

would deceive the 'very elect' if the elect did not 'watch' as well as pray."*

Concluding this part of my subject, I remark, that the parent who, having invited to the intimacy of his family a widely traveled and very entertaining person, yet finds that his fireside visitor has the habit of breaking out at intervals into indelicate remarks, would, without any doubt, show him to the door, and dismiss him shortly with a word of much-needed advice. It is hence amazing that many of these same parents will admit to their homes publications which, however instructively informing in the main they may be, are nevertheless frequently found offending against modesty and innocency, extolling the play-house and the players thereat, and other the concerns of Vanity Fair. Would it not be consistent to keep these dangerous visitors out of our homes, at the same time helping the cause of purity in the community by telling those who send them forth the wherefore? Coming again to a safe standard, they might be properly welcomed back. The words of the annual query to those of our own "household of faith," express this concern with precision in asking, "Are Friends careful . . . to restrain [those under their direction] from reading pernicious books, and from the corrupt conversation of the world?"

The root of the trouble I believe to be the exaltation of art and beauty for art and beauty's sake. Satan is resourceful beyond conception in the ways and means of attaining his end.

* Not long after the above incident, a merchant wrote me in regard to a picture show of bad repute that had been set up in the east-central part of the city. Some weeks elapsed, when it appeared to be my duty to give the matter attention. The City Hall was visited, and the police lieutenant of the district being there at the time, agreed to go at once with me to the place. The proprietor was told to bring half-a-dozen specimens of his "art" exhibits of engravings and photographs to the office of the Superintendent of Police, with the result that the resort was ordered closed that day. And one of the disgraceful pictorial subjects was the same as that which had been banished from the magazine as above stated. I felt rightly led in both cases.

Much he makes of beauty, and the graces and attainments of the person. Blindly pursued through the channels of art, literature, and music, we reach a renaissance of idolatry, affected indeed to be refined, but as real, as degrading, and as effectual in separating from God as the gross idolatry of paganism.

"The downfall of Oscar Wilde," said the Iowa State Register, a few months ago, "is the downfall of the pernicious modern idea that art and literature have nothing to do with morals, that æsthetics are higher than ethics, which have long been favorite phrases with the literary school to which Oscar Wilde belongs."

"I have no right, perhaps, to judge men of whose motives and whose necessities I am practically ignorant," said a writer in the Contemporary Review last year, "but, as a critic of twenty years' standing, I have not only the right but the obligation to judge their work when I believe that work to be vitally affecting the public welfare. It is my sincere conviction that during the past ten years most of the new departures which have been made in the arts have been mistaken from the æsthetic point of view, and have been injurious from the moral."

John Bascom, late President of the University of Wisconsin, now of Williams College, Mass., in his "Science of Beauty," says: "There is one direction in which art has indulged itself in a most marked violation of propriety, and that too on the side of vice. I refer to the frequent nudity of its figures. This is a point upon which artists have been pretty unanimous, and disposed to treat the opinions of others with hauteur and disdain, as arising at best from a virtue more itching and sensitive than wise, from instincts more physical than æsthetic. . . . Despite alleged necessities, despite the high toned claims and undisguised contempt of artists, our convictions are strongly against the