "Morgenstreich" or Reveille.

Groups or "Cliques" consisting of twenty to thirty masked men, beautifully and artistically costumed to illustrate their chosen theme, march slowly and solemnly down the streets and alleys towards the market square, accompanied by the sound of well-trained drummers and fifers.

Traditionally the groups are led by a vanguard, carrying stick-lanterns. Next comes the drum-major, wearing a huge and grotesque looking head and a costume that differs from that of the other musicians. He is in charge of a group of well trained drummers and pipers whose heads are illuminated with small, painted lanterns. When we were there in 1969 the number of drummers and pipers varied. Some "Cliques" had relatively few musicians, eighteen pipers and fourteen drummers, whilst others could boast thirty-two pipers and thirty-six drummers. Finally comes the showpiece of the group, a huge transparent lantern, beautifully painted by some of Basel's finest artists and inscribed with a poem satirizing some special event and carried on the shoulders of four men, guided by the lantern leader who is in charge of the raising and lowering of the lantern during short pauses and stops.

Since there are many groups participating and criss-crossing the town for three hours and streets are tightly packed by the onlooking crowds, frequent stops are a

necessity. At such times the drum-major elegantly raises his stick in greeting and lets the others pass. In the past such confrontations encouraged fights, but today everyone is friendly, united in the spirit of Carnival.

It is interesting to note that similar though far less sophisticated "Transparencies" used to appear at the "Mardi Gras" parades in New Orleans around 1873, according to Robert Tallant.[30] Since New Orleans and its "Mardi Gras" activities are mainly influenced by French traditions and are furthermore very commercialized, they have otherwise very little in common with the Central European masking customs discussed here.

By 7:00 a.m. groups and spectators assemble in the warm and overcrowded inns to fortify themselves with the traditional "Mählsuppe", a soup made of roasted wheat flour and "Ziebelwähä", an onion pie of exquisite flavour. After that, some go to work and others take a rest to gather strength for the afternoon's parade.

That time more than a hundred groups from Gross - and Kleinbasel, the two parts of the town situated on the right and left bank of the Rhine, march not only through all the main streets of the city but parade finally before the Carnival committee to be judged. They are dressed in colourful costumes representing and illustrating their

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[30]Robert Tallant, Mardi Gras, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1948, p. 144.

society's topical theme and are accompanied by drums and fifes. The streets are densely lined with spectators who are bombarded with sheets of paper on which each society's "theme" is ridiculed in poetical form or in spicy language. At the same time multi-coloured streamers are thrown into the dense crowd from windows and balconies and gaiety abounds.

It is the aim of every "Clique" to find a "sujet" or theme that ridicules and makes fun of a noteworthy event, preferably local, of a serious or funny nature; but there is no hesitation to include subjects from elsewhere in Switzerland or even abroad, provided it does not ridicule religion or damage the state. Although many of the "sujets" we saw in February, 1969, could only be understood and appreciated by the inhabitants of Basel themselves, because they ridiculed and criticized purely local events and happenings, I would like to mention just a few that impressed us as typical examples.

One "Clique" had for its theme: "A bowl of Hashish in the manse", which obviously referred to a local drug scandal where the parish priest's children were involved. In this instance, we saw the pipers costumed as a group of students, specializing in illegal studies of drugs with the parson's daughters amongst them, two people rigged up to represent a camel, the animal required to bring the illegal drugs from the distant desert to Central Europe,

and the drummers dressed as experienced drug traffickers with masks expressing great self-satisfaction, downcast eyes, wearing long hair and flat caps. The drum-major himself wore a devil's costume with a horse's head and devil's horns and a pitchfork in his hand to represent the top man in the trafficking trade.

