

SOME SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AMERICAN DRAMA

by

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1917.

Submitted to the Department of
English and the faculty of the Graduate
School of the University of Kansas in
partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts.

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NOTE

It is not the purpose of this paper to point out any well marked paths of moral direction; it is not its purpose to deduce any strict laws of moral didactics. The medium of literature is, in its finest conception, spiritual. Its creations are not of the earth, earthy. They are neither clay images, nor plaster saints; they are such as have had breathed into them the breath of life. In this examination of some of the important American dramas it is the purpose to search out the crimson thread of love of justice; to test for an essence of truth and honor. It is especially the purpose to put in a good word for the play-maker's opportunity and wish, to elevate, to purify, the mind of the reader; and so to fortify, through its pleasures, the life of the American people.

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AMERICAN DRAMA

Two years ago the English reading public was surprised and charmed by a little book of verse, which furnishes a sub-text for this paper--"Bread and Circuses". For both of these the Roman public clamored with equal insistence, possibly with equal need. From that day to this, the world's populace, still primitive, if not pagan, has repeated the same demand: for joy and sustenance, for amusement and salvation, for circuses--and bread. The Latin-European takes his responsibilities gaily; the Teuton takes his pleasures deliberately; that newest world citizen, the typical American, is a thrifty soul, and demands that in some degree at least, his circuses yield him bread. This, not altogether in the commercial sense so universally imputed to him, but in the soul saving sense of intellectual and spiritual inheritance. In discussing Bernard Shaw, Mr. Archibald Henderson has this to say of the

American theater going public: "American audiences, while welcoming the amusement furnished, are constitutionally curious in regard to the underlying import of the dramatist." It is not, perhaps, too much to predicate this statement of the American audience in regard to all dramatists. Both the theater public and the reading public are looking for the meaning of the writer. They like to be entertained, amused; but they like, too, now and then, a bit of something they can set their teeth into.

Today social questions are broached everywhere and on all occasions. It is not now philosophy which is brought down from the clouds to dwell at tea tables and in coffee-houses; not even a philosophy of life consumes the interest of the masses. But the practical issues of life problems: disease, marriage, the great national menace of the slum, intemperance, labor and capital, our personal desires, getting rich, getting on in society, getting on with our neighbors, health, wealth, and religion--these thousand natural shocks both flesh and soul are heir to are the problems propounded every day to the race for solution.

And this constitutional curiosity of the American public is listening alertly for the antiphon. Every hour society is hearing responses to its call; sometimes in the clash of discord, sometimes in the mellow harmonies of honor and justice; sometimes through the antics of the clown, sometimes at the gate of vision. The answers won in the yet doubtful struggle with the angel of light or darkness must determine the blessing or cursing of the race. These answers of all sorts, whether or not the projector of them looked for action as a result, are getting into daily practice in the life of the people and in the public policy of the nation. This daily practice, the working out in public sufferance, of private, sometimes individual propoganda, is at one and the same time the fearsome danger and the mighty power of a people's government.

To these problems the professional philanthropist and the scientific investigator have long given themselves; the abolitionist once, the prohibitionist, the socialist, the settlement worker, the eugenist, the preacher, and all others who have courted unpopularity in the interest of a cause. But professional reformers alone, however selfsacrificing or foresighted they may be, can never mightily move, nor powerfully

lift the race. To this task the good citizen, of whatever class or guild, must join himself for his own sake and for his community. In this undertaking he seeks aid from every source--from his church, from his government, from his intellectual diversions, from his amusements, from the labor of his hours of toil, from the delights of his hours of recreation. To the reinforcing of public rectitude and to the ennobling of private virtue science must bring her wisdom, religion must bring her exaltation, and art must bring her esthetic inspiration.

Notwithstanding denials, many and vehement, of the amenability of art to moral obligation, the two are necessarily related. This is most essentially true of that most universal of the arts--the drama. In as far as any artistic creation fails of moral excellence, so far it misses its truest reason for being; in so far as moral effort fails to appeal to the sympathies and quicken the imagination, so far it will fall short of its aim to enlarge the spiritual perceptions of man, and to dignify his personal activities. It is no more the obligation of the artist to preach truth, than it is of the

preacher to teach beauty; it is the highest achievement for both when each seeks to broaden the scope, and deepen the power of the other. But to insist that art shall teach a moral code is to blind beauty with creed, and to hamper truth with cant. Moody doubt wails,

"Thy body at its best,

How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?"

But clear sighted and unshackled faith cheers back,

"All good things

Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than
flesh helps soul."

One who was both philosopher and poet, as well as social democrat, says: "The great secret of morals is love"; and again, "The greatest instrument of moral good is the imagination." The ancient sentimental slogan, art for art's sake, was never good ethics, nor correct esthetics. It was based on a false conception of the true scope and character of beauty. The student of art, no less than the herald of truth, repudiates such a restricted interpretation of the province of the great achievements of the imagination. Percy Mackaye, with true democratic emphasis, scouts the phrase. He says, "Art for art's sake is as mean-

ingless as statesmanship for the sake of statesmanship." All good exists for the sake of enlargement and power to the human race; whatever strengthens and refines the capacity of the human soul for subjective enjoyment or objective contribution is a distinct asset of human knowledge; on the other hand, every influence which fails of this moral and humanitarian emotion becomes a menace, either passive or active, to the public good.

Yet because the drama makes its appeal through the written and spoken word, it must not be assumed that it is therefore the handmaid of preachment. Nor because its acknowledged aim is entertainment, dare the drama itself shirk the high responsibility to progress the race. The high privilege of direct and universal appeal entails upon this form of art a supreme inevitableness of ethical effort, not to be ignored, not to be evaded, but to be cherished and fostered. The actualness of this moral force is conceded by every thoughtful student of the play. Richard Burton speaks of the "impressive influence of the playhouse in common social life"; in another connection he refers to the significance of this

(the dramatic) social factor. Ashley Dukes, in the introduction to "Modern Dramatists," assumes the need of the theater to "find its present way into touch with art and life." Henry Van Dyke says, "This art lies closer to the common life, and rises higher into the ideal than any other art." Brander Matthews asserts the obligation of the dramatist "to reflect the social movement of his own age", and further declares that the drama can deal adequately with some of the problems of existence.

So important has this relation between the drama and the truth become, that in January of 1914 the Contemporary Club, an organization of university men and women of distinction of Philadelphia, held a formal symposium on "Morality and the Drama". At this time such distinguished authors and artists as Agnes Repplier, Reginald Kauffman, Francis Wilson, Professor George P. Baker, thought it worth their while to come together for a discussion of this subject.

