

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydow Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
von Ossietzky May Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
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Sachs Poe de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



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# **The Growth of English Drama**

Arnold Wynne

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## PREFACE

In spite of the fact that an almost superabundant literature of exposition has gathered round early English drama, there is, I believe, still room for this book. Much criticism is available. But the student commonly searches through it in vain for details of the plots and characters, and specimens of the verse, of interludes and plays which time, opportunity, and publishers combine to withhold from him. Notable exceptions to this generalization exist. Such are Sir A.W. Ward's monumental *English Dramatic Literature*, and that delightful volume, J.A. Symonds' *Shakespeare's Predecessors*; but the former extends its survey far beyond the limits of early drama, while the latter too often passes by with brief mention works concerning which the reader would gladly hear more. Some authors have written very fully, but upon only a section of pre-Shakespearian dramatic work. Of others it may generally be said that their purposes limit to criticism their treatment of all but the best known plays. The present volume attempts a more comprehensive plan. It presents, side by side with criticism, such data as may enable the reader to form an independent judgment. Possibly for the first time in a book of this scope almost all the plays of the University Wits[Pg 6] receive separate consideration, while such familiar titles as *Hick Scorner*, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* cease to be mere names appended to an argument. As a consequence it has been possible to examine in detail the influence of such men as Heywood, Udall, Sackville, and Kyd, and to trace from its beginning, with much closer observation than a more general method permits, the evolution of the Elizabethan drama.

I have read the works of my predecessors carefully, and humbly acknowledge my indebtedness to such authorities as Ten Brink and Ward. From Mr. Pollard's edition of certain *English Miracle Plays* I have borrowed one or two quotations, in addition to information gathered from his admirable introduction. Particularly am I under an obligation to Mr. Chambers, upon whose *Mediaeval Stage* my first chapter is chiefly based. To the genius of J.A. Symonds I tender homage.

For most generous and highly valued help as critic and reviser of my manuscript I thank my colleague, Mr. J.L.W. Stock.

ARNOLD WYNNE.

South African College,  
Cape Town.

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

Early Church Drama on the Continent

## CHAPTER II

English Miracle Plays

## CHAPTER III

Moralities and Interludes

## CHAPTER IV

Rise of Comedy and Tragedy

## CHAPTER V

Comedy: Lyly, Greene, Peele, Nash

## CHAPTER VI

Tragedy: Lodge, Kyd, Marlowe, *Arden of Feversham*

## APPENDIX

The Elizabethan Stage



## CHAPTER I

# EARLY CHURCH DRAMA ON THE CONTINENT

The old Classical Drama of Greece and Rome died, surfeited with horror and uncleanness. Centuries rolled by, and then, when the Old Drama was no more remembered save by the scholarly few, there was born into the world the New Drama. By a curious circumstance its nurse was the same Christian Church that had thrust its predecessor into the grave.

A man may dig his spade haphazard into the earth and by that act liberate a small stream which shall become a mighty river. Not less casual perhaps, certainly not less momentous in its consequences, was the first attempt, by some enterprising ecclesiastic, to enliven the hardly understood Latin service of the Church. Who the innovator was is unrecorded. The form of his innovation, however, may be guessed from this, that even in the fifth century human tableaux had a place in the Church service on festival occasions. All would be simple: a number of the junior clergy grouped around a table would represent the 'Marriage at Cana'; a more carefully postured group, again, would serve to portray the 'Wise Men presenting gifts to the Infant Saviour'. But the reality was greater than that of a painted picture; novelty was there, and, shall we say, curiosity, to see how well-known young clerics, members of local families, would demean themselves in this new duty. The congregations increased, and earnest or ambitious churchmen [Pg 10] were incited to add fresh details to surpass previous tableaux.

