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THE FUNCTION AND VALUE OF THE STAGE.

by

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I.

Standing in front of one of the master paintings of Turner, and viewing it, a realist once said "For my part, I don't see nature like that". The great painter calmly replied: "No; don't you wish you could?" The idea underlying this delightful answer was also expressed by Goethe, when he stated that "Art is art, simply because it is not nature". And it was ~~the failure to recognize~~ this fundamental idea that caused Solon to ~~say to Theopis,~~ after having seen his play, as tradition has it: "Are you not ashamed to tell so many lies before such a number of people? If we honor and commend such a play as this, we shall find it some day in our business". Art is, as it were, the uniting link between the actual and the ideal. It is the idealization, the universal and essential element, of nature. All art worthy of the name must express the ideal, yet it must also be based on truth and reality. The Beautiful must be united with the True, as the time-honored union of these two seems to require.

The function of art, then, is to lift us above our common hand-to-mouth existence into the realm of a higher reality. Since, in the words of the poet-philosopher Amiel, "The ideal is truer than the real; for the ideal is the eternal element in perishable things". Art seeks to embody the essence of things, and hence its purpose and end is to elevate and ennoble through the presentation of Poetic Truth. Man has an instinctive craving for "the purified

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image of nature's original"; the presentation of nature "sublimated into the ideal" satisfies a universal human need. Art is inseparable from all higher culture and refinement. Ruskin has told us that "Life without art is mere brutality". Tolstoy tells us that art is not simply "a pleasure, a solace, or an amusement; art is a great matter". Ernst Grosse, an investigator of the origin of art, speaks in this wise: "Art is not merely a pleasant pastime, it contributes to the fulfilment of the highest and most earnest purposes of life". Bernard Bosanquet, in his excellent "History of Aesthetics", uses the significant expression, "man's imperious need for beauty". The origin of the art instinct may be a disputed matter, but its uses are beyond doubt.

All art is one; the different arts are but forms or phases of that unity. They have been called, by an American poet, "the branches of one tree". They are all embodiments of the ideal; all are expressions of man's striving to transcend his narrow and fragmentary existence; all serve to enrich and elevate man's emotional life. Art is older than civilization, and the play is one of its earliest forms. Professor Hirn, an authority on the beginnings of art, holds it to be distinctly the earliest form. It may even have preceded any definitely formed language. Its earliest ~~form~~ known manifestations are seen in the mimetic dances and the dramatic songs of primitive peoples. In Greece the development of dramatic representations was exceedingly rapid - as were all developments of civilization in that wonderful little country - and very early came the grand efflorescence of the Greek drama in the Periclean Age, where were combined the highest poetry, drama, and music. The Greek theater had a two-fold function: it was primarily the instrument of religious worship and religious instruc-

tion; it was secondarily a means of civic education and patriotic inspiration. Incidentally, as perhaps the Greek citizen would say, it afforded a splendid opportunity for intellectual training and esthetic culture. The Greek stage was a state institution, and perhaps the most potent force in Greek civilization, for it lay at the basis of their religion and patriotism. It was a school of loyalty, of manliness, and of high ideals.

Like all other arts, the art of the drama has had its periods of sterility and decadence, as well as its periods of fertility and brilliancy. But it has always survived, and will always continue to survive till man is no longer man, because it is demanded to satisfy the dramatic instinct in human nature. Let me quote Sir Henry Irving: "Acting is a part of human nature. It is originally nature's own method of education in the earliest stages; and its purposeful organization is like that of any other organization - an Art". The child in his daily play and occupations is often an actor in miniature without knowing it. We are all actors within the society in which we live, as Richard Mansfield recently reminded us. The whole world is but "a stage where every man must play his part". By nature, therefore, we are interested in the dramatic and in "playing", whether we meet it in life or in literature. Greece had her day (and what a day!); and with the passing of her glory passed also the glory of the Greek stage. But the drama of her Aeschylus and Sophocles and Euripides, of her Menander and Aristophanes, remains to us as one of the everlasting monuments and tributes to Greek civilization. The Age of Corneille, of Racine, and of Moliere is gone, and the bodies of these men have long been dust; but their works remain as the flower of French literature. Moliere is recognized to-day as the greatest genius of the French people, and as their greatest single con-

tribution to the world. His immediate service to his France - whom he loved so well, but who did not learn to appreciate him till after his death, if indeed she has ever learned to appreciate him enough - was immeasurably great. His service to all modern enlightened races is perhaps second only to that of Shakespeare. Elizabethan England, with all its variety and splendor, is by far the most brilliant period in English history. But the Age of Elizabeth is for us almost synonymous with the Age of Shakespeare, who is master poet and dramatist of the Anglo-Saxon race, and one of the greatest men of genius of all time. When Henry Arthur Jones said that "The greatest glory of England is her literature, and the greatest glory of her literature is her drama", he might almost have substituted the name "Shakespeare" for the word "drama", since it was no doubt the name of Shakespeare that emboldened him to make the statement at all, great as are the names of many other men in the history of the English drama. Had the theater given to the world nothing but Shakespeare, it would still deserve serious consideration and the highest gratitude. But as it is, he is only one, although the greatest, of all the great contributions of the stage to civilization.

The immense importance of the drama as a form of literature is universally acknowledged. But it must not be forgotten that the drama would not exist even as literature, were it not for the theater. Sophocles and Aristophanes wrote directly for the Greek stage, not for any reading public, for there was none. Moliere, with his band of players, produced his comedies on the contemporary French stage, and wrote directly for the theater of his time, as no one who reads his plays can think of denying. Shakespeare was an actor and a theater-manager, as well as a dramatist; and his works were written, not as poetry or as "closet-drama" for the

Elizabethan literature, but as stage-plays for the Elizabethan theater. This is proved beyond dispute by the fact that he did not make the slightest attempt at publishing one single play, and no collection of his plays was published till almost a decade after his death. His contemporary, Ben Jonson, who was so anxious to produce great literature that he usually failed to produce good plays, paid tribute to Shakespeare in the following beautiful and significant words: "Soul of our Age, the applause, the delight, the wonder of our Stage". I call this significant because it is evidently the tribute of a man of letters, not to a writer of literature primarily, but to a writer of stage-plays. The great Ibsen in our own day, who is held by many to be the greatest genius of the Nineteenth Century, was for many years a theater director and manager, and early turned away from the writing of poetic and romantic drama - unquestioned master as he was in this form - and wrote the greatest body of his works in stern prose realism, in order to produce effective stage-plays above everything else. The drama was surely made for the theater, not the theater for the drama. And great as has been the influence of the drama as mere literature, it cannot begin to compare with the influence the drama has had in the theater.

