VI. *On the Etymology of MASS, &c. in a Letter from H. C. ROBINSON, Esq. addressed to JOHN GAGE, Esq. F.R.S., Director.*

Read 7th March, 1833.

2, Plowden's Buildings, Temple,
3d March, 1833.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN your learned Dissertation on St. Æthelwold's Benedictional, (Archæologia, vol. XXIV. p. 1,) you have adopted the traditional derivation of the word MASS, in the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church, from the formula *missa est* of the ritual. This induces me to address myself to you on the subject of English Etymology, though I cannot expect you to take an active interest in the argument I mean to lay before you in opposition to that derivation, or be more than the obliging medium through which I may address the learned Society, of which you are so distinguished a support. You have, I believe, not yet directed your attention to the German or other Northern languages; and as far therefore as you can have any opinion upon a subject of controversy to which you have not yet particularly attended, that opinion must of necessity be in conformity with that which has generally prevailed among European scholars for the last three centuries. I am aware of the disadvantage of opposing myself to such a mass of authority; but I own that this rather impels me to, than deters me from, the investigation. The concurrence of all the authorities in favour of any doctrine may be a sufficient inducement for assuming it to be true without further inquiry, but it is a still better reason for exposing an error, if there be one: and more especially if it should appear that the shrewd remark of the German Göthe is here peculiarly applicable, "In this world, there are so few voices and so many echoes."

The conjectural proposition to which I invite your attention is this: That the English word *Mass*, as well as the cognate *messe*, &c. in the other European languages, has not, nor had the barbarous Latin *missa*, any connection whatever with the pure Latin participle *missa*: and that so far from being, as is asserted by Mr. Bruce in the *Archæologia*, vol. *xxi.* p. 113, “wholly distinct, both in derivation and meaning, from *mas*, the adjunct of Christ,” in Christmas, &c., it is that very word—a word which belongs to the Teutonic languages alone, and has no connection with the pure Latin.

In endeavouring to establish these points, I shall avail myself of the great name of Muratori, and apply to this purpose an etymological rule hitherto generally disregarded, indeed little known, though promulgated by one of the most illustrious scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Among the treasures of learning with which the last century was enriched, few are to be compared with the “*Dissertazioni sopra le Antichità Italiane*,” a portion of which was published in Latin by the author himself, but his own improved Italian work was published by his nephew after his death. The edition before me is of Rome 1755. The thirty-second and thirty-third dissertations are on the origin and etymology of the Italian language. Muratori’s purpose in these treatises was to direct the attention of scholars to the Northern tongues, more especially the German and English, as supplying the origin of a vast number of words generally supposed to be derived from the Greek and Latin; and he has enlivened his opusculi by an amusing exposure of the absurdities of Menage, and other popular writers. Maffei, an author of a very different character, having, in his “*Verona illustrata*,” denied the influence of the invasion of the Barbarians of the middle ages on the language, &c. of Italy, and even affirmed that there were not more than twenty German words afloat in the Italian, Muratori drew up a catalogue of several hundred Italian words which are the subject of investigation; a catalogue which ought not to be neglected by any English lexicographer. The doctrine maintained by Muratori, is shortly this:—When the Romans became the masters of Italy there were other dialects besides that of Latium; and though they were conquerors, it is not reasonable to suppose that they could extirpate the words of the other Italian nations or races. These words he supposes to have subsisted during the long period of Roman dominion. In addition to which, in after ages, when

Italy was overrun by the Northern tribes, who brought with them their wives and children, and established themselves permanently in Italy, the language of the Italians was further overrun by foreign dialects, and still retains the marks of this primitive diversity, and of the corruption of the Italian from the invasion of the Northern races.

Having remarked on the reciprocal influence of languages through the commercial intercourse of nations, which is a matter of trivial observation to every man, Muratori comes to this conclusion: "Ma qualora osserviamo nella Lingua Germanica qualche parola comune agl' Italiani, Francesi, et Inglesi, difficilmente falleremo in attribuendone l'origine più tosto alla Germanica che ad altra Lingua."^a But it is to be remarked of Muratori, that his acquaintance with both English and German seems to have been merely that of a lexicographer. He had no familiar knowledge of either language, as is proved by his omissions. His sagacity enabled him to trace resemblances which are but remote; while other coincidences are passed over, which a man of no acuteness, but having an ordinary knowledge of the several languages, would at once perceive. I throw into a note a few specimens of his investigations and speculations, which involve some remarks on the German language.^b

^a Tomo ii. parte 1, p. 173.