But the Church is conservative. It required the lapse of hundreds of years to make plain the possibility of action and its advantages over motionless figures. Just before this next step was taken, or it may have been just after, two of the scholarly few mentioned as having not quite forgotten the Classical Drama, made an effort to revive its methods while biting and bridling it carefully for holy purposes. Some one worthy brother (who was certainly not Gregory

Nazianzene of the fourth century), living probably in the tenth century, wrote a play called *Christ's Passion*, in close imitation of Greek tragedy, even to the extent of quoting extensively from Euripides. In the same century a good and zealous nun of Saxony, Hroswitha by name, set herself to outrival Terence in his own realm and so supplant him in the studies of those who still read him to their souls' harm. She wrote, accordingly, six plays on the model of Terence's Comedies, supplying, for his profane themes, the histories of suffering martyrs and saintly maidens. It was a noble ambition (not the less noble because she failed); but it was not along the lines of her plays or of *Christ's Passion* that the New Drama was to develop. It is doubtful whether they were known outside a few convents.

In the tenth century the all-important step from tableau to dialogue and action had been taken. Its initiation is shrouded in obscurity, but may have been as follows. Ever since the sixth century Antiphons, or choral chants in which the two sides of the choir alternately respond to each other, had been firmly established in the Church service. For these, however, the words were fixed as unchangeably as are the words of our old Psalms. Nevertheless, the possibility of extending the[Pg 11] application of antiphons began to be felt after, and as a first stage in that direction there was adopted a curious practice of echoing back expressive 'ah's' and 'oh's' in musical reply to certain vital passages not fitted with antiphons. Under skilful training this may have sounded quite effective, but it is natural to suppose that, the antiphonal extension having been made, the next stage was not long delayed. Suitable lines or texts (*tropes*) would soon be invented to fill the spaces, and immediately there sprang into being a means for providing dramatic dialogue. If once answers were admitted, composed to fit into certain portions of the service, there could be little objection to the composition of other questions to follow upon the previous answers. Religious conservatism kept invention within the strictest limits, so that to the end these liturgical responses were little more than slight modifications of the words of the *Vulgate*. But the dramatic element was there, with what potentiality we shall see.

So much for dramatic dialogue. Dramatic action would appear to have grown up with it, the one giving intensity to the other. The development of both, side by side, is interesting to trace from rec-

ords preserved for us in old manuscripts. Considering the occasion first—for these 'attractions' were reserved for special festivals—we know that Easter was a favourite opportunity for elaborating the service. The events associated with Easter are in themselves intensely dramatic. They are also of supreme importance in the teaching of the Church: of all points in the creed none has a higher place than the belief in the Resurrection. Therefore the 'Burial' and the 'Rising again' called for particular elaboration. One of the earliest methods of driving these truths home to the hearts of the unlearned and unimaginative was to bury[Pg 12] the crucifix for the requisite three days (a rite still observed in many churches by the removal of the cross from the altar), and then restore it to its exalted position; the simple act being done with much solemn prostration and creeping on hands and knees of those whose duty it was to bear the cross to its sepulchre. This sepulchre, it may be explained, was usually a wooden structure, painted with guardian soldiers, large enough to contain a tall crucifix or a man hidden, and occupying a prominent position in the church throughout the festival. Not infrequently it was made of more solid material, like the carved stone 'sepulchre' in Lincoln Cathedral.

A trope was next composed for antiphonal singing on Easter Monday, as follows:

Quem quaeritis?

Jhesum Nazarenum.

Non est hic; surrexit sicut praedixerat: ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis.

Alleluia! resurrexit Dominus.

Now let us observe how action and dialogue combine. One of the clergy is selected to hide, as an angel, within the sepulchre. Towards it advance three others, to represent three women, peeping here, glancing there, as if they seek something. Presently a mysterious voice, proceeding out of the tomb, sings the opening question, 'Whom do you seek?' Sadly the three sing in reply, 'Jesus of Nazareth'. To this the first voice chants back, 'He is not here; he has risen as he foretold: go, declare to others that he has risen from the dead.' The three now burst forth in joyful acclamation with, 'Alleluia! the

Lord has risen.' Then from the sepulchre issues a voice, 'Come and see the place,' the 'angel' standing up as he sings that all may see him, and opening the doors of the sepulchre to show clearly that the Lord is [Pg 13] indeed risen. The empty shroud is held up before the people, while all four sing together, 'The Lord has risen from the tomb.' In procession they move to the altar and lay the shroud there; the choir breaks into the *Te Deum*, and the bells in the tower clash in triumph. It is the finale of the drama of Christ.

