

stage could serve up. To-day I would willingly have my right hand cut off, if I could erase from my mind and memory, some of the impure things I heard and saw in my teens. But they cannot be rubbed out, for they were imprinted with the deep black ink of hell, when the brain was young and fresh and easily impressed.

I am not now speaking to professing christians of the inconsistency of patronizing the theatre, because I hope there are none; at least none who are members of this church, who would commit such a violation of their covenant with the Saviour as to encourage the impudent and impure personifications of the stage. But I am just now addressing those who, while you are not members of any church, you are not vexed in the iniquitous machinations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and a word of warning may be helpful to you whenever the temptation may again arise to go to a "theatrical performance."

I am not so ignorant of certain plays, as to make the sweeping remark that every play is immoral; nor am I so disgusted with theatrical performers as a whole, as to assert that they are all corrupt in motives and in mind; nor do I believe that every one who has gone to a play has necessarily gone to the dogs; but I do unhesitatingly assert in the name of Righteousness and in the name of every converted actor and actress, that the whole tone and tendency of the stage, that is taking the stage as a whole, is antagonistic to individual heart purity, and derogatory to national moral. I know that some will say, "We must except some plays as being elevating in tone, and educating in influence." But surely you know that these are so rare, especially in this day of glare and glitter and glamour, that to put the moral play over against these that are impregnated with impure insinuations, is like (in their comparative influences,) the splash of a pail of water beside the irresistible Niagara.

You know that the chief object of a stage manager is not to furnish the individual patron with sights and sayings, which shall leave an elevating moral tone in his mind; nor does he care one straw about the influence of his stage on the home life of his visitors; neither is he interested in the advance of national morals; the one absorbing aim of his life as a stage manager, is to **MAKE MONEY**.

The successful stage manager of to-day, (I do not know what elements were essential to a successful manager of plays in past days, nor do I need to know, as I am not concerned with what the stage was, but what it is to-day) the man who can get a full house and consequently a full purse by manipulation, is not he who strives to keep his exhibitions within Puritanic limitations, for that class of drama would not "Draw." For I understood that some Henry-Irving-sort-of-a-manager did once try the experiment of running a theatre in Boston, "that excluded every indelicacy from the stage, and every improper person from the audience." But how much money did this ambitious reformer of the stage make out of his well meant effort? He failed, and his "high class theatre went into Bankruptcy." Why? Because the class of people who generally patronize theatres do not find such "intellectual plays" congenial to their taste.

The successful stage manager of to-day, is he who can present to the "public" a play that will have a little immorality in it; a love story that will end in a divorce; a pantomime that will insure the exhibition of a number of semi-nude girls; or a blood and fire tragedy that will end in a murder or a suicide. These are the plays that "**TAKE**" to-day. And it is just here where the church