PREFACE

James' early dramatic works are generally approached as social comedies with a philosophical outlook. He strictly follows the French genre of setting a play. His plays are known for intrinsic merit, for scenes of high comedy, for the drollery or depth of the characterization and for the intensity of the drama. They are known for their dramatic compactness.

The aim of the present dissertation is to make a close study of Henry James' early plays, with a view to showing that he is a playwright with a deep philosophical concern. The dissertation is divided into six chapters based on James early plays. The introductory chapter seeks to show James as a dramatist.

The second chapter deals with Pyramus and Thisbe in which a journalist and a music teacher come out of their neighbourly inconveniences and enter a permanent wedlock. The third chapter is about Still Waters, a triangular love story which ends with the sacrifice of the passive hero. The fourth chapter pertains to A Change of Heart in which the intention of a wicked man who seduces women is thwarted by an earlier victim in accomplice with a good natured man. The fifth chapter is devoted to Daisy Miller which depicts the tragedy of a young American girl who wanders around all over Europe changing several gentlemen who stand finally in a no measurable relation.

While offering a summing up of the main argument of the dissertation, an attempt is made in the concluding chapter to assess the achievement of Henry James as a dramatist, highlighting his significant contribution to the development of drama.

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