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CROSS
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HENRY W. STOUGH



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LINE OF AMUSEMENTS**

By HELEN RUSS STOUGH

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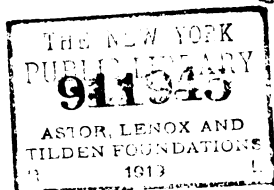
By
HENRY W. STOUGH, D.D.



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To My Parents

*The devoted Mother still with me and the sainted Father
whose LOYALTY and LOVE for Christ kept*

their children in the path

that seemed to many

“straight and narrow”

But which proved to be the “path of the righteous

that shineth more and more unto the

perfect day,”

This volume is affectionately dedicated

by their son.

PREFACE.

THE wholesale denunciation of the so-called popular amusements has always brought antagonism from those who have indulged and never been able to see the harm. This antagonism has been aroused because such denunciation has frequently failed to be discerning, discriminating and sympathetic.

The theatre, the cards, and the dance, have been called questions of casuistry, and not without reason. If they were wholly bad, moral people, not to mention Christian people, would have quickly cast them aside. It is because there is woven through them the good and the evil that it is so hard for many to detect the evil. The evil is so wedded to the good that it frequently takes the name of the good.

As a young man, I felt most keenly the opposition of many Christian people, including my godly parents. I could not understand why they should so strenuously oppose what seemed to me the height of youthful enjoyment, in which so many of my friends indulged. I do not know that they even knew why they felt so. It was an inward conviction which God gives to those who walk closely with Him. I have been glad ten thousand times that they were firm

and unwavering, and to them I therefore dedicate this little volume.

The contents are the substance of lectures I have had occasion to give in my nation-wide evangelistic labors.

I made up my mind, when I became a minister, that I never would speak upon the subject until I could give my audiences, especially the young people, fair and adequate reasons for my opposition. For years I have given more or less careful study to the subject, and the fruit of the study is herein presented.

I shall be more than grateful if it proves in anyway helpful to those who want to know the truth and then to do it.

HENRY W. STOUGH.

Wheaton, Illinois.

CONTENTS

I. The Tragedy of the Theatre.....	13
II. The Curse of Cards.....	65
III. The Dance of Death.....	109

THE TRAGEDY OF THE THEATRE

A Christian's amusements must be blameless as well as ingenious, safe as well as rational, moral as well as intellectual. They must have nothing in them which may be likely to excite any of the tempers which it is his daily task to subdue; any of the passions which it is his constant business to keep in order. His chosen amusements must not deliberately add to the "weight" which he is commanded to "lay aside"; they should not imitate the besetting sin against which he is struggling; they should not obstruct that spiritual mindedness which he is told is life and peace; they should not inflame the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which he is forbidden to gratify.—*Hannah More.*

I

The Tragedy of the Theatre

THERE is a radical distinction to be made in any discussion of this subject between the theatre as an organized business, and the drama as literature. The drama, of course, is the handmaid of the theatre, without which it would be impossible for it to exist, and upon which it draws for much of its inspiration.

On the other hand, the drama exists separate and apart from the theatre as literature which can be studied and enjoyed, without the necessity of being acted. That the study of worthy drama is invaluable for education and culture, goes without saying. Some of the greatest literary productions of the centuries have come down to us in this form.

The theatre was intended, in its inception, to be the exponent of the drama, to further it in its work of education and culture, as one of the fine arts. But, because of the great revenues derived therefrom, the theatre was soon organized as a commercial business, and as such was steadily developed until, within the past few years, so great has been the profit, that it is now largely conducted as a consolidated trust,

14 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

with an investment of millions of dollars in properties and in contracts with hundreds of actors and actresses.

To-day every city in the country is being exploited, each has its various play-houses on what are called dramatic circuits. Companies, owned and operated by these trusts, are booked throughout the entire season. Into the coffers of these theatres pours a stream of millions of dollars spent each year by the pleasure-seeking public.

The theatre has become a vital factor in our American life, being one of the greatest teachers of the people, next in power to the press and the pulpit. As such it calls for the closest scrutiny and most searching inquiry upon the part of moral people.

Thus it becomes evident that the drama is one thing and the theatre quite another. My object is not to discuss the drama, nor even an ideal theatre as the worthy exponent of the drama. The late Dr. Brand, of Oberlin, said: "The ideal theatre is an ideal idea. It has never existed." My object is to discuss the theatrical business as it exists to-day.

It may almost seem Don Quixotian for one to protest against the theatre when some of the most moral and refined people, even of the churches and clergy, attend it, endorse it, and recommend it to their children and parishioners.

How much good the presentation of the following arguments may do, I do not even venture to hope. If, however, they are in any way suggestive to inquiring minds and hearts, I shall feel amply repaid.

The Ancient Condemnation

Dramatic acting has existed from time immemorial, but even the ancient writers of moral truth, both Greek and Roman, frowned upon the theatre and almost universally condemned it. Plutarch, Xenophon, Plato, Socrates, Solon, Seneca, Tacitus, Ovid, and many others have raised one common voice against it as hostile to morals. "An English writer in the time of Charles the First," says Dr. Thomas Brainerd, "made a catalogue of authorities against the stage, which contains almost every name of eminence in the heathen and Christian world." Plato once said, "Plays raise the passions and pervert the use of them, and of a consequence are dangerous to morality." Aristotle said, "The seeing of plays and comedies should be forbidden to young people until age and discipline have made them proof against debauchery." Tacitus said, "The German women were guarded against danger and preserved their purity by having no play-houses among them."

Uhlhorn, writing of the theatre in the Roman Empire, said, "The adventures of deceived hus-

16 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

bands, adulteries, and amorous intrigues formed the staple of the plots. Virtue was made a mock of, the gods were scoffed at, and every thing worthy of veneration was dragged in the mire."

Philip Schaff, the historian, said, "The Roman theatre became more and more the nursery of vice and deserved to be abhorred by all men of decent feeling and refined taste." Dramatic art took its rise at Athens, we are told, amid the orgies of Bacchus. "It was an exhalation from the frantic revels of a periodical national abandonment to intoxication and debauchery."

All this was said about theatres where women never appeared, when their parts were acted by men and boys, as is the case at the present time in the Chinese theatres.

It is said no woman ever appeared on the stage until the time of the Restoration. The first time a woman ever acted was in Shakespeare's Othello in the part of "Desdemona." It was regarded at first, Dr. Brand says, as shocking and monstrous.

Woman's presence did not purify the stage, for Macauley declares that from "the time the theatres (in England) were opened they became seminaries of vice. Nothing charmed the depraved audience so much as to hear lines grossly indecent repeated by a beautiful girl supposed not yet to have lost her innocence."

The Church and the Theatre

The church has tried both methods, to condemn and to condone. Dr. W. P. Breed said, "There was a theatre in Jerusalem in the days of Jesus. Think you He ever attended it? Did the early disciples? So far from it that neither Jesus nor the apostles ever thought of forbidding their attendance upon stage plays." When Herod introduced this theatre, Josephus (not a Christian) denounced it as corrupting the morals of the Jewish people.

The church very early introduced into her conditions for membership an express prohibition against the theatre. Dr. Taylor Lewis says, "At baptism the candidate was called upon to say '*Vanis mundi pompis renuntio*'—'The vain pomp of the world I renounce'. It can be clearly shown that this word '*pompae*' was employed with special reference to theatrical shows." Theophilus, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, all denounced it.

The mystery and miracle plays were introduced during the Middle Ages and were acted very widely. The art of printing being not yet known it was thought the people could be taught spiritual truths from the stage. However, the results were never satisfactory, and finally were deteriorating. Lecky says that after the thirteenth century they became one

18 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

of the most powerful agents in bringing the church, and, indeed, religion, into disrepute. Reformers then tried to correct abuses. "Two hundred clergymen," says Mrs. Mowatt, the actress, "wrote for the stage, but all in vain!"

Dr. Brainerd says that fifty-four ancient and modern general, national, and provincial synods, both of the Eastern and Western churches, have pronounced against the theatre, and that the condemnatory sentence of seventy-one ancient fathers, and one hundred and fifty modern Catholic and Protestant writers are on record. Conferences, assemblies, synods, associations, have all with one voice registered their protest. All these could not have been without worthy reasons, and it is to set forth these reasons that I am writing these words.

The Indictment

My indictment against the theatre is two-fold:

- I. The theatre's effect upon the audience,
- II. The theatre's effect upon the profession.

The Theatre's Effect upon the Audience:

The first harmful effect is the *gloss that many plays put upon sin*. The base, the wicked, the impure, are frequently exalted, and virtue is made sport of. Religion is scoffed at, blasphemy indulged in, the Bible standard is not recognized, and the Ten Commandments are frequently flaunted.

Hannah More was the friend of the actor Garrick, and in her earlier days a writer for the theatre and one of its patrons. As her judgment, forced upon her by her own observation, she wrote—though she says she had read none of the writings against the stage—“The fruits of the Spirit and the fruits of the stage perhaps exhibit as pointed a contrast as the human imagination can conceive.”

She continues, “It is generally the leading object of the dramatist to erect a standard of honor in direct opposition to the standard of Christianity; and this is not done subordinately, incidentally, occasionally, but worldly honor is the very soul and spirit and life-giving principle of the drama. Honor is the religion of tragedy. It is her moral and political law. Her dictates form its institutes. Fear and shame are the capital crimes in her code. Against these all the eloquence of her most powerful pleaders, against these her penal statutes—pistol, sword, and poison—are in full force. Injured honor can only be vindicated at the point of the sword; the stains of injured reputation can only be washed out with blood. Love, jealousy, ambition, pride, revenge, are too often elevated into the rank of splendid virtues, and form a dazzling system of worldly morality in direct contradiction to the spirit of that religion whose characteristics are charity, meekness,

peaceableness, long-suffering, gentleness and forgiveness.”

Too frequently the end is made to justify the means, provided it succeeds in the achievement of some noble and worthy purpose. The highest type of morality is to be found in Christianity and in the Bible, and whenever standards are raised and morals taught which are not in accord with these, but which, on the other hand, make light of them and scoff at them, such teaching is bound to be destructive to the moral sensibilities.

Dr. Joseph Stephan has said, “Religion is either ridiculed, or so presented as to become offensive. Criminals become heroes and the good appear simpletons. Murder, adultery, divorce, theft, and other great crimes are made light of, and the sacredness of love and the solemnity of dying are trifled with. Oaths, mock prayers, and turns and quibs in Scripture are frequent. By sly hints and cunning innuendoes the imagination is inflamed and evil thoughts are awakened. There is scarcely an incident, however debasing, that may not be learned at the theatre, making it a university of vice and immorality for the youthful mind.”

A recent magazine writer has said, “In life there are two kinds of morals, yours and mine. In the drama there is a third kind, which has no relation to life whatever. We are often

asked in the play-house to accept as admirable and moral what is in reality contemptible, immoral; and what is worse, we do so accept it.

“We check our own moral code in the cloak-room before the play begins, and then are allured by the most immoral, impure things posing as virtue on the stage, and are warmed to a rich glow of sympathetic sanctity by situations which upon analysis are the negation of goodness.

“And this is entirely due to the fact that in the theatre we are carried along from moment to moment without pausing to reflect upon cause or effect; and the dramatist is so carried along, also, in his desire to make each situation immediately effective, forgetting its larger significance. In other words, in the drama, as elsewhere, a lack of clear thinking, down to the bed-rock of principles, is the cause of most of the falsity and misappreciation.” These words are the more forceful because the writer was not writing from the standpoint of the pulpit, but of the dramatic critic.

The disastrous effect of such a “checking of our morals in the cloak-room” is that when people leave such plays, they, alas! too often leave their own code of morals permanently checked, and take home those the theatre furnishes,—the “admirable and moral” exchanged for the “contemptible and immoral.”

The second harmful effect is the theatre's *Positive Teaching of Crime*. For instance, methods and means by which murders, robberies, and other crimes are committed are set forth in all their lurid details, and instructions in crime are frequently given as explicitly as are the studies of the public schools. So common is this in many of the so-called melo-dramas that even theatrical managers themselves have at times protested.

One of these, Mr. J. J. Butler, of Kansas City, was reported as saying that many dramas are morbid and unclean, and that many of the melo-dramas presented each year are "schools of crime,"—they actually make criminals.

In discussing the epidemic of crime which breaks out in Chicago nearly every season, Bishop Fallows said with regard to the various causes, "Worst of all, in my judgment, are the realistic plays of robbery and murder in several of our lower theatres, which are frequented nightly by thousands of boys, and the advertising of such plays by immense posters portraying to the life the 'hold-ups' by masked gangs with pistol and rifle and dagger." Other reformers and settlement workers have expressed themselves in a similar way.

Some instances in illustration of this fact are very striking. In Canada some time ago a thirteen-year-old girl confessed to the murder of a

nine-months-old infant. It is said she was in the habit of stealing baby carriages from the front of department stores while the mothers were inside. One day she stole a baby, took it to the woods near the city, stripped it of its clothing, threw it over an embankment, and caused its death. She then placed the body in a culvert and buried the clothing. A few days later she made the announcement that she had discovered the baby in the culvert. When accused of the crime, she confessed that the plan of killing the child was suggested to her by a play she had seen at the theatre.

In New York, a man was arrested as a pyromaniac, first for ringing in false alarms, then for a series of factory fires. He confessed, and said that he developed a desire to see fires burn through his interest in a play entitled "The Fire Bug," in which he had taken part as an amateur actor.