To illustrate at once the dramatic nature and the limitations of the dialogue as it was afterwards developed we give below a translation of part of one of these ceremonies, from a manuscript of the thirteenth century. The whole is an elaborated *Quem quaeritis*, and the part selected is that where Mary Magdalene approaches the Sepulchre for the second time, lamenting the theft of her Lord's body. Two Angels sitting within the tomb address her in song:

*Angels.* Woman, why weepst thou?

*Mary.* Because they have taken away my Lord,  
And I know not where they have laid him.

*Angels.* Weep not, Mary; the Lord has risen.  
Alleluia!

*Mary.* My heart is burning with desire  
To see my Lord;  
I seek but still I cannot find  
Where they have laid him.  
Alleluia!

[*Meanwhile a certain one disguised as a gardener draws near and stands at the head of the sepulchre.*]

*He.* Woman, why weepst thou? whom seekest thou?

*Mary.* Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

*He.* Mary!

*Mary* [*throwing herself at his feet*]. Rabboni!

*He [drawing back, as if to avoid her touch].* Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

At Christmas a performance similar to the *Quem quaeritis*[Pg 14] took place to signify the birth of Jesus, the 'sepulchre' being modified to serve for the Holy Infant's birthplace, and Shepherds instead of women being signified by those who advanced towards it. The antiphon was in direct imitation of the other, commencing '*Quem quaeritis in praesepe, pastores?*' Another favourite representation at the same festival was that of the Magi. The development of this is of interest. In its simplest form, the three Magi (or Kings) advance straight up the church to the altar, their eyes fixed on a small lamp (the Star) lit above it; a member of the choir stationed there announces to them the birth of a Saviour; they present their offerings and withdraw. In a more advanced form the three Magi approach the altar separately from different directions, are guided by a moving 'star' down the central aisle to an altar to the Virgin, bestow their gifts there, fall asleep, are warned by an Angel, and return to the choir by a side aisle. For this version the service of song also is greatly enlarged. Another rendering of the story adds to it the interview between the Magi and Herod; yet others include a scene between Herod and his Councillors, and the announcement to Herod of the Magi's departure; still another extends the subject to include the Massacre of the Innocents. Finally the early Shepherd episode is tacked on at the beginning, the result being a lengthy performance setting forth in action the whole narrative of the birth and infancy of Jesus.

Here then is drama in its infancy. A great stride has been taken from the first crude burying of a crucifix to an animated union of dialogue and natural action. The scope of the Mystery (for so these representations were called) has been extended from a single incident to a series of closely connected scenes. In its fullest ecclesiastical form it consisted of five Epiphany Plays, of the Shepherds (or[Pg 15]*Pastores*), the Magi (or *Stella* or *Tres Reges*), the Resurrection (or *Quem quaeritis*), the Disciples of Emmaus (or *Peregrini*), and the Prophets (or *Prophetæ*), the last perhaps intended as a final proof from the Old Testament of Christ's Messianic nature. Four points, however, deserve to be noted. The language used is always Latin.

The subject is always taken from the Bible. Close correspondence is maintained with the actual words of the *Vulgate* (compare the Magdalene dialogue with John xx. 13-17). The Mystery is performed in a church. Each point, it will be observed, imposes a serious limitation.

There was one play, however, which broke loose from most of these limitations, a play of *St. Nicholas*, written by one Hilarius early in the twelfth century. The same author composed a Mystery of *Lazarus*, and an elaborate representation of *Daniel*, which must have made large demands on the Church's supply of 'stage properties'. But his *St. Nicholas* is the only one that interests us here. To begin with, the title informs us that the subject is not drawn from the Bible. The words, therefore, are at the discretion of the author. Further, though the medium is mostly Latin, the native language of the spectators has been slipped in, to render a few recurrent phrases or refrains. The story is quite simple, and humorous, and is as follows:

The image of St. Nicholas stands in a Christian church. Into the church comes a pagan barbarian; he is about to go on a long journey, and desires to leave his treasure in a safe place. Having heard of the reputation of St. Nicholas as the patron of property, he lays his riches at the foot of the statue, and in four Latin verses of song commits them to the saint's safe-keeping. No sooner is he gone, however, than thieves steal in silently and remove the booty. Presently the barbarian returns, discovers his loss, charges the image with faithlessness, and, snatching[Pg 16] up a whip, threatens it with a thrashing if the treasure is not brought back. He withdraws, presumably, after this, to give St. Nicholas an opportunity to amend matters. Whereupon one representing the real celestial St. Nicholas suddenly appears, perhaps from behind a curtain at the rear of the image, and seeks out the thieves. He threatens them with exposure and torment unless they restore their plunder; they give in; and St. Nicholas goes back to his concealment. When the barbarian returns, his delight is naturally very great at perceiving so complete an atonement for the saint's initial oversight. Indeed his appreciation is so genuine that it only needs a few words from the reappearing Saint to persuade him to accept Christianity. — Monologue and dialogue are throughout in song. The following is one of the three verses in which the barbarian proclaims his loss; the last two lines in the vernacular are the same for all.

Gravis sors et dura!  
Hic reliqui plura,  
Sed sub mala cura.  
Des! quel dommage!  
Qui pert la sue chose purque n'enrage.

A play of this sort, dealing with the wonder-working of a Saint, became known as a Miracle Play, to differentiate it from the Mystery Plays based on Bible stories.

*St. Nicholas* would be performed in a church. But there is a probably contemporaneous Norman Mystery Play, *Adam*, of unknown authorship, which shows that the move from the church to the open air was already being made. This play was performed just outside the church door, and though the staging remains a matter of conjecture, it may be reasonably assumed that the church represented Heaven, and that the three parts of a projecting stage served respectively as Paradise (Eden), [Pg 17] Earth, and Hell (covered in, with side doors). The manuscript of the play (found at Tours) supplies careful directions for staging and acting, as follows:

A Paradise is to be made in a raised spot, with curtains and cloths of silk hung round it at such a height that persons in the Paradise may be visible from the shoulders upwards. Fragrant flowers and leaves are to be set round about, and divers trees put therein with hanging fruit, so as to give the likeness of a most delicate spot. Then must come the Saviour, clothed in a dalmatic, and Adam and Eve be brought before him. Adam is to wear a red tunic and Eve a woman's robe of white, with a white silk cloak; and they are both to stand before the Figure (*God*), Adam the nearer with composed countenance, while Eve appears somewhat more modest. And the Adam must be well trained when to reply and to be neither too quick nor too slow in his replies. And not only he, but all the personages must be trained to speak composedly, and to fit convenient gesture to the matter of their speech. Nor must they foist in a syllable or clip one of the verse, but must enounce firmly and repeat what is set down for them in due order. Whosoever names Paradise is to look and point towards it.[1]

Glancing through the story we find that Adam and Eve are led into Paradise, God first giving them counsel as to what they shall and shall not do, and then retiring into the church. The happy couple are allowed a brief time in which to demonstrate their joy in the Garden. Then Satan approaches from Hell and draws Adam into conversation over the barrier. His attempt to lure Adam to his Fall is vain, nor is he more successful the first time with Eve. But as a serpent he over-persuades her to eat of the forbidden fruit, and she gives it to Adam, with the well-known result. In his guilt Adam now withdraws out of sight, changes his red tunic for a costume contrived[Pg 18] out of leaves, and reappears in great grief. God enters from the church and, after delivering his judgment upon the crime, drives Adam and Eve out of Eden. With spade and hoe they pass under the curse of labour on the second stage, toiling there with most disappointing results (Satan sows tares in their field) until the end comes. Let the manuscript speak for itself again:

Then shall come the Devil and three or four devils with him, carrying in their hands chains and iron fetters, which they shall put on the necks of Adam and Eve. And some shall push and others pull them to hell: and hard by hell shall be other devils ready to meet them, who shall hold high revel at their fall. And certain other devils shall point them out as they come, and shall snatch them up and carry them into hell; and there shall they make a great smoke arise, and call aloud to each other with glee in their hell, and clash their pots and kettles, that they may be heard without. And after a little delay the devils shall come out and run about the stage; but some shall remain in hell.[2]

Immediately after this conclusion comes a shorter play of Cain and Abel, followed in its turn by another on the Prophets; but in all three the catastrophe is the same—mocking, exultant devils, and a noisy, smoky 'inferno'.

