PREFACE

AN IMAGINARY TIME MACHINE is not the only instrument by means of which we may be carried into the past. The past lies near to our doors if only we will open our eyes and take notice of it. Amid the mechanical wonders and terrors of this generation cultural relics exist which have been passed down from age to age relatively unaltered since first the continent of America was discovered, explored, and colonized. In the homes of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Arizona part of man's history is enshrined.

A good deal of archaeological and ethnological research has been expended upon the lives of these Indians, but more still is needed—needed especially in these days when modern methods are threatening to shatter age-old customs. The Indian culture survived the missionary methods of Franciscan friars from Spain; nominal acceptance of Christ and the Virgin did not in any respect alter or prohibit the celebration of more ancient ceremonials. But the present-day school is proving more effective than the Catholic chapel and what could not be accomplished by the preacher the teacher is easily doing. There is unquestioned danger that this antique culture may, in a few years, vanish utterly.

Because of this, Miss Roediger's survey is of supreme importance. A student of the theater, she has realized that the theater embraces more than Broadway,

that in the dances of the Pueblo Indians there resides an essential dramatic quality which has value both intrinsically and historically as a living example of those cultural roots from which the modern tragedy, comedy, and problem-play have sprung. In this volume she has endeavored, by a combination of personal field work and of careful examination into all available published records, to describe and explain the dance dramas still to be seen in the pueblos. Rightly, she has recognized that merely general descriptions are not sufficient, and perhaps the greatest significance of her work has been her attempt to demonstrate in detail the various aspects of her subject. She has not remained satisfied with outlining the appearance of a costume; from the finished dress she carries us back in an exact account of the cloth used, of the method of dyeing, and of the processes of manufacture. The movements of the dancers are related to their religious conceptions, to their secret ceremonies in the kivas, and to their methods of training. Just such a study as this was needed. I for one welcome it heartily and I feel sure that I shall not be alone in giving it this welcome.

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