This baneful influence has extended even to the moving picture shows through the exhibition of dramatic films. Recently a film was shown of a girl who deceived her parents by going to her room for the night, and fixing the bed-clothes in such a way that they appeared as if some one were in the bed. She then crawled out of the window and spent the night in gay frivolity with her friends. A young girl who sat in the audience and saw the suggestive deception, thought

it clever, and a few days later did precisely the same thing. In the morning her mother went to call her, saw the deceptive bed-clothes, thought her daughter was overtired and let her sleep. She called her a second time, but she did not respond, and, being an indulgent mother, she let her sleep a little longer. The third time, receiving no answer, and knowing it was time for her daughter to be up, she went over and touched the bed-clothes, which immediately collapsed. The mother was frightened and ran shrieking from the room, to call the father over the 'phone, and send out the alarm. At last they found the girl in another part of the city, where she had spent the balance of the night with a girl friend, after going out on a lark. Thus the "show" had been a veritable school of deception, suggested immorality, and crime.

The police of our great cities have declared that certain theatres are the foster-mothers of crime among the youth. The Director of Prisons in Paris once said, "Whenever a noted play of a vicious character is put on the boards, I have soon found it out by the number of young fellows who come into my custody." Three-fourths of the young people who go wrong in our cities, can look back to the theatre and the ball-room as the starting points of their downfall.

The theatre is to be condemned for its *Unreal*

Presentation of Life. Dr. Brand said, "The theatre's appeal to the sensibilities and passions is uniformly exaggerated and extreme. Not only do its plots consist of assassinations, poisonings, and illicit loves and intrigues, but every passion is overdrawn. Anger is madness; ambition, frenzy; love, delirium. It does not hold the mirror up to Nature except in her very worst aspects and her most degraded moods. Nature is not *always* after money. Nature is not always in an agony of either horror or laughter. Nature is not always languishing with a great sorrow on her face and a bottle of laudanum in her pocket, weeping last tears over a false lover. Nature is not always nude, whirling around on one great toe, while the other is up in the air. Nature is not always armed with pistol and bowie-knife. Nature is not always roaring through the streets with clenched fists, dishevelled hair, and blood-shot eyes. She is not always cutting throats and playing the harlot. Nature never ridicules religion and morality, for an entrance fee. Nature is sane, rational, decently clad, patient, self-contained, not living for cash, even divinely beautiful at times, like her Maker."

The theatre thus presents a different world from that in which nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand live. The majority of people do not live in the atmosphere of intrigue,

illicit love, deception, murder, and other vile crimes. Most people have never seen a burglary or a murder except on the stage. If they have ever been forced to do so, it has been a shock from which they have been a long time recovering, nor is it an experience to be desired a second time. It cannot be said that its effect upon them was in any way beneficial. Then how, in any way, can its mimic reproduction on the stage be beneficial?

The costuming, the glitter, the tinsel, the unreal, coupled with the moral gloss, and the positive portrayal of crime, unfit the spectator for the humdrum life next morning. Nerves have been stretched to the breaking point; minds and senses have been dazzled and intoxicated so that neither body, mind, nor spirit is fitted for the new day's work. People are made discontented, hence incapable of faithfully undertaking the responsibilities of the work-a-day world, which is so different from the mimic theatre world. Instead of relaxing and recuperating tired minds and bodies, it stimulates and excites, with subsequent reaction and enervation.

The fourth harmful effect is the *Indecent Display of Nudity*. The costuming in the average theatre is positively immodest, indecent, and immoral. The theatre's appeal is to the sensuous and the sensual. This is a deliberate policy upon the part of the managers, who know the

weakness of poor human nature. For many theatrical plays, actresses are chosen solely for their physical charms. In musical extravaganzas, for instance, it is vastly more important that an actress should have a pretty face and a beautiful form than that she should have a pleasing voice. A glimpse at many of the bill boards substantiates this statement; for, as with Lady Waldemar, in Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*,

They split the amaranth bodice down
To the waist, or nearly, with the audacious press
Of full-breathed beauty. If the heart within
Were half as white! But if it were, perhaps
The breast were closer covered, and the sight
Less respectable by half, too.

I do not say by any means that all theatre people are immoral. But I do say that if you will only stop to consider for a moment what it would mean to any woman to garb herself as these women are garbed and come out and stand on a platform before the gaze of a crowd of people, you will agree that no actress can get the consent of her conscience and her modesty so to do, unless at some previous time that modesty and delicacy have received a moral shock. There must have been a shrinking and embarrassment when the first costume was donned and when the first appearance was made, for no woman has stood behind the foot-lights, and looked down into the eyes of an audience,

without reading in many of them the looks of lust and hearts of wickedness. To a refined and modest woman such consciousness once must have given excruciating moral agony,—to know that she was the object of such lust, feasting itself upon her physical charms.

People who know what is going to take place and who go deliberately to see are not excusable. The managers who furnish such plays, actresses who make themselves the objects of such moral lust, audiences who indulge their visual passions, are all equally culpable before God.

The next harmful effect is the *Breaking Down of the Moral Barriers of the Audience*. How can a young man and a young woman who have come together to enjoy the play, and have looked upon and have listened to such things, fail to be contaminated? When they go home they naturally are impelled to discuss what they have seen and heard. As one scene after another of the various acts is reviewed, and the oaths, curses, innuendoes, compromising positions, false morals, and vile costuming are discussed, they are bound to break down the barriers of modesty and reserve between them. Such conversation courts familiarity about topics that young people should never discuss together. The result is that each loses a certain respect for the other, making it more easy for them to talk about such things on other occasions and at

least *tempting* them to do the same things, especially when the theatre's false morals are also adopted. If the theatre be a means of culture and education, and yet such things as are seen there cannot be even safely discussed by young people, let alone practiced, then where is the moral value of the theatre?

For instance, the intrigues and affinities and kindred immoralities portrayed upon the stage arouse suspicion in the audience. Here is a husband who perhaps has had a misunderstanding with his wife. The stage suggestion is almost identical with something he saw in his wife's actions at home, and immediately arouses his suspicions of her; whereas the wife may have been perfectly innocent of any wrong doing. Thus are jealousy and dissension bred in the home, frequently leading to divorce. Besides this, husbands and wives, perhaps, whose love has grown cold, here find suggestions by which they may deceive each other and lead double lives.

Much of the tragedy of the divorce court can be traced to the tragedy of the stage. When men lose their respect for womanhood, through displayed nudity, through the breaking down of moral barriers, and through the generating of lustful desires, marriage vows are lightly treated, and divorce becomes an easy method of ridding the contracting parties of their respon-

30 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

sibilities, leaving them free to repeat their lusts elsewhere. I am persuaded that the theatre is responsible, more than any one other thing, for the increasing number of divorces in our country. With the dance, it is the chief feeder of the brothel, as divorced women make up the majority of professional prostitutes.

Another harmful effect is the "*Rotting of the Will by the Fomentation of the Sensibilities,*" to use the words of Dr. Washington Gladden. The sights, scenes, and sounds of the plays continually stir the emotions, play upon the affections, bringing the whole psychic nature into intense excitement. As they furnish no outlet or vent, the consequences is the gradual decaying of the fibre of the will.

For instance, the sympathies are stirred for the unfortunate, pitiable condition of the little orphan match-seller, who, in the bitter cold, clad in mere rags, sinks down to freeze and starve on the city streets. Women will sit and weep over the pathos of the scene and have the deeper moral sensibilities of their hearts stirred, but they either do not know or do not care that children in the great city all round them are at that moment literally starving and freezing. Though they weep over the child in the mimic world, they never think of going forth into the real world to find real suffering chil-

dren and to bring them needed comfort and relief.

“There may be a starving family in a neighborhood court, a sick and dying domestic in a garret, or a poor relative reduced from affluence to beggary. But what are all these to the theatre-going lady, who has been accustomed every night to see kings dethroned, imprisoned, murdered; princes wandering in beggary and starvation; nobles outlawed and put to death; mothers butchered in the presence of their children and maidens betrayed and seeking revenge with a dagger or with poison. What are the real ills of life to one who lives amid such scenes as these? They are the unheeded sighings of the zephyr in ears filled by the roar of the tornado. They are the slightest murmurs of the rivulet to one who dwells under the voice of Niagara’s cataract.”

“Save me and mine from the tender mercies of such as have daily poured their sympathy on fictitious sorrow until the hackneyed hearts have now no deep affections. I would as soon trust the strength of a man who had kept an open vein for the daily waste of his own blood.”

Such toying and tampering with the emotions, the affections, and the sympathies, is absolutely dangerous. That they can look upon such scenes and not be impelled to go forth in holy

service for humanity, means no less than that the will is in decay.

The psychological impressions of such plays gradually become stimulating, then intoxicating, so that people go to enjoy having their sensibilities stirred, as men drink stimulants. Life becomes to them hypocrisy, mockery, and a scoff at the real tragedies of sorrows and tears. The world goes on unrelieved by their love and sympathy, but is used as a means to entertain them by its misery. Characters have become flaccid and flabby and so fail to develop sympathy, sincerity, and heart earnestness in life. Dr. Gladden says, "I do not believe that any habitual or inveterate play-goer ever achieved conspicuous success in business, in statesmanship, or in professional life."

Of the French Revolution, the celebrated Edmund Burke writes: "While courts of justice were thrust out by Jacobin tribunals, and silent churches were only funereal monuments of departed religion," when Paris "was like a den of outlaws, a lewd tavern for revel and debaucheries"—there were in that city "no fewer than twenty-eight theatres crowded every night." From debauchery, blasphemy, and butchery in the day time to the theatre at night,—from the theatre at night back to butchery, blasphemy and debauchery in the day time!

And as at Rome when the bloody gladiatorial

combats and fights with wild beasts, and persecutions of Christians were demanded at last to satisfy the craving for excitement, so in Paris the "fomentation of the sensibilities in the mimic world" at last demanded the real, the actual. Some of the darkest pages in history are to be traced to the theatre's demoralization of character.

The Harmful Effect upon the Theatrical Profession:

First, because it *Breaks Down the Moral Barriers Between the Actors and Actresses by Constant and Undue Familiarity*. All the liberties that belong to the close and confidential relations of marriage, parenthood, and the home, are permitted on the stage. It is taken for granted that actors and actresses have perfect moral rights to caress each other in all the accepted ways love has inspired. If a man is an actor he may hold the actress on his lap, encircle her with his arms, imprint his kisses upon her lips, to the gaze of the admiring audience; and yet this same crowd would be insulted if the same things should be taking place in the audience at the same time. It is hard to understand why, because people calling themselves "actors" and "actresses," are on a platform, three feet or more above others, and because an admission fee is charged,

34 'Across the Dead Line of Amusements

society will accept that which they would not accept under any other conditions. It is hard to see how these artificial things destroy or abrogate a moral principle. If these social privileges cannot be permitted off the stage, how, in the name of decency and ethics, can they be permitted on the stage? People have just as much moral right to do these things off the stage as on!

How would it look, for instance, for a woman, for the sake of raising a church debt, or for any other worthy cause, to advertise that she would permit certain men, certain evenings of the week in her parlor, to go through the same pantomime as the stage folks go through, at a price of twenty-five cents a ticket?

But this is not all. This actor and actress do this night after night and day after day, for months at a time. Whether they are purely professional about it or not, it certainly means that the familiarity thus indulged is detrimental to their own morals.

Women and men cannot indulge in such things, made as they are of flesh and blood, with natural passions and temptations, without having moral barriers broken down. If the caresses mean nothing to them at the time and with the stage lover, they will mean something on other occasions with other people.

It is, therefore, not surprising to read in the

papers continually that actors and actresses have been involved in scandal that ended in the divorce courts. The true meaning of love and marriage has been lost to many of their lives. Add to this the Bohemian life of travel together in sleeping cars and hotels, forced to put up with the inconveniences involved, and it becomes evident that only those of the strongest moral fibre can survive this continual onslaught upon their characters.

In an article printed in a current magazine some time ago, entitled "What It Means to Be a Chorus Girl" are some startling confessions and revelations. The writer of the article is evidently a young woman who chose the stage as a profession with the idea of living on the stage, as she would in any other profession, an upright and moral life. The article is a pitiful portrayal of the trials and temptations and even sufferings of a girl who tried thus to do. She declares, "The musical opera has no reason for existence save its ability to please. It is from beginning to end an appeal to the senses, pure and simple. No chorus girl who has the slightest pretensions to good looks need go looking for temptation; it is waiting for her at every turn, and the wonder is not that so many take the primrose path, but that there are any—and there are a few, God be praised!—who have courage to fight their way along the

straight and narrow road." She recites a tale of the persecution she received at the hands of the business manager, who repeatedly tried to force her out of the company because she resisted his persistent and unwelcome attentions. She says that the experience was nerve-racking, as she was continually singled out for his ridicule and abuse. With his bitter, sarcastic tongue and almost infernal ingenuity he vented his anger upon a girl who was simply trying to maintain her virtue and honor. She declares that even in New York at the rehearsals, the girls were compelled to change their costumes on the stage without a screen and without a warning to the men to keep away from that part of the stage, and when the stage hands and scene shifters were wandering around.

She says:

"Most of the girls, hardened, perhaps, by other experiences in previous seasons, treated the matter as a joke. There were a few of us who felt differently, and we made a human screen of ourselves, in turn shielding each other."

The familiarity of which this poor girl complains, is simply the logic of the familiarity and free-and-easy life that is demanded by the very plays themselves. Nor is this all. She continues, "After a show, we had literally to fight our way through a mob of young men waiting

for a chance to get on speaking terms with us, and many had their automobiles waiting to take the girls out motoring who were willing to go." She declares that even the hotel clerks connived with these lecherous men by pointing out the best-looking girls, telling them their names and the numbers of their rooms. "I have slept again and again in hotels where I had to barricade the door by pushing the bureau against it and piling my wash-stand on top of that, and even then I was actually afraid to go to sleep. Never for once were we allowed to forget our sex. There have been times when the thought of my womanhood has filled me with shame and loathing, as behind the smiling masks of the men who approached me I saw the bared fangs of the wolf. I am a young girl and already feel like an old, old woman; cynical, world-weary, I have been robbed of my youth and freshness, stripped of every illusion. But for the girls who are planning to go into chorus work, I say with all the fervor I can command: Stop and think, and ask yourself as I did not, Is it worth while? *Believe me, it is not, in any single, solitary, sense.*" Is it any wonder, if what this young woman says is true, that so many, many actresses go astray?