Another group's theme was: "Basel stinggt" or "Basel stinks", referring to the smoke and gas pollution of the city. Here the pipers were costumed as scientists with scholarly looking masks with high foreheads, and almost bald heads; some carried microscopes, others different scientific instruments next to huge test tubes with large labels indicating that they contained poisonous liquids and gases. The drum-major was dressed as a huge smelly ghost, completely wrapped in white with a large pointed nose attached to his mask. He carried a bunch of evil-smelling herbs in his hand. The drummers, on the other hand, were dressed as poor, wretched looking inhabitants of Basel in ragged clothes and dilapidated looking hats who wore masks that showed tear-filled eyes and nostrils pinched together or stuck down with bandaids.

Another club chose for their theme: "Ziri unter Null oder d'Winterspili in Niederdorf" or "Zurich below freezing or the Olympic Winter Games in Niederdorf (a suburb of Zurich)". This theme referred to the fact that the city of Zurich applied to be the host town for the

Olympic Winter games despite their mild and moderate winter weather which is generally unsuitable for winter sports.

Zurich and Basel have not only enjoyed healthy competition for a very long time, but their citizens have also been the object of much rivalry and jealousy over the years. Therefore, it was not surprising to see one of the societies choosing this subject.

The pipers of this group were dressed as local policemen with masks expressing annoyance; some of the drummers wore snowman-costumes with long noses made of carrots, long hair and Olympic flags hanging round their necks and at the same time showing obvious similarity with the "Säxi-Lüte-Böögge", local bogie figures representing winter which used to be burnt at a Zurich spring festival, called Säxi-Lüte. Other drummers represented people at the Olympics roasting chestnuts and others still simulated "pretty girls" standing in the snow with cold and freezing feet. In the centre of this colourful and gay scene was a character made up as a snow maker. Marching behind the lantern were a group of saints who were obviously sanctified for their ability to make snow, even under the most adverse weather conditions.

Yet another group took for their theme: "Räge, räge, Drepfli, s'schifft uff all Kepfli" or "rain, rain, drops - it pours on all heads". Here, one group was costumed as people completely drenched by rain, whilst

another was divided into weather witches and weather prophets and the drum-major wore a costume and mask representing a neglectful St. Peter.

The huge, magically shaped lantern, which nowadays must not be more than three yards in height so as not to interfere with the tram wires and traffic signs, is the "soul" of the "Morgenstreich" and the show piece of the afternoon procession. It represents the theme in a grandiose way and has been referred to as "the moving, shining wit of the times".[31]

While the first Carnival lanterns had definite forms, representing such things as bottles, barrels or coffee grinders, the frames of which were crudely made of sticks and wire which were covered with rags and linens, they then changed to more simplified and straight-lined shapes. Since the end of the first world war, however, a great variety of lanterns have brought colour and life to the scene. The lantern, lit up from inside by candles, are made of various materials on which comical and satirical pictures have been painted and verses referring to the theme have been written.

The painting techniques have developed from a primitive simple art to the highly specialized painting

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[31] Oscar Kaiser, "Fasnacht Laternen", D'Basler Fastnacht, Basel: Basler Fasnachts-Comité, 1946, 109-117.

of transparencies of today. In the past the small available range of lacquer shades hardly allowed the dim candle light to show through; water colours and coloured India inks brought some improvement; today amazingly clear luminosity is achieved by painting the lantern from the inside with water-resistent colours and stains. It is quite obvious that lanterns are no longer the works of amateurs but those of highly specialized artists.

Although the artistic value of the lanterns has steadily improved, they are "only" folkloristic objects, not mentioned in any history of art. Their creation is alarmingly short-lived since the humour depicted on them refers to fleeting events and happenings which make the talk of the town before and during Carnival but are very soon forgotten afterwards.

Apart from the organized adult societies, groups of young people anxious to participate in the Carnival festivities can also be seen. They, too, choose a theme, but its interpretation is more modest and less sophisticated, and yet in its naivety frequently extremely funny.

Since the Carnival committee always gave active support to the schools for drummers and fifers, there is an ample supply of young, gifted musicians who serve their apprenticeship in the youth societies before being received into the experienced adult ranks.

