

THE ENGLISH RELIGIOUS DRAMA

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649171743

The English religious drama by Katharine Lee Bates

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KATHARINE LEE BATES

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ENGLISH RELIGIOUS DRAMA

BY

KATHARINE LEE BATES
WILLESLEY COLLEGE

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.
1913

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Set up and electrotyped October, 1893. Reprinted December,
1901; February, 1904; October, 1907; July, 1909; August, 1911;
August, 1913.

Notbock Press
J. B. Cushing & Co. — Herwick & Smith
Norwood, Mass. U.S.A.

THIS little volume embodies a brief course of lectures delivered in the Summer School of Colorado Springs, July, 1893. The indebtedness of the Appendix to Stoddard's *References for Students of Miracle Plays and Mysteries*, Library Bulletin, No. 8, University of California, should not pass unacknowledged.

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THE ENGLISH RELIGIOUS DRAMA.

CHAPTER I.

PASSION PLAYS AND SAINT PLAYS.

THE history of the European theatre, not only west of the Channel, but upon the Continent as well, bears resemblance to the history of the little English robin, who, as his strength waxes and his breast brightens and his song grows tuneful, turns his ungrateful bill against the parents who have reared him, so that the misty autumn mornings ring with melodious defiance and cries of combat between the young birds and the old. In like manner the romantic drama, born of the Church and nourished by the Church, came in time, as it acquired an independent life and gradually passed from sacred to secular uses, to incur the resentful hostility of the parent bird, whose plumage its mischievous young activity loved to ruffle.

It is not only the Christian drama which has a religious basis. We find religious passion at the heart of the drama of ancient India and of modern