In another magazine, one who signs herself "An Actress" frankly confesses that it is next to impossible for a woman to attain success on

38 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

the stage without paying a heavy price,—“promotion, more often than not, being at the cost of all that a true woman holds most dear.”

Clara Morris, once the greatest of emotional actresses, recently wrote, “A Plain Talk to the Stage-struck Girl,” warning against the stage life. “I will admit,” she says, “that there are many more temptations peculiar to the profession of acting than in other female pursuits.

“Perhaps there is one among you to whom the dingy, half light of the theatre is dearer than the God-given radiance of the sunlight. If the burnt-out air, with its indescribable odors, seemingly composed of several parts of cellar mold, with a great many parts of dry, unsunned dust, the whole veined through with small streaks of escaped illuminating gas—if this heavy, lifeless air is more welcome to your nostrils than could be the clover-sweetened breath of green pastures! If that great, black gulf yawning beyond the half-extinguished footlights makes your heart leap up at your throat! If, without noting the quality or length of your part, the plain, bold fact of acting something thrills you with a nameless joy! If the rattle-te-bang of the ill-treated old overture dances through your blood, and the rolling up of the curtain is to you the magic blossoming of a mighty flower—if these are things you feel, your

fate is sealed. Pray for Heaven's help to sustain and protect you!"

In commenting upon the "Talk," Mary Anderson, the actress, said, "I trust this will help to stem the tide of girls who so blindly rush into a profession of which they are ignorant, for which they are unfitted and in which dangers unnumbered lurk on all sides. If with Clara Morris' powers and charm so much had to be suffered, what is—what must be—the lot of so many mediocrities who pass through the same fire with no reward in the end?"

It requires a sterling character and unusual strength of will to remain virtuous and pure for long under these trying circumstances, and under such fierce temptations.

If the amusement of the theatre-goer is thus purchased, it is certainly at a dear price. The price of the finest box is not only the price of the pleasure purchased, but frequently the price of immortal souls.

A second harmful effect is the *Assimilation of the Characters Played* and the *Consequent Demoralization of One's Own Character*. The underlying principle of perfect acting is the ability of the actor and actress to take themselves out of themselves and put themselves over into the characters they are portraying. The actor must so study and master the part that he re-lives it as far as it lies within his power. For instance,

to take the part of Iago in Shakespeare's "Othello," the actor must think as a villain, talk as a villain, act as a villain, and in every way seek for the time being to *be* a villain. The more perfect the villain, the more perfect the achievement of dramatic art.

Or, if the actress is taking the part of Carmen, in the play of that name, she must *be* a Carmen. Now Carmen is nothing more nor less than a prostitute. Hence, the actress, if she would perfectly represent this character, must think as a harlot, talk as a harlot, act as a harlot, and for the time being, *be* a harlot.

It is a law of our lives that we become more and more like the thing we strive to be. Of course, there is this redeeming side,—that many good characters are portrayed. But when these players play alternately and interchangeably the good and the evil characters their lives become surfeited with a mixture of the good and the evil. These impressions of good and evil are more or less indelibly stamped not only upon the mind, but upon the imagination and upon the very fibres of the soul. The consequence is, that the actors, dominated thus by the characters in which they so much live, are bound to become unstable in character, lacking in that which makes up the strength of the moral life.

The late Miss Georgia Cayvan in an address delivered at the period of her highest success

said with reference to stage morals and actresses: "The question of stage morality—that is an incubus which has clung to the drama for many years, but the nineteenth century has luckily dissipated the clouds of mystery and doubt that surrounded the player, and the stage has never before numbered so many worthy women as to-day. The stage itself is purer and nobler, but the publicity of its life is its stumbling block.

"It might seem pertinent to explain some of the influences that prevent an actress from being exactly like other women. Does it seem possible for a woman who has to simulate a varied assortment of feeling every night to be like the woman whose every emotion is sincere and natural? A woman of the stage must lay bare her heart and soul before the public in order to present in perfection some type of woman. *The artificial is always dangerous to character*, whether it is the artificial in society or the artificial on the stage. It is almost menacing to moral perception, to bring the most sacred impulses of womanhood down to the level of the commonplace by constant draft upon them. In every other profession a woman may keep inviolate the holy of holies of her individuality. In this alone is the veil rent, and a sacrificial flame upon her altar is lighted for the entertainment of the public. They little realize what it costs her,

“There is an old story of a dancer who wore about her neck a precious chain of pearls as she came before the king; in the midst of the dance the chain parted, and the pearls were scattered beneath her flying feet. How was she to step the measures so gaily that the king should never know her care, nor the handsome courtiers smiling lightly down, nor the gentle ladies looking on in languid grace, and yet never crush a single snow-white pearl, while the cymbals clashed and the wild, glad music sounded madder and merrier, and the witchery of the dance dulled her fear and deadened her caution? The exceptional woman of exceptional breeding may, when the court pageant has passed, count her pearl chain and find it all complete, even as those which home-guarded women wear so proudly. Will you remember what it costs? Will you think of the dancer—a moment of forgetfulness, a careless step? Will you help us by understanding us—help us with your sympathy, your influence—lest we crush our pearls?”

Her words are a noble woman's plea, and reveal the trying, perilous life of the worthy actress. Only a little while after this a jealous woman stepped upon this actress' pearls and crushed them in a most cruel way that sent her to an untimely grave.

Without question, there have been and are

eminent actors and actresses who have lived worthy and commendable lives. They have succeeded in spite of their profession, and have reversed all the psychological laws, for this law of perfect acting is the identical law for the culturing of Christian character. Paul says, "We all with open face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of God, are changed from character to character even as by the Lord, the Spirit." In other words, as we study the spirit of Jesus, talk the words of Jesus, do the works of Jesus, and seek to re-live the life of Jesus,—by thus meditating, contemplating, and absorbing, as it were, His Spirit life, we are actually changed, degree by degree, in our own characters. We become more and more like Him as we grow older and older in the Christian way.

That psychological suggestions and their repeated impressions upon the players have actually produced results accordingly, is beyond question. For instance, a play entitled "The Fourth Estate" was given in Chicago. One of the actors, who took the part of the "melancholy poet-reporter," committed suicide. In his lines describing the suicidal death of a young woman in the lower world, he had had to say over and over again, "She destroyed herself utterly." His friends declare that, as eight and ten times a week the young reporter told of the young woman's suicide which to him seemed so tragic

44 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

but which to his managing editor seemed so trivial, it preyed upon his mind and produced the psychological impression of suicide.

It is also said that in the years since the Passion Play of Oberammergau has been played, at least two of the men who have taken the part of Judas have committed suicide. The man who played it in 1910 once was so swayed by the frenzy of his part that he actually threw the rope over the stage tree and was strangling when the curtain was lowered and he was released.

These illustrations show the psychological effect of their art upon the players. These are extreme and exceptional cases so far as their outward tragic results are concerned. But Sir Henry Irving is said to have committed at least fifteen thousand murders on the stage; Mr. Chas. Wyndham has been divorced from twenty-eight hundred wives; Miss Ada Cavendish has been foully betrayed fifty-six hundred times; and every other actor and actress has committed similar mental, moral, and physical acts in the mimic world, and these facts suggest that the psychological impressions received must affect their characters.

While it is true that there are some plays that cannot be subjected to all of these criticisms, the vast majority of plays are indictable.

Analysis of the Average Drama

Some years ago Dr. James Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, made a minute study of more than sixty plays of the New York stage, covering a period of more than three years. He analyzed them one after another, describing their plots, the whole proving a terrible indictment of the slush and slime put forth as moral teaching and for the amusement of the crowd. The following conclusions fairly apply to present-day plays:

- (1) Christian morals are not accepted as the rule of morals,
- (2) True religion is never praised, but usually ridiculed,
- (3) Wickedness is made to give amusement. Crimes that would call down the wrath of God upon the perpetrators are systematically made to provoke laughter,
- (4) Oaths and profane expressions abound,
- (5) Where there is a moral it is usually disposed of before the fifth act.

Dr. Buckley adds: "If language which would not be tolerated by respectable people and would excite indignation if addressed to the most uncultivated servant girl by an ordinary young man, and profaneness which would brand him who used it as irreligious, are improper amusements, then at least fifty of these plays

are to be condemned. Of the other ten (with the exception of three or four) those which are morally unobjectionable are of a comparatively low order of execution."

This condemnation applies not only to the melodrama and to the tragedy type, but also to a large number of dramatic operas.

Here are a few of the contents of dramatic or grand operas as characterized by Mr. Bouricault, a play writer. The beautiful music and the foreign language in which the librettos are sung are the only things that have kept them from being driven from the stage.

"Norma" is a vestal priestess who has been seduced. She discovers her paramour in an attempt to seduce her friend, another vestal priestess, and in despair contemplates the murder of her bastard children.

"Don Giovanni" is the proverbial hero whose career represents the romance of successful adultery and debauch.

"Rigoletto" exhibits the agony of a father obliged to witness the prostitution of his own child.

"La Traviata" (the favorite) is the progress of a transcendental harlot, who is the king's mistress.

"Lucretia Borgia" is the history of adultery not unassociated with incest.

“Faust” is the most specious apology for seduction ending with the apotheosis of crime. Margaret, who murders her mother and illegitimate child, is carried to heaven by angels.

We may add to his list “Salome,” which to use the words of a dramatic critic, “was, as we now know, a deliberately planned effort of a degenerate poet to evoke a series of beautiful and perverse images. To attain this end the author did not hesitate to pervert Scripture or to improve on history.” It is one of the most shocking and daring exhibitions of unbridled lust ever put on the stage. It is most grossly sacrilegious and almost fiendishly so. How any one can enjoy such exhibitions of moral depravity and sexual perversion under the guise of art passes comprehension.

That the theatre is continually open to criticism of this kind will appear to any one who watches the comments of the various dramatic critics appearing frequently in the metropolitan dailies. Neither time nor space can be devoted to the mass of such criticism against so many present-day plays. But here are two illustrations, one of a popular play acted by one of the greatest actresses in the world. The dramatic

critic says concerning the confession that the heroine (a wronged girl) makes to her lover:

“The stage was bathed in darkness as she related the details and out of consideration for the audience the house lights were turned out, too, so that the blushes of the audience would not be visible during the recital.”

The other concerns Mme. Bernhardt, doubtless the greatest living actress, who time and again has visited this country and played in every part of the United States. Mr. William Winter, one of the foremost dramatic critics, said of her acting: “No spectator was ever benefited, cheered, encouraged, ennobled, instructed, or even rationally entertained by the prospects of these embodiments (characters) or any one of them, and it is beyond dispute that the exhibitions of them have exerted a deplorable influence.”

This statement made with reference to the representative “embodiments” played by this actress through the years, is most amazing, coming as it does from such a source. He continues, “These embodiments of her acting are ability to show a woman who seeks to cause physical infatuation and who generally can succeed in doing so; a woman in whom vanity, cruelty, selfishness, and animal propensities are supreme; a woman of formidable, sometimes dangerous, sometimes terrible, mental force.

The woman of intrinsic grandeur,—the woman essentially noble,—she has never succeeded in portraying. She has never truthfully depicted a woman who truly loves.” He concludes, “When the Great Prompter strikes the bell for the last curtain, she will pass and be thought of no more, except as a conspicuous example of eccentric character and brilliant ability. The laurel that is rooted in a bed of horrors soon withers and dies.” Such is the estimate of this dean of dramatic critics of the life work of the greatest living actress.

A dramatic critic in a Chicago paper said concerning the plays then on the Chicago stage, that it was unsafe for a man to take a woman to see them unless he was very well acquainted with her, or wanted to subject her to mortifying embarrassment.

I have not meant to condemn every play in this indictment. There are undoubtedly some plays which are clean and wholesome, but, alas! they are lamentably few. But even concerning the so-called “good plays,” some earnest words need be said.

“*Good Plays*”

It is incumbent upon advocates of the theatre to define what they mean by “good plays.” Rip Van Winkle—as played by the foremost American actor, the late Joe Jefferson, was

such a play. No less a man than Opie Read, the author, said concerning this play, "It has been above criticism because it has been regarded as the Monroe Doctrine of the drama and must not be tampered with, and in sacredness second only to Uncle Tom's Cabin. It is a most genial and whimsical drunken joke. In every great work of art there is a moral and a lesson, deep and soul-strengthening. In 'Rip Van Winkle' there is no lesson. Well, yes,—it teaches us that the humorous drunkard can never be reformed, that the scold becomes gentle when she marries a brute."

Several so-called "good plays" have enjoyed exceptional popularity. One of these, "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," was acclaimed by every one as a drama of great moral import and spiritual regeneration. A dramatic critic, writing for one of the current magazines, said: "This play is almost as much a travesty as an allegory to those who have labored toilingly to raise their fallen brothers and sisters. It is a travesty because in common with so much of the easy optimism of the day, the New Thought, the New Psychology, the New Law of Suggestion, or whatever it is called, it ignores the practical basis of human struggle and human will in every true and lasting reformation, and sends away the beholder with a pleasant feeling that all that is demanded to set the

world aright are a few deep thoughts and a call to our better natures.