The most important characteristics of *Adam* are the venturesome removal of the play outside the sacred building, the increase in invented dialogue beyond the limits of the Bible narrative, and the 'by-play' conceded to popular taste. The last two easily followed from the first. Within a church there is an atmosphere of sanctity, a spirit of prohibition, which must, even in the Middle Ages, have

had a restrictive effect upon the elements of innovation and naturalness. The good people of the Bible, the saints, had to live up to their reputation in [Pg 19] every small word and deed so long as their statues, images, and pictures gazed down fixedly from the walls upon their living representatives. This was so much a fact that to the very end Bible and Saint plays conceded licence of action and speech only to those nameless persons, such as the soldiers, Pharisees, and shepherds, who never attained to the distinction of individual statues, and who could never be invoked in prayer. Out of sight of these effigies and paintings, however, the oppression was at once lightened. True, these model folk could not be permitted to decline from their prescribed standards, but they might be allowed companions of more homely tastes, and the duly authorized wicked ones, such as the Devil, Cain, and Herod, might display their iniquity to the full without offence. Thus it is that in this play we find great prominence given to the Devil and his brother demons. They would delight the common people: therefore the author misses no opportunity of securing applause for his production by their antics. Throughout the play we meet with such stage directions as 'the devils are to run about the stage with suitable gestures', or the Devil 'shall make a sally amongst the people'. In this last the seeing eye can already detect the presence of that close intimacy between the play and the people which was to make the drama a 'national possession' in England. The devil, with his grimaces and gambols, was one of themselves, was a true rustic at heart, and they shrieked and shouted with delight as he pinched their arms or slapped them on the back. The freer invention in dialogue is equally plain. Much that is said by Adam and the Devil has no place in the scriptural account of the Fall, and the importance of this for the development of these dramas cannot be exaggerated. [Pg 20]

The move into the open air was not accidental. Every year these sacred plays drew larger congregations to the festival service. Every year the would-be spectators for whom the church could not find standing room grumbled more loudly. In the churchyard (which was still within the holy precincts) there was ample space for all. So into the churchyard the performers went. The valuable result of this was the creation of a raised stage, made necessary for the first time by the crushing of the people. But alas, what could be said for the

sanctity of the graves when throngs trampled down the well-kept grass, and groups of men and women fought for the possession of the most recent mounds as highest points of vantage? Those whose dead lay buried there raised effectual outcries against this desecration. To go back into the church seemed impossible. The next move had to be into the street. It was at this point that there set in that alienation of the Church from the Stage which was never afterwards removed. Clerical actors were forbidden to play in the streets. As an inevitable consequence, the learned language, Latin, was replaced more and more by the people's own tongue. Soon the festivals assumed a nature which the stricter clergy could not view with approval. From miles around folk gathered together for merriment and trading. There were bishops who now denounced public plays as instruments of the devil.

Thus the drama, having outgrown its infancy, passed from the care of the Church into the hands of the Laity. It took with it a tradition of careful acting, a store of Biblical subjects, a fair variety of characters—including a thundering Herod and a mischievous Devil—and some measure of freedom in dialogue. It gained a native language and a boundless popularity. But for many long years after the separation the *Epiphany Plays* continued [Pg 21] to be acted in the churches, and by their very existence possibly kept intact the link with religion which preserved for the public Mysteries and Miracles an attitude of soberness and reverence in the hearts of their spectators. The so-called *Coventry Play* of the fifteenth century is a testimony to the persistence of the serious religious element in the final stage of these popular Bible plays.