But this is no new theory of the privilege and right of dramatic presentation. The recognition of its social value and significance is as old as this, "the most perfect and universal form of literature".

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Shelly, in commenting on its influence in Greek life says, "The drama at Athens, or wherever it may have approached to perfection, ever coexisted with the moral and intellectual greatness of the age---And it is indisputable that the highest perfection of human society has ever corresponded with the highest dramatic excellence". Another student of drama and life speaks of the drama's "extraordinary public influence for good or evil", but throws the weight of his historic belief in the direction of its "effectiveness for human happiness." Otto Hellar says that it is the business of dramatic interests of today, to convert a place of entertainment of the well-to-do lazy into a serious institution for the development of public intelligence. Says Reginald Kauffman, in speaking of dramatic presentation: "If it interprets life truthfully and dramatically, it is art; if its interpretation interests us in the fight against life as it is, it is moral." Says Walter Prichard Eaton, "It is surely a matter of record that the great periods of the drama have been coincidental with periods of national awakening. The Athenian drama and the Athenian state went

hand in hand. The name of Shakespeare and the name of Drake can hardly be separated." Ibsen and Modern Norway were a joint growth. Finally, in putting public duty back of the opportunity of the play and the obligation of the playwright, Mr. Richard Burton says, "To see that our playhouses do good rather than evil is being regarded as a civic and a social aim."

The drama of today is, ideally, the drama of life; it is life in little; not improvised amusement merely, but "life relived." Things seen are mightier than things heard. A story is told in terms of emotion, and it must be "made to yield man what is for his welfare." The wise playmaker frankly uses its "unique power to perform this service and in the guise of pleasure".

But pleasure is never an isolated condition. Man is essentially gregarious; his social sympathies are the most vivid emotions of the normal human being. Henry George assumes that there are periods in the life not only of the individual, but of the group, or of the mass, when earnestness characterizes their motives to an unusual degree, and when their best intelligence is called into play for

altruistic ends. We seem in this twentieth century to be entering upon such a period. The superstitious ignorance which in earlier times left social and moral obligation to the consideration of the few is giving way to the kind of enlightenment which makes every man wish to take a personal hand in the political and industrial problems of the state, and in directing the progress of the moral universe. Long ago divine order gave way to divine right. Divine right in turn yielded to the theory of race evolution. Today democracy of thinking is supplanting subservient belief and servile bowing to tradition, political, intellectual, or spiritual. The average man in church and in state, in market and in forum, in home and in office, proposes to himself to take active part in working out the destiny of society.

For these times of intellectual and moral crisis the dramatist must summon all his powers. The problems of modern life are the maelstrom into which this daring, but earnest public throws itself. These, this same conscientious public attacks with what has been called "a genuine if rough courage" even though it lack the artist's finish of touch.

Underneath the veneer of custom and the thin crust of refined taste, under the superficial knowledge of modern education, the instincts of man remain primitive and simple. Governments have been instituted, professedly to protect the rights and enlarge the happiness of the people; officers of administration are elected, taxes are levied, industries are organized; splendid thoroughfares are opened and maintained, institutions of culture and art are established; great journals are published; churches and cathedrals point their spires toward good and God. Yet rights and happiness flit evasively about the souls of men, and tease their spirits with the changing vision of what should be, and what is. A thousand things are out of joint, and we the people clamor openly or mutter deeply for means to make life good. He who would get the ear of the people must have something to say about the people's affairs.

Says Victor Hugo, in the introduction to "Cromwell": "Primitive times are lyrical, ancient times, epical, modern times, dramatic. The ode sings of eternity, the epic imparts solemnity to history, the drama depicts life. The characteristic of the first poetry is ingeniousness; of the second,

simplicity; of the third, truth.--The ode lives upon the ideal, the epic upon the grandiose, the drama upon the real.--Civilization begins by singing of its dreams, then narrates its doings, and lastly sets about describing what it thinks."

Up to the present time the novel has largely abrogated to itself the prerogative of teaching any propaganda with which the author and his public were alike in sympathy. Today the drama is fast displacing the novel as a national source of pleasure and profit, and upon it is falling the mantle of the prophetic office. Brander Matthews asserts that the playwright is "confined to those subjects in which the broad public can be interested, and to the treatment which the broad public will accept." This is true to a degree; "He who lives to please, must please, to live." Yet this very theory of dramatic creation is the stone of stumbling to American drama. Its results have been the slough of despond to many an earnest soul who has refused to "prostitute his art to jugglery, to tickle the fancy." Besides, public opinion, be it regarding politics or art, is not made by the

broad public; it is the crystalized sentiment of a small, but respectable, intelligent, thinking, and judicial minority. Such a play as "Kindling" failed repeatedly because the broad public failed to see its greatness, until some visioned prophets of better things rescued the piece from imminent oblivion, and so heralded it as to open the blind eyes, and unstop the deaf ears of this same earnest, curious, conscientious, but sometimes thick-skinned American public. To quote Mr. Kauffman again: "One of the first justifications of the great drama of modern times is the fact that it does disturb; that it does uncover sorrow, sin, poverty, disease and dirt; that it does show up to us the evils to which our eyes have long been closed." But this freedom is artistic, and is moral only when the author is actuated by high and noble moral purpose, and when the interpretation does enlist the reader or hearer against the babbling mysteries of the world. But here the artist must chart his Scylla and Charybdis. The mass of people are quite content with what Mr. William Hunter calls a slimy sea of vulgarity. The Puritans are too well defined by another icono-clast who says they are "against the telling of modern truth." Mr. Burton insists that it is this

very catering to the demands of a largely untutored and undisciplined public appreciation of art, which keeps our stage yet inferior to that enjoyed in England.

If the drama is to come into its own among the sentiment moulding forces of the day, it must earn its place by sheer right of power. It must meet its supreme obligation to be high, noble, and sound in art; at the same time it dare not be less than sound, noble, and high, in life. Dr. Matthews says that the drama even of today, though often slighted, is "the noblest form of literature, because it is the most direct." It then becomes the high prerogative of this rich and universal type, to reinforce the higher lessons of the world's noblest thought.

So far, then, the fact of the possible moral value of the drama, and its opportunity for social service, the authorities rather well establish. It remains to test for the actual trend of dramatic thought, and the presence, or absence of distinct thesis in current plays.