The play represents a benign spirit, presumably an incarnation of the Christ spirit, as coming to a boarding-house filled with lying, bickering, cheating, unhappy beings and, by calling to their better natures, reforming them one and all." They went down before the "glance of his eye and the soft boom of his voice," it is said, "like ninepins in an alley, and as each sinner went down, as each reformation was accomplished, all the women in the audience wept." "What," continues the writer, "in actual life would be the process of reclaiming them? It would be a battle, a long-drawn battle. Unfortunately, in this world, men are not turned from sinners to saints without a struggle, and usually a bitter struggle. They must confess, they must repent, but that is not enough,—they must be led up from one stage of understanding to another, slowly, patiently, probably with frequent backslidings. The play is immoral," he resumes, "because it makes spiritual regeneration a matter of external and immediate success, a kind of hypnotic process, instead of an inward effect of will and moral sense; dangerous, because it permits an audience to lapse back fifteen minutes later into exactly their former state. It inspires no real ethical purpose and no real thought because it

is based by the dramatist on no real thought, though doubtless his purpose was sincere enough. *It does not touch the real principle of moral reformation.*"

Similarly he analyses such plays as "The Easiest Way," "The Man from Home," "The Fighting Hope," "Mother," "The Whirlwind," "The Great Divide," etc. "Such," he concludes, "is the morality of the stage, because it is *vastly easier in the drama to write what is momentarily effective than what is fundamentally true.*"

"If the ethical problems of life were only so simply as that! But they are not. They are bitterly complex; they stem back into the past and forward into the future." His article is well named, "BAD MORALS IN GOOD PLAYS."

So I am unwilling to accept the words of the theatre advocate as to what are "good plays" until they have been subjected to such careful analysis.

Opinions of Actors

Many of the highest minded and sincerest of actors and actresses have felt quite the same way about the theatre.

Edwin Booth said, "My knowledge of modern drama is so very meager that I never permit my wife and daughters to witness a play with-

out previously ascertaining its character. But while the theatre is permitted to be a mere shop for gain, open to every immoral huckster, there is no other way to discriminate between the pure and the base than through the experience of others.”

Macready, the actor, said, “None of my children with my consent shall ever enter a theatre or have any visiting connections with actors and actresses.” (This statement has been disputed but never successfully denied.)

A. M. Palmer, a successful theatre manager of the country, said, “The chief themes of the theatre are now, and ever have been, the passions of men—ambition and jealousy leading to murder; anger leading to madness; and lust leading to adultery and death.”

M. Dumas, the younger, a writer of licentious plays, said, “You do not take your daughter to see any play? You are right. Let me say once and for all, do not take your daughter to the theatre. It is not merely the work that is immoral, it is the place. Whenever we paint men, there must be a grossness that cannot be placed before all eyes; and wherever the theatre is elevated and loyal, it can live only by using the colors of truth. The theatre being the picture of the satire of the passions and social manners, it must forever be immoral.”

54 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

These are but samples of the feelings expressed by them.

Reforming the Theatre

What about the possible reform of the theatre? I reply that people in the past have tried to reform the theatre and failed. Garrick, Hannah More, Macready, Henry Irving, Edwin Booth, Channing, Lyman Beecher, all tried it and failed. Theatres that have been erected for the purpose of purifying the drama and producing only wholesome and moral plays have degenerated and are now serving the public as all others. Each theatre in Philadelphia is said to have originated in a throe of reform.

The latest and most striking illustration of this is the New Theatre in New York, costing a vast fortune, with the money donated by high-minded people. After running a little more than two years, it has been forced to abandon its place and submit to reorganization after a tremendous financial loss of \$400,000. The explanation made by the press is to this effect: "The obstacles seemingly insuperable to the present projectors are the difficulty of getting an adequate manager, the unavailability of competent actors, and the scarcity of suitable plays." Certainly three vital factors!

The trouble with reforming the theatre is that at least three classes of people will have to be

reformed. First of all, the public; second, the actors and the actresses; third, the theatre managers and stockholders.

In regard to the public, a dramatic critic summing up the New York theatre season of 1911-12, says, "A look at our politics, our literature, our newspapers, our finance, our professions, even our 'best' society, shows that the biggest successes are made by those who have been first to recognize that the American public doesn't want to think, or really feel; it is pleased best and attracted most when it is merely tickled or excited for a little while in one way and left free to turn quickly to the next shallow sensation of the moment. Almost exactly one-third of the energies of the theatre in New York during the season just closing has been given over to musical shows. Few things in life call for less exertion of the thinking powers, or for less accrued knowledge of any kind than does the enjoyment of the typical musical show."

From the dramatic critic's standpoint such is the character of the greatest theatre-going public.

Regarding this same American public, Olga Nethersole, the famous actress, who thoroughly knows her audiences through years of experience, recently declared that the only kind of play which may hope to meet with success with

the English-speaking people at the present date is the play which is sufficiently indicated by calling it immoral.

With respect to the managers and stockholders, the critic continues, "The steady decline in the managerial standard is not likely to be checked so long as we have only theatrical speculators catering to a public crude in its tastes and putting sheer amusement ahead of everything else in the theatre. From this point of view the failure of the New Theatre and the consequent discouragement of the moneyed element which alone could combat commercialism, was a greater blow to dramatic art in America than has been yet realized."

Evidently the underlying motive of the theatre must be reformed if it ever proposes to be a moral educator. It has always been run purely for the benefit of the box office.

Now, if money-making is the prime object, then only those plays can be staged which produce dividends. Mixed motives in business as well as in individual characters spell moral failure. The most scathing criticism that has ever been hurled at any church has been the charge that the minister's message was colored or suited to please those who were the church's chief supporters. Nothing would so quickly paralyze the minister's influence and destroy his usefulness as such a proven charge.

The deepest motives of both manager and stockholders have influenced them to put upon the boards what will please this "crude," amusement-loving public that does not want either "to think or feel," but to be "tickled and excited." Time and time again managers have declared that when they have attempted to put on good plays the people have not patronized them.

A metropolitan manager wailed thus: "However beautiful his Shakespearean play may be in its pictures, and in its acting, however true to nature the drama of Pineroy may be, and be it never so well acted, that ambitious manager is going to be bankrupt unless the public likes his offering. His good intention, his desires to accomplish something really creditable in his profession, will not fill his theatre once. Not a soul will buy a ticket in order to help along a manager who is setting his standards high and at variance with what the public thinks it wants at just that time. If he can ever be foolish enough to believe that his desires to attain to his ideal in his profession are going to bring him the aid and comfort of the theatre-going public, the probabilities are that he will not be able to pay his rent and will be dispossessed before his first season is finished."

Then with respect to the actors and actresses. This same critic declares, "One discouraging

feature in evidence through the season is the continual decline in the quality of the work of the American actor. The control of the American theatre is so much more commercial than artistic that the decline in the art of acting is naturally to be expected." Even Mr. Belasco has been compelled to advertise in the daily papers inviting "young men with proper qualifications and ordinary energy" to become his students. There can be little doubt left that the stage is not attracting the right kind of material. The theatre can't go much further in the way of commercialization without absolutely destroying the art of acting.

Eleanora Dusé declared, "To save the theatre, the theatre must be destroyed; the actors and actresses must die of the plague. They make art impossible."

Mr. Edward Gordon Craig, the son of Ellen Terry, in a book on "The Art of the Theatre," pleading for a reform from an artistic standpoint, makes the same assertion. If this is true from an artistic standpoint, then what of the moral?

While avoiding that criticism which would seemingly condemn all actors and actresses, these statements from professional and other impartial critics would indicate that not the least reform demanded is among the profession. The decline of both art and morals has logically produced a similar decline among them. Good

players cannot long play bad plays without becoming contaminated. And, again, such cannot be entrusted to teach morals to the public. Spurgeon once exclaimed, "That must be a strange school of morals where the teachers never learn their own lessons."

With reference, therefore, to the reform of the theatre, we have this situation:

The theatre needs reforming.

Attempts in the past and up to the present have failed.

The failure is due to the dependence of the manager upon the patrons, the majority of whom demand the questionable play.

The Christian's Attitude

What, then, should be the attitude of the Christian to the theatre and the good play? Of course it is taken for granted he will not think of patronizing any other kind.

Many conscientious people say, "Can we not attend Shakespearean plays and others of like character?" No better answer can be given than the following letter:

Dear Friend:—

I was one of your hearers when you preached to women on your first Sunday in Mobile.

You mentioned a woman whose husband had been touched by attending a religious meeting and who asked her to accompany him the following night. She

60 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

refused, saying she had asked some friends to her home to play cards. You no doubt recall the incident, I trembled for fear I should cry out that I was guilty of just such a sin, and I determined to let you know of it and ask you to use my story as an emphasis to the one you told.

When I was married, my husband was a clean man, a Y. M. C. A. worker, a Sunday-school teacher, and an earnest church member. I was a member of the same church.

I begged him to go to the theatre with me, but he insisted again and again that theatre-going was not conducive to Christian living. Finally I won, and we began taking in only Shakesperean plays, then others and others. Then my husband did not come home early in the evening to go out to the theatre or anywhere else with me. He quit attending church, came home later and later, would be absent from home and his business for several days, telling me that he had been called to a neighboring city on business. I never had doubted him until a disclosure made it evident that he had been drinking heavily, had been in vile company and had spent the time of his absence in small bar-rooms in the suburbs of the city.

Just before you came here we had a conversation in which he told me that theatre-going was the beginning of his trouble. He thought he could go to the theatre some, smoke a few cigars, and drink a little, until he came to the point where he had no taste for religious affairs, and went from bad to worse.

I thank God that I had the courage to tell him I had long since known I was wrong. He promised

to give up his evil habits and to try to follow Christ. I believe he has done so, for he was one of the most zealous personal workers during the evangelistic campaign.

Out of the fulness of my glad heart I am writing to you to ask you to urge mothers and wives and young women to make no compromise with evil and to cling close to Christ, and to encourage by every means every good effort of a husband or a son in religious work.

Through suffering my heart has been changed, and I trust my message to you may save many of my sisters from a sin like mine.

With my prayer for your work,

A PENITENT ONE.

The eminent comedian, Mr. E. M. Holland, verified this very experience when he said to a friend of mine, "The theatre is moving down grade. When I have a night off, I go down to the Bowery (New York) and there I see people who used to come to see the Shakespearean plays ten or twelve years ago. They have gone steadily down the line."

Somewhere imbedded in the heart of the theatre seems to be, in spite of all reformatory efforts, that which is not only not conducive to devotional and spiritual living, but a positive menace to it.

Paul has given a fair and rational rule by

62 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

which to settle this and every question of Christian conduct.

“Prove all things,
Hold fast that which is good,
Abstain from every appearance of evil.”

THE CURSE OF CARDS

I tremble to think of the myriad ministers to vice and degradation, to destruction of heart, soul, body and the health of coming generations who infest and infect our great cities; and at the coarse, garish, unlovely, ignoble, and often hateful character of the chosen public amusements of a great class of our young men.—*Baldwin Brown.*

II

The Curse of Cards

GAMES should never be classified together and then denounced together. All games are not harmful. Many are wholesome, helpful, and recreative. Certain ones, as baseball, tennis, golf, bowling, etc., are pre-eminent in giving needed physical exercise and should be encouraged. Others are mentally stimulating and afford splendid training to the intellectual faculties. Such games are checkers and chess. Still others train the eye, the muscle, and the nerve, like crokinole, billiards and pool.

To denounce any of these in the same breath with cards is to show a lack of careful thought, and to do a great injustice to those who enjoy real recreative games.

Games of Skill

A cursory study of all games in which mechanical devices are used will show that they are naturally divided into two classes,—games of skill and games of chance.

Games of skill, roughly defined, are those which are won by the accuracy of the trained eye, the trained muscle, the intellectual judg-

ment, and the subsequent mastering through study and practice of the fundamental principles of the game. Of course, any of these games may be misused. This goes without discussion, but my contention is that fundamentally they are right and proper.

Some declare that billiards and pool are fully as dangerous to morals as cards. Doubtless this has been true, but the dangers are not to be sought in the same direction as in cards. They are harmful for several reasons. First of all, they are expensive games to own and maintain; second, they are restricted accordingly to well-to-do homes and to public places. In the past, these places have been mostly saloons and public parlors, or club-rooms of questionable resort. In the third place, they are run for revenue only. Hence the proprietor is not usually particular who his patrons are if they have the money to spend. As a result, these places become loafing places where good young men mingle with evil young men, idle their time, waste their money, listen to foul and obscene language, play to see who will pay for the game, and in other ways demoralize themselves.

As for the two games, they are founded upon laws of straight lines and angles, as unchangeable as the laws of Euclid. But for the above reasons, one cannot approve of the association and manner of the games as played to-day. The

experiment of some Young Men's Christian Associations, notwithstanding the sincerity of the attempt to cleanse and sterilize the games, seems yet an experiment.

Games of Chance

Games of chance, on the other hand, have most of the elements of games of skill plus the element of chance, without which they would not be games. It is solely this element of chance that makes these games morally, mentally, and spiritually dangerous. And it is upon this fact that I base my argument against them.

To games of chance belong all card games, all dice games, and all domino games. Of these, however, the euchre deck is the most baneful in its influence. This is due to the innumerable combinations of odds of chance which the deck offers. While finch, flags, authors, and many other card games belong to the same family, the odds of chance are so much attenuated, like homeopathic medicine, that they are but vaguely perceptible. There is this also to be said in their favor, that some have an intellectual side, which adds something of culture to them. Dominoes are also much attenuated. I do not mean by this to condone them, but simply to discriminate even between Games of Chance.

The Lost Art of Conversation

It seems a sad commentary upon our modern social life that socially inclined people have deteriorated to that level that they cannot amuse themselves without resorting to one of the three so-called popular amusements. I say "deteriorated" advisedly, for the mania for card-playing is not a mark of culture, refinement, nor even of average intellectual attainments. Whether card-playing is the cause, or the result, it is a recognized fact that the fine art of conversation through which people may sharpen their wits and develop their brain power, as well as increase their range of knowledge, has almost disappeared. Dr. Leslie W. Sprague, lecturer of the Brooklyn Ethical Society, was quoted recently as saying: "It is the deck of cards that has made conversation the dead art in America." Francis Browne, editor of the "Dial," added, "There is not a doubt of it. We look in vain for any such charm and stimulation as men like Dr. Johnson, for instance, could impart to their talk. Our comment on most subjects is limited to a few words. We look askance on the prospect of a long talk. We dive to the point in one sentence, and then we have said all we have to say. The same is true of letter-writing as an art. Where will you find now-a-days any such long, rambling, delightful letters

as were indited with such pleasure a century or two ago?"

