

city, or in some schoolroom or building under the direction of a religious body, to aid in raising funds for the benefit of the sect providing the show. The charge will vary from say ten cents to occasionally one dollar, and often professional people are engaged to give *clat* to the affair, but the programme is usually largely filled by ambitious amateurs who are quite satisfied to play for the honor of the thing. And here is where the effect of organization comes in; these church socials and entertainments are as a rule accorded a crowded attendance, because the canvassing (mostly by young ladies) has been severe. It is said that the people who attend these functions are not theatre-goers; to a certain extent this is true, but only to a certain extent; and it is an incontrovertible fact that these entertainments do affect the legitimate theatres and music-halls to a large extent. This is a grievance our theatrical managers must put up with, I have no doubt: but that it is a grievance is soon seen when one remembers that the theatres are all heavily taxed and pay large sums for artists, and the religious houses are not taxed one single cent, and pay most of their performers nothing. The position is a serious one; but of course ladies and gentlemen have a perfect right, if so disposed, to fret and fume their little hour upon a stage, and it is equally of course the right of their friends and acquaintances to say whether they will suffer what is often the affliction of listening to them, and in addition pay their money to undergo the suffering. If the public will be more discriminating in the class of amateur entertainments to which it extends patronage the legitimate artists and the legitimate places of amusement will gain appreciably, while the reputable churches and religious bodies will gain much in the respect of all decent people both inside and outside of their ranks by ceasing to lend countenance to a line of business which is made to pay, as a rule, by means that, if critically examined, are no more nor less than a genteel system of blackmail.

WILFRID WISGAST.



### A CONSOLATION.

WHEN to the sessions of sweet, silent thought  
 I summon up remembrance of past things,  
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,  
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;  
 Then I can drown an eye, unused to flow,  
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,  
 And weep afresh love's long-since cancell'd woe,  
 And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight.  
 Then I can grieve at grievances foregone,  
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er  
 The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,  
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.  
 And if the while I think on thee, dear friend,  
 All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

—*Shakespeare.*