

But with the downfall of the savage slaughter of the arena came the revival of the drama, and it is indisputable that the infant Church found in the stage of the times one of the greatest obstacles to the work of overthrowing the immoralities of the heathen world, with all the attendant vices. In the second century A.D. the Church was organized and powerful, and the war against the immoralities of the drama was waged with great earnestness. The battle was a fierce one, and while the theatre dragged its life along for ages, the Church ceased not to hurl her anathemas upon it and its patrons, till the effects were most destructive to her heathen antagonist. It was near the close of the second century that the Church made an attempt to cut the ground from under the feet of her enemy by putting upon the stage scenes and plays of a religious character; but the success of this venture was indifferent if not evil, and in the long run rather favorable to the drama.

In the fifth century the embers which had been allowed to slumber for some time were again fanned into a flame, and the more powerful Church continued on the aggressive till, in the middle of the ninth century (A.D. 845), the theatre was extinct. On this point Hastings says: "From this epoch onward the drama, under the attacks of Christianity, . . . must be held to have expired." And yet the same religion in the twelfth century was to undertake the resurrection of that which it had effectively ruined. All