To entertain at cards is the cheapest and easiest way to spend an evening. All that need be prepared are the card decks, the tables, and the refreshments. After greeting her guests any hostess could easily retire to her room, set the alarm, sleep from eight to midnight, then come down and serve the refreshments. There is little probability that she would have been missed at all, for from the time the guests began their playing, until they finished, there would not have been an intelligent idea expressed (except about the game) all the long evening. One is not permitted to talk, for it will spoil the game. The less disposed one is to talk, the less distracting will be his ideas to others, and the more popular he will be. It is, therefore, no mark of refinement nor culture nor any special recommendation of modern society, that it has gone card crazy. It indicates a distinct deterioration of grey matter. Expert card-playing as the passport to the exclusive set, is a sorry reflection upon boasted and much coveted society.

*The Inter-relations of Intellect, Conscience
and Will*

Three things upon which every man depends for his success in life are basal to all action: the

intellect, the conscience, and the will,—or the attributes of the rational, the moral, and the volitional man. These three, all and always, operate conjunctively. In the normal man, they never act separately. They are more closely adjusted than ball and socket joints. They are the trinity that control and direct the conduct of life. They pass like Supreme Court judges upon all questions. They must always, like judges, have the freest range for action, and should never be repressed. Whenever one is destroyed, the real self-hood is demoralized. For instance, whenever intellect is subtracted there is idiocy or insanity; whenever conscience is subtracted there is moral degeneracy and villainy; and whenever will is subtracted the life is rudderless and lacks direction. In the degree that any one of these is hobbled or impaired in its action, to that degree the balance, or poise, of life, is disturbed and becomes abnormal.

Every act of our lives *must* be submitted to these three psychological forces. Art, science, commerce, religion, are regions over which these faculties can and should preside. But there is one realm over which they cannot preside, where they become instantly ineffective and crippled, and that is the realm of chance. Here they lose their prestige and power. This it is that makes cards and dice so very dangerous to the players.

In every game of cards, the element of chance exists. It cannot be eliminated. The fundamental difference between the checker game and the card game is here disclosed. If you put the games side by side ready for playing, you will note that in the checker game all the factors of the game are spread out before both players, and upon them all their powers of intellect, conscience, and will can be brought to bear. Each player sees exactly the position of his opponent's disks and can marshal his own accordingly. To win, he must know the "moves," or the value obtained through the relative positions of the disks. On the other hand, in the card game, where four are playing, besides the cards to be drawn from the rest of the deck, each player is dealt a hand. Clearly here are five factors in the game, but each player sees only his own hand. He is in possession of only one-fifth of the factors of the game which are essential to winning. His skill in the card game must differ from that in playing checkers, where everything is visible. In the card game, it consists in acquiring this hidden four-fifths knowledge, by the lever of the one-fifth. This produces the element of hazard, or chance, because neither the intellect, conscience, nor will can be brought to bear upon the unknown by the laws upon which they normally and necessarily

proceed. It is like tying up an arm and then expecting it to work successfully.

The Destructive Element of Chance

To further illustrate: The player looks carefully over his hand and decides that one card is the best to play. Each of these faculties, intellect, conscience, and will, acting together, passes upon the play. But behold! when each opponent has played his hand, the player finds he has been mistaken. At the second play, the intellect is consulted, but is at once confused, inasmuch as, having used its best judgment and lost, it can but hesitatingly decide on the next card to be played. What intellect cannot positively determine, conscience cannot morally estimate, and in consequence, will hesitates to act. After weighing the next play in the light of the previous failure, intellect chooses again. This time when each has played, behold! the trick is won. The third play is on. Again must intellect pass upon the card. The player has now one trick lost, one won, and little to guide from the two previous plays as to the third. Again there is confusion. Intellect says to conscience, "What shall I play?" Conscience says, "That's your task to decide. I will pass upon the morals of it, after you hand your opinion over to me." Will says, "When you and conscience have passed upon the rational and

moral, I will signal brain and muscle to play it." Intellect keeps hesitating by saying, "I wish I knew what cards the other players have. I wish I knew which card to play. I want to win. *If I knew, I could.*" But it cannot know certainly. Accordingly, all three are baffled and balked. After using their best skill they are again compelled to hazard the desired results. Thus they are pitched and tossed, backward and forward, between the racquets of fainting loss and hoped-for gain, like a tennis ball or like a person tossed in a blanket, equilibrium lost, now heels, now head in the air,—now an intellectual, now a moral sprawl, the utmost confusion of the whole psychological nature. Or, to change the figure, all three are put on the stretch, like a rubber band pulled to the breaking point. The visible effect shows itself in the growing interest and intense excitement of the game. Every nerve is on edge, the breath comes short and fast, the blood rushes to the brain, the temper is frequently heated and unloosed; the desire to win becomes a passion; conscience becomes feverish; barriers go down; advantage is frequently taken; dishonesty is committed; and there ensues a general psychological riot. There has really happened to the mental powers exactly what happens to the physical when alcohol is taken into the system. The reigning powers are gradually deteriorated,—at first by

mild stimulation, then by intoxication, finally, if long indulged, by inebriation. Intellect, conscience, and will reel and totter under the drugging of chance and remain so until the stimulation is over, and they sober up like a drunken man. But the appetite is created and soon asserts itself, demanding, as alcohol, another spree.

This abnormal stimulation accounts for the card craze of modern society. It is the insidious charm of the serpent chance, as it wraps its coils about the intellectual, moral, and volitional life, leashing them, then strangling the soul and spirit, injecting into the life a poison deadlier than that of the rattlesnake, disguising it in the sweet nectar of desire to win as alcohol hides in the flavor of the liquors.

The Effect Upon the Temper

The effect upon the temper is illustrated by an incident told by Mr. Nolan Rice Best, editor of *The Continent*. He says:

“In the delightful suburban home of a Chicago judge a group of neighbors dropped in one evening for an informal call. A vivacious young woman at once proposed a game of cards.

“‘Come, judge,’ she coaxed gaily, ‘get a deck of cards and play a game with us to pass the evening.’”

“ ‘Indeed, I won’t,’ promptly responded the jurist.

“ ‘Judge, are you such an old foggy that you won’t play cards?’

“ ‘No, I’m not an old fogy.’

“ ‘You think cards are wicked, then, do you?’

“ ‘Not at all.’

“ ‘Why won’t you play, then?’

“ ‘Well,’ blurted out the judge, crowded into a corner, ‘I’ve watched you card players a long while, and *I’ve never yet seen a bunch of players that could get through a whole game without losing their tempers.* There’s always somebody complaining of the way somebody else has played, even in the most friendly company. I won’t bother with anything that spoils one’s temper so.’

“ ‘But, judge,’ still coaxed the young woman, ‘you know we are your guests and you ought to play a game with us just because we want you to.’

“ ‘Yes, you’re my guests,’ echoed the judge, his spirit rising notably higher; ‘you’re my guests, and that’s the reason why you ought to think of my preference for spending my evenings. Why shouldn’t you do what I want to do—sit and talk of something sensible?’

“ ‘There’s just one reason why you play cards, and that’s because you are so empty-headed that you can’t talk. You don’t know

enough to spend an evening in any kind of conversation, and so you have to kill time fingering over those useless cards. You can do as you please. I'm going to the library to read.'

"Afterward the judge explained why he fore-swore cards:

" 'I never played much, and was always poor at the business. One evening, however, I sat down at home with my wife, my son, and a young lady neighbor for a game of whist.

" 'Pretty soon I made some misplay. My son groaned, "O father, that was wretched!" I turned toward the young woman. Her face was white with anger.

" " "Was that such a very bad play?" I asked.

" " "It was inexcusable!" she almost hissed.

" 'I laid down my cards. "Here," I said, "is where I quit. *If this paltry good-for-nothing game can raise such a tempest as this over a blunder that I'm likely to make at any time, I'm never going to touch it again.* I know I can't play very well, and I'm not going to put myself in a position to be scorned any more like this for an ignorance that isn't worth while curing." " "

Demoralization of Honor and Honesty

A magazine article gives a deplorable picture of the dissipation which is going through society and the church like a virulent, deadly epidemic. "Physicians deplore the craze, claiming that it

burdens their hands with hysterical women. Captains of industry say that it is weakening the stamina of the young men of the country who need their strength for work. It is certainly draining the nerves, the purses, and the characters of those who heretofore made up in our land a sane, substantial society. The bars are down, and the social climber can cast aside church and charity,—the open gate of society. Let her hire a professional teacher and play bridge. The game will ruin her temper, and probably bring on the habit of heavy drinking, but if she can play bridge, she will be one of society's favorites. If bridge, in its present hysterical form, does not really impair a sturdy character, it *does* encourage the development of every latent trait. It may not create depravity, but it surely lifts the veil from it."

This is the tragedy of what has been considered a pleasant evening diversion. It has invaded both home and church, and is undermining both health and morals. Some of the most astonishing things have happened among women who have been inveigled into playing for money, even to the disruptions of intimate friendships without number, and the demoralization of homes, such is the frenzy that has grown up among the devotees of society.

In reply to the request of the editor of a certain magazine that women should give their

idea of the heroine's conduct in a story relating to cards, a large number of card players responded. Their replies throw a flood of light upon the present day card craze, and are especially valuable because they give the standpoint of those who know the inside. Their own incrimination of themselves is startling.

One says: "I am a bridge player and a straight one, and many times I have fairly writhed over the lax ideas some women have in regard to cards. I have seen women who would not deliberately misdeal, convey information by nods, shrugs, or facial contortions, that were as surely cheating as any gambler's methods."

A second says: "Surely only the highest standard of morals should prevail in any club or party of women. Where can we expect virtue and fine example if not from our mothers and daughters. Bridge whist is now played to excess, with shocking and most demoralizing consequences."

Another said: "I think there is usually cheating at a card party. Men who would not cheat when playing with other men do not take a ladies' game seriously enough to refrain from dishonesty. Some women do not cultivate the habit of sincerity in anything, and play to win. To others the prize is too much of a temptation."

A fourth wrote: "My only reason, or chief

reason, for not liking to play for prizes is that it induces cheating. There are certain people whom you must meet socially so long as they are recognized by your associates, whether they cheat at a social game of cards or not. I should as soon condone stealing—and there you are! It is hard to know what to do.”

Brazen Cheating

The next indictment shows to what length even women will go in order to win. It outdoes the wiliest and most unprincipled gambler:

“Some three or four years ago, I played my last game of bridge with women. And the reasons for stopping were more queer than those of ——, inasmuch as the culprit in that case saw her own guilt—(as witness her face the color of mahogany!); but in the three cases I am about to mention *no woman admitted anything irregular*, and a score to whom I have since spoken observed innocently that they saw nothing wrong in *that*—‘nothing but a game anyway!’

“The first instance was brought to my notice by a friend of mine, who played in a public tournament in New York some years ago. Some hundreds of women were playing, and the prizes were very valuable. These were to be given to the highest scorers; that is, if the four women at any table had the highest scores, the fact or

their all being together made no difference—they got the best prizes. The players pivoted, but did not change tables. When my friend sat down, one of her opponents remarked casually, ‘Remember, everything’s doubled.’ ‘Everything’s doubled,—how do you mean?’ she said. ‘Why,’ said all three impatiently, ‘we count hearts 16, diamonds 12, etc., just to bring up the score.’ ‘Whether the cards are there or not?’ said my astonished friend. ‘Certainly, that’s fair; you lose twice as much, or you gain twice as much. Lots of us do it at these affairs.’ ‘And suppose the leader really has doubling cards?’ ‘Then that doubles it again!’

“My friend, a little dazed, played through the afternoon, but was determined that at the end of the game, she, at least, would not compete for prizes under those conditions. Not the least extraordinary phase of it, however, was the fact that although doubled, all their scores were far below the winners! Perhaps the winners quadrupled it!

“I watched a game one day, not long ago, also for very beautiful prizes, but in a private house. The four women I watched were at their table some half hour before the other guests (forty in all) were ready to begin, so they played a rubber to pass the time, the winners of which scored six hundred points (auction bridge). When the hostess gave the signal to commence, one of

these winners said regretfully, "Oh, I hate not to count those points; I'll tell you what we'll do," she said eagerly, "we'll *all* take six hundred points, that'll be fair!" This was done, and the points scored on the four fresh cards, and two of these women carried home prizes.

"The third instance was a case of two intimate friends, Mrs. A. and Mrs. B., who found themselves opponents at the end of an afternoon's play. Mrs. A. had a very high score, Mrs. B. a hopelessly low one. The latter, despairing of her one chance at a prize, deliberately aided her friend's game, by doubling and making recklessly. Mrs. A. radiant with her prize, said gratefully to Mrs. B., 'I owe you this, you duck!' 'I think you do,' said the other laughing, and quite openly. Enough has been said of women who play all day and who fight over tricks."

Thus we trace the demoralization of character through the assault of hazard, or chance, upon the moral and spiritual nature. Lying, deceiving, cheating, anger, hatred, and other vices, are the inevitable demoralizing results.

In the New York *Medical Journal*, the editor writes this scathing indictment of cards from a purely medical standpoint:

"It is reported that a certain prominent church body is about to relax its discipline to

the extent of permitting to its adherents dancing and card-playing."