Granting in the beginning the primary object of amusement in the drama as stage material and as literature, nevertheless it has a vital reason for being. "Its greatness", says Mr. Graves, "consists

in its being a mirror held up to life with a steady hand." Miss Maude Adams comments rather unfavorably in regard to the popular demand for strong plays. It is inevitable that the desire for relaxation will always secure a large hearing for the type of light plays for the popular stage, for the lurid, sensational itinerating play, and for the overworked movies. But even melodrama, though sacrificing message and characterization to plot, yet finds itself drawn into the edge of the current of public interest in the social idea. While many of these plays would fail to reveal, even on the most minute scrutiny, anything corresponding to thesis, nevertheless the effect of the present day passion for the social problem is fairly evident.

Pseudo-moral Plays

In this romantic class of plays, to be shunned, to be eliminated when that shall be possible, must be reckoned a long list built upon a sentimental sympathy with the wrong-doer, the criminal who is assumed to have suffered at the hands of unjust laws. These plays Mr. Burton calls the "crook plays"; they include an appalling number. Mr. Shaw has made him-

self notorious by his revolt from tradition. His would-be imitators, lacking all that has made Shaw famous, are already becoming rank through their revolt from all law. To catch the flotsam and jetsam of popularity, these plays have been built on a pseudo-social idea; they stimulate a sort of sickly sentimentality in a warped and mis-directed judgment. In such plays as "The Master Mind", and "Within the Law", the romantic interest depends for its vitality on that crude and unjudicial sympathy, which always follows the individual who seems not to have had, in the beginning, fair play. The clever manipulator of the law, the powerful financier, the corruptible or corrupted judge, are made to deal unfairly with the individual. The individual retaliates not less cleverly, no more scrupulously, and brings retribution upon his enemy by choice evasion, or sharp subversion of the law. "The Master Mind" is the superlatively clever professional crook. In the second play mentioned, "Within the Law", the woman is the victim of grinding industry and soulless capital. To bring her enemy to justice she herself uses every variety of intrigue. The plots of both are romantic, overdrawn,

sensational, perilous to unripe judgment. In their very strong dramatic quality lies a great danger. They purport to appeal to the sense of justice. Yet the whole life re-lived before the footlights is of the underworld. In place of the bread of moral sustenance the reader or auditor receives a stone of heaviness and distrust. It is this class of plays which move Dr. Burton to the feeling that supervision and direction of dramatic concerns shall become the duty of the state.

Wholly different in theme, yet of a scarcely higher ethical quality is "Romance" by Edward Sheldon. This, too, is pseudo-moral. In her struggle to rehabilitate her character, and redeem her soul and body from the dominion of man's passion, the woman meets with rebuff and temptation from both sinner and saint. Amid the rugs and jugs and candle-lights of opulent society, a woman's soul seems struggling for incarnation. But the whole is so overlaid with luxury, intrigue, the sensuous, that the physical outweighs the moral. The result may be summed up in a passage at the close of the play.

"Bishop--But that is not why I told you. I wanted to get the nonsense out of your head.

Harry--Never mind. You did something quite

different; and now it is too late to change." That is precisely the danger in the pseudo-moral plays. They purport to get the nonsense out of the mind of their public--largely youth; they do something quite different, and then it is too late to change. If the bad instead of the good, the foolish, not the wise, the false, not the true, be insinuated into the minds of the unwary, the end of all statesmanship, of all philosophy, of all religion, is foiled, and the last end is worse than the first. "A Night in Avingnon", by Cale Young Rice, though so serious in idea, and so tragic in denouncement is intensely sensuous in its appeal. Here the man is the center of conflict against vice. In this case, however, the dramatic quality is so intense, and the moral tragedy so imminent, that the moral conflict is more apparent.

It is against this kind of piece that the friends of the drama inveigh. "It makes for uneasiness to reflect upon the influence of such character drawing upon the young and unformed--the major part of all theatre audiences." It is unfortunate for the dramatist himself, that he yields to the demands of the popular, and often not too refined audience, in

sacrificing nobility of ideal to story-telling-- a concession that will often be condoned by the box office receipts. But there is hope in the belief that both artist and public are coming to realize that there is no real dramatic merit in the underworld vices, even though they be clothed in dramatic power.

Yet this vice of human passion, the seeming almost universal prevalence of what we term the social evil, mutters its sinister threat in many plays which have a wholly different controlling idea. It is present under the marital infelicities in "Arizona", and "As a Man Thinks". It hides and dodges in the jealousy of Jinny Austin, "The Girl with the Green Eyes". The fear of it torments Warder in "The Truth". It distresses and disturbs "The Faith Healer", and "The Necessary Evil" is a protest against traditional attitude to the woman in the case. It is the morbid clutch of "The Great Divide", and the deadening certainty of ravishment in "Enemies' Child."

Sectional Drama

In this same category of romance drama may be catalogued many plays which maintain a distinct

romantic atmosphere as their popularizing agency, but which are essentially ethical in spirit. Many of these plays deserve popularity, if not immortality, because they depict and preserve phases of life distinctly characteristic of our national development, and, consciously or unconsciously, the ethical principals of community life. It is not the fault of dramatic writers if any one part of our country remains in ignorance of how the other sections live, move, and have their being. This exploitation of the results of our migratory tendencies opens up a fertile field, and one which will not be soon exhausted. "Arizona", by Augustus Thomas, reproduces life in the frontier military camp,—its freshness, its freedom, its recklessness, its unconventionality, its native love of the square deal; withal its underlying contention for honor and sincerity. The West is the scene, also, of Mr. Armstrong's, "The Heir of the Hoorah", and of Mr. Moody's "The Great Divide". The South brings its peculiar racial history, and its phenomenal later development to the dramatist's mill. Some of these aspects are glanced at in "Alabama" by Mr. Thomas, "The Octoroon", by Dion Boucicault, and "The Nigger", by Edward

Sheldon. Whatever the author's point of view, early and romantic, or present day and threatening, here is an aspect of our social economy held up for public consideration, which well may give one pause. Here is the conflict between education and heredity, between desire and danger, between expediency and justice. To quote Mr. Graves again, "Whatever will stir men and women to ask questions about life, and to think through the questions to an answer, is good." In such plays as these the reader is made to think, to ask questions; and some ethical principles, some ideas of noble sacrifice and service to mankind dignify life even for the man whose tragedy is that he is "the nigger".

It is a far cry from "The Nigger" and its almost hope-less tragedy to the tragedy of the New England conscience. But that is what Mr. Moody portrays in "The Great Divide." The feminine incarnation of deep seated Puritanism finds her soul the battleground between traditional creed and the independence which breaks bonds at whatever cost. The play is typically characteristic of New England prejudice, and at the same time quite as truly true to social customs of the wild west. "Children of Earth",

by Alice Brown, represents New England in another phase, but with the same large and wholesome triumph in life's combat. The quaintness of provincial life, the struggle for freedom, the impact of present day commercialism against the contented quiescence of the people of the soil--these must make the native of New England hills look with concern on the decay of the land and the migration of the old families.