Apart from the organized processions and the groups of young people, single maskers in original costumes as well as small musical bands also move through the town adding to the gay mood of the city.

When the Carnival crowd finally disperses in the early evening hours of that long first day of Carnival and the paper mess of streamers and Carnival newspapers has been cleaned from the streets of the inner city, one can observe crowds of ordinary citizens slowly moving towards the inns. Though their legs are tired from standing, their ears still filled with the noise of the pipes and the drums and their hands and pockets bursting with Carnival pamphlets, these passive Carnival participants are by no means tired of Carnival, but look forward to an evening of "Intrigieren" and the "Schnitzelbänke" in one of the well-known inns.

After supper, around 8:00 o'clock, a multi-coloured happy and noisy lot of maskers appears in these big restaurants. They push and crowd between tables and into corners in an effort to discover an acquaintance or friend whom they can attack with a frightening torrent of words. If the person addressed is satisfied, he bids them to sit down and to drink from his glass with a straw. This is the outer appearance of "Intrigieren".

But what happens in fact? Though difficult to explain, a kind of guessing game is played. Wherever masks

are worn, the wearer is forever tempted to play the role of an unrecognized friend who, dressed as a complete stranger, knows the secrets of the one he questions. Whilst more primitive people frighten their children by wearing demons masks and reproach and accuse them for "sins or deeds" they have committed, "enlightened" people consider themselves lucky and are happy when they can approach a friend with "Ah, you don't know me!" The magic lies in the fact of not being recognized.

In this particular Carnival activity it is important that the mask and the costume are typical and characteristic so that the unsuspecting victim sees in it a particular image which impresses him so deeply that he forgets for the moment that this strange apparition knows and tells him things about himself with which only his closest friends are acquainted.

Most people choose a costume which is far removed from every day life with a mask of a face that portrays an ordinary person. It is, therefore, not surprising that certain mask types which have developed over the years appear again and again at Carnival time. They represent real people and are well known: the most popular today is perhaps the "Waggis", an Alsatian farmer figure with a big potato-shaped snub nose, red neckerchief, blue blouse, white pants and a straw hat with vegetables on it or a white tasseled cap, covered with vegetables.

Almost as frequent is the costume of the "alti Dante" or old aunt, an old Victorian lady's outfit with many skirts, lace shawl and bonnet and a mask which offers a great range of variety. Rarer are the "dumb Peter" with his rag-baby and the "Blätzlibajass" or clown, figures typical not only for Basel but also the Rhine region. Apart from these well-known types, one also meets original single costumed masks who obviously show more originality in their execution and usually fulfil their purpose to perfection.

But the costume is only an outer appearance, for the core of this activity is the verbal part. The people of Basel pride themselves that their masks are peculiar to them because they always have an open mouth which literally overflows with ridicule and sarcasm. They are quick to add that the mouth of their masks must not be open too wide, however, so that the face hidden by the mask remains unrecognized. For this same reason half masks can never be used, and the stuffiness of a full mask with its odour of shellac and paint is willingly accepted in exchange for free and uninhibited speech.

"Intrigieren" is an intimate art: it is a socially, legally and morally accepted form of telling one's fellow-man what one thinks of him. This naturally pre-supposes a thorough and intimate knowledge of "the victim" and his circumstances and was, therefore, a sport particularly suited

to a formerly small community, where people knew each other much better than they do today. While most use a falsetto voice, the "Waggis" roars into his big nose and thus produces a very queer unnatural sound. "Intrigieren" can best be described as "the telling of refined malices to one's friends".

Costumed and disguised by a mask, the person who practises this art is allowed to go much further than he would ever dream to under normal circumstances because "the victim" gladly accepts accusations and reprimands in the spirit of Carnival. Even the most sensitive people realize that words uttered from behind a mask cannot be taken as completely serious and the disguised has a right to reprimand and to divulge the secrets of others.