^b *Schifare*, *Schivare*, *Vitare*, *Declinare*, *Abhorrere*; Muratori derives from the German *Scheu*, aversion, fear, whence *scheuen*, *fuggire*. And he connects with this the French *Esquiver*, and the English to *eschew*. This latter word he had found in our Bible, but had he had any acquaintance with our every-day language, he would not have failed to remark how widely the word had spread. The *shying* of a horse and the *shyness* of a girl, are plainly derivable from the same origin.

Randa di un volto, *di un arco*, also used for the rim of a wheel, is by Menage derived from *Ramus*; but Muratori supposes it to be from the German *Rand*, in the several senses of *Giro*, *Cerchio*, *Orlo*, *Margine*. I notice this for the sake of relating an anecdote which shews how words linger in remote provinces when in other places they have died away. At an Assizes at Norwich, many years ago, I heard a trial involving the right to the reeds growing on the borders of a little river. Old witnesses were called to prove who had the right to cut the *rands*, which *a* they pronounced just as the Germans now do. The witnesses meant by the *rands*, the rushes on the borders or edges of the land, which were claimed by the owners of the land—which word, by the bye, still survives (the *a* being changed into *i*) in the *rind* of cheese, orange, and bacon.

Schuma—*Spuma*, is by Menage derived from that Latin word, but Muratori makes it identical with the German *schaum*, the Danish *skum*, the Icelandish *scuum*, the English *scum*, and the

It is by no means an agreeable reflection that, notwithstanding Muratori's very high character, his philological speculation seems to have been altogether disregarded by his own countrymen. Political feelings and national antipathies have undoubtedly greatly contributed to this result. Petrarch's frequent epi-

French *ecume*. It may be here remarked, that a very large proportion indeed of the Italian words which commence in *sch*, are from the German.

Muratori warns his readers against being misled by mere identity of sound, which would occasionally lead to false conclusions. Thus he remarks on our *cold*, while the Italian *caldo* means *hot*; our *women*, while the Italian *uomini* means *men*. By the bye, I would observe here on the anomalous diversity of pronunciation in the singular and plural of woman, that the plural is the more correct pronunciation of the word according to its origin. Women (say *wi'men*) is but a softening down of *wyv*, or *wif*, or *weibmen*.

Among the words which look alike and are the opposite, is *schliudere*, which means to open, and not to shut. This Italian word is evidently derived from the Latin *claudere*. The *l* being turned into an *i*, as in so many instances, *Flos*, *fiore*; *Flumen*, *fiume*, &c. Now this same *claudere* is in German *schliessen*, which word has ramifications so beautifully analogical, that I am glad of availing myself of it to shew *how* the German language is formed. From the verb *schliessen* comes *entschluss*, a resolution or determination of the mind which shuts up all doubt. A decree of a court of justice is for the same reason called a *beschluss*. A *schloss* is a castle, i. e. a fortified or shut-up building. The same *schloss* also means a bolt, as *schlüssel* means a key. *Schleusse* is our *sluice*. Hence it follows, that sluice is a contrivance rather to shut than to open: though of course it cannot do one without the other. The worth of a language lies, in a great measure, in the richness of its analogous formations.

A more interesting illustration of this richness of the German in vernacular formations, contrasted with our recourse to foreign languages for words which from fastidiousness we have rejected in our native tongue, is found in *geist*, which answers a multitude of purposes which we have refused to effect by our own corresponding word. *Ein Geistlicher* is a *clergyman*; *ein geistliches lied*, a *spiritual song*; *Geistige getränke*, spirituous drinks or liquors; a *geistreiche person* is an *ingenious* lady or gentleman, while *geistvoll* is more seriously *intellectual*; and *geist*, in its simple form, is *spirit*, in all its variety of applications. How this Latin *spirit* came to supersede our Teutonic *ghost*, I cannot pretend to say. It may be thought that our proper term has been withdrawn from common use, *reverentiæ causa*, having one solemn application. Yet it is at the same time used in another sense, in which it is not used in German—*ghost*, in the sense of a departed spirit making itself visible, being in German *gespenst* from *spinnen* (as if spun out by the fancy). It is worthy of remark that the Teutonic word has come to us a second time under the varied form of *Gas*. This word is said to have been introduced by Van Helmont. He had not far to go in search of it. *Geest* seems to be as much in use as the allied *Geist* is in German. The chemical *Geestdryver* (for such is the Dutch word for Enthusiast, and such Van Helmont was) adopted the novel variety of *geest*, *gas*, to designate spirit or vapour. And in so