The American city, too, figures as an essential element in many present day plays. The chaotic and seething interests which center in the city offer immeasurable possibilities for the drawing of character and the complexing of plot. Here the great business enterprises concentrate their power; here political life ebbs and flows; here the enterprises of reform and religious regeneration hurl themselves on the cosmopolitan mass of society. These same large and important interests afford conspicuous opportunity for dramatic treatment. The tenement and its often sordid, often noble, dweller; the slum and its attendant social workers; night schools, mission classes, social settlement centers; the over-worked and under-paid clerk, the hall-bedroom girl: the every night theater goer sees scores of

plays pitting these in their ignorance, their simplicity, or their cunning, against the keen juggler of good and evil, of hard luck and prosperity. That very astute schemer of American life, the ward politician, manipulates employee and important manufacturing interest, alike, to further his own or his party's aims, shunting the lines of justice and subverting the public press. Many plays mentioned in other connections are essentially metropolitan in setting. Society plays, plays of industry, of business, of politics, are laid in the city, the center of American wealth.

The shop-keeping ability of our English ancestors, which so teased the great Napoleon, seems, honorably enough, to have descended to us. Abroad, yet, or again, the American is anathematized as commercial. But this in itself is no stigma. Into his business the American merchant, banker, or ranchman, puts all the powers of his mind--which alone, according to Ben Johnson "ever made any man rich". Indeed this same business man is by some one accredited with a "lyric fondness" for his trade. "It is the process of acquiring which he enjoys, rather than the result." It is the zest of conquest inherited from his thrifty

pioneer ancestors. Aaron Barstow, in "Children of Earth", has followed and cultivated this zest until he is obsessed with the idea of getting, and nothing else is sacred to him in his greed of gain. When the pursuit of risk and chance becomes a mania, the finer fibers of character are first buried under the rubbish of the merely material for its own sake, then ultimately shrink away and leave the man lean and stark of spirit. "The Lion and the Mouse", by Klein, pits this passion of getting, against fair play and consideration for others. This is the tragedy for some men in "The Climbers" and "Her Own Way." Intoxication with the gamble of the street, the lure of risk, make men once honest, easy victims of speculating crooks, dishonest to the core. Says Coast in "Her Own Way", "You've got to be tricky if you want to succeed in our business. I don't mind telling you right out between us, I'm tricky." What chance against this ingrained knavery has the man who has become so suddenly dishonest that he "takes the lie without a quiver?" It is this same element which dishonors Sterling in "The Climbers", and ultimately brings him to suicide.

This drawing on the commercial field for dramatic material seems a redeeming of the assertion of Bronson Howard, many years ago, that business would be a future dominant theme for dramatic purpose. In "The Fourth Estate", the man who has made his fortune honestly in the big open West returns to the city to meet out justice to the enemy and oppressor of his youth. Presently he makes use of his wealth in promoting a great daily paper. At every turn he finds his purpose blocked by outside interferences. Politics crowds against commercialism. He must meet and conquer, or be conquered by the machine. He learns that a great newspaper in the twentieth century is no longer a voice, but a property. The theme of the play is the contest between truth telling, conscience, the managing editor, and the cajolery of the party boss, seconded by a socially ambitious family. Here business, politics, society, meet, blend, as in life. The dramatic conflict in the lives of the various characters is vivid and yet wholesome. The business-like precision of action, the positive and immediate decision of vital points, the promptness of the business man in contrast with the oily insinuation of the ward manager, the detective methods

used to prove the bribery of the judge--all these are true, also to some types of American politics. The entire action of the play is marked by the enthusiasm of American journalism. "The Man of the Hour" shows another phase of American political life--the attempt of the political ring to control and manipulate law and officials for their own or for their commercial friends' aggrandizement.

These plays show the seamy side of political life in conjunction with business interests. But unlike many of the lighter and more melodramatic plays, they maintain a respect for law. A once famous Kansan is credited with having said that in politics there is no place for the decalogue. This seems to be the art theory of many critics. But the men in the balance between uprightness and corruption in public duty decide that truth is a larger happiness than happiness without truth. This is not the remote heroic deed of the classic world; it is the problem which every day confronts the man who dares to give his labor and his love for the good of the race. "The Nigger" is only less vital as a play upon the political machine than it is as a study of the race

problem. "Electricity" represents both industrial and political life, the latter only potentially. The author makes a very telling point in regard to the inefficiency of modern education. It is somewhat a plea for the working man—that every man be a working man. The socialistic defenses are rather feeble, and would scarcely give content to the supporters of the socialist cause. Perhaps there will be no place better than this to mention "Kindling" and its powerful theses of social injustice. Mr. Arthur Hopkins defends the idea drama as "the coming thing." He says "Let an author have an idea, and a producer the ability to see it, and to work to get it over to the audience, and you have the drama of the future." Already thinking people are enjoying this better class of social play. "Kindling", by Charles Kenyon, is one of these. It proves what may be done, given a powerful theme and an artist clever in storytelling. Here is no psychological problem, nor theory of philosophy. Here is a volume from life, duplicated, who shall say how often, in the tenement districts of the great city. It is the tragedy of the poor, the struggle which sets the good of traditional code against

the right to live and to give chance for life. It pits the cold "thou shalt not" against the instincts and obligations of parenthood. Bates, in the opening scene, voices the conviction of the reader at the close of the drama. "I bet the Lord made the rules of nature long before he made the Ten Commandments." The motherhood of Maggie demands the right of a chance for her unborn child. Since poverty and bad air and hard luck are the portion of the tenement dweller, since means to provide for the expected guest come not through legitimate channels, Maggie employs the means open to her. In her last passionate defense she wails the cry of millions: "There's something wrong somewhere." And the explanation is made for all guilty oppressors, in the person of the tenement owner, Mrs Burke Smith, when she says, "I looked on things down here too casually. I didn't know. I didn't realize."

Of this powerful play Mr. Clayton Hamilton says: "Kindling" is admirable as a work of art; but it is even more important as a social document.-----It reminds us with a pang that each of us is at least a tacit partner in a social organization that is guilty of infanticide upon an enormous scale. There is blood

upon our hands; the responsibility is ours. What are we going to do about it? remain silent partners in the crime, or take a more active hand in the business of society and endeavor to reorganize it in such a way as to mitigate its cruelty? Mr. Kenyon is an artist, and his play is not polemical; but after we have lived the life of Maggie Schultz for an evening in the theater. or in the library, we can scarcely recede to our own more snug and comfortable lives without asking ourselves some questions such as these.

