

**GUIBOUR: A  
MIRACLE PLAY  
OF OUR LADY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649352111

Guibour: A Miracle Play of Our Lady by Anna Sprague Macdonald

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**ANNA SPRAGUE MACDONALD**

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OF OUR LADY**



**GUIBOUR**  
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**A MIRACLE PLAY OF OUR LADY**

VERSION FROM THE OLD FRENCH  
BY  
ANNA SPRAGUE MACDONALD



**THE SUNWISE TURN, Inc.**  
9 EAST 31ST STREET, NEW YORK  
1919

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PQ 1248  
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TO  
YVETTE GUILBERT  
IN MEMORY OF  
HER BEAUTIFUL AND MOST MOVING PORTRAYAL  
OF GUIBOUR,  
HER FELLOW WORKERS  
AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAYHOUSE  
DEDICATE THIS BOOK





## FOREWORD

"**G**UIBOUR," or, as it is known in the original French, "Un Miracle de Nostre Dame, Comment elle garda une femme d'estre arse," is preserved in manuscript number 7208.4.B, in the Bibliothèque du Roi.

Almost nothing is known about this work, except that it belongs to a collection of forty (some authorities say forty-three) Miracle Plays,—all celebrating in some way the intervention of Our Lady. No one knows whether this cycle is the work of one man or of a group of men. From a reference in "Guibour" to "Guillaume, maire de Chiefvi," it is probable that one of two villages (Chivy), both near Laon, is meant and that the author was a Laonnais.

These Miracles were presented by members of a "Pui Nostre Dame." The Puy was a mediæval confraternity, half ecclesiastical, half literary in character. Its

connection with the church must have been very close, as sermons preceded or formed a part of many of the Miracle plays. There is a long sermon in the first part of "Guibour."

The most original feature of this play, distinguishing it sharply from the others of the cycle, is the mass episode, the only known instance of this particular use of the mass in French mediæval dramatic literature. Though the "Guibour" mass, with its very simple and colloquial dialogue, may seem strange to a modern audience, yet to lovers and students of old-time lore it is the part of the play most characteristically mediæval. One gets from it the same quality that charms in those primitive pictures of the Holy Family, which show them amid all the homely details of everyday contemporary life. Moreover, the plays were written during the Hundred Years' War, when France was invaded and suffering in northern France acute. Then the hearts of men turned to the pitying Mother of Christ for comfort and consolation, and the nearness of radiant Holy Folk was sincerely and passionately believed. It is this

endearing sense of the intimate brotherhood of heaven and earth that gives a charm all its own to the last part of "Guilbour," and which intensifies the creed of the Middle Ages, set forth in the first part: the idealization of the feminine virtues of chastity and fidelity, and divine forgiveness through the Virgin Mary.

It was Madame Yvette Guilbert who first discovered the acting possibilities of this old play, and to her belongs the credit for the Neighbourhood Playhouse presentment, so glorified by her art.

A. S. M.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAYHOUSE,

March 8, 1919.