thet “*il barbaro*,” joined to “*Tedesco*,” is still on the lips and in the hearts of his countrymen. I can testify to this fact, and to its influence even on men of letters, and on questions purely literary. Yet the inquiry is going on elsewhere. I have noticed the title of a work which every Italian scholar will look at with jealousy, if not aversion : “*Der Germanische Ursprung der Lateinischen Sprache und des Römischen volkes nachgewiesen, von Ernst Jäkel.*” Breslaw, 1830. “The German origin of the Latin language and Roman people traced.”^c In the mean while, until the appearance of Horne Tooke’s “*Diversions of Purley*,” which gave so strong an impulse to and changed the course of etymological inquiry, the opinion suggested by Muratori was scarcely known in this country, except by the witty though coarse burlesque argument by Swift, in his proof that Greek and Latin are derived from the English.

Before I proceed to apply these general remarks to the word *Mass*, as used in the ritual of the Church, I will compendiously set down the several varieties of that word, which varieties are said by Mr. Bruce *not* to be the word in question.

doing, he reversed the process which had taken place in the Latin. *Spiritus* meant first a material substance, though the finest, breath ; and then became opposed to all matter : while *geist*, otherwise immaterial, becomes in *gas* a bodily substance.

I will conclude these extracts with a word of far less importance, but one which has given pleasure to the English readers of Italian poetry, accompanied by regret that we want a corresponding word. In Ariosto the word *guizzare* frequently occurs, which is used to express that brilliant flash which a fish (trout especially) makes by its motion in the water ; and yet, if Muratori be correct, we have the word in English. He asserts that *Guizzare*, *motus piscium per aquam*, is not from *fluitare*, Latin, as Ferrari affirms, but from the German *wischen*, or *witschen* ; he remarks that the Italian *Gu* denotes a passage through the German, though the word in its origin may be Latin. *Guastare* comes not directly from the Latin *vastare*, but from the German *wast*. He supposes *wischen* to have become *guiscare*, and then *guizzare*. If this be so, then we have also the word in our *whisk* :

“ Out of the window, whisk, they flew,

But left a spell upon the table. GRAY.

But our *whisk* simply expresses the rapidity of the motion in the *subject*, *guizzare* is used to indicate the effect on the beholder of the *object* ; a delicacy of discrimination which is seldom noticed by grammarians, which is found in good writers, but too often lost in the heedlessness and inaccuracy of common conversation.

^c See an excellent article in the Foreign Quarterly Review for October 1832.

I may refer with confidence to every Anglo-Saxon and Mæso-Gothic dictionary, in which will be found the original of these words in the primitive sense which was afterwards adopted by the Church. Mr. Bruce himself states that *maerje* was used in the sense of festival. And Lye renders the Mæso-Gothic *MATGAN* by *edere*, *comedere*, and *MATS*, meat, *cibus*, *esca*.

All the popular dictionaries shew that this Northern word spread rapidly over all the European languages. In our own tongue we have all those compounds of *Mas* which indicate the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, *Michael-mas*, and *Christmas*, *Candlemas*, *Martinmas*, &c. which need no explanation. That the kindred term *mess* was early used in the sense of a portion of food, is proved equally by our early poets and the common version of the Bible. The other sense of this word, for *convivium*, is also universally known and of daily use, so that I will not detain you by a needless repetition. The French language presents the same facts on its very surface; not to dwell on its common term *metz* for dish; their etymological dictionaries all concur. Roquefort, in his "Glossaire de la langue Romane," explains *messe* by *Confrerie*, *association*. And the "Dictionnaire Roman Walon," &c. contains the term *Mes de Mariage*, as a technical term by which a legal right to a portion of a marriage feast is designated. In the Italian also, *messo* retains its primitive sense, for the very dictionaries which derive it from *missus* inform you that it means also *muta di viande*—a remove or service at table.