Mr. Kenyon is not alone in his love of life and his devotion to truth. Many playwrights and many plays have, and communicate the gift which leads to understanding of, and sympathy for our fellows.

Plays of Peace and War.

War also has its place among the themes before its footlights, or intended for appeal to the student.

The mid-nineteenth century ideal of war is represented in "Barbara Fritchie" of Civil War fame, and in "Nathan Hale", these both by Clyde Fitch. The dramatic little war monologue, "Allison's Lad", by Beulah Dix, is also an appeal to the fast dying worship of the uniform. Its theme is the hate and fate

of the coward, and the ever present conflict in the soul of Allison's lad, the struggle in hereditary cowardice is overcome by the hereditary courage and the vital life and prayers of Allison.

But the later plays which deal with war as a definite theme are rather more distinctly thesis plays. Some of them have been forged, white hot, in the furnace of the present conflict. They picture war not as the wonderful romance of the ideal, eternal masculine; not war now in the veiled, courageous abstract of manly virtue; not battle-scarred heroes, to be idealized and idolized: but war in its fearful tyranny over soul and body; war in its heart-rending, hearth-breaking reality; war, with its wounds and blindness; war, with its insanity and corruption; war, driven on by the sovereign hand of the few mighty; war, endured by the multitude of valiant, or callous, but also by the suffering. War and its accompaniment of toil and privation, watching and anguish for woman. War and its strangling of the babes. War in its aftermath of destitution, physical degeneracy, industrial demoralization, and soul revulsion.

Two phases of the woman-tragedy of war are represented in "War Brides", by Marion Craig Wentworth, and in the little monologue "Enemies' Child", by C. H. Crawford. In "War Brides", the women are at first wildly stirred by a romantic enthusiasm. To marry the soldier in uniform! To be the cynosure of envy and praise! But the sometimes forced merriment of the nuptial ceremonies is interrupted by the news of battle, the report of wounded, the wail of the stricken, the shriek of the demented. The terror of foreign invasion and the loathsome horror of ravishment breath in every word of the unwilling mother of "Enemies' Child". The "Unseen Empire", by Atherton Brownell, sums up, marshals in formidable array, masses in overwhelming power, the deluding victories of war, the tyrannous domination of the masses by the Man, the heroic loyalty of women, the buying and selling of women, poor and rich, the industrial complication, the inhuman horror of carnage, the waste of resources, the recoiling aftermath of death and revolting disease. And all of this at the cool, calculating, bloody behest of the empire of militarism. This sort of play is distinctly the play of idea, and it is doing for

a reasonable public what the Fraulein says the American Ambassador is doing for her: teaching them to think. Mr. George Ross Kirkpatrick, vice-presidential candidate for the socialist party, has written a seething, turbulent arraignment of militarism, "War--What For?" Mr. Kirkpatrick could ask no better sanction for his almost rabid denouncement of our military system than "War Brides", "Enemies' Child", and "The Unseen Empire". The short play, "The Terrible Meek", by Charles Kennedy, adds realistic details to the thinking of the reader who may himself have some one enduring hardships "on the border", not for the defence of a principle nor for the sake of a sentiment, or a "scrap of paper" but to preserve the weal of the interests.

There are too, plays of suffrage, plays physiological and pathological. All these, good or bad, strong or weak, wise or foolish; nevertheless portray American life. And the playmaker, be he wise, the actor, be he noble, the discriminating reader, or theater goer, finds himself wishing to heighten and dignify American life, by himself becoming a worthy part of it. For not all are wise, not all are noble, not all discrim-

ate good from evil. For him who does not, poison is death.

Humor in the Drama.

Even humor is not exempt from the sway of the social idea. Said Moliere, "It is a strange enterprise to make honest folk laugh." But it may be a clever and absorbing task. The sort of comedy which "produces thoughtful laughter is capable of success only before an audience of men and women of high culture and refined taste." Into our childish ears our elders dinned the old saw, tell me what company you keep and I will tell you what you are. May we not pass the slogan on to the next generation, slightly modified. Tell me what humor you enjoy and I will read the scale of your moral refinement. The modern Touchstone is a true democrat. He estimates all persons on the basis of character and conduct, quite ignoring class distinctions or favor by law or custom. He delights in exposing the follies and foibles of men and women of all classes, who are undemocratic in spirit, or whose conventional code obscures the intrinsic human qualities of good fellowship.

Ever since 1786, when the first dramatic Jonathan, in "The Contrast", made merry with, and at, European taudry aristocracy, this has been a fertile source of American humor; and not so much the European himself, then, or now, as the American who apes foreign customs, shaming his own birth and nativity. "The Man from Home" levies on Europe for its setting, but is American in spirit. Beneath its romance, it is a gentle satire on fawning courtship of things foreign. But its ridicule has a healing quality, which leaves a hearty and worthwhile respect for things, and ideals, and men, "from home". The nonsense of many society customs, the frequent absurdity of feminine logic, the bull-in-the-china-shop character of masculine adjustment of delicate dilemmas, are illustrated in all of Mr. Fitch's plays. An unusual combination of sense and nonsense characterizes the clergyman's wife in "Anti Matrimony". "Canterbury Pilgrims", by the same author, in its semi-classic borrowed setting, is a rich field of playfulness and rollicking fun, to which the demure Nonne and the great Chaucer are as necessary as are the Miller and the Wife of Bath. In

"Kindling", referred to elsewhere, the quips and jibes of Maggie cover a fund of sound philosophy of life worth any man's hearing. "Electricity", by William Gillete, furnishes a deal of good natured satire at our half-baked university products. The best and probably the most lasting of our characteristic American humor finds its butt in the ludicrous situations incident to our rapid national growth. Provincial types of racial anomalies, the result of our complex racial composition, the grim humor of the hard pushed pioneer,—these often approach, sometimes cross the line between humor and tragedy. In any case the jibe often becomes in itself the source of healing balm, which takes the sting from its wound. Humor is good, is wholesome, and when it is distinctively American, becomes in itself a phase of American character and life, the legitimate field of the playwright.