The stage is an institution of tremendous possibilities and significance. Listen to the words of Matthew Arnold: "The human spirit has a vital need, as we say, for conduct and religion, but it has a need also for expansion, for intellect and knowledge, for beauty, for social life and manners. The revelation of these needs brings the middle class to the theater. The revelation was indispensable, the needs real, the theater is one of the mightiest means of satisfying them, and the theater, therefore, is irresistible!" And Sir Henry Irving believes that "the theater has capabilities of

good which are illimitable as the progress of man". The acted play has a universal appeal, reaching both the highest and the lowest elements of society; whereas literature as such, or any other art, reaches but a select few of the entire population. Moreover, the acted play has a direct appeal, giving life and character in action; whereas dramatic literature can at best only give the imaginative reconstruction of life. "Things seen are mightier than things heard". The acted drama is, therefore, both the most democratic and the most effective of all forms of literature and art. It is these considerations that make the theater such a powerful institution, and it is these considerations that make the art of the stage one of the noblest of the arts. In the beautiful verse of the poet Campbell,

"How ill can Poetry express
Full many a tone of thought sublime,
And Painting, mute and motionless,
Steals but a glance of time.
But by the mighty Actor wrought,
Illusion's perfect triumphs come;
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
And Sculpture to be dumb".

The influence of the stage on the masses, and hence on civilization in general, would seem to be self-evident. But let us get at a few facts as regards the theater situation in this country. Mr. Franklin Fyles, dramatic critic of "The New York Sun", has recently made the following estimates. There are more than five thousand playhouses in the United States at the present moment. About two thousand of these are devoted to what he calls "legitimate drama", and are open to traveling companies. Another thousand of the

number are devoted to vaudeville. The remaining two thousand are devoted to a great variety of performances and "shows". About one hundred million dollars is invested in the best three-fifths of the number. On an average, not less than one and a half million people visit these five thousand playhouses every weekday night throughout a season of at least eight months every year. What do these facts indicate? A mere glance at them cannot help but bring home to us with force the mighty influence of the theater on American life and character. The moral which should be drawn from these facts would sound something like this: "Since the theater is a gigantic force in American civilization, it behooves us to foster and increase its good tendencies and possibilities, and to strive to minimize and eliminate its evils. We might do well to give heed to the words of Matthew Arnold: "The theater is irresistible; organize the theater!" The neglect with which the American people has treated its theater is hardly excusable, and is in sharp and glaring contrast with the national and endowed theaters of France and of Germany, nay even of Scandinavia. But we can at least offer a slight excuse: In so many matters we wait to let England set the pace, and in this matter her pace has not yet been set. Still, would it not be better if we struck out on a pace of our own in a matter of such vital and national importance? Paraphrasing William Archer: The endowed theater is indispensable and hence inevitable.

To summarize, it has been my attempt to show something of the nature and the value of art in general, leading up to a consideration of the art of the theater in particular. Moreover, I have maintained that the drama comprises much of the world's greatest literature; and at this point let me quote Brander Matthews, than whom probably no American has better right to speak with authority on this subject: "That the drama is the highest form of literary en-

deavor will be denied by no true lover of Shakespeare and of Moliere - the foremost figures of the two greatest modern literatures". And he might safely have added an almost similar statement about the Goethe of German literature and the Ibsen of Scandinavian literature. I have paid special attention to this point, because I wished to show the tremendous debt that literature owes to the theater; for, as I pointed out and tried to substantiate in my next step, all the great dramatic literature of the world owes its existence entirely to the stage and comes directly out of the theater. Furthermore, I have emphasized the fact that the drama belongs on the stage, not in the closet, and that the art of the theater has a more universal and a more direct appeal than has any other form of literature or art. Finally, I have given a few facts showing the importance of ^{the} theater in America, and I dwelt on the sorry neglect with which out stage at present is treated. I shall now go on to consider a little more in detail the art of the theater and its constituents; and I shall consider these mainly in the light of their function and value, tacking on a moral tag wherever I find it possible.

II.

The art of the theater is a many-sided one, and is made up of a complex of elements. It involves in the main the correlative arts of the actor and the dramatist. But painting and music are indispensable adjuncts, and poetry has played an all-important part, since almost all the great drama of the past has been poetic drama. Incidentally, sculpture and architecture may also contribute to the general effect of the stage-picture. The playhouse is, therefore, the home, not of a single art-form, but of a union of practically all the art-forms. A British poet has called the modern stage "the

youngest of the sister arts, where all their beauty blends". The various arts are made to supplement one another in the representation of life in action as given through the actor's personality and setting. But the two main factors are of course the drama and the actor. And as to the parts that each of the factors contributes, let me quote two sentences from Sir Henry Irving, the greatest of the many great actors of the English-speaking race, and one of the staunchest defenders and advocates of the stage: "The aim and purpose of the drama is to cultivate the imagination, and through this means to bring home to heart and mind the lessons which tend to advance the race". And further, "The actor's art is the art of embodying the poet's creations, of giving them flesh and blood, of making the figures which appeal to your mind's eye in the printed drama live before you on the stage".

When Bishop Tillotson once asked Betterton why a player exercises a vaster power over human sympathies than does a preacher, the veteran actor replied: "You in the pulpit only tell a story; I show facts". This answer expresses the fundamental strength of the actor's art. "The character must be and do, and the spectator must see what he is and does and why". As actions speak louder than words, so the acted drama "speaks louder" than does the closet-drama, which latter name Brander Matthews holds to be a contradiction in terms, for a drama must be actable, or it is not a drama at all. As also T. W. Rolleston says, a drama must be "a doing, an action". A play is a representation and an interpretation of life and character by an acted story. It aims to give a purified and selected form of reality, stripped of the accidental and the unessential; for all art recognizes the fact that the ideal is more representative than the real. The drama deals with the broad themes and the fundamental truths of humanity. Henry Arthur Jones calls

the acted drama "the most vivid and forcible teacher of the truth and wisdom of life". And Schiller called it "the school of practical wisdom and the handmaid of religion and philosophy".