Since every "Clique" or society has its own chosen poet whose responsibility it is to put its theme into witty rhymes, these poetic verses not only appear in part on the lanterns but are also written or printed on the "Schnitzelbank", a primitive kind of Carnival newspaper or broadsheet.

The term "Schnitzelbank" conveys the same notion as the whetstone on the cart of a knife and scissor sharpener which emits sparks - flashes of wit, for a whetstone also sharpens the wits and tongues of those that like to gossip. "Schnitzer", therefore, are jokes, anecdotes

but also errors, faults and mistakes.[32] Whilst the mockery originally had to be confined to two lines, it was later expanded to stanzas and adapted to melodies of well-known songs. It used to be customary for the "Schnitzelbänkler" (those reciting the verses) to visit only the better restaurants in the inner city, where they recited their verses and showed illustrative caricatures for the pleasure of the guests and their own and willingly paid their own expenses, except perhaps for a special treat from the innkeeper. Gradually, however, the affair grew into a business and the "Schnitzelbänkler" asked and received monetary compensation from the innkeeper for the amusement they provided for his guests. Eventually, "Schnitzelbank" societies came into being and finally a "Schnitzelbank" committee was formed which, like the Carnival committees, took charge of the finances.

Whilst "Intrigieren" only concerns a few chosen individuals, "Schnitzelbänkler" recite their verses in groups, i.e. the leader declaims and the choir sings the refrains to the gathered crowd who happily relives the events of the day by listening to the verses and songs.

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[32] H. Fischer, Schwäbisches Wörterbuch, V, Sp. 1078 ff. ("Schnitz"); M. Scharfe, "Rügebräuche", Dörfliche Fasnacht zwischen Neckar und Bodensee, Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1966, p. 210.

The custom of the "Schnitzelbank" can also be found in widely scattered villages in Southern Germany, particularly but not exclusively in the region of Lake Constance.[33] In the village of Ellwangen the "Pennäler Schnitzelbank" is well known: here, according to an article in the Stuttgarter Zeitung of March 5th, 1957, which is quoted in an article entitled "Rügebräuche" by Martin Scharfe,[34] forty to fifty senior students, wearing black masks and domino costumes with various sashes and ox tails, march from farm to farm and sing reprimanding verses to a local tune.

But to return to Basel. The day following the exciting events of the "Morgenstreich" is an ordinary working day. Only an exhibition of lanterns, organized by the Carnival committee for the purpose of close and critical inspection, reminds one of the previous day's festivities.

The great finale takes place on Wednesday afternoon. Once again the members of the various societies, beautifully costumed, march to the sound of drums and fifes and carry their big, artistically painted lanterns with their themes through the main streets which are lined with dense crowds. As everyone is aware of the approaching end of this happy

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[33] See Dörfliche Fasnacht zwischen Neckar und Bodensee, Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1966, map IX, p. 209.

[34] Martin Scharfe, "Rügebräuche", Dörfliche Fasnacht zwischen Neckar und Bodensee, Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1966, p. 210.

season, people enter into the spirit perhaps even more than on Monday. Whilst men hidden behind masks are anxiously holding on to these beautiful happy moments, they are fully aware that the spice of the old Carnival of Basel lies in the brevity and concentration of the season.

CHAPTER VII

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MUMMERING IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND MASKING CUSTOMS IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Having described a variety of Central European masking customs and thus having made little known descriptive material available in English, I would now like to conclude by comparing some of their features with those found in Newfoundland mummering, examining similarities and differences.

In Newfoundland as well as in Central Europe, people enjoy "dressing" up and changing their personality with the help of a mask or costume. At least once a year, they like to break away from the humdrum of everyday life, to break down social barriers and to enjoy a short period of unlicenced behaviour. In both places the mask in conjunction with the disguise and the use of a falsetto voice (or ingressive speech in Newfoundland), makes its wearer either anonymous or resembling another person. The masked person is anxious to hide his personality so that his jokes and behaviour can remain unrecognized and unpunished. Another characteristic trait of masking both in Newfoundland and Central Europe is the desire to play and to act which is

common to all people but perhaps more pronounced today amongst those who live in isolated communities where amusements and entertainments are not readily available and people are, therefore, entirely dependent on their own resources.