Of this humorous sentiment, Mr. Burton says, "The deep seated inherited Puritan notion that amusement to be amusing must be disconnected with serious purpose and helpful influence, will sooner or later go into the scrap heap that awaits all antiquated ideas. Why not self-consciously help make it sooner? To per-

sist in the assumption that pleasure implies irresponsibility is to challenge God's plan in investing man with the instinct of enjoyment and joy." This is quite in harmony with the estimate made by one of our quaint humorists of the broad type. Mr. Henry Shaw always declared that a man's inability to enjoy a joke, even at his own expense, indicates a mental, or temperamental deformity; that persistent resistance to the appeal of wit or humor places him beyond the pale of human sympathy. Underneath all the romance, good and bad, underlying the quips at the newly rich, and the exposing of the superficiality of present society, high and low, there breathes yet in these plays, that spirit of social democracy which insists that the grading of folks on the basis of birth, or rank, or calling, or cash is coarse and barbarous; that "men must be rated not by their trappings, but by the essential things,--wisdom, character, efficiency, the dignity of the busy people who make the world go round."

Society Plays.

In a catalogue of plays perhaps the longest list would be found under the heading of society plays. Of this class Mr. Clyde Fitch is the acknowledged chief

exponent. He delights in the sort of anomalous, but not uncommon combination of staid old-family pride and exclusive importance, in juxtaposition with all the pettiness and humors of the socially ambitious, and the fevers of the newly rich. With these there is usually joined a leaven of open hearted, unconventional democracy which we term typically American. "The Climbers" is a social tragedy. The false basis of much of our social forms and the emptiness of our present day conventionalities are conspicuously prominent on almost every page. "We are all climbers", says Mrs. Hunter, when her daughters would force their entrance to the charmed circle of the socially important. Mr. Hunter has fallen a victim to the mania of speculation, partly in the vain endeavor to provide money for his too expensive family, but quite as truly in the wish to satisfy his own desire to be counted among the successful men on the street. The Godesbys and Johnny Trotter have wealth, and social entree with certain circles, but are without the pale of moral recognition. None of these characters is wholly admirable; yet none, possibly, is without some saving quality of honor. Not unlike "The Climbers" is "Her Own Way". There is the same kind of com-

plex family,--the ambitious and luxurious wife, the unsuccessful Wall Street broker, the astute but unprincipled speculator, who confesses himself a crook. In both these plays there is the saving element of one or two sound characters, who seem, however, relatively unimportant as persons; of value only as a part of plot development. In "The Girl With Green Eyes", and "The Truth", the personal character of the chief personages, both women, becomes the vital matter, as must inevitably be true when thought as the basis of drama production replaces mere good dramatic action. "The Girl With Green Eyes" is a case of hereditary jealousy; not a mild, fickle, trifling, type, but a jealousy of the variety which becomes an obsession, a mania, an Othello passion. This uncontrolled idea defies sense, judgment, love, law, and mars, nearly wrecks her home. "The Truth", like the other plays of Mr. Fitch, involves the problems of the home resulting from successive intermarriages between persons of different social and moral strata. It is again our complex social structure. Like "The Girl With the Green Eyes", "The Truth" introduces the hereditary bias. It has much more palpably an underlying thought. Lying, here, is a hereditary vice and an

obsessing spirit; its labyrinthic intricacies remind one of the nurse tales invented to impress infantile minds with the endless-chain character of a lie.

This play carries the power of moral assent unbacked by moral conviction. This seems to be the weakness of most of Mr. Fitch's social plays. He has done his part when he has portrayed society as it is. The reader must furnish his own moral conviction. The characters at the close of the plays seem rather to have been revealed as they are, than to have grown in the conflict with life. However, "The Truth" voices in the last lines some growth of moral idea, when Becky says: "Something's happened to me in these two days. Even if I tell lies, I learned to loath them and be afraid of them."

In this particular, the play is much superior to "The Lie", by Sir Henry Arthur Jones. Mr. Jones' play is much stronger in characterization and dramatically more powerful. In both plays the woman that lies is forced to a truth-telling basis. However, in "The Lie", Lucy is forced by fear of discovery, and yields to truth only as an expediency. Becky, in "The Truth", revolts from lying as a soul destroying

vice, and saves herself in spite of circumstances, and in the face of disaster.

From among the numerous excellent plays of the society type there is room for one other example, the much discussed "As a Man Thinks". Mr. Burton speaks of the alleged philosophic content of "As a Man Thinks", and characterizes the handling of its theories as rather half hearted, and such as to "evoke a smile in these days of militant feminism." Which reminds one, by the way, of Mr. Barrie's clever little tale "What Every Woman Knows". Even grant that a definite thesis, which Mr. Burton himself calls a "welcome infusion", is somewhat lacking. What then? Mr. Lowell says: "That which the artist did not mean to put into his work, but which found itself there by some generous process of nature, of which he was unaware, has somewhat in it that snatches us into sympathy with the higher things than those which come by plot and observation; these fine creations as truly build themselves up in the brain as they are built up with deliberate forethought." The reader will not probably agree with Mr. Thomas' theory in

regard to the relative moral standards for the father and mother of the child. Nobody asks him to do so. Modernists, the last spurt of feminism, will repudiate the contributory sphere assigned to woman. Nevertheless, here is something which "snatches us into sympathy with higher things." They may disagree with the proposed solution of this particular marital controversy; they may deny the fundamental basis of the conclusion. What then? He who hears or reads has been taught to think, and will of his own initiative find the answer true for his own soul. Farther,—Doctor Seilig is as great a creation for his day and society as many a classic character whose name has become a household word. Mr. Thomas deserves our thanks for having put him into American literature. He sees thru, and avoids for himself and others, all subterfuge. He proves himself as one of the characters says of him, "First in every situation." He is a Jew, believing ardently in his own race; but he is tolerant, just, generous, to those outside the court of the chosen people. He is the metropolitan physician to the luxury class; yet he is a promoter

of art and letters. He inherited ten millions from his father; yet he is so devoted to his general, and hospital practice that he is often too busy to go home to dinner. He is a Jew; yet he utters without passion, and without prejudice, what seems to be true for him.

"This Carpenter of Nazereth. He worked it all out, this thing we call life. He knew the essence of it. He said 'Forgive and ye shall be forgiven'". He sums up the lack in Christian living today, when he says: "The mistake is not in taking Him too literally. The mistake is in not taking Him literally enough."

To quote Mr. Lowell again, "The poet deserves praise for all we find in him." No definite thesis? Maybe not. Grant that there is no purposeful theory of morals in the author's intent. All the better. Some critic has said that the strength of power in "Paradise Lost" is that Milton refused to be hampered by the sermon purpose. The dramatist is not the first to write better than he knew.