With all its ideality and "beauty blended", the theater still remains popular in appeal. The drama is the one form of literature that reaches the masses; and the art of the theater, with its variety and its strength and directness of appeal, is the only art-influence that reaches all sorts and conditions of men. Brander Matthews, by reason of this fact, calls the drama "the noblest form of literature". In the preface to one of his most noted dramas, "Fröken Julie", August Strindberg, the great Swedish dramatist, has the following words: "The theater has long seemed to me, like all art in general, a Biblia pauperum, a Bible in pictures for those who are not able to read what has been written and printed; and the dramatist has seemed to me like a lay preacher who spreads broadcast the vital questions of the day in popular form, so popular that the middle class, who in the main constitute the theater-public, can without much effort grasp the chief issues involved. The theater has therefore been a school for the masses..." It would seem, as Sir Henry Irving told us a little over a decade since, that the art of the theater needs no defense. It gives its own justification in its results and possibilities.

A work of dramatic art is "an idealized representation of human life - of character, emotion, action - under forms manifest to sense". This is a definition by Professor Butcher, the noted Greek scholar and the interpreter of Aristotle's theory of art. It will be noticed in this definition, as well as in other definitions, of dramatic art, that the emphasis is laid, not on any teaching or preaching quality, but on the showing and the representing of

nature idealized. The drama does teach, but it does so only indirectly; the moment it becomes "preachy" it is likely to defeat its own end. The great mass of theater-goers come to the playhouse for amusement and recreation, and will therefore resent sermonizing. But the theater can give what Professor Butcher calls "rational enjoyment". It can present the vital and essential truths of life in such a way as to give pleasure, and intellectual and spiritual stimulation as well. Art-pleasure is higher and better than mere amusement-pleasure, for it lifts us into the realm of the universal and the fundamental. The drama broadens man's intellect, quickens his sympathies, and ennobles and elevates him through the emotions. He is led to imitate and to further the good, whereas the mean and low becomes hateful in his eyes. In a few and pregnant words Shakespeare tells us that the purpose and end of playing is "to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure". This presentation of the reflection of life gives esthetic pleasure, and esthetic pleasure is a spring to virtuous action and higher living. This truth about the nature and value of art was expressed in the following beautiful words of Ruskin: "The highest thing that art can do is to set before you the true image of the presence of a noble human being. It has never done more than this, and it ought not to do less". If this is the highest function and value of art, what form of art can have greater possibilities than has the theater?.

The fact that most of the great drama is in poetic form gives it an additional appeal and value, over and above those already emphasized. Much of the value of Shakespeare, not only when read, but also when given on the stage, is due to his magnificent poetry. William Hazlitt says that "Poetry is that fine

particle within us that expands, rarifies, refines, raises our whole being". "Poetry is the lullaby of our woes", are the words of John Stuart Mill. And Aristotle tells us that "Poetry is the highest form of imitative art and the best expression of the universal in human life". Only music can surpass poetry in loftiness and purity of appeal. And when excellent dramatic poetry is reinforced and interpreted by excellent music, as for instance in the works of Richard Wagner, we have the strongest and the highest appeal that art can offer.

The actor must "suit the action to the word, the word to the action". And he must get the suitable word before he can suit his action to it. There are two main forms of this word, the tragedy and the comedy. The most important of these forms is the tragedy; which Milton calls "the gravest, moralest and most profitable" of all forms of poetry. And it might also be added in passing that Milton himself wrote his last great work, "Samson Agonistes", in the tragedy form, whereas he had early in life written the brilliant masque, "Comus", in a lighter vein. Aristotle says that tragedy is "the imitation of an action"; but it is evident that he does not mean a mere copying of nature, for he also says that "the pattern in the mind must surpass the actual". And, again, he says; "It is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen". As Professor Butcher interprets him, "Beneath the individual, art finds the universal. It passes beyond the bare reality given by nature and expresses an idealized form of reality". A work of dramatic art, then, is a reflection, a semblance of reality, not a mere copy of facts. Only such facts are demanded as are necessary for veri-similitude. The function of tragedy, according to Aristotle, is to purge our emotions through pity and fear. Professor Butcher has interpreted him as meaning "to clarify and purify the emotions of

pity and fear by passing them through the medium of art". And Milton's interpretation is somewhat similar; namely, "to temper and reduce pity and fear and such like passions to a just measure and a kind of delight". Tragedy broadens man's sympathies and makes him identify his own sufferings with those of humanity. He forgets his own petty sorrows when he is brought face to face with the mighty struggles of mankind. He suffers with Antigone and with Hamlet, because he recognizes in these characters the conflict between the elemental passions and their fate. Tragedy must needs deal with the sad aspects of life, but it never despairs of human virtue. Good tragedy is never depressing, because it always has room for hope and poetic justice. It stimulates the mind to thought and reflection; it moves the heart to deeper and broader feelings for humankind; it acts as a spur to a higher life and nobler action. It teaches by example, as Aristotle said so long ago. No one has given us a better exposition of the nature and function of tragedy than has Aristotle; and the great dramatic critic, Lessing, even went so far as to say that he held the "Poetics" to be as infallible as the elements of Euclid.

Next in importance and next in time comes the comedy. As tragedy dates back to Aeschylus and Sophocles, so comedy dates back to Aristophanes and Menander. Aristotle holds that the comedy arises from a pleasure in the ludicrous and the incongruous. It deals with the mistakes and the foibles of humanity, and it aims to produce laughter. But it is not an instrument of malicious ridicule, it is an instrument of reform. In his classic "Essay on Comedy", George Meredith presents the view that the main function of comedy is "to awaken thoughtful laughter". And he tells us further that comedy "teaches the world what ails it". He holds, what is to us a somewhat novel view, that "the philosopher and the comic poet are of a cousinship in the eye they cast on life". The underlying idea of

