

usages of society which are hurling millions into eternal damnation ! Can that wine-bottle be pronounced "innocent" ? No ! No !

Dr. Crosby has been very outspoken in his denunciations of the American stage, and in his frank, incisive style has affirmed that "the theatre is a nasty place." Suppose some church-member should say to him, "I only attend the theatre occasionally, and I only go when I can witness an unexceptionable play. The theatre never harmed me or my family." Dr. Crosby would probably reply to him : "The American stage is a concrete institution. It is to be judged as a *totality*; and as such it encourages lasciviousness and endangers character, and pollutes both performers and spectators, and ruins thousands. If you patronize the stage with your money and your personal influence, you become an abettor of it, and you must take your share of the responsibility." *Amen* to that, brother Crosby ! You are now sending the Pauline principle of abstinence for the sake of others, like a Minie-rifle ball, right into that church-member's conscience.

But suppose, again, that your theatre-going Christian had been reading your article on Paul's law of charity, and quoting your own language, should say : "It is my own sole judgment that has any authority in the premises. It is a matter between me and my God *in foro conscientie*. I am to see what act of mine may make my brother stumble in his piety, and I am to refrain from that act; but no man is to usurp dominion over my soul and order *my* abstinence from the theatre from *his* view." If you discovered that your Fourth Avenue church-members were all turning theatre-goers under this plea of yours, you would probably say to them : "My dear people, it is about time that you looked into your own *consciences* to see whether they are governed by the law of brotherly love, or by the laws of Belial."

It is one of the most commendable traits in your character, my brother (if you will low me to be as personal as you are towards us teetotallers), that when you undertake to defend a bad position, your heart gets the better of your consistency. In your article, therefore, you surrender your whole position when you say, "my duty as a Christian is to seek the maintenance and growth of piety in my brethren. If I am convinced that any possible act of mine may interfere with this, and may be a stumbling-block over which my Christian brother will fall, it is my duty to avoid that act." Nobly said ! None of us total-abstainers could have said it more concisely. Now, you must know that the wine-bottle may be, and often is, just as dangerous to a "Christian brother" as it is to an ungodly convivialist. And if the bottle were only dangerous to those who are out of Christ, is it not your "duty as a Christian" to do as much for those whom you try to convert as for those who are already converted ? Is it not an equally obligatory duty to take stumbling-blocks out of the way of the worldlings ? Now, the drinking-usages are terrible stumbling-blocks in the