A man's responsibility for what he thinks is the

dramatic idea underlying Mr. Thomas' play, "The Witching Hour". An old superstition and a hereditary aversion become the immediate occasion of a crime; a man's unvoiced feelings and most secret conception for the scheme, becomes, apparently, the incitement of another's crime. Here is the psychological thesis, pure and simple. Not only may a member of society not safely do as he pleases, regardless of others; he may not even righteously think as he pleases, unless he pleases to think righteously.

The Religious Idea in the Drama.

Some few dramatic artists have gone a step further, and assumed the prophetic cloak. They stand for the moment as the seers of literature. They dare become the voice of one crying, prepare ye! prepare ye! This is a delicate and careful task, yet is not outside the province of the drama. To quote again from Victor Hugo: "On the day when Christianity said to man, "Thou art two-fold, thou art made up of two beings, one perishable, the other immortal; one carnal, the other ethereal;

one enslaved by appetites and passions, the other borne aloft on the wings of enthusiasm and revery-- in a word the one always stooping towards the earth, its mother, the other always darting up towards heaven, its fatherland--in that day the drama was born." This is the essential field of dramatic emotion: the conflict in the soul of man. It is the playmaker's business to depict life as he sees it; not man as he should be, but as he is, with a human soul shaped and twisted into character by the complex experiences of life, not in the abstract essence of something to be saved or lost. The drama is no law-bound schoolmaster to bring humanity back to God. But it must teach its own lesson. Nor can modern drama resort to the long didactic lectures which the Elizabethan theater goers endured. The drama is life in little. Ho, great, thronging, questioning, doubting public, come! see! think, and understand! But make all interpretations of your own order. Make all decisions for yourself. Here are the great struggles between sin and righteousness, the great passions of joy and sorrow; here

are the comedies of prosperity, and the tragedies of calamity; here is the rottenness of the state; here is the insecurity of the home; here is the weakness of moral purpose; here is the insufficiency of social custom. Here is devotion to obligation; here is the faithfulness of friendship; here is the love of woman, here is the courageous manliness of man; here is the appealing innocence of childhood. They are put before you,--good and evil, blessing and cursing. See, think, ponder. The choice is yours.

Religion is different. It is the one subject on which the public demands that the preacher speak with no uncertain sound. Religion is propaganda. This makes the religious theme very difficult to handle in dramatic form. It is by nature the theme that lies at the root of all man's most sacred and intimate hopes. But here, often, the conception is indistinct, and the results uncertain. In most of the current dramas having a religious significance, the author seems to have seized upon a present public interest, with intent to use it for artistic capital. This is vexatiously true of "The Faith Healer". Of this play, Mr. Burton says, "It was a bold and

worthy attempt to take a type like Michaelis straight out of the Bible and set him in American desert."

Mr. Moody knows the desert of the prospector and the tourist; the desert of the prophet he does not know. Neither dramatist nor reader have had the Saint John experience. Both are travelling through unexplored territory, and trying to speak and hear in an unknown tongue. The reader finds himself bewildered in a maze of the mysterious; and feels that the writer is blowing hot and cold on him, as Michaelis sways, swerves, doubts and wavers. It is an undertaking fraught with dangers seen and unseen, and could not be brought through safely except by one who has himself experienced the vicarious life. It is undeniable that the religious idea is rising to high importance in the public mind. There is no other theme which holds so universal and powerful an interest. Speaking of this very play, Mr. Burton says that man is still "visioned, prophetic, capable of seership." Yea, verily! But "The Faith Healer" does not prove it. Michealis has strained and abberated vision of life; he conceives himself not any more as a man

with a man's natural relations to life. To the observer he seems a man in a remote and highly hypnotic state. He claims the priestly office, usurps the vicarious prerogative. Michealis might have been the youth of Ibsen's "Brand". Such misconceptions of the true and noble and holy relations of life as he represents might well terminate in the disaster which Brand worked out for himself and Agnes. Possibly he might be explained as Relling, in "The Wild Duck", explains Malvick. "Daemonic natures are not made to walk straight through the world; they must meander a little now and then." However, the play is stimulative of thought about a phase of religious culture, not new, or transient, and certainly not negligible.

In "The Great Divide", it is the woman whose human nature and inherited creed clash. She takes a long, hard road before she reaches the goal of knowledge that the secret of morals is love; not the abstract theory of life, but the concrete experience. By ancestry and training she is Puritan. Joy is pagan; delight in living is sin; the instincts of life

are crime. By temperament she is poet and artist. The man's religion is that of the wide plain. God is to him a part of all that is good and fine. She lets the earthy drag her soul away from its rightful joys; he is elevated by a high joy in all things high. It is a combination of Massachusetts and Arizona--possibly the religion of the next generation. The man's attitude is that of a free, untrammelled pagan. He recognizes his regeneration, but has no name for it but love. For him old things are passed away. Under a new heaven he gives himself, soul and body, to the intense joy of love and service in a new earth. The woman's experience is partly religious, partly temperamental, partly pathological. But to her it is all conscience. Here Mr. Moody is again on safe ground, and he carries his readers to sure goal in higher belief in God and man. Both these plays by Mr. Moody represent the conflict between the elemental and impulsive, and the acquired and conventional.

Another and powerful religious force in this day of public evangelism is represented in "Salvation Nell", by Edward Sheldon. This is a study in the details of

slum life, not for the mere rehearsing of underworld tragedy, but for the sake of illustrating the pervasive influence of Salvation Army life, and its power as an agency in uplifting even the lowest. This play occasioned a torrent of criticism, favorable and unfavorable. "The latter," says Mr. George P. Baker, "have perfectly illustrated how conventional and unthinking is most of the dramatic comment of the general public." This play represents the simplest, and at present possibly the most effective form of religious tutelage.

A few years ago an unimportant writer attempted to transplant the story of the palsied young man who was brought to Jesus for healing, by four of his friends, into present day life and conditions. The story was not successful. Neither was Mr. Stead's book, "If Christ came to Chicago"; neither was Mr. Sheldon's "In His Steps". The reader is rather startled than charmed by the element of unreality in them. As a drama Mr. Kennedy's play "The Servant In the House" is not wholly a success. It is too mystical, too intangible, too ineffable; yet its enduring impression is of earnestness of conception and verity of ideal.

The author "seems tremendously in earnest, deeply interested in life, and aware that humanity at large is much concerned with spiritual matters." Professor Duvall used to say that the great puzzle is that so often there seems little connection between religious profession and moral conduct. This is the situation when the story opens. But it is not long until the fact is crowded home that there is the most vital and essential relation between moral action and Christ-like love. The unfathomable becomes the practical; the mystical becomes the surest form of knowledge; the unknowable becomes the most available every day fact. Such a transformation in life is the mission of today.