comedy, therefore, must always be serious, despite the more or less mirthful exterior and surface. Comedy is not a lighter thing, nor a less significant thing, than tragedy; unless we give the first place to the latter because it deals with the intenser passions and the more manifest struggles of man. The "Misanthrope" and "Don Quixote" are two of the greatest comedies ever written, but they are very serious, nay even sad. As Landor says, "Genuine humor and true wit require a sound and capacious mind, which is always a grave one". It is indeed doubtful if Shakespeare can be called more serious in his tragedies than Moliere in his comedies; and we know for certain that the man Moliere was a very much sadder figure than was the man Shakespeare. Lessing has said that one of the main functions of comedy is to expose folly; this is no doubt true. And when folly is exposed before our eyes, we are naturally made to shun it and to work against it. Comedy, then, is beneficial in effect; it is "the fountain of sound sense, not the less perfectly sound on account of the sparkle". It shows us life as it is, as "something strangely mixed" that we must try to adapt ourselves to and understand. Comedy fosters broad-mindedness and sanity. It makes us shrink from the narrow and the ludicrous and the contemptible. It also cultivates tolerance and sympathy for erring humanity. The comic laugh bears no malice or scorn. It requires one to laugh at one's own foibles and mistakes, as well as at those of others. George Meredith says that "sensitiveness to the comic laugh is a step in civilization". It is evident, then, that comedy is a very important factor in life. Even though it did nothing else but give wholesome pleasure and "confirm the healthy in their health", using Brander Matthews' phrase, it would still fulfil a very important function. With Lessing we can surely hold that "A preservative is a valuable medicine, and all morality has none more powerful

and effective than the ridiculous". But, as ^{we} have seen, comedy does more than this; it has an educational and culture value, as well as a recreation and pleasure value. Says Sainte-Beuve: "The first end of a play is to amuse, the chief end of a play is to amuse rightly".

And now a word on the opera form. This form adds the appeal of music to the action and the word of the player. As has already been pointed out, this is a tremendous advantage when well done, as in the masterpieces of Wagner, the king of the makers of opera. The opera at its best is certainly the highest form of drama; for it has all the good qualities of tragedy and comedy, and it has also the additional re-enforcement and interpretation of music. And music soars to the loftiest and purest realms of ideality attainable through art. Wagner was primarily a dramatic genius, and he had a firm faith in the value of the drama in general and of the opera in particular. William Knight, in his admirable study, "The Philosophy of the Beautiful", tells us about Wagner that "he made it his aim that all the arts should contribute their share towards the production of Drama; not Music and Poetry only, but Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture as well; so that perfect unity, or full artistic harmony might be reached". He worked to create a great national opera that should be the pride and the inspiration of his Fatherland; and "Tannhäuser and "Lohengrin", "Tristan" and "Parsifal", and the immortal "Nibelungen Trilogy" will live as long as the German nation. Nor is Wagner the only illustrious master of the opera. Other men that have adorned the history of the opera are not inglorious nor few. We will not go back to its Italian beginnings, nor mention any of the almost innumerable lesser names; but a few representative masters might be mentioned, so as to bring home something of the dignity and the importance of the opera form. A long list of great

names presents itself at once; we have Handel and Glück, Verdi and Puccini, Gounod and Mozart, Rossini and Cherubini, Weber and Meyerbeer, Strauss and the great Wagner. It is true that all of these men have not devoted themselves exclusively to the opera; but all of them have done some great work in that line, and some of them, as in the case of Wagner, have devoted their lives to it. And it is worth emphasizing here that the art of music owes the existence of these great compositions directly to the theater, just as literature owes the existence of the drama to the same source.

III.

It has already been noted that the stage has a many-sided and widespread influence. It furnishes recreation and amusement for the masses, and by virtue of this fact it has a definite significance for civilization. As an art it has another distinct meaning and value. It must also have a certain beneficial effect on the spoken language of ~~the~~ a people; for it aims to use the standard pronunciation of a country, so far as this is possible. Again, an institution so powerful as the stage has a considerable influence on national life and character; and it is important that this influence be a salutary one. Morality and religion furnish further relations between the theater and the life of the people; and here it is that the theater meets the most opposition and discouragement; although this ought not so to be, since dramatic art can be made to promote morality and be "a supplement to the pulpit", as Milton held. Finally, the influence of the stage on education and enlightenment is one of primary significance; and it is easily demonstrated that the stage can be made an educator and a civilizer in the best sense.

I shall take up a little more in detail the points here summarized.

The playhouse could be justified as a place for innocent amusement, even had it no higher function than this. In the hurry and the flurry of our intense industrial life, the need of relaxation is becoming increasingly imperative. In 1882 Herbert Spencer made a speech in New York City on the subject, "The Gospel of Relaxation"; and he chose this subject because it was, as he considered, the most important message he could bring to the American people. In summing up he said: "We have had somewhat too much of the gospel of work. It is time to preach the gospel of relaxation". But if this was true in 1882, is it not still more true in 1908? In 1899 the eminent psychologist, William James, published an address to students, again on "The Gospel of Relaxation"; and in it he dwelt on the American fatigue, the wear and tear, the over-tension which "weaken our dear American character". He calls us a nation with "bottled-lightning" ideals and points out the injurious effects of such ideals. We therefore need some form of recreation and diversion to save us the over-strenuousness of our daily life; and the playhouse can and does furnish us such a one. Even Lamb tells us that he went to the theater for enjoyment, for relaxation, and for rest from his labors. And Brander Matthews holds, with Lessing, that a play which gives wholesome entertainment needs no excuse for being. In fact, the primary end of an acted play is to amuse, for if it were not so the masses would not frequent the playhouse. But the stage does something more than simply amuse, it aims to give the higher or art pleasure. The end of the legitimate drama, as Henry Arthur Jones says, "is not to rob the people of their pleasure, but to increase and rationalize and purify it". Milton calls the theater "a means both to recreation and instruction"; but he notes that its first

function must be to give pleasure, and that only indirectly can it be a means to instruction and higher culture.

The fact that the theater has the very important function of bringing the masses into direct touch with different phases of art, has already been considered at length; but the value of art-culture cannot be overemphasized, and the need for it is growing with the growing material forces of our civilization. The esthetic and cultural aspects of life must always be made to counterbalance the ever-increasing pressure from without, else our better natures will be dwarfed and our spirituality deadened. Let me again quote Tolstoy: "Art is one of two organs of human progress. By words man interchanges thoughts, by forms of art he interchanges feelings". And further: "Art is an organ of human life, translating man's reasonable perception into feeling. The task of art is enormous". The cultivation of the emotions is an all-important factor in the furtherance of civilization; art offers the best school of the emotions; the theater at its best is a splendid union of the arts, and it has a direct and a universal appeal. Hence the theater can be made a mighty force towards refinement, towards culture, towards the higher spiritual life. In closing this paragraph I can do no better than to quote a sentence from Henry Arthur Jones: "The drama is not only a symbol and index of civilization, but is also a source and agent of civilization and good manners; a harmonizer; a humanizer, an enlightener; in the best sense an educator".