"Card-playing is a pure and simple mental dissipation, that grows upon the victim like all other dissipations, to the eventual exclusion of logical and close thinking. A valuable distraction for the elderly* once a week, say if indulged in oftener, especially by the young, it exercises its narcotizing influence with irresistible force. Skill counts for only three per cent. in even the most scientific of card games, much less in the popular gambling forms. The legend which attributes the invention of playing cards to the necessity for amusing a mad king of France possesses verisimilitude. Appealing primarily to the imperfectly balanced mind, they soon reduce that of a better quality to the same level. They are comparable in every way to the habit-forming drugs, and lead surely to the neglect of every sane and healthy amusement, to say nothing of business or professional duties. We hope that any religious body which has the power will continue to enforce a regulation evidently based, years ago upon observation of the stupefying effects of card-playing, effects which are identical with those of 'playing the races,' a pastime which finally incurred

*The editor's argument for card-playing upon the part of elderly people seems to be that elderly people are not required to do "logical and close thinking," so that the mild dissipation can be indulged.

extinction at the hands of none too squeamish legislatures.”

The Stimulant of Chance

To trace the history of card playing for the last few years is not a difficult task in the light of the above statements. The simpler games no longer satisfied, for the same reason that drinking does not usually stop with wine. With the use there was created an appetite which craved more and stronger stimulant. As the stimulating alcohol in wine is found in larger percentage in beer, in ale than in beer, in whiskey than in ale, in champagne than in whiskey, and in absinthe than in champagne, so the alcohol of chance has produced a craving for more alcohol of chance. From the simpler card games of old maid, casino, muggins, to euchre, progressive euchre, whist, bridge whist, and scientific whist, is the progress of feverish craving for more psychological stimulant.

The havoc that is being wrought is alarming. One physician, viewing it purely from a physical standpoint, says: “As a medical man, I am convinced that gambling at cards has had much to do with the increase of nervous breakdown among a certain class of women.”

Scientific Whist Most Dangerous of All

It is true that there are certain games, as scientific whist, that require more intelligence

and skill than others. But the more of intelligence in proportion to chance, the more dangerous the game. The greater the strain, or the more "science" you put upon the intellect only to have it tripped by the element of chance, the more dire the results, just as the higher, the heavier, the stronger the building, the greater the catastrophe if it be toppled over; the more violent the blow that chance strikes, the surer is the reaction and the reeling of the brain. As chance, even in these most intellectual games is ninety-seven per cent. of the whole, we get some idea of the terrific assault made upon the psychic nature. This explains the many suicides from the gambling tables of Monte Carlo. The brain gave way under the terrible strain, when chance at last swept away the last dollar.

*No Difference between Card-Playing and
Gambling*

There is no essential difference between card-playing and gambling when reduced to this analysis. In the whist game played for money, which is legally considered gambling, there are the same odds of chance, and one proceeds in the identical way as in the whist game played for pleasure. The only difference is that in the gambling game a *commercial value* is placed upon the odds. The one set of people get their pleasure in playing in the consciousness of su-

perior skill and chance, the other in superior skill, chance, and the *stakes*.

Why Card Players Become Gamblers

What produces the desire of the one company to play for money and thus become gamblers? Nothing in the world except that the stimulant of ability to win points, and the reputation of being expert players finally ceased to gratify. It is the most logical thing in the world that women have commercialized the odds by offering prizes. Why not make more remunerative the odds that already existed in the social game?

It is rather hard to declare that some of the loveliest of women, among them even some church women, are in the eyes of the law (then certainly in the eyes of Christians and all moral people) nothing but gamblers. When men play for a jackpot of silver and women play for a silver creamer, there can be no difference in the world except in the shape of the silver! It was because the purely social game ceased to gratify that so many mothers and sisters have descended morally to the plane of common gamblers. The Chicago pastor was within the bounds of law, ecclesiastical and state, when he notified the police lieutenant to send the patrol to a home where a club of his church women were playing for prizes.

A grand jury's report to Judge Harrison of Kentucky said: "A pink tea where society plays progressive euchre and gives prizes to the winners has the same degrading influence as the gambling-house, where roulette and poker are the attraction, the difference being only one of degree. It matters very little whether the prize is a silver thimble or a silver dollar. Progressive euchre parties are made alluring with prizes, refreshments, and the knowledge that the local papers will print the names of guests and winners. All are common gamblers, and deserve to be fined." The court demanded that these euchre players be indicted under the anti-gambling laws and dealt with as criminals.

The card-table has become one of the menaces of modern society. Quinn, the reformed gambler, could not have been far wrong when he declared: "The parlor card table is the kindergarten to a gambler's hell." A boy must first learn to play cards before he is likely to be admitted to a gambling hell. If your boy or mine should present himself there, the first question would be, "Can you play cards?" They have no time to teach a "greener," but he can go to a respectable parlor, even of some church member, where they will give him his primary lessons and start him on the card highway back to the gambler's hell and ruin; so if I were compelled to choose, I would rather have a score

of gambling joints in the block where I live than one refined parlor of moral and religious people who play cards. The one will more surely trap the boy than the twenty.

An ex-saloon keeper said: "I have been in the saloon business with a gambling room attached for the last four years, and I claim to know something about what I am now going to tell you. I do not believe that the gambling den is nearly so dangerous or does anything like the same amount of harm as the social card party in the home.

"In the gambling room, the windows are closed tight, the curtains are pulled down; everything is conducted secretly for fear of detection, and none but gamblers, as a rule, enter it, while in the parlor, all have access to the game. Children are permitted to watch it, young people are invited to partake in it. It is made attractive and alluring by giving prizes, serving refreshments and adding high social enjoyments.

"The saloon men and gamblers chuckle and smile when they read in the papers of the parlor games given by the ladies, for they know that after a while these same young men will become the patrons of their business. I say, then, that the parlor game is the college where gamblers are made and educated. In the name of

God, men, stop this business at your homes, burn up your decks, and wash your hands."

The Danger of Home Card-Playing

Yet some people ignorantly but honestly say that they teach their children to play cards at home so that when they grow older they will not want to go away and play them. Sam Jones used to say—"You fools, you might as well say, 'I will give the little pigs swill and when they get to be hogs they won't like swill.'" They forget that they are creating an appetite in their children. Some day, if the appetite is indulged, their playing will be too tame and the children will seek excitement among neighbors, and finally where the real experts are, where damnation awaits their souls. "A game that is dangerous anywhere is not safe at home."

Before me are the photographs of three beautiful boys, the sons of one mother, who adopted this very principle. They came from most excellent stock; in fact, on the father's side they came from a Colonial line of ancestry, men of wealth as well as of letters, one being a man high in office in the country, another being the founder of a famous university. The mother argued that by playing cards with her boys, they would not care to go elsewhere for amusement; thus she would avoid for them the evil

amusements of their town. For her ignorant but well-meaning folly this poor mother has lived long enough to see one of these boys sink lower and lower in the moral scale until, both a drunkard and gambler, he became a bar-tender and was even arrested for robbing a joint and strongly suspected of belonging to a gang of safe-blowers. His mother's grief can easily be imagined by any mother heart. The second son was married and has a little family of children. He both drinks and gambles, and the poor mother's cry is: "What will become of him and his little ones?" The eldest son is a prosperous professional man, but he both drinks and gambles and was arrested and tried for murder. The trial is said to have been a disgraceful one. The witnesses were keepers of joints and the lowest of the low. The mother said through her sobs: "It is all the result of whiskey." In her intense suffering she cried out, "Why is this? Did I not bring my boys up in the Sabbath-school? Have I not always fought against the unclean, the impure? I have fought it all through my motherhood—all through my life—and now every child I have drinks, gambles, and is ungodly." When asked if she still advocated cards in her home (which preceded the whiskey), her expression was pitiful to behold. "No! No!" she cried. "My mind has changed on many things. I have

reaped what I sowed. I sowed cards and reaped gamblers." Cards, gambling, whiskey, murder, broken hearts, blasted lives, are the logical order and the steps to hell.

Some years ago, a traveling man gave an address in a church in Chicago. He spoke of his travels through the State of New York and of another eastern trip that he contemplated. At the close, a lady came up and asked him if he expected to stop at Auburn. Replying that he did, she said, "May I ask of you a favor? It almost breaks my heart to do so. I have a son in the Auburn prison and I wondered whether you would call upon him, take him a mother's love and my photograph, and perhaps speak to him about the Saviour."

"Certainly," he replied. "I shall be glad to do so." A few days later he received from her hand the package, while her trembling lips said, "Thank you," and her eyes swam with scalding tears.

At the penitentiary waiting room, he met the convict boy. He introduced himself and then said, "My boy, I have brought your mother's love and this package from her." Slowly the young convict untied it, and there beheld his mother's face. He looked at it intently for a few moments, and then said slowly, "Yes, that's my mother all right. But, say, her hair is grayer than when I saw her last. I suppose

my actions have put the gray hairs there; yes, she has more wrinkles and crows' feet than when I was last home."

Then a sort of cynical smile came over his face as he said, "Are you going back to Chicago soon?" When the salesman replied in the affirmative, he continued, "Then take this photo back. Tell her I don't want it. I suppose you wonder why. Let me tell you. Drinking and gambling have put me here for fifteen years. But it was at my mother's table I took my first drink and it was in my mother's parlor I played my first game of cards."

Said Frank ——, a murderer in Sing Sing, to his spiritual adviser, just before he went to the electric chair, "If it had not been for that hellish pack of cards, I would not have been here to-day. And the worst of it is that my mother, a Christian woman, taught me to play."

Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage, in answer to the question of his idea of card-playing, replied, "Some young converts say to me, 'Is it right to play cards? Is there any harm in a game of whist or euchre?' Cards in my mind are so associated with the temporal and eternal damnation of splendid young men that I should no sooner say to my family, 'Come, let us have a game of cards' than I would go to the menagerie and say, 'Come, let us have a game of rattlesnakes,' or into a cemetery, sitting down on a

a marble slab, say to the grave-digger, 'Come, let us have a game of skulls.' How will you feel if, in the great day of Eternity when we are asked to give an account of our influence, some man shall say to you, 'I was introduced to a game of chance at your house, and I went on from that sport to something more exciting, and went on down until I lost my business, and lost my morals, and lost my soul, and these chains that you see on my wrist and my feet are the chains of a gamester's doom, and I am on my way down to a gambler's hell?' Honey at the start—eternal catastrophe at the last."

Dr. J. G. Holland wrote: "I have all my days had a card-playing community open to my observation, and I am yet to be made to believe that that which is the universal resort of the starved in soul and intellect, which has never in any way linked to itself tender, elevating, or beautiful associations, the tendency of which is to unduly absorb the attention from every weighty matter, can recommend itself to the favor of Christ's disciples.

"The presence of culture and genius may embellish, but can never dignify it. I have at this moment ringing in my ears the dying injunction of my father's early friend: 'Keep your son from cards. Over them I have murdered time and lost heaven.' "

We are not surprised to find that seventy-

five per cent. of all the gamblers who were said to have been interviewed by the Civic League in Chicago during the World's Columbian Exposition, declared that they started by parlor card-playing.

Saved from the Thralldom of Cards

Those who have been saved from the thralldom of cards are unanimous in their testimony against them. The words of Mrs. A. B. Sims, of Des Moines, Iowa, the champion woman whist player of the United States at the time of her conversion, are emphatic and sweeping. Mrs. Sims, in 1905, won the first prize for women at the annual tournament of the National Whist Association; in 1906 she won the championship and became the holder of the loving cup valued at \$100, and the Amsterdam trophy. This is her letter:

DES MOINES, IOWA,

My Dear Dr. Stough:—

You ask me wherein I consider cards to be harmful. I will endeavor to answer to the best of my ability. I think if ever any one was in a position to give a tangible answer, it is myself. The depth is fathomless, and I can never touch bottom regarding the harm, but I will go down as far as possible.

I was rocked in a Christian cradle, and my mother was one of the most consistent Christians that ever lived. I myself was a consistent Christian for many years. Coming to the city I became infatuated with

society and then became a strong whist player. I soon had absolutely no time for Christian work. When I found myself drifting, drifting, with the tide, I would pick up the oars and try hard to paddle back up the stream, only to find myself drifting down again.

I knew what it meant when I began to go so far away from Christ. I would try so hard to live more closely, but how could I? I remember once having thirteen nights and afternoons and dinner engagements ahead, all for cards. Wednesday night came with the prayer-meeting, and a whist party and luncheon; then Saturday night a card club and dinner. I came home so tired at midnight as to be completely worn out, revelling in scientific and aristocratic gambling. I just could not go to the house of my Lord the next morning and commune with my Saviour. I was so heartsore that I would not throw what little energy I had left in God's face and call it worship. Thus I went on until cards completely dwarfed all religion in my soul.

I firmly believe card-playing and dancing are two of the greatest evils in all Christian civilization. If professed Christians would renounce cards, we would have no trouble in converting the world. My Bible teaches me: The fountain cannot send forth sweet and bitter waters—we cannot serve God and mammon.

Playing for prizes is not a whit less gambling because it is pursued in a Christian home and by reputable Christians. Invitations to card parties where prizes are given are gambling devices in the strict interpretation of the Federal postal law. It is as

unlawful to send such invitations through the mails as to advance a lottery scheme. Reform the society gamblers of our churches first, then begin on the professional gamblers. It is a fact beyond dispute that it is from the drawing-room card table that the gambling dens' recruits are drawn.

The card craze, as it prevails among the women of this country, is the most serious competitor the church has to-day. I have letters from Canada, Mexico, and different parts of Europe, from many of the leading cities of the United States, declaring that church and society women have gone mad over bridge and other card games. It was when these messages began to pour in upon me after I renounced cards, that the hold which cards have taken on Christian women fully dawned upon me.

Cordially yours,

MRS. A. B. SIMS.