In both places masking festivities are confined to long winter nights: whilst the inhabitants of Alpine villages and valleys are forced to stay at home because their meadows and fields are covered with ice and snow and their farm animals are confined to the stables because of wintery weather, in Newfoundland it is the end of the fishing season that forces people to stay at home and compels them to take a well earned holiday, usually accompanied by excessive eating and drinking.

Urban centres have slightly different reasons for choosing long winter nights for their masking festivities. They, too, are longing for excitement and colourful noisy entertainment to break the monotony of winter; they, too, are eager and anxious to socialize during the dark cold season, perhaps in an endeavour to strengthen their community spirit with their masking activities.

Masked parades, more spontaneous and less opulent than those described in Europe were not uncommon in Newfoundland. J.B. Jukes, a Cambridge geologist visiting St. John's, refers in some considerable detail to Christmas mumming in the capital. Here as in Europe,

> . . . men, dressed in all kinds of fantastic dis-disguises and some in women's clothes, with gaudy colours and painted faces, and generally armed with a bladder full of pebbles tied to a kind of whip, paraded the streets, playing practical jokes on each other and on the passers-by, performing rude dances, and soliciting money or grog. They called themselves Fools or Mummers.[1]

In this description we find the same basic features of the typical Mummers parade in Central Europe with only minor differences. For example, bladders in Newfoundland were filled with pebbles, while the European reports emphasize that they were filled with soot or coloured liquid, possibly even blood.

We further learn from G.M. Story[2] that Sir Richard Bonnycastle who visited Newfoundland shortly after Jukes, left an even more detailed report of such parades. Bonnycastle emphasized that ladies were represented by young fishermen with painted, rather than masked faces. Thus, as in Central Europe, female figures were represented only by males.

He also noted that fools and clowns, equipped with thongs and bladders, tormented and teased the onlooking crowd. Bonnycastle takes particular care to underline the ingenuity employed in the styles and decorations of the

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[1] J.B. Jukes, Excursions in and about Newfoundland during the Years 1839 and 1840, London, 1842, I, pp.220-221.

[2] G.M.Story, "Mummers in Newfoundland History: A Survey of the Printed Record", Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969, p. 171.

hats. High pointed paper hats and caps, as well as shirts with multi-coloured ribbons as decorations, are never missing in descriptions of Newfoundland parades. Here, too, is another most important feature of the costumes displayed in European parades.

Moreover, the masked participants of the parade made a point of first calling at Government House, before calling on other citizens, just as the "Perchten" and "Schemen" in Central Europe were and still are in the habit of visiting the most prominent and distinguished people of the community first to perform their dance and collect their reward. Even when "Perchten" appear at an ordinary farm, the owner is fully aware of the great honour bestowed on him and receives them with gratitude and generosity. It may well be that this is just a remnant of earlier times, when only the most important people were chosen to be called upon.

William Whittle's description[3] of seasonal customs in St. John's between 1840 and 1865 confirms previous reports and shorter accounts that followed. We further learn from Story that a St. John's journalist of the nineteenth century, A.A. Parsons, refers to the participation of a "hobbyhorse" whose weird attendants used to hit and chase people and

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[3] G.M. Story quoting W. Whittle in "Mummers in Newfoundland History: A Survey of the Printed Record", Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969, pp. 173-175.

attack them with whips to which inflated bladders were attached".[4]

All reports stress the attachment to and the interest of the entire communities in these masking occasions despite a certain amount of violence which inevitably accompanied them and was always associated with boisterous mummering, an occurence not only true for St. John's and Newfoundland, but equally for Central Europe.

The settling of old grievances by people hidden behind masks, some using shrill yells or falsetto voices whilst beating and thrashing with sticks, is another feature common to both areas.