One of the strong points in favor of the stage which is usually overlooked, is its unique relation to the spoken language of a people. It is the only existing means of preserving a common standard of spoken language throughout the entire country. In our United States it is especially difficult to retain any purity

and uniformity of speech chiefly for two reasons; namely, we are an amalgamation of many different races and nationalities, and this means that foreign elements are apt to creep into our speech; moreover, our country is very large, and it is a wellknown fact that differences of speech almost amounting to distinct dialects are beginning to show themselves. It would be vain to hold that the stage can entirely prevent these tendencies; but it takes little thought to see that the stage is at least the best remedy, if not the only remedy, at the present time. A national theater could certainly furnish a standard for the spoken language of the nation, even could it do no more. It is an unpleasant fact, and one not altogether complimentary to our beloved people, that Americanstraveling in Europe are considered by the foreigners to be slovenly in pronunciation and enunciation, besides having a harsh and grating voice. And the cultured New Yorker returning from London and Paris frankly admits the truth of the accusation. If we had an established national theater and a school for actors in connection, might not something be done to improve our precious American speech? Might we not learn an important lesson in this regard from the national endowed theaters of Germany and France? But there is also another side to this question. The drama brings the masses in touch with the finest literary language of the tongue. This influence, if kept up throughout the lifetime of the playgoer, ought to have a significant effect on his language-use, entirely aside from pronunciation and the mere spoken aspects of the language. The literary culture that can be attained by constant theater-going cannot help but be a great influence towards propriety and refinement in language-use. Can anyone overestimate the tremendous influence of the stage of Shakespeare's time on the Elizabethan language, and, hence, on the

English language ever since? And here again we have one of our great debts to Shakespeare: he did more than any other single man towards making our English language what it is; and we owe the fact of Shakespeare's influence also on this score to the stage without which there could have been no Shakespeare plays. It is beyond question that the Elizabethan dramatists, including Shakespeare, have contributed more towards the richness and variety and beauty of our language than has any other single force in the history of the tongue. Surely it might be possible for us moderns also to make our theater a considerable factor in promoting good speech-use as well as literary culture.

"The State, the nation in its collective and corporate character, does well to concern itself about an influence so important to national life and manners as the theater". These words of Matthew Arnold introduce us to our next point, the value of the theater as a national institution. We have already emphasized its pre-eminent position as an inspirer of manliness and loyalty and patriotism in ancient Greece. Under the leadership of such men as Lessing, Schiller, and Wagner, Germany has been at least partially successful in her attempt to establish a national theater that would be an inspiration and an enlightener to the nation. Schiller believed that the stage can be "a guide to civil life", and Lessing and Wagner had almost unbounded faith in its power to instill love of country and high national ideals. And because of the untiring efforts of men like these, Germany has to-day a great national theater. In France the relation between the state and the theater is equally close, if not equally vital. But England and America are only just beginning to realize their need of a national established stage. Things are not what they ought to be when William Archer can say

about his country that "No modern nation has so rich a dramatic literature and so poor a theater". It must be plain from the earlier parts of this essay that no art is more closely bound up with the national life and character than is the stage. It reflects the trend and thought of the day, and is what Strindberg calls "a Bible in pictures" and "a school for the masses". Let me again quote William Archer: "The drama is essentially one of the noblest of the arts, and its comparative degradation in England is perhaps the heaviest item in the price we have had to pay for civil and religious liberty". The old prejudices against the theater die hard; but there are many signs of their gradual disappearance both here and in England, and there is now hope that the Anglo-Saxon people will soon come to recognize the value of an established and endowed theater, and that they will act accordingly.

The theater can also be made to further morality and right living. Fate and retribution follow the sinner relentlessly in tragedy, and the heart is purified and strengthened by Poetic Justice. The comedy, as has been seen, is equally important in its esthetic stimulation and its spiritual uplift. It creates thought and reflection, and these lead to a broader and deeper morality. The psychologic drama of our present day is especially influential in this regard, and Ibsen is the main figure in this splendid modern tendency. With this added element the theater of to-day can wield a stronger power than ever before. Even farce is distinctly moral, for it always makes right to conquer and wrong to suffer. No one can doubt the essential morality of a play like "The school for scandal" or "The Magistrate", and still these are very little but splendid farces. It is evident that even lighter plays like these have a serious and moral undercurrent,

despite the rippling and sparkling surface. But it hardly necessary to dilate upon the various ways in which the theater can be a great moral force at this point, because these have come out in different parts of the essay already, and will come out still more plainly later on. One word about the Puritan and the stage. As one reads about the controversy between the Puritan and the stage, one gains an increased respect for the Puritan attitude in that struggle. The excellent and detailed study of the subject made by E. N. S. Thompson shows conclusively that the accusations brought against the stage were essentially just. Nor can we feel sure that Collier was not entirely right in his fierce denunciation of the contemporary stage. But this is not a condemnation of the theater in general, as our modern Puritans would have us believe. It simply shows that the theater may become very bad in the hands of very bad men, and of what human institution can this not be said? Can it not be said even of the Church? Our modern Puritans must be made to see that they are laboring under an irrational and an outworn prejudice. They must be made to see that the stage has just as great possibilities for good as for evil. The legitimate drama of to-day cannot possibly hurt morality, unless it be of the kind that Henry Arthur Jones so aptly calls "wax-doll morality". Unfortunately some people yet believe that ignorance is the best kind of innocence, and with such people argument is vain. But the thinking public knows that the morality which cannot endure the truthful art-representation of life on the stage, is not worthy of the name. The inconsistency of the modern Puritan's attitude is seen in the fact that he over-anxiously condemns the theater unheard, whereas he often seems to overlook entirely the inane and worse than inane vaudeville and variety

"shows". Generally, those who disparage the theater disparage a thing they know nothing about.