How Card-Playing Destroys Spirituality

Permit a few words to show how card-playing destroys spirituality in Christians and the desire to become Christians upon the part of unbelievers. Again the reasons are hidden in the deadly factor of chance. Let us analyze the "dwarfing of all religion" in the heart of this woman, of which she speaks so regretfully.

God has commanded His children to trust the unknown in life to Him. That trust constitutes the life of faith, or the Christian life. When one plays cards, he hazards the unknown, or

chances it,—the exact opposite of trust! When one thus hazards the unknown, the process tears down the very foundations of morality and spirituality, as well as of intellectuality. It destroys the very psychological processes by which the life of faith is developed. The Christian rule is “Whatsoever is not of *faith* is *sin*.” (Rom. 14: 23). Therefore, “Whatsoever is of hazard, or chance, is *sin*.” A life of unbelief is a hazard, or gamble, from start to finish. It is easy to see how this woman was caught on the one side by the yearning to live a true Christian life, and on the other by a feeble effort to break away, only to be swirled off her feet by the undertow of card passion into the eddying flood of worldliness. Card-playing destroys the desire and ability to pray, by which faith becomes experience, for hazard is the devil’s only method of prayer and the card deck his only prayer book. All interest in spiritual things, and, above all, the love for the souls of others, not to speak of Christian influence over them, is gradually undermined and finally destroyed. Thus is spirituality demoralized and much of the apathy, worldliness, and impotence of the church explained.

An Ex-gambler’s Testimony

One of the most striking books on the curse of gambling which has appeared is a book entitled

“The Fool and His Money.” It was written by Mr. Harry Brolaski, who spent more than twenty years of his life as a professional gambler, all over the United States, in every kind of gambling known. As an owner of horses, a lessee of tracks, as well as a bookmaker, he operated on practically all of the race tracks of the country. He owned and operated a gambling boat on the Mississippi river during the St. Louis Exposition, under the guise of a pleasure boat. He also conducted pool-rooms, policy games, and poker joints. His exposé is a terrible arraignment of the awful curse that gambling wreaks upon the lives of men.

So sensational and tragical was his book and such an impression did it make upon my own mind, that I wrote him, asking him his frank opinion about parlor card-playing. His letter, which follows, ought forever to settle the question for every father and mother in this country, and the attitude of every young man and woman toward this social indulgence. No words that I can utter so scathingly condemn the whole card-playing business.

My Dear Dr. Stough:—

I will give you my idea of so-called innocent card-playing as follows:

The manufacturing of cards should be prohibited by law. Every parent who permits a deck of cards in the home, and teaches the young children how to play

the supposedly innocent game, is really committing a crime against his own off-spring, yet he does not realize it. If the attention of the mother and the father were drawn to the fact that they were giving their children first lessons in gambling, I believe they would put the cards out of their home. Parlor card playing, even old solitaire, and all card games are dangerous, and they lead to one end—gambling. I have seen many an old gentleman and old lady, playing a game of solitaire, become vexed at the cards because they couldn't get the game, and deliberately cheat themselves to win the game, with nothing to gain. Now, what would they do with something to gain in sight? I am strongly against card parties given by women's clubs, sometimes under the guise of charity. They, too, teach one point, and that is, to try and get something for nothing.

Gambling is a disease, in my opinion, and from my twenty-two years' experience, I must say that when it is inoculated into the system of the child, the gambling germ grows and grows until when that child reaches the age of twenty-five, he loses his sense of right and justice and expands his sense of greed.

From my observation, children who are not permitted to play cards nor taught the game at home, when they reach the age of twenty-five and are then invited to card parties, decline the invitation because they look upon gambling, or card-playing, as they would upon a drunkard and liquor-drinking. Such right-minded men and women make our history. There has never been a gambler in the president's chair, and there never will be. No bank will employ

a gambler and no bonding company will bond a gambler. Consequently, when parents teach their children the first lessons in card-playing, they are really taking away from them opportunities of life,—positions, stability and character,—and no parent will do this knowingly and willingly.

Yours very truly,

HARRY BROLASKI.

The late Mr. John A. Gates, the multi-millionaire stock broker, at the Conference of the Gulf District Methodist Episcopal Church at Port Arthur, Texas, thus advised young men: "Never play cards nor gamble!" He was speaking earnestly out of his own experiences and observations, and was himself considered famous as a bridge whist player.

From Card Playing to Murder

In an evangelistic campaign in Cambridge, Mass., we were accustomed to have people send in their requests for prayers, both for themselves and others. One evening the following request was sent to the platform. As I read it I do not believe there was a dry eye in the house, and fervent prayers went up from all parts of the church for the unhappy writer.

"For the first time in fifteen years I heard the wonderful story yesterday. I have not slept since. Oh, pray for me, and with me, that I may lead a better

100 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

life. I, for one, know what it is to need a Saviour, a friend, a helping hand to guide.

Stone walls and iron bars have encompassed me for years. Yet they were softer than the natures of the men placed over us to work our reformation. A few years ago I was convicted of a crime, and the sentence of the court was that I should pay the penalty with my life. The twelfth of October was the day set that I should go to the great beyond; I was granted a sixty days' reprieve, then a commutation of sentence to life.

After spending the best days of my life in that living hell, I was pardoned. Where are the faithful wife, the two beautiful children that were torn from me, the father and mother who guided my first footsteps? They have all gone to that home above. I am alone and friendless now.

I ask you, do I know what trouble is? Do I need a Saviour? Do I need your prayers? If so, pray as you never prayed before, for the softening of this heart of stone, for one who feels himself lost, so I can meet my loved ones in that world beyond.

AN EX-CONVICT.

What a pitiful cry it is of a man whose life had been blighted and cursed by his crime! At the close of one of the afternoon meetings a few days later, a well-dressed man came up to me whom I took for one of our workers. He extended his hand and said to me, "I don't suppose you know me." When I replied that I could not place him, he said, "I am the man who

wrote that request and who signed himself an 'ex-convict.' " He then told me the story of his downfall and of the awful punishment for his crime. After he concluded, he said, "I came to tell you that after the night I sent up my request, I gave myself to Christ and have found peace and joy in believing in Him, and the great burden has been lifted from my heart, and I wanted you to know it." His story made such a deep impression upon me that I asked him if he would not write it out that I might read it to the congregation that evening. He did so, as follows:

This is the story of one who has sinned and suffered the consequences, one who has paid the penalty that the law allowed and society demanded—the same society that was responsible,—shall I say directly?—for the crime.

With Christian parents, at one time an active member of the —— church, educated at three universities—McGill, Heidelberg, and Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons,—I started a practice in the West and was doing finely. I had made many friends, including a prominent judge, who was also a church member. Cards were played in that home.

Election day came. The judge was on the opposite side of the platform believed in by my party. Although we believed differently in politics, we were still friends.

After he was elected, a number of his intimate friends, with their wives, were invited to his house

102 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

to celebrate the occasion. After dinner the gentlemen of the party retired to one of the parlors to smoke. Wine did not stop at the dinner; it was served frequently during the earlier part of the evening. At last cards were introduced. About the same time, the ladies joined us. The ante was one dollar, the limit was the roof.

Then came a select family card game. There were five players, one woman, four men. Luck seemed pitted against me; I lost one hand after another. At last, when I had but twenty dollars left, luck seemed to change. It was the judge's deal. I held three kings, an ace, and a jack. I discarded the ace and the jack, and drawing two cards, caught my fourth king. I raised the bet all I had; he raised my bet fifty dollars. The lady on my left had thrown up her hand. I let her see mine; she passed me a roll of bills to back my hand, which of course I did. I called the judge. You can imagine my surprise when he laid down four aces. The wine and nervous tension were too strong. I shot him before he could take in the stakes. You already know the consequences.

You can tell this story as you will, but kindly shield me from being known.

In explanation of the terrible deed he told me that he saw the judge slip the fourth ace out of his sleeve and a frenzy of anger seized him to think that a judge would be so dishonest.

For fifteen long, weary years he was condemned to solitary confinement, and during all that time he was not permitted to read maga-

zine, book, nor papers, nor to do any task, but was compelled to sit idly in his cell all day long, with a guard on duty day and night. He said that the marvel was that he had not gone insane, for he believed that was their intention.

As I looked upon his manly features, unmarked by dissipation or criminality (for had it not been for cards and wine, the crime would never have been committed), my whole soul recoiled, and I said to myself as I say to you, "If card playing could so ensnare a splendid life, lead him to commit such a crime and then consign him to such bitter punishment, rob him of his influence and usefulness, break the hearts and send to untimely graves the dear ones who loved him, then how in the name of reason, conscience, or God, can moral people approve of and indulge in this cursed game?" Not the least element of this terrible tragedy was the fact that both the murdered judge and the physician murderer were members of the church.

Card Players the Church's Menace

Card-playing Christians are indeed the menace of the church. It is such that make the work of the pastor almost impossible. Their lives belie their profession and their influence causes others to stumble. The sinner outside the church sees little difference between himself and them.

In a certain community there lived a gentleman of excellent character and intelligence. Two church officials, his companions in social life, were very anxious to secure him as a member of the church. These two elders were noted as card-players. Each entreated his pastor to visit the longed-for brother. He did, and had with him an hour or so of Christian conversation. As the pastor urged the gentleman to surrender to Christ, he replied, "You want me to accept Christ and to unite with the church. I see no reason why I should. I see no gain in it. I see no difference between your officials (referring to the two) and myself. They give me no example of anything superior in their lives. From me they differ only in that they pray in public and make a show of religion. I play cards, but they more; I dance a little, but they more; I go to the theatre, but they more than I. They go to card parties and dances instead of prayer-meeting. I do not believe that a Christian should do such things. Will you tell me frankly, what benefit may I expect in your church?"

The pastor was simply staggered. What could he say in defense? It would seem that if for no other reason than the world's judgment, Christians ought to forswear cards.

I have this story from the lips of Major J. H. Cole,—the retribution of a Sunday-school

teacher who saw no harm in card-playing and set an example that finally cursed the lives of all her scholars:

“In one of our morning meetings a tramp arose and said, ‘This pew was the first and only one I ever sat in. My father was an elder in this church and my mother a member. Seven Sunday-school scholars occupied this seat,—I was one of the number. We had a lady teacher whom we almost worshipped. Saturday afternoon we went to her home and studied our Sunday-school lesson, then had some refreshments, and later amusements of various sorts. One day she taught us the game of cards. We all said our parents never let us play cards. She said, ‘Nice boys like you will never gamble, and it will rest your minds.’ Our parents did not agree with her, but said, ‘Well, she is such a good woman, I guess the boys will not go wrong.’

“Gradually we were fascinated with cards—and spent less time on the Sunday-school lesson. One Saturday we said to her, ‘Teacher, never mind the lesson to-day.’ Presently on our Saturday holidays we began to go down to the cotton gin to play cards. Later still, we began to gamble. Soon—no Sunday-school for us,—no church, but gambling—drinking. At last we became drunkards. I haven’t been in this church for years. Two of those Sunday-school

boys have been hung, three are in prison for life, and if the authorities knew where I am and another of the class, we, too, would be in prison. My father and dear mother are dead,—and I'm glad they are! Would to God I had never had such a Sunday-school teacher!

“At that a scream came from a woman on the front seat. She arose and fell on the floor near the tramp, crying out: ‘And my God! I am that Sunday-school teacher!’ She was carried out, while the tramp hurried away and was never seen again.

“For the sake of the Christian members of that church, and at their request, we promised not to give the name of the church. Hearts were broken because seven dear Sunday-school boys were ruined by a respectable Sunday-school teacher.”

Why need more be said? Lives ruined, homes wrecked, parents, church officials, Sunday-school teachers, not only robbed of influence, but cursing the lives of others—how can we indulge or endorse the card game? May God impress the message upon every one who reads!

THE DANCE OF DEATH

“A party of young people were about to explore a coal mine. One of the young ladies appeared dressed in white. A friend remonstrated with her. Not liking the interference she turned to the old miner, who was to conduct them and said, Can't I wear a white dress down into the mine? Yes, mum, was his reply, there is nothing to hinder you from wearing a white frock down there, but there'll be considerable to keep you from wearing one back. There is nothing to hinder a Christian from conforming to the world's standard of living, but there is a good deal to keep him from being unspotted if he does.”

III

The Dance of Death

IF we are to treat intelligently and fairly the subject of dancing, we must begin with definitions, for there is "dancing" and "dancing."

The word covers a multitude of ideas. The word "locomotion" expresses various phases of travel. The old lumbering "prairie schooner" worming its way through the underbrush and forests and over the unbroken prairies, by which our forefathers heroically settled the middle and far West, was "locomotion." The few miles of progress each day, jolting over the logs with not infrequent upsets, brought the travelers at last to their destination.

The "Twentieth Century Limited" from New York to Chicago, traveling the steel rails at the rate of more than a mile a minute, making the nearly thousand miles in eighteen hours is also "locomotion." Instead of the cotton-covered wagon, a Pullman car; instead of board seats, upholstered couches; instead of a bed on the ground, a comfortable berth; instead of a span of mules, a steel horse, which is the wonder of

the age. Both methods of travel are "locomotion!" But where is the resemblance?

When asked, "Do you believe in 'dancing'?" my reply is, "What do you mean by 'dancing'?"

The dancing of the present day is no more like the dancing referred to in the Bible than the "Twentieth Century Limited" is like the "prairie schooner," except that both are "dancing."

The Bible and the Dance

To use the Bible as an endorsement of the modern dance is about as sensible and fair as to use it to prove polygamy. To answer those who may not have discovered this, let me say that many years ago Dr. Lyman Beecher made a careful study of all the Scripture references to dancing and its practice among the Jews. His conclusions were as follows:

Dancing was a religious act, both in true and idol worship.

Dancing was performed by maidens only.

Dancing was performed on joyful occasions, such as national festivals or great victories.

