

# **THE INFLUENCE OF THE DRAMA**

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The Influence of the Drama by Granville Forbes Sturgis

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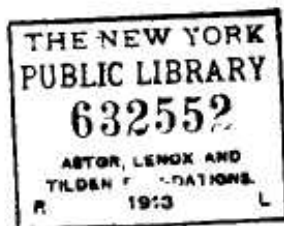
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TO  
IDA KRUSE MCFARLANE  
*In Remembrance of a Pleasant Winter When We  
Discussed the Contents of the  
Present Volume*

THE AUTHOR.



## PREFACE

Lives there a thoughtful person who has not at some time paused to consider that great question, The Influence of the Drama? It is a question which has been uppermost in the minds of men of all Ages so far as we have record, and it no doubt troubled the minds of the men who first reviewed our earliest preserved dramatic writing, that wonderful allegory, The Book of Job.

It is not the purpose of the present volume to draw conclusions as to the definite moral effect of the Drama upon the Peoples of the Ages, but rather to trace the various forms of influence of the Drama, and its ways of producing that influence, and leave it to each reader to make his own deductions.

The subject is vast and of necessity its treatment must be merely suggestive. It is to be hoped the reader may be assisted in arriving at a definite determination in regard to many things connected with the Play which may hitherto have troubled him.

G. F. S.

Denver, Colorado, 1913.



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# The Influence of the Drama

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE DRAMA HISTORICAL

Because of the influence which Puritanism has had upon the English speaking races, we have come to think involuntarily of the Drama as productive only of evil, or, in its mildest form, a simple means of pleasure. In this Chapter I wish to comment upon the Drama in the early dawn of present day civilization, and, if possible to make some deduction of the tendencies of the peoples from the forms of Drama they patronized, or to reverse the case and read the effect of the Drama as writ upon the history of those peoples.

The Egyptians were fond of massive architectural structures, as their memorials left in forms of tomb, pyramid and other bits of half-buried ruin bear mute witness. The drawings upon the walls of these buildings show the Egyptians in various pastimes, both athletic and intellectual. Scenes from the spoken Drama are absent, but pictures of groups enjoying the pleasures of the dance and the operatic muse are very abundant. It is, therefore, legitimately deduced that the dance, possibly elaborated with the pantomime, was the form of the theatre which prevailed in ancient Egypt.

As a nation becomes more refined, the nearer does it in its ideals of art approach to the ideals of

the ancient civilized nations. Today we admire the straight line, the picture which is impressionistic, the drawing which is merely an outline and lacking in perspective. Woman's dress has been fashioned on the straight line, and with half-closed eyelids one can almost fancy the present day lady of fashion dressed in the style of the ancient lady of Thebes. Our music is simpler in composition, our dance is simplified. The world seems to move in circles, the ends constantly approaching until super-refinement is reached, and it is discovered to be the place where so-called civilization commenced. So is prepared the way for a new birth of ideas, renewed culture, greater civilization, until at length refinement has again refined itself back to the cave- or tent-man days.

When the Children of Israel took their departure from out the Land of Egypt, it is to be supposed they took with them the ideals of civilization then fashionable in Egypt. The Hebrews, as a race, seem to have always been lacking in dramatic ideas. As individuals they are most expert in delineation of character by the written word or the vocal utterance. Many of the foremost players of all periods have been of Hebraic extraction. In the Old Testament are numerous fine Dramatic Songs—The Psalms, the Song of Solomon, Song of Jephtha's Daughter, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet; all are wonderfully beautiful books of poetry, the verses of which were suitable to all occasions, and when rendered to the exquisite accompaniment of harp and timbrel must have been beautiful in the extreme. That they were frequently accompanied by the dance, there is abundant mention in the Testa-