From such a play as this it is only a step to the quaint strangeness of "The Return of Peter Grimm." Here, it is not too much to believe that a man may even come back from that land from which no traveler returns, to see to it that right and justice prevail in the home he made so dear and peaceful, among the companions of his love and care.

From these border-land tales of spiritual things, the mind slips easily to the allegorical modern moral-

ity, "Everywoman". It is of all the plays here discussed, the most frankly avowed thesis play. Yet the author asserts that he usurps no preaching privilege; his wish is to present some "clean and wholesome moral lessons." These begin in the first speech by Nobody, who says:

"A simple maid
Was Everywoman, in her early youth;
If happily she be led astray
'Tis she the penalty must pay,
And nobody will know the truth."

The same character closes the play with these words:

"Be merciful, be just, be fair
To Everywoman, everywhere."

These two quotations may perhaps be taken without violation of the author's meaning, as the thesis of the play. Its moral is both subjective and objective; it has the caution of warning to the thoughtless and tempted, and it urges a gentler sympathy, justice, and charity in the observer. It is a possibly not unfair comment on these piping days of policy and exploitation, when Beauty quotes Truth as saying:

"There is no home for Truth nowadays;

I am an outcast."

Thru the whole play runs the ghostly, solemn chant of vanitas vanitatum--till Everywoman loses all her beauty, charm, friends, and returns to find Truth yet waiting, with friendly voice, to give her welcome home.

These are but a few straws which show the direction of dramatic currents; a few proofs of the tendency of dramatic influence and favor.

Out of the present wave of epigrammatic phrase making there has come the epithet "ragtime age" applied to our own times. The phrase is not flattering, whether true or not. It cannot be gain-said that it has certain applicability. Let it pass. Tomorrow will witness our emergence into a more rational artistic sense. If we today clamor more stridently for circus, tomorrow the demand for bread will be the more urgent. Today the public is free of authority, without having yet acquired the sense of artistic appreciation. It is its own political master. It asserts its industrial independence. It recognizes no social aristocracy or magistracy. It flaunts its religious emancipation. It has not yet achieved fully the

the power of self direction. It has not yet learned the law of self control. It demands what it thinks it wants. To this demand the playwright must needs concede something. It is not necessary that he concede his right and privilege to lead, while he follows. While he yields to current thinking, at the same time it is his to interpret and to direct this same thinking to some purpose. Life itself is full of action and meaning. The dramatist may transcribe thinking, and reset living before his audience, so that humanity may come at least nearer to understanding its own meaning.

The very fact of the essentially public character of his piece forces the playwright to consider public opinion and public desire. Life's road is various; the goal is one. Whatever the direction in which he is looking, the focus of man's vision is attained desire; whatever winds buffet him, his feet are trudging the road to happiness. But the dilemma of his life is that he does not know. The reason that a man goes to a play at all is for pleasure--possibly only a respite for daily eating care--but pleasure, be it immediate

or permanent. He calls for joy; and his untamed human soul may yet fail to see and acknowledge as the goal of his peace, moral soundness of act and thinking. The problem of good and evil is older than theology. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" antedates every preacher; it was born in the spirit of the first rational thinker; it has become immortal thru intellectual propagation of kind. Because of his chance to help, the man who writes for public entertainment, or for education, must, to be himself noble, choose a lofty theme. His groundwork medium may be never so simple, never so commonplace; but his subject must be sincere. His setting and characters may be the most everyday and unromantic; his use of them must be dignified, and the treatment of his theme, stately.

The sociologist assumes virtue, not only as the ideal good, but as a synthesis of virtue; pleasure, integrity, self-realization. If the dramatist abjectly caters to popular demand, and yields to the call of lesser achievement, not only will he lose his own highest goal, but he will fail in his essential responsibility to a public needing inspiration, and even now looking for someone, something, to which it may

self-respectingly yield allegiance. It is already in its secret heart half agreeing, "It seems not so beautiful to be free, as sweet and grateful to be guided."

The enemies of the drama suffer thru the ages an unending and inevitable repulse. Dramatic scenes have always been the favorite and most vital means of expressing the great truths of existence, and the important facts of history. The plunging turmoil of the present civilization hurries from the slow descriptive analytics of the novel to the immediate flash-light of dramatic representation. Professor Winchester says that the highest dramatic type both in moral value and in artistic finish will be found only in the higher effects of "those plays which aspire to be judged as literature as well as to be enjoyed before the footlights." So soon as the great hungry public recognizes the ultimate spiritual quality of its own life, so soon as the dramatist recognizes his amazing power, and his immeasurable right to wield it for the weal of his fellows, so soon will this far-reaching literary force distance the attacks of its opponents. But this can

never come as the result of didactic and formal purpose merely. No less than Socrates, no less than Joan of Arc, must the artist be directed by the soul-guiding spirit of service to humanity. The nobly human will speak to the human nobleman in stately and worthy lines the truths which are for man's perfection.

This is no farfetched theory; it is the rational goal of our own American drama, and for the immediate future. The tide is already coming in. Again to quote Brander Matthews: "The drama in its graver aspects, the drama as a contribution to literature, and as a form of poetry, is not dead or dying. Indeed there is evidence that it is on the threshold of a new youth. Signs of a refreshed vitality can be found by whoso cares to keep his eyes open and his mind free from prejudice." The ethics of the drama is not different from the ethics of all life. "To speak the truth; to respect himself and his readers; to do justice; to love mercy; not to call good evil, or evil good; to honor the noble and to condemn the base; to face the facts of life with courage, the humors with sympathy, the mysteries of life with reverence."

William James says in regard to the morality of life

and effort, "Life is a war, and the service of the highest is a kind of a cosmic patriotism, which also calls for volunteers." Above all other artists the dramatist must adopt the human side of religion asserted by the venerable Abou Ben Adhem. He above all must know that second greatest commandment. In his heart must be the superlative belief in the natural goodness of man; for him must hope spring eternal. In him must be triumphant confidence in the true, the beautiful, and the good. These must be his confession of faith; not in a remote and misty future, but in a throbbing present. And for our own stage this hope must be tied not to England, or France, but to America. Is not this a task to employ a man's best effort? To those who strive, what better benediction than that of brave Robert Louis Stevenson.

"O toiling hands of mortals! O unwearied feet, traveling you know not whether! Little do you know your own blessedness; for to travel is better than to arrive, and the truest success is labor."

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