The stage can be an ally to religion. It was so in the earliest days of English drama, when the mystery plays, the miracle plays, and the moralities came directly out of the Church and were a part of the religious worship. It was so in ancient Greece, where the primary function of the stage was the religious one. Even at the present time we have a revival of the old passion play every ten years in the impressive Oberammergau performance. And also the liturgy and the ceremonials of the Church are essentially dramatic in form and in appeal. Symbolism is an important element in religious worship, and in no way can it be brought about better than by dramatic materials. The separation of the drama from religion, and the subsequent hostility between the two, was due to the unfortunate vulgarization of the drama, not to any natural or necessary incompatibility. The theater is the disowned and disinherited child of the Church; and inherently it is therefore closely allied with religion and can be of tremendous service to it. Nothing can drive home the great and fundamental truths of religion more forcibly and vividly than can the stage. And it has the splendid virtue of not being narrow or sectarian. By necessity it must treat religion in a broad and sane manner, else it would lose its universal appeal, and this universal appeal is essential to the stage. As a result it would also cultivate tolerance and fraternity among the various denominations; and it would emphasize the religion of humanity, instead of the humanity of religion which is so often preached. The prejudice with which a majority of the church people of to-day views the theater is not based on rational grounds. It is partly due to an ignorance of the nature and value of the stage, and partly due to a failure

to discriminate between the different kinds of dramatic performances existing at the present time. It is true, very true, that the American theater is a sorry and degenerate sight; but what can be expected, when it has always been left to take care of itself? It is but natural that it should cater to the mediocre and often vulgar taste of the masses, since only by so doing could it get their support. The modern Puritan and the thinking public must learn to see the great possibilities of the theater at its best; they must support and encourage the best, and strive to suppress the existing evils. The Church is a vital force in national life, the stage can be made a vital force in national life: Let us foster and cherish the stage as we now foster and cherish the Church. And to do this we must have an endowed and established theater. Also a word on Biblical themes and modern religious plays. There is a decided prejudice against introducing Biblical themes and characters on the stage. This is especially striking when we remember that the early English drama used no other materials. Again we see the inconsistency of the modern Puritan's position. The Bible is a perfect storehouse of dramatic materials; and stories like "Job" and "Esther" are complete dramas in form and could be played on the modern stage. A few playwrights of to-day, as for instance Stephen Phillips and Henry Arthur Jones, have ventured into the disputed field. It is to be hoped that this irrational prejudice against dealing with religion on the stage may soon be overcome entirely. To be most useful and effective the drama must be allowed to treat all phases and conditions of human life. And this is what our best modern playwrights attempt to do, as Ibsen in Norway, as Hauptmann in Germany, as men like Arthur Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones in

England. Let me quote the words of the last man mentioned: "The attempt of the modern English drama movement is to treat the great realities of our modern life upon our stage, to bring our drama into relation with our literature, our religion, our art, and our science, and to make it reflect the main movements of our national thought and character". Could not even the Church afford to lend a helping hand to such a creditable attempt?

After what has already been said, it may seem like undue repetition to dwell further on the educational value of the theater. But there are a few additional things to be noted; and then this paragraph may serve as a summary of what has already been emphasized under separate heads. Education means preparation for life and character development. The former necessitates an extensive knowledge of life, since wide knowing is required for wise living. And there is no better teacher of life and its "chances and changes" than the art-representation of life on the stage. The great dramatists have "seen life steadily and seen it whole"; and their view of life is given to us in action on the stage. The Greek theater, the Elizabethan theater, and the Molierean theater were perhaps the most effective schools of life that have ever existed. And the psychologic drama, as well as the better type of realistic drama of our present day, make the theater increasingly vital and instructive. "The proper study of Mankind is Man", and it must be evident that the playhouse offers one of the best opportunities for the study of man. I said that education means, not only preparation for life, but also character development. And that the acted drama can be a great character-builder, I believe I have shown conclusively already; for character is nothing but the sum of all the tendencies and purposes of a

human being, and the influence of the theater on these I have shown to be mighty and beneficial. The theater ought to be and can be an inspirer and a purifier of the emotions, making towards a higher life and loftier aspirations. And in words of Wordsworth,

"We live by admiration, hope, and love;
And even as these are well and wisely fused,
The dignity of being we ascend".

IV.

The question before the American people in regard to the theater is: How can we make our theater what it should be? In the first place, we must make it something more than a commercial institution. To do this some form of an endowed and established theater is indispensable. This would make the actor's position more secure, more respectable, and more inspiring. It would also affect the playwright in a like manner; and it would make possible the presentation of standard dramas both of the past and of the present, both foreign and native, without the risk of financial ruin. Steps must be taken to educate the public and make them discriminate between the stage as mere amusement and the stage as amusement plus art. We need intelligent critics of the acted drama and energetic supporters of the playhouse at its best. We need both argument and financial help. The increased attention given to the drama and to dramatics in our higher schools will do much to break down prejudice and stir up enlightened enthusiasm. There is no need for despair, but there is abundant need for untiring agitation and support.

The American theater of to-day is a commercial institution; and it is natural that it should be so, because it must needs

subsist, and it gets no outside aid or security. The theater trust may be a deplorable institution; but it is at least better than nothing, and nothing else has come forth to take its place. In many ways the trust has benefited the American stage. It has made the actor's position more stable and lucrative; it has also in some degree encouraged the playwright, and has produced a syndicate school of playwrights. It has also insured steady runs; and it has offered the theater public just as much good material as was possible without hurting its own purse. But how can the trust be expected to further the best interests of art, when this would spell financial ruin? The trust gives us as good plays as they can and as we deserve; but this does not say that they give us the best, for they simply cannot. Let me quote what three of the leading American actors have said concerning the trust versus dramatic art. When the trust was first formed Richard Mansfield said: "Art must be free. I consider the existence of the trust or syndicate a standing menace to art. Its existence is, in my opinion, an outrage and unbearable". Francis Wilson said: "Dramatic art in America is in great danger! A number of speculators have it by the throat, and are gradually but surely squeezing it to death". And Mrs. Fiske: "The incompetent men who have seized upon the affairs of the stage in this country have all but killed art, worthy ambition, and decency". Furthermore, Mrs. Fiske has waged war upon the trust till this very day. And of course it ought to be plain to any one that the trust makes the theater a matter of business rather than of art; but if we had not neglected our theater in the first place, no syndicate could possibly have existed now. A national theater or an independent endowed theater could have prevented these otherwise necessary

evils, and it can cure them now.

