

THE SECULAR MASQUE

JOHN DRYDEN

Table of Contents

<u>THE SECULAR MASQUE</u>	1
<u>JOHN DRYDEN</u>	2

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Enter JANUS

JANUS

Chronos, Chronos, mend thy pace,
An hundred times the rolling sun
Around the radiant belt has run
In his revolving race.
Behold, behold, the goal in sight,
Spread thy fans, and wing thy flight.

Enter CHRONOS, with a scythe in his hand, and a great globe on his back, which he sets down at his entrance

CHRONOS

Weary, weary of my weight,
Let me, let me drop my freight,
And leave the world behind.
I could not bear
Another year
The load of human-kind.

Enter MOMUS Laughing

MOMUS

Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha! well hast thou done,
To lay down thy pack,
And lighten thy back.
The world was a fool, e'er since it begun,
And since neither Janus, nor Chronos, nor I,
Can hinder the crimes,
Or mend the bad times,
'Tis better to laugh than to cry.

CHORUS OF ALL THREE

'Tis better to laugh than to cry

JANUS

THE SECULAR MASQUE

Since Momus comes to laugh below,
Old Time begin the show,
That he may see, in every scene,
What changes in this age have been,

CHRONOS

Then Goddess of the silver bow begin.

Horns, or hunting—music within

Enter DIANA

DIANA

With horns and with hounds I waken the day,
And hie to my woodland walks away;
I tuck up my robe, and am buskin'd soon,
And tie to my forehead a waxing moon.
I course the fleet stag, unkennel the fox,
And chase the wild goats o'er summits of rocks,
With shouting and hooting we pierce thro' the sky;
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

CHORUS OF ALL

With shouting and hooting, we pierce through the sky,
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

JANUS

Then our age was in its prime,

CHRONOS

Free from rage,

DIANA

—And free from crime.

MOMUS

A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.

CHORUS OF ALL

Then our age was in its prime,
Free from rage, and free from crime,
A very merry, dancing, drinking,

JOHN DRYDEN

THE SECULAR MASQUE

Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.

Dance of Diana's attendants

Enter MARS

MARS

Inspire the vocal brass, inspire;
The world is past its infant age:
 Arms and honour,
 Arms and honour,
Set the martial mind on fire,
And kindle manly rage.
Mars has look'd the sky to red;
And peace, the lazy good, is fled.
Plenty, peace, and pleasure fly;
 The sprightly green
In woodland-walks, no more is seen;
The sprightly green, has drunk the Tyrian dye.

CHORUS OF ALL

Plenty, peace, &c.

MARS

Sound the trumpet, beat the drum,
Through all the world around;
Sound a reveille, sound, sound,
The warrior god is come.

CHORUS OF ALL

Sound the trumpet, &c.

MOMUS

Thy sword within the scabbard keep,
 And let mankind agree;
Better the world were fast asleep,
 Than kept awake by thee.
The fools are only thinner,
 With all our cost and care;
But neither side a winner,
 For things are as they were.

CHORUS OF ALL

The fools are only, &c.

JOHN DRYDEN

THE SECULAR MASQUE

Enter VENUS

VENUS

Calms appear, when storms are past;
Love will have his hour at last:
Nature is my kindly care;
Mars destroys, and I repair;
Take me, take me, while you may,
Venus comes not ev'ry day.

CHORUS OF ALL

Take her, take her, &c.

CHRONOS

The world was then so light,
I scarcely felt the weight;
Joy rul'd the day, and love the night.
But since the Queen of Pleasure left the ground,
 I faint, I lag,
 And feebly drag
The pond'rous Orb around.
All, all of a piece throughout;

MOMUS,

pointing {} to Diana {}

Thy chase had a beast in view;

to Mars

Thy wars brought nothing about;

to Venus

Thy lovers were all untrue.

JANUS

'Tis well an old age is out,
And time to begin a new.

CHORUS OF ALL

All, all of a piece throughout;
Thy chase had a beast in view;
Thy wars brought nothing about;
Thy lovers were all untrue.

JOHN DRYDEN

THE SECULAR MASQUE

'Tis well an old age is out,
And time to begin a new.

Dance of huntsmen, nymphs, warriors, and lovers.