It is sufficient thus briefly to intimate, that even in the languages which retain the least portion of the Teutonic, this primitive word is found with some slight variety of form. It is in the German that we may expect to find it more frequently. In fact, in that language *Messe* is used both for a fair and also for the rite of the Church. It would be uncandid in me not to admit that Adelung, the great German lexicographer, whose reputation is so great, also concurs in your, the general etymology from *missus*. It being a well known fact, that in an early age fairs were attached to religious rites, he considers the sense *fair* as secondary and derivative. Having made this admission, and also noticed the significant compound *Kirmse*, or *Kirmes*, the annual feast in German villages, by which the day of the consecration of the church is celebrated, and which is compounded of *KIRCHMESSE*—*church-feast*, I now take

leave to make one single reference to the German, and that shall be to no less illustrious a poet than the Minnesinger the Chevalier Hartmann von Aue, who flourished in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. His epic poem *Iwain* was edited by Michaelles, Vienna 1786. In that edition, I read :

“ *Dem gelinget dester bas
Sein schimpf und sein mas.*”

The editor renders this in modern German, “So much the better succeeds his jest and his farewell feast,” [Bescheidessen], and briefly refers in the margin to Oberlin’s edition of Scherzius’s glossary of the German of the middle age—“in MAS, *cibus* ; MASS, *convivium*.” In the more valuable edition of Benecke and Lachman, Berlin 1827, taken from another codex, entitled, *Iwein*, &c. The cited lines are given, and besides other variations, the word in question is written MAZ. In this edition there is another passage in which *cibus* alone can be understood :

“ *Und az diz ungesalzen maz
Ane brôt und âne wîn.*”

“And ate this unsalted mess, or dish, without bread and without wine.”

Being thus referred to the glossary of Scherzius and Oberlin, I looked into it, and found with German completeness the Anglo-Saxon and Gothic *mas* traced in every European language. I unwillingly cite a citation, but I found one so conclusive, that I beg your indulgence for a copy of it, though not being able to obtain the work here, I cannot even explain the abbreviations by which the book is cited : Sch: Fr: Serm: S.S. Joh: f. 189. “Unser vrowe sprach da min kint hette gessen mit sinen jungern vor seiner martel das jungeste mas. —Our lady said, when my child had eaten his last mas [*scil.* mess, supper] with his disciples before his death.”

These citations from *Iwain*, and the coeval writer cited in the glossary, go far towards illustrating what I venture to state as the conjectural history of the word Mass. Its primitive sense I believe to have been quantity in the abstract. *Mess* I suppose to have been distinguished from Mass in the sense of distributed portion or quantity. In a simple age that word would be most frequently applied to portions of food ; and by an obvious association of ideas, extended to *convivia*, feasts or festivals. Finally, I suppose that the word, already become familiar and trivial, would become appropriated to the great festival, the

most solemn rite of the Christian Church—the *Mass*. I submit this as a probable explanation ; suggesting, that though it does not pretend to comprehend the internal and spiritual essence of the rite, yet it expresses its external character, which is what a popular word would express ; and I invite you to consider its reasonableness, in opposition to that of *ite, missa est*, with reference to the principles of rational etymology.

In treating of the word *Mass* in its liturgical sense, it becomes me to be as brief as possible. Of the *Mass*, I need for my purpose no better definition than your own : “ The whole celebration of the divine Sacrifice.” I find it in several works shortly defined : “ *Incrumentum Christianorum sacrificium in quo Christi corpus conficitur.*” For such a definition authority would be superfluous. I abstain from dwelling on the relation which *Sacrifice*, in its external character, bears to *meal*, or festival ; for this lies on the surface, whether we consider the rite in its sacred origin, or pagan imitation. I remind you, without comment, of the familiar appellation of *Cæna Domini*, common even to those Churches which have separated from the Church of Rome. The German term *Abendmahl* (supper) is used alike by the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The corresponding term, “ The Lord’s Supper,” I venture also to cite here, on account of the identity of the denomination : and this I would have avoided, did I suppose it possible that this discussion could shake a grain of dust into either scale of the too well-known theological controversy. This it cannot do, because this etymology refers to that in the rite which is common to all the churches, not that in which they differ. Had I no other object than to set up a conjecture in opposition to current opinion, I should content myself with what I have written ; but I proceed to examine the arguments by which that opinion is supported, because they appear to me to supply a useful illustration of the effect produced by a fixed idea upon the mind of persons not deficient in acuteness.