Just what is an endowed theater? William Archer has given the following definition: "An endowed theater is one which, apart from the actual sale of seats, receives a certain yearly income, no matter from what source or sources, on condition that it fulfills, or strives honestly to fulfil, certain artistic functions". It is to be a public institution, not a business institution. It would be independent of the mediocre taste of the public; and art would come before business or popularity. In this way there would be some hope of educating even the vulgar up to an appreciation of good art and the higher pleasure. The endowed theater could prevent the long runs of to-day, which often wear out both the actor and the piece. It could also prevent the pernicious starring system, by virtue of the fact that it would not need to make the star-appeal in order to gain popularity, as is the case to-day. It could secure better playhouses and better accommodations, and thus make the stage more respectable also in this sense. Further, it could be a standard of theatric excellence, and thus have good influence on all other dramatic performances and amusements. Nor would first-night audiences decide the fate of new plays in this theater; and New York would lose its tremendous and unjust power over the theaters of the whole country. Above all, the aim of this theater would be to give us the best art possible. The initial expense of establishing such an institution would no doubt be great; but it is a mistake to think that it might not soon become self-supporting, for such an institution would soon create a band of regular supporters who would back it up sufficiently by their patronage. The expense would be especially easy to bear, if it could be made a national institution, and why

could it not? The other arts receive at least some recognition: why should not the stage receive even more, when we consider its importance?

The actor would in every way be benefited by the endowed theater. His position and status would be improved in respectability and prestige. He would be ~~improved~~ considered an artist just as much as a painter or a sculptor or a musician. He would also have a more secure and remunerative position. And if this theater had a school of acting, as it ought to have and easily could have, the actor might get a better training and more expert attention. Furthermore, the actor would be freed from much of the present traveling and expense, and freed also from the strain of starring in order to make a success. The actor stands for a great art, and hence ought to be encouraged and supported. Voltaire calls the art of acting "the most beautiful, the most difficult, the most rare". And let me just mention a few of the great name of actors of the Anglo-Saxon race. We have Burbage, Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Kean, Macready, Irving in England, and Forrest, Booth, Barrett, Jefferson, Mansfield in America. Nor let me forget women like Mrs. Liddons and Nance Oldfield and Ellen Terry. I have mentioned only a few of those whose race has already been run. There is an unfortunate prejudice against the actor's life and morals which ought to be killed; and the recognized theater would help to do this, partly by remedying actual evils and partly by making the actor's status a higher one. At present the actor is likely to be considered a mere "showman", with no actual humanity or goodness beneath. It is a common and erroneous idea that the actor is apt to show much the same passions when off the stage as when in the stage-picture. No view could of course be more false

than this, and a little thinking would go far to correct it. Why should an actor be more dominated by his art than are other artists? It would be vain to say that the stage has not its peculiar temptations, just as any other position in life; but this does not necessitate immorality in the player's profession. The player's art is "an art which Horace did not think it beneath his genius to advise, Addison to recommend, and Voltaire to practise and to protect".

The drama and the dramatist would also be benefited by the endowed theater; and classical plays, which might not always have a wide appeal, could nevertheless be presented. The modern drama has to depend on first-night popularity and star-appeal; this must needs be destructive of the best dramatic art. Furthermore, it is very hard to get a new play produced on the stage at all, because the managers are apt to stick closely to what they know to be popular and money-making. Consequently the playwright must needs cater to his manager and to the vulgar taste, or fail utterly of recognition. Now it is plain that all this would be changed under the endowed theater, and hence this is the only hope for a worthy and national drama. The playwright would thus be encouraged to produce the best that is in him, feeling sure that he would receive worthy recognition and remuneration. In this way our modern drama could also be made literary; and there would even be a demand for the poetic drama, which now unfortunately has such a slim chance. Brander Matthews tells us that we have the three main qualifications of the dramatist; namely, ingenuity, invention, and humor. There is no inherent reason why we might not produce a great national drama. But further, the endowed theater would also enable us to present Shakespeare

and all the great classical drama, both past and present; and much excellent material that would have only a limited and select appeal could still be presented. Moreover, the psychologic drama, which has often too little action to appeal to the multitude, could be given to a far greater extent than at present. The range and variety of subjects handled on the stage will also naturally become greater, if we break down the present theater fashions and conventions; and the notorious happy ending when art requires otherwise, can be buried forever in the vaults of the new endowed theater. It seems evident that if we shall ever get a worthy drama, we must first recognize and subsidize our theater.

We need intelligent critics of our acted drama. At present the public is judge, and it usually judges altogether at first-nights in New York; an immediate popularity or a decided failure are the order of the day for the modern playwright. The theater is in need of good critics more than any other art, because it is more endangered by the mediocre or low taste of the multitude. The critic should discriminate sharply between art and mere amusement; and he should condemn bad art and bad amusement. If it is possible we ought to have an enlightened censorship of our plays and "shows". There is no doubt but that much that is allowed on the stage to-day should be prohibited in the interests of public morals. Our liberty in this regard is becoming license. It is true that the censorship in England has often been worse than useless; but this is due to the fact that it has been entrusted to men of inability to judge both a play as such and the effect it might have on public morals. A group of intelligent and broad-minded students of the theater could surely constitute a censorship that is much needed at the present time; and such

groups would be forthcoming if we had a national or at least an established and recognized theater. England had its patent or licensed theater; but this created a monopoly of the drama which was exceedingly oppressive, and it discouraged all new and original work in play-writing. As Sheridan Knowles said in 1833, "The present monopoly is an insult to the public, an injury to the actor and the author, and an unwarranted departure from the purpose for which the Patents of Theaters Royal, Drury Lane, and Convent Garden were granted". But if the theater became a national institution, all these evils could be eliminated; and we should then have a theater both licensed and protected. So far I have emphasized only the negative work of the critic; but his positive work is equally important. His hardest task is to try to educate the public up to a higher standard of art and amusement. He must show the splendid possibilities of the theater at its best; he must show how it can be bettered and made what it ought to be. And further, he must encourage dramatic art - both actors and playwrights. If he can help it, he must not review plays "as an east wind an apple tree", using Douglas Jerrold's phrase; although some plays no doubt deserve no better fate than this. Our dramatic art needs encouragement on every hand where it is possible, for it has suffered a woful neglect. It is no easy matter to be a dramatic critic. He must have an extensive knowledge of literature; he must also know a good deal about the technic and art of play-writing; lastly, he must have an intelligent understanding of the art of the actor. But even this is not enough. Brander Matthews tells us that the good critic must have "insight and equipment, sympathy and disinterestedness". This evidently makes the good dramatic critic about the rarest

creature on earth; and yet we should not despair so long as we have men like William Archer and A. B. Walkley in England, and men like Brander Matthews himself in this country.

