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### "Miracle Plays"

The Elizabethan drama is a combination of the native growth and the intrusion of foreign elements through Renaissance. Native elements are concerned with religious drama whereas foreign elements belong to secular drama. During tenth century the church called for such dramatic performances to make the people understand simple events such as the birth and resurrection of the Redeemer. In this way dramatic performances advanced and the so called miracle plays came into being. The miracle plays were the dramatic presentations of the legends of saints or martyrs. They presented either the miracles performed by the saints or his relics or the sufferings and death of the martyr. The earliest play is the play of St. Catherine presented by the school boys of Dunstable in about the year 1100 under the direction of their school ma-

ster. Another play that has been preserved in an Orleans ms concerns St. Nicholas. This play has been written in Latin with French refrains. These plays performed during the festivals of the church's year gradually became elaborate with the introduction of music and song. Gradually these dramas became more than ritualistic ceremonies and developed into real dramas. An early Christmas play concerns the 'Slaughter of the Innocents'.

The end of the thirteenth century saw the performances of these dramas by the trade guilds. The simple miracle play had evolved into a series of plays that began with Creation and ended with the 'Day of Judgement'. The performance of plays from 1529 to 1533 were for the purpose of raising funds for roofing the church. Unfortunately no play of such type has come

down to us ~~except~~ except the late fifteenth century 'play of sacrament' and 'The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene'. William ~~Fitz~~ Fitz Stephen, a monk of Canterbury, has given an account of the City of London in which he mentions the miracle plays and their popularity.

"London, instead of common interludes belonging to the theatres had plays of a more holy subject - representation of these miracles, which the holy confessors wrought, or of the suffering wherein the glorious constancy of the martyrs did appear!" He also describes a play on Thomas Becket.

The end //

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