The scholars of the last three centuries having a notion that *missa* must be derived from the Latin *mittere*, have displayed much ingenuity in finding out a variety of discordant explanations. For the purpose of ascertaining the full operation of this fixed idea, I have, since I began this letter to you, consulted a very high authority ; in whose great work, to my surprise, I found my own conjecture noticed, but only to be rejected with scorn. Cardinal Bona, in the

elaborate treatise “*Rerum Liturgicarum*,” in the edition in three volumes folio, Augustæ Taurinorum 1747, has treated this subject at very great length. In his chapter on the origin of the word, after briefly denying the supposed origin in the Hebrew and Greek, he adds : “*Tertia et singularis hac de re opinio est viri doctissimi Gabrieli Alaspinaei qui, lib. de Sacram. Euchar. cap. 3. . . . Missam dici autumat a nomine Mess, quod apud gentes Septentrionales significat festum sive congregationem. Quia vero, populi, ut sacrificio intersint, in unum adunantur, ideo Missæ nomen ipsi sacrificio inditum arbitratur.*” This view of the subject is that of Adelung in his admirable Dictionary already noticed.

This is quite consistent with my speculation. Adelung frequently adverts to words originally German which were adopted by the French, and then came back to the German, after undergoing a change. I should remark that Adelung, in the article in which he adopts the usual etymology, says : “It was called *Messe*, in the middle Latin *missa*, though Ten Kate [a Dutch etymologist, whose work I have not seen] chooses to derive the word from the ancient *mesa*, a table, which is found in Ulphilas, because the Lord’s Supper is also called the Lord’s table.”

I regret not having the means of referring to Mons. Aubespine’s work, since the Cardinal’s answer notices the interpretation of *congregationem* rather than *festum*. On which point he deems it sufficient to remark, that it is improbable that the Northern nations should have imposed a new word of their own, since they became Christians later, and were converted by those who must have had the word already when they carried Christianity into the North. Now this is a true observation ; but it shews that the Cardinal was not aware of the drift of the argument he opposed. No one supposes that the word was *first* applied to the rite when the conversion of the Northern nations took place. On the contrary, the conjecture is, that the word in some one of its various forms was at all times and places significant of feast or meal ; and the rite itself being in shew a feast, symbolically at least, would, in the very nature of things, be designated by a familiar and popular word for feast, by and among the people.

“His explosis,” the Cardinal proceeds to his deduction *a mittendo*, which he accounts for variously. He cites Tertullian in support of the explanation, “*de remissa peccatorum.*” Then the *missa* is supposed to be so called, “*quod olim*

fieret ex donis a populo missis et in unum collatis;" but bearing in mind the substance of the elements, this, you perceive, is consistant with and indeed favours my conjecture. Then we have the *Agape*, or *convivium publicum*; to which I of course do not object. Then another variety of interpretation, "eo quod populus per ministerium sacerdotis preces et oblationes ad Deum transmittat." Finally, we have the origin to which the Cardinal gives the sanction of his approbation, *Ite, missa est*. But even as to this he gives a double sense, "Scilicet hostia ad Deum." And also, for which he cites the "Magister Sententiarum," lib. iv. dist. 13, "Quod Deus a Deo mittatur ut assistat sacrificio." So wide a field is thus allowed to conjecture, even within the narrow space of the Latin tongue! He then adds a comment which merits attention. "Frustra nititur Genebrardus hanc missæ etymologiam convellere quasi nimis frigidam et modicæ reverentiæ erga tantum mysterium." On a reference to the "Traicté de la Liturgie," Paris 1602, I find this is by no means a fair representation of the Archbishop of Aix's argument, which is a shrewd one, though mixed up with pedantry and in bad taste: he quotes Plato to prove that names are given to express that which is most important, not that which is least important in a thing; and adds: "Ce seroit comme si quelqu'un vouloit appeller l'homme *doigt* ou *ongle*, parceque' il a un doigt ou ongle; ou, pour venir de plus pres, un sacrifice des Payens *Ilicet*, parceque cette parole etant prononcée le peuple se retiroit." The remark needs no corroborative. But it deserves to be mentioned, that the Roman courts had a formulary corresponding with the *Ilicet* and the *Ite, missa est*. And a like dismissal of the public is in daily use in the courts at Westminster-hall.