The increased attention to the drama and the theater in our higher schools is an encouraging sign. It will do much to educate public opinion in dramatic and theatric matters, both by furnishing intelligent advocates of the theater and by bringing the problem into its deserved prominence in the public eye. The fact that the playhouse is becoming a matter of school importance will gain for it the respect that is its due; and very soon respect must needs be followed by support. The drama is no longer studied only as a form of literature; on the contrary, it is now getting to be recognized that the drama is primarily a form for the playhouse and must so be studied. And it is also recognized that to get the full benefit of any drama, it must be seen on the stage. The attention our universities are paying to these matters is also a means of educating our future playwrights for their work; and a higher standard of plays will be the result. Today we have right in our universities several worthy playwrights - a thing which could not have been only a few years ago. But the higher schools do not only study the drama and the theater more intelligently and extensively than ever before; they also produce plays on the stage and thus study the actor's art as well. And there is a movement at the present time which must inevitably result in student independent theaters at all our prominent universities, and in fact some of these already exist and are doing good work. When all our higher institutions of learning shall have attained to this, it is to be hoped that the playhouse in this country may become recognized as it should be, and as a

result become bettered to what it can be.

There is no need of viewing the future with despair, for the present has many signs of promise of a better drama and theater. Indeed the good work of reform has been going on for some time, and we are beginning to see splendid results. Very truthfully could Matthew Arnold say in 1879: "We in England have no modern drama at all"; but had he lived and said the same to-day, it would have been false. England now has a modern drama that promises to become of national importance. It is serious, it is vital, it is literary. Men like Pinero, Jones, Shaw, Grundy, Barrie, and Wilde have done some excellent work in prose drama; and men like Phillips, Yeats, and Carr have produced poetic drama of very worthy quality. And what is an added advantage over the earlier situation, these men with few exceptions publish their plays, so that they also can be read as literature. Nor is America without promise as regards drama. Men like Howard, Gillette, Herne, Thomas, Moody, and a good many others, are giving us some respectable work, which with an added seriousness might be a promise of a national drama. Nor has poetic drama been entirely neglected, for it has several worthy representatives, notably Mackaye. But if second-rate dramas can be produced under our present neglected theater system, might we not even expect some first-rate dramas if these able men got the proper encouragement and support of the American people? If they could be made to feel that they were striving to produce national art and literature, and if they could feel sure of the proper recognition and remuneration, might they not give us very much better results? One thing more must not be forgotten, namely, that the encouragement of the American drama also means the encouragement of American literature; for the drama, as we have, already seen, is a noble and great form of Literature. The fact

that there is less importation of foreign plays - a condition largely brought about by the international copyright - is a further incentive towards a better drama in this country, since this has created a greater demand for the home product. The increased seriousness with regard to the theater on the part of the thinking public is another hopeful sign of a better future. Agitation is beginning to be heard in all quarters of the country, urging us on to a reformed and endowed theater, which shall also be an inspiration and an encouragement to a new American national drama. The unfortunate divorce between literature and the drama in this country seems to be almost at an end; for our best playwrights, just as the English also, are beginning to publish their plays. The independent theater is already attracting considerable attention. Only during the last year Donald Robertson and his company have done excellent and self-supporting work in Chicago. His aim has been to put on nothing but plays worth while, and as many different ones as possible. Concerning his noble and successful attempt, the "Record-Herald" of that city recently stated that he had put on more worthy plays in six months than had any other manager in six years. If this can be done by one single manager in one single independent theater, how much greater things could not be done under an endowed or a national theater regime? Sir Henry Irving once said that "The drama must succeed as a business, if it is not to fail as an art". This has been the sad truth under the old regime. "They who live to please, must please to live", has indeed been altogether too true with regard to the actor and the dramatist of the Anglo-Saxon world; but now there is hope that the theater may become a recognized and endowed national art. A few wailing voices there always are, that

complain of the "hopeless present situation", while they turn their faces back to "the good old times", when everything was just the way it should be. And they are with us now to tell us that we have no Greek drama, we have no Moliere, we have no Shakespeare, therefore let us despair of the whole situation. They fail to see that the great drama of the past has existed only at certain comparatively short periods, and that there has been plenty of degradation and sterility in the theater of the past also. Have we not recently received the works of men like Ibsen and Hauptmann and Wagner? And should we condemn or despair of any art because a Phidias or a Michelangelo or a Beethoven is not forthcoming every year? Or is not the drama all the more precious as an art because we have had only one Sophocles and one Moliere and one Shakespeare and one Ibsen? Is not the opera all the more splendid because there has been but one Wagner? And those who despair of our present situation also naturally refuse to recognize the hopeful signs above discussed; nor do they take the slightest step towards attempting any reform. One thing further they fail to recognize, namely, that we have to-day a larger, more varied, and more excellent group of actors than ever before. Perhaps we have no Booth or Jefferson or Mansfield, but we have scores of remarkably good actors to-day where we had but a handful before. We may mention men like Mantell and Sothern and Drew and Wilson, and we could go on almost indefinitely. And we have women like Mrs. Fiske and Mary Shaw and Julia Marlowe and Maude Adams, and also here the number is surprisingly great. We must remember, moreover, that these splendid artists have at present a very slender chance; since we have no national or independent theater, and we have no drama but the faint beginnings.

Is it fair to suppose that they could do much better work and produce far better results, if they were given the material and the support that an art like that of the theater deserves? We have no cause to despair, but we have cause for giving our financial and moral support in a great and worthy movement.

The significance of the stage in general has been dwelt on at some length. The importance of the American stage has also been shown. The comparative neglect which it has suffered has been deplored, and remedies have been suggested. The first thing that we must do is to separate art from mere amusement. We must also support our theater and make it independent of lowering influences. We must encourage our actors and dramatists, and give them a higher and securer position. We must remember that the demand will usually bring the supply, so that if we really want the best, and nothing but the best, this is a long step towards getting the best. But we must not only wish for the best, we must also work for the best. We must learn to be patient and hopeful, even though great things may not be forthcoming all the time. We must educate the public up to a higher standard of art, making them see the superiority of art-pleasure over mere amusement-pleasure. We must remember that the American people are to-day paying just as much in their five thousand playhouses for dross as they would have to pay for gold, so that the theater question is not primarily one of expense. Moreover, we must never lose sight of the fact that the stage is a mighty influence in civilization, and that it can be made a great school for humanity by its direct and universal appeal to their higher emotions. Finally, we must cherish the art of the stage as an art which is worthy of national recognition and general support, for only in

this way can we have a right to expect great and satisfactory results. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap".

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