

ANCIENT ART AND RITUAL

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Ancient art and ritual by Jane Harrison

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JANE HARRISON

**ANCIENT ART
AND RITUAL**



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ANCIENT ART
AND RITUAL

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PREFATORY NOTE

It may be well at the outset to say clearly what is the aim of the present volume. The title is *Ancient Art and Ritual*, but the reader will find in it no general summary or even outline of the facts of either ancient art or ancient ritual. These facts are easily accessible in handbooks. The point of my title and the real gist of my argument lie perhaps in the word "*and*"—that is, in the intimate connection which I have tried to show exists between ritual and art. This connection has, I believe, an important bearing on questions vital to-day, as, for example, the question of the place of art in our modern civilization, its relation to and its difference from religion and morality; in a word, on the whole enquiry as to what the nature of art is and how it can help or hinder spiritual life.

I have taken Greek drama as a typical instance, because in it we have the clear historical case of a great art, which arose out of a very primitive and almost world-wide ritual. The rise of the Indian drama, or the mediæval and from it the modern

stage, would have told us the same tale and served the like purpose. But Greece is nearer to us to-day than either India or the Middle Ages.

Greece and the Greek drama remind me that I should like to offer my thanks to Professor Gilbert Murray, for help and criticism which has far outrun the limits of editorial duty.

J. E. H.

*Newnham College,
Cambridge, June 1913.*

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ANCIENT ART AND RITUAL

CHAPTER I

ART AND RITUAL

THE title of this book may strike the reader as strange and even dissonant. What have art and ritual to do together? The ritualist is, to the modern mind, a man concerned perhaps unduly with fixed forms and ceremonies, with carrying out the rigidly prescribed ordinances of a church or sect. The artist, on the other hand, we think of as free in thought and untrammelled by convention in practice; his tendency is towards licence. Art and ritual, it is quite true, have diverged to-day; but the title of this book is chosen advisedly. Its object is to show that these two divergent developments have a common root, and that neither can be understood without the other. It is at the outset one