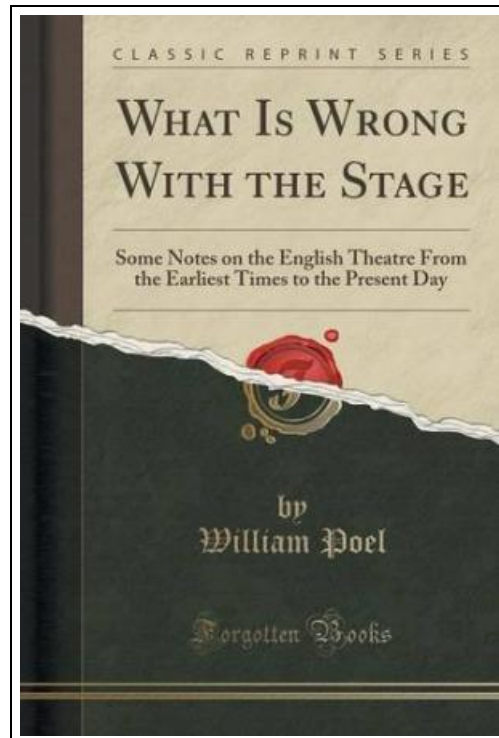


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Forgotten Books, United States, 2015. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book \*\*\*\*\* Print on Demand \*\*\*\*\*. Excerpt from What Is Wrong With the Stage: Some Notes on the English Theatre From the Earliest Times to the Present Day Historians tell us that no drama of any kind existed in England before the Norman Conquest, and that for 250 years French Ecclesiastics composed and acted the first plays seen in this country. They were religious dramas written in Latin. In a Latin story of the thirteenth century we read that two friars, coming upon a large crowd in a field near a church, recognised that the spectacles such as they were wont to call miracles were being acted there, because the silence was broken only by bursts of laughter and applause. Perhaps this demonstration of the crowd was an Anglo-Saxon way of telling Norman Ecclesiastics that the common folk were not able to regard Latin Christianised plays with feelings of devotion. The peasantry did not forget that the Norman Conquest brought England back into the Roman pale. So when the religious play was removed from the church into the meadow, the vernacular mingled in grotesque incongruity with the Latin, and scenes, both comic and in the vulgar tongue, were interpolated between the more solemn portions of the play. Nor could the clergy fail to realise that the people liked to hear dialogue spoken in a language which they themselves could understand. In fact the spectators were anxious to see even scriptural narratives embroidered by traits of character and incidents with which they were immediately familiar in their own towns. In 1311 the Council of Vienna, under Pope Clement V., decided that the feast of Corpus Christi should become an annual church festival in all the countries under its...

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