Despite disapproval by authorities, the sometimes apprehensive joy of the spectators was a factor in the continuing popularity of such events. In Newfoundland as in Europe, excesses, violence, and finally serious incidents followed by riots, led to the ultimate banning by the authorities of all mumming activities in the province in 1861. The law which is still on the books today apparently put an end to all formal parades in Newfoundland.

Again, as in many of the Central European examples cited in preceding chapters, we see that folk customs cannot be killed by prohibitions and punishments alone, since they

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[4] G.M. Story quoting A.A. Parsons in "Mummers in Newfoundland History: A Survey of the Printed Record", Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969, p. 175.

are too deeply rooted in the lives of the people. In one way or other, often with certain changes or with the emphasis on one particular feature, people tenaciously stick to their customs as part of their traditions. Whereas the public display officially came to an end with the 1861 ban, many of its ideas and characteristics were perpetuated in the form of the "house-visit", which was still practised in St. John's as late as 1925, as described by A.C. Hunter:

> Another amusing, pleasant surprise awaited us that evening (Christmas night); a visitation of mummers: not that the ancient practice of mummering was new to me, but in England it is associated with New Year's Eve, not with Christmas, and the mummers, some at least of whom wear - or should I say used to wear - traditional costumes, went silently because speaking or singing was expected to have dire consequences - went silently about their symbolic ritual, sweeping up the ashes on the hearth and going silently out again. They then returned for the expected fun and cakes and ale. Our Newfoundland mummers were masked and sufficiently disguised in fancy costumes but had no ancient ceremony to perform. They sang noisily what may have been local ballads or come-all-ye's - I didn't know enough to recognize them - did a bit of clowning, and departed suitably rewarded, after the fun.[5]

Many Newfoundland outports continue to look forward to the informal house-visit of Christmas mummers during the twelve days of Christmas. According to the many reports on deposit in the Folklore and Language Archive at Memorial University and accounts from friends and acquaintances, all

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[5] A.C. Hunter, "Winter Forty Years Ago", The Newfoundland Quarterly, Fall 1971, 12-13.

these visitations show some common feature and only differ in details. Basic to all house-visits, according to Herbert Halpert,[6] is the complete disguise of the callers which consequently involves not only face and clothing disguises, but also the disguising of voice, gesture and all normal body movements. It is the task of the hosts to attempt, by a variety of means, to guess the identity of the visitors. Upon successful identification the callers unmask, return to their normal social roles and are usually offered and accept some kind of refreshment before moving to the next house.

What have the Newfoundland informal house-visits in common with some of the European Alpine customs and where do they differ?

While the Newfoundland house-visits generally extend over all the twelve days of Christmas, except on Sundays, the Central European masking customs are tied to specific days, usually either St. Nicholas Day or the eve of Old Christmas Day, one or all three Thursdays before Christmas, or Carnival. This shows perhaps above all, that Alpine dwellers consider the feast of the birth of Christ more as a quiet family occasion, whereas the Anglo-Irish tradition sees the Christmas period as a season for visiting amongst

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[6] Herbert Halpert, "A Typology of Mumming", Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969, p. 37.

friends, feasting and merrymaking.

The knocking on doors in Newfoundland by the visitors, interpreted by M.M. Firestone[7] and others as a sign of a visit by strangers in contrast to a neighbour who just walks in, is equally well known in Central Europe. As we have seen, the "Klöckler"[8] in Styria and Carinthia, equipped with sticks, rods and hammers, gather in front of the entrance and knock on walls and doors, begging to be admitted. There, as in Newfoundland, the hosts are given an opportunity to turn the special guests away, should their visit be undesired because of sickness or some other reason. Whereas mummers in Newfoundland occasionally carry walking sticks[9] or considerably shorter "splits" and pretend to be crippled, Alpine maskers used their sticks or poles to jump over fences and to beat the ground to ensure a good harvest for the coming year. While sticks in Newfoundland are part of the complete disguise and imperative for the guessing game that follows, they are used in Europe as part of a very old pagan fertility rite. Formerly, sticks were also used in both Central Europe and Newfound-

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[7] M.M. Firestone, "Mummers and Strangers in Northern Newfoundland", Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, p.70.