The Cardinal finally dismisses the Archbishop with the intimation that he was carried away by his love of the Hebrew, and relies on authority. The wise men who had imposed the term would not have done so, "temere et sine ratione." He then proceeds to enumerate the derivative and secondary senses in which the word *missa* was used: and in this part of his treatise he supplies materials for a complete explanation of the general misunderstanding; without which, I should hesitate in opposing a speculation to general opinion: he variously interprets *missa*,—"pro lectionibus et precibus:" "pro divino officio interdum:" "pro tota divini sacrificii celebratione." I find this definition more formally expressed in Martinius "*Lexicon Philologicum*," Frankf. 1654,

Missa—"pro quovis Ecclesiæ officio quod in ædibus sacris peragebatur interdum sumitur." The author takes pains to shew the impropriety of this use. But the instances are very frequent in all languages, in which the secondary and derivative sense of a word usurps the place of the proper and primitive meaning; and this has been the case with the word *Mass*. For though no Catholic can ever lose sight of the real import of the word, yet the great body of Protestants are in the habit of using it in the laxer and more vague sense: and, indeed, the mistake may easily be made by any one who refers merely to dictionaries and popular writings. Look, for instance, into *Du Cange*: there are sixteen fearful folio columns filled with various applications of the word *mass*, the greater number of which have a relation, not to the essence of the *mass*, as stated by you, but to the accidental accompaniments. You read there not merely "*missas celebrare*," which is strictly applicable to the solemn act, but also "*missas dicere*," and "*missas cantare*," which can refer only to the accompanying prayers. Indeed the ordinary expression of saying masses, the one most familiar to Protestants from books, is quite sufficient to divert their mind from the perception of the real character of the divine office. They have in consequence a vague notion that the *mass* is that rite which distinguishes the Roman Catholic from the Protestant Churches, all that which is contained in the *mass-book*, which is their prayer book. Now certainly such an idea of the *mass* is sufficient to account for Mr. Bruce's already cited assertion, that it is distinct in meaning as well as derivation from *mas*, the adjunct to so many names of feast-days. To this want of familiar acquaintance with the real nature of the *mass*, as defined by you, and every Catholic writer without exception, I alone can account for it, that having pointed out so clearly the real meaning of *mas* in its combination, as Christmas, &c. he, Mr. Bruce, should not have at once perceived that it proved the very etymology his article was written to disprove. No one ever imagined, as he seems to suppose, that Michaelmas meant the *Mass* of Michael; but since it notoriously means the "feast of St. Michael," then, if the *Mass* be the Feast pre-eminently, as perfect an identity is established as can be required by an etymologist; while the utter want of meaning in the supposed derivation from *Ite, missa est*, is demonstrated by the shrewd and conclusive remark of the Archbishop of Aix,

coupled with the simple observation that the Gothic mass, mess, messe, &c. common to all the languages of Europe and of remote antiquity, has nothing in common either in sense or origin with mittere, missus, missio, of the pure Latin, with which all the philologists of the French and Italian schools in their utter ignorance of the Teutonic tongues confound it.

As to the few who have a familiar acquaintance both with the Teutonic language and the ritual of the Catholic Church, I consider their adoption of the common opinion as a mere indolent and inadvertent assent to a notion which they have heard continually repeated, and have never yet heard contradicted. Who of us will venture to say that he has not a number of such opinions?

I am, my dear Sir,

faithfully yours,

H. C. ROBINSON.

JOHN GAGE, Esq. F.R.S.
Director S. A.

AFTER this article was sent to the press, I received from my friend Mr. J. Payne Collier an obliging communication, which I gladly add: however superfluous it may be as proof, yet the illustrations of our ancient language are very interesting. My friend found in the Towneley MSS. of the Miracle Plays, which are of the reign of Henry VI., if not of earlier date, the following passages:

In the play called “Resurrectio Domini:”

“And whoso will of synnes seasse
I graunt theym here a measse
In brede, my awne body.”

I presume it is the Saviour who speaks. The sense is obvious, and the passage is very curious, as shewing how the primitive import of *measse* as *cibum*, is made to run into and blend with the theological sense of sacrifice.

In the play, entitled “Judicium,” representing the Last Judgment, one of the dæmons having said he would carry one of the damned souls to hell, adds :

“ Yet to nyght shall I shew you
A mese of ill ostre.”

This passage illustrates the early use of the word in its second or derivative sense, *convivium*. *A messe of ill ostre*, is a mess or company of evil guests.

In a third play, “Lazarus.” It is said of the body in the grave : “It shall be wormes mese,” i. e. *cibum*.