

"Mystery Plays"

The development of drama in England passed through different stages. In the first stage the clergies tried to teach the people doctrinal religion through their long speeches. The church services were originally in Latin and, hence, few people could understand them. Even the 'Bible' was beyond the understanding of the common people. This is the reason why previously the Gospel stories were illustrated by living pictures in which the players acted the story in dumb show. The next stage of development was when the actors played as well as spoke. Special plays were written by the clergies first in Latin and then in vernacular French. These early plays are known as the 'mysteriel' or the 'miracle'. In the mystery plays the clergies acted. In England the term 'miracle' was applied to any kind of religious play. The diff-

evance between miracle play and mystery play is that the former dealt with the incidents in the lives of saints and martyrs and the mysteries were concerned with the stories taken from the Scripture narrative. The materials for the mysteries were supplied by the 'Bible'. The mysteries expounded the mysteries connected with religion whereas the miracles dealt with the legends in whose honour they were acted. The mysteries presented the 'creation of Eve' and the 'Fall of man'. Other plays are the 'Nativity', the 'Crucifixion' and so on.

The miracles proved more popular than the mysteries. One probable reason ~~is~~ seems to be the fresher subject matter. How the stage was set for the miracles and the interludes. The serious subject was taken up by the former and the lighter aspect was presented

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by the latter.

The end.

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