[8] See Chapter IV, p. 47.

[9] C.E. Williams, "Janneying in 'Coughlin Cove'", Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, p. 210.

land to inflict punishments, often for unsettled debts, whilst under the protection of a mask.

Normally, however, people in both regions look forward to the mummers' visits, though perhaps for different reasons.

While Alpine dwellers know that their disguised visitors bring them happiness, good health and all the blessings for the New Year, Newfoundlanders look forward to be amused and entertained by the mummers. There is, moreover, one fundamental difference in the costumes, which are far more elaborate but less disguising in Central Europe than in Newfoundland. Since the guessing game is not the focal point in Central European masking customs as it is in Newfoundland, the disguise does not have to be complete. Its function in Europe is to be artistically beautiful or ugly, typical or merely traditional, whereas it is supposed to cause confusion in the mind of the hosts in Newfoundland.

I have, however, found one possible exception to this rule: When the maskers of Basel play their game of "Intrigieren" on the night of the "Morgenstreich", and tell their hosts or victims in the restaurants "refined malices", they too must be left wondering and try to guess the true identity of the friend with falsetto voice who hides behind costume and mask! But while this feature is only an adjunct in Basel, the guessing game is the main purpose of the house-visit in Newfoundland.

Another basic difference between Newfoundland and European masking customs is that Newfoundland mummers, when visiting, are normally only offered refreshments after they have unmasked and have re-acquired their true identity, whilst Alpine maskers are rewarded and refreshed in full attire and still unidentified. In Newfoundland one is eager to extend hospitality as an act of friendship which the recipient is equally anxious to repay at the earliest possible opportunity, as L. Chiaramonte[10] points out. In the Alps, on the other hand, the bearers of good wishes and blessings or those who perform a dance receive their well earned reward in the form of a refreshment.

In both regions the behaviour of the disguised people is not normal, nor is it expected to be, and violent outbursts in some form or other, often aggravated by too much alcohol, are by no means uncommon. In some cases prohibitions and restrictions made over the years have turned these customs which used to be often rough and wild into much more peaceful, enjoyable and amusing occasions.

Finally, mummers in both regions enjoy special privileges. They are allowed certain physical sexual freedoms, such as "grabbing someone" or "touching him or her up", or "feeling her up above the waist", or "drag girls out for

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[10] L.J. Chiaramonte, "Mumming in Deep Harbour", Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, p. 85.

a dance",[11] pinch them or even steal a kiss from them, all activities which would normally never be permissible. In Europe, not only St. Nicholas and his companion "the devil" or "black Peter" are given very special privileges when they reward or punish the youngsters; practically all individuals when covered by a mask enjoy some kind of licenced freedom in speech as well as in deed, which is willingly tolerated and accepted by the society at large.

Although masking customs in Newfoundland communities used to be generally confined to young male adults, they are now either practised by groups of "big" and "little" mummers or only by little mummers or not at all. In the Alps some of the customs have been completely taken over by the children and in others children play a very important role; in some cases children are trained and carefully molded by their elders so that they are able to perform efficiently when their time has come. Other customs still belong strictly and solely to young, preferable unmarried men.

The noise element seems to be mostly redundant here in Newfoundland, especially at the house-visit. A variety of bells as well as drums, pipes and other noise-making instruments play an essential part in most Central European

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[11] J.C. Faris, "Mumming in an Outport Fishing Settlement", Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, p. 132.

masking activities. Apart from very old reports of mumming where "the roars" of the masks were always emphasized, this element is not as important in Newfoundland. The reason seems to be that the Newfoundland mummers only object is like that of most of the contemporary Central European maskers: to have fun and enjoy a guessing game, rather than to chase away wicked spirits or re-awaken and fertilize dormant nature.

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