[Pg 22]

## CHAPTER II

### ENGLISH MIRACLE PLAYS

Most of what has been said hitherto has referred to the rise of religious plays on the continent. The first recorded presentation of a play in England occurred in Dunstable—under the management of a schoolmaster, Geoffrey—about the year 1110. Probably, therefore,

the drama was part of the new civilization brought over by the Normans, and came in a comparatively well-developed form. The title of Geoffrey's play, *St. Katherine*, points to its having been of the *St. Nicholas* type, a true Miracle Play, belonging to a much later stage of development than the early *Pastores* or *Quem Quaeritis?* We need not look, then, for shadowy gropings along the dramatic path. Instead we may expect to find from the very commencement a fair grasp of essentials and a rapidly maturing belief that the people were better guardians of the new art than the Church.

We know nothing of *St. Katherine* except its name. Of contemporary plays also we know practically nothing. A writer of the late twelfth century tells us that Saint Plays were well favoured in London. This statement, coupled with the fact that all sacred plays, saintly wonder-workings and Bible stories alike, were called Miracles in England, gives a measure of support to Ten Brink's suggestion that the English people at first shrank from the free treatment of Bible stories on the stage, until their natural awe and reverence had become accustomed to presentations of their favourite saints.[Pg 23]

Passing over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, therefore, as centuries in which the idea of the drama was filtering through the nation and adapting itself to its new audiences, we take up the story again in the fourteenth century, before the end of which we know that there were completed the four great plays still preserved to us—the *Chester, Wakefield, York, and Coventry Miracles*. Early in that century the Pope created the festival of Corpus Christi (about the middle of June). To this festival we must fix most of our attention.

Glancing back a few pages we shall recall the elaboration of the play of the *Magi* from one bare incident to what was really a connected series of episodes from the scene of the 'Shepherds' to the 'Massacre of the Innocents'. It grew by the addition of scene to scene until the series was complete. But the 'Massacre of the Innocents' only closed the Christmas story. For the festival of Easter fresh ground must be broken in order that the 'Passion' might be fittingly set forth, and, in fact, we know that both stories in full detail eventually found a place in the more ambitious churches, any difficulty due to their length being overcome by extending the duration of the festivals. Then a time came when, even as St. Matthew was anxious

to lay the foundations of his Gospel firm and sure in the past, so some writer of Bible plays desired to preface his life of Jesus with a statement of the reason for His birth, and the 'Fall of Man' was inserted. In writing such an introductory play he set going another possible series. To explain the Serpent's part in the 'Fall' there was wanted a prefatory play on 'Satan's Revolt in Heaven', and to demonstrate the swift consequence of the 'Fall', another play on 'Cain and Abel'; the further story of [Pg 24] the 'Flood' would represent the spread of wickedness over the earth; in fact, the possible development could be bounded only by the wide limits of the entire Bible, and, of more immediate influence, by the restrictions of time. That this extension of theme was not checked until these latter limits had been reached may be judged from the fact that in one place it was customary to start the play between four or five o'clock in the morning, acting its scene after scene until daylight failed. But this was when the Corpus Christi festival had become the chief dramatic season, combining in its performances the already lengthy series associated respectively with Christmas and Easter. Between the 'Massacre of the Innocents' and the 'Betrayal' (the point at which the Easter play usually started) a few connecting scenes were introduced, after which the Corpus Christi play could fairly claim to be a complete story of 'The Fall and Redemption of Man'. Admittedly of crude literary form, yet full of reverence and moral teaching, and with powers of pathos and satire above the ordinary, it became one single play, the sublimest of all dramas. To regard it as a collection of separate small plays is a fatal mistake—fatal both to our understanding of the single scenes and to our comprehension of the whole.

Yet the space at our disposal forbids our dealing here with every scene of any given play (or cycle, as a complete series is commonly called). The most that can be done is to give a list of the subjects of the scenes, and specimens of the treatment of a selected few. This list, however, should not be glanced through lightly and rapidly. The title of each scene should be paused over and the details associated with the title recalled. In no other way can the reader hope to comprehend the play in its fullness. [Pg 25]

Here are the scenes of the *Coventry Play*.