Dancing was performed usually in the day time, in the open air, and in the highways, fields, and groves.

To pervert dancing from a sacred use to purposes of amusement was deemed infamous.

There is no instance found where the sexes united either for worship or social amusement.

Nor is there any instance of social dancing except of the "vain fellows void of shame" alluded to by Michal; of the irreligious families described by Job, in which there was increased impiety ending in destruction; and of Herodias, whose daughter danced off the head of John the Baptist.

These conclusions ought forever to settle the attitude of the Word of God toward modern dancing.

Past and Present Dancing

From a purely ethical standpoint there are forms of dancing that can be scarcely classified as wrong, except that they are apt to foster an appetite for the grosser forms; for instance, the stately minuet, the Virginia reel, the Maypole dance, the various clogs and flings, where the grace of movement is everything, and where beautiful figures and evolutions are gone through. In these, as formerly carried on, although men and women danced together, the relations were the most formal and dignified, and liberties not strictly within the bounds of propriety were neither granted nor taken.

The square dance of later times, was very much of the same character.

In recent years the dance has steadily deteri-

112 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

orated. The reasons are not hard to discover. The gradual lowering of moral standards along all lines has lowered the dance along with them. The theatre, the amusement parks, Sunday picnics, lewd illustrations in papers and magazines, the erotic novel, the inordinate desire for pleasure, the ignorance of sex hygiene, the growing familiarity between the sexes, have had their ultimate effect upon the grosser animal passions. The dance, likewise, has made its peculiar appeal to the same propensities, and thus degenerated in its character.

All these formal and more or less dignified dances have deteriorated into what is popularly known as the "round" dance, which is a free-and-easy-all-the-time-swing-your-partners of the old "square dance." It is this particular form of the dance against which I desire to lodge my emphatic protest as demoralizing and dangerous. I have called it the "Dance of Death."

The Wrong Principle in the Dance

My fundamental proposition is that music and motion never make that thing right which is otherwise wrong. If it be wrong from a social and ethical standpoint for a man to take liberties with the person of a woman off the dance-floor, then, simply because the music is playing two-four or three-four time and the feet are

moving in rhythmic tread, should these liberties be permitted? Can music and motion destroy a moral principle?

At a convention of the American Society of Dancing Professors in New York a few years ago, the President, Mr. Henry Doring, said: "There is only one proper method and one proper position for proper dancing. When a gentleman escorts a lady to the dancing parlor and the music starts, the gentleman should place his right arm gently and carefully about the lady's waist while he takes the lady's right hand in his left. His left arm should be extended and held in a graceful curve half way between the lady's waist and shoulder. All other innovations are local and have no part in correct conventional dancing."

It is evident from this statement that dancing professors recognize that their art, taught even in the most conventional and æsthetic way, demands the hand-clasp of partners and the more or less close embrace.

The only excuse that can be urged for these liberties is the music and the motion. When the music starts and the feet move, then what would not otherwise be permissible, except in close and confidential family relations, is recognized as right and proper.

If an ethical principle so quickly disappears, how would it look if this same position should be

114 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

maintained by the dancing partners and the music were omitted, and the motion changed to a promenade? Would it appear modest and proper for a gentleman and a lady to walk up and down even a dancing floor in such an affectionate position? Or suppose the partners maintain this same position and the motion were omitted? In other words, suppose they sit down together with clasped hands and encircled waist to the music of a two-step! Would either of these two actions appear to be strictly within the bounds of modesty and propriety? Society would not condone the act for a moment, when either music or motion were omitted. The ethical principle appears! But presto! Here are music and motion with the act! And the ethical principle disappears, like a coin flipped up a magician's sleeve!

I repeat, what is ethically wrong *off* the dance floor, is ethically wrong *on* the dance floor, and music and motion cannot alter this moral principle.

No woman has any right to allow a man not her father, her husband, her son, her brother, or other blood relative, any liberties with her person, and no man has any right to take such liberties with any woman not his mother, his wife, his daughter, his sister, or other blood relative. Such liberties indulged in promiscuously either in a public dance hall or a private parlor are

bound to engender familiarities that eventually breed contempt among people, both young and old. Married people cannot grant such liberties to others than their own life partners without the same results. No man who loves his wife as he ought to love her can see her in the arms of another man without feeling (and rightfully so) a pang of jealousy, unless he himself enjoys the same pleasure with other women. His marriage secures for him alone such familiarity. No married woman can safely permit such liberties without endangering the very foundation stones of her home. Said a Philadelphia army officer, when first witnessing a round dance, "If I should see a man offering to dance with my wife in that way, I would horse-whip him."

The Lure of the Dance

I am opposed to the round dance because perfect dancing demands perfect movement, and perfect movement demands this very physical embrace. Dancers reply that the embrace is only an incident to the real enjoyment of the dance. I am not so sure that they know their own minds in the matter, because the very evolution of the dance from the minuet to the two-step has seemd to be a continuous desire and attempt to bring the sexes into closer contact. The two bodies, interlocked in this embrace, are brought into such close contact in order that the

116 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

two bodies may move as one upon the floor. There is no other way this can be so perfectly accomplished as by the encircling arms and hand-clasps.

One who has looked upon a crowd of merry dancers and observed all the elements that go to make up their hours of pleasure must have been impressed with the fact that here is a most unusual procedure that receives the approval of society, is under its patronage, and poses under the guise of respectability.

Here are men and women, single and married, choosing partners promiscuously. Some are acquainted, some recently introduced and that in a free-and-easy way,—submitting their bodies each to the other in close physical contact and to the rythm of voluptuous music, (for music may be as voluptuous and passionate as either pictures or books,) in an over-heated room, with the atmosphere heavy with the perfume of flowers and poisoned with the breath of many dancers. Women, gowned so that necks, shoulders, bosoms, and arms are exposed, are clasped in the familiar embrace of their partners, who breathe their hot breath down upon the exposed parts; the animal heat, increased by the perspiration of exercise and the delicate personal magnetism, passes each into the other, through the close contact and through the unavoidable intermingling of limbs. It is a sight

calculated to startle every thoughtful and un-biased observer.

“Let us take this couple, for example. He is stalwart, agile, mighty; she is tall, supple, lithe, and beautiful in form and feature. Her head rests upon his shoulder, her face is upturned to his; her naked arm is almost around his neck; her swelling breast heaves tumultuously against his; face to face they whirl, his limbs interwoven with her limbs; with strong right arm about her yielding waist, he presses her to him until every curve in the contour of her lovely body thrills with the amorous contact. Her eyes look into his, but she sees nothing; the soft music fills the room, but she hears nothing; swiftly he whirls her from the floor or bends her frail body to and fro in his embrace, but she knows it not; his hot breath is upon her hair, his lips almost touch her forehead, yet she does not shrink; his eyes gleaming with a fierce lust, gloat, satyr-like, over her, yet she does not quail; she is filled with a rapture divine.”

I am far from intimating that all people who engage in such questionable practice do so with impure thoughts and motives, but I *do* say that, constituted as we are, those who indulge do so at a great risk to their morals and characters. It can but be dangerous and full of the most insidious temptations, and any one who stops to

118 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

consider the possible consequent sins, trembles for many of the dancers.

“Flush in the cheek and languish in the eyes,

“Rush to the heart and glisten through the frame,

“With half-told wish, and ill-dissembled flame” advertise that there is more than music and motion to the ecstasy of the dance. Both men and women pass from one dance to the other, and one partner to the other, all through the long hours of the night, while every fibre of the body is a-tingle, and every muscle becomes wearied and jaded, until at last two by two they take their way to their carriages, their homes, and their sleepless couches.

A Confession

I have before me the confession of a woman who at last analyzed for herself the meaning of her passion for the dance. She is said to be among the most eminent women in America. Her words are tremendously convincing:

In the soft floating of the waltz I found a strange pleasure, rather difficult to describe. The mere anticipation fluttered my pulse, and when my partner approached to claim my promised hand for the dance, I felt my cheeks glow a little sometimes, and I could not look him in the eyes with the same frank gaiety as heretofore.

But the climax of my confusion was reached when, folded in his warm embrace, and giddy with the whirl,

a strange, sweet thrill would shake me from head to foot, leaving me weak and almost powerless, and really almost obliged to depend for support upon the arm which encircled me. If my partner failed from ignorance, lack of skill, or innocence, to arouse these, to me, most pleasurable sensations, I did not dance with him a second time.

I am speaking openly and frankly and when I say that I did not understand what I felt, or what were the real and greatest pleasures I derived from the so-called dancing, I expect to be believed.

But if my cheeks grew red with uncomprehended pleasure then, they grow pale with shame to-day when I think of it all. It was the physical emotions engendered by the magnetic contact of strong men that I was enamored of—not of the dance, nor even of the men themselves.

Thus I became abnormally developed in my lowest nature, I grew bolder, and from being able to return but shy glances at first, was soon able to meet more glaring ones, until the waltz became to me, and who-soever danced with me, one lingering, sweet and purely sensual pleasure, where heart beat against heart, hand was held in hand, and eyes looked words which lips dared not speak.

Married now, with home and children around me, I can at least thank God for that experience which will assuredly be the means of preventing my little daughters from engaging in any such dangerous pleasures. But if a young girl, pure and innocent in the beginning, can be brought to feel what I confess to have

felt, what must be the experience of a married woman? She knows what every glance of the eye, every bend of the head, every clasp, means; and knowing that reciprocates it, and is led to swifter steps and a surer path down the dangerous, dishonorable road.

I doubt if my experience will be of much service, but it is the candid truth from a woman, who, in the cause of all young girls who may be contaminated, desires to show to just what extent a young mind may be defiled by the injurious effects of round dances. I have not hesitated to lay bare what are a young girl's most secret thoughts, in the hope that people will stop and consider, at least, before handing their lilies of purity over to the arms of any one who may choose to blow the frosty breath of dishonor on their petals.

The Dancing Position vs. Morals

In showing that there is a direct moral relation between the dancing position and its music and motion, a most suggestive article appeared recently, written by Mr. Mikail Mordkin, the Russian dancer. He remarks how little the American audience seems to realize that pantomimic dancing is capable of even great expression and meaning. "In Russia we have been taught that great drama, the real, pulsating, vital, drama of the real world, is silent drama. The most dramatic moments in a man's or woman's life are rarely accompanied by words. Great feeling, deep emotion, in everyday life, is scarcely ever accompanied by speech. The

heart, the chief organ of life's profound drama, cannot talk."

He then illustrates how he was taught to express such emotion as hate with his body in movement. "As a matter of fact, when a man hates another, his hatred projects back into his head a spirit of strength in himself, and his body takes an upright rigidity. Show this through the body of the dramatic dancer, and your audience will feel the quality of hatred."

To those, therefore, who say the position is inconsequential and secondary, comes the art of this professional dancer declaring that the body does express itself in its position and motion. He builds his whole art upon this principle.

At a conference of the American National Association of Dancing Masters in Chicago, a Miss Margaret Thuma, describing what she called "The Soul Dance," said: "Dancing must reach the soul. True dancing of this sort is the expression of the soul through the mind by motion of the body. The result will be a personal magnetism that will contain our inner selves and *hold* our audience."

To assert, then, that close contact and recline of partner upon partner is meaningless, is to dispute those who have made a life study of the art of dancing, and are its most finished exponents. Likewise it is to deny what Mr. Mordkin declares his audiences *feel* and what

Miss Thuma declares *holds* her audiences. Surely the onlooker cannot be so far wrong when he sees and feels that it is the flush of passion, in every sinewy movement and in the dreamy eyes of the dancers that holds them as they hold each other in its dreamy whirls. However ignorant the dancers may be of their own feelings, they thus betray themselves to those who have eyes to see and minds to comprehend.

Passion the Basis of the Dance

There can be no doubt that passion is the basis of the round dance. I use the word "passion" advisedly—I do not say "lust."

No better proof of this is needed than that dancing is the only amusement which demands the commingling of sexes. Neither parlor dances nor public balls could be maintained any length of time if men and women were to disport themselves only with their own sex.

Can you imagine men, after working hard all day, arraying themselves in their dress suits, calling for each other in carriages or automobiles, and dancing through the long hours of the night together? The appeal of the dance is for the opposite sex. Even in gymnasiums where young women are taught the dancing step for physical development, handkerchiefs are frequently tied around the arms of one part-

ner that she may be recognized as taking the part of the gentleman.

If young ladies doubt the statement that passion is the basis of this pleasure they would be convinced of its truth if, instead of remaining in the house when they are escorted home the next time by their gentlemen friends, they could secretly follow them back to the restaurant or club-room where the young men are wont to gather, and, if possible, get near enough to hear what they say. They would not only be amazed but their cheeks would burn with mortification and shame as they heard the various comments. They would discover that the most popular dancer was the girl who yielded herself most perfectly to the embraces of her partners; that not only was this conducive to the most graceful dancing but also made her far and away the most attractive to them. Her popularity would be explained, and her vanity crushed, let us hope. Says Professor Faulkner, "She would hear such remarks as, "Miss —— is a perfect stick. I would not give a fig to dance with her. You can't arouse any more passion in her than you could in a putty man. To waltz with such as she is not what I go for." And this, remember, does not "refer to rough, uncultured men, but to those who are looked upon by society as most polished, refined, and desirable young men."

124 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

A dancing teacher, who is also an expert dancer, said, "It matters not how perfectly she knows and takes the steps, a dancer must yield herself perfectly both to her partner's embrace and also to his emotion. Until a girl *can* and *will* do this, she is regarded as a scrub by the male experts."

In a western college town not so very long ago, says a current Y. M. C. A. magazine, a dance was given by the Freshman class. After escorting his young lady home about midnight a freshman came in where three other college men were sitting, who roomed at the same club house, and immediately began to discuss the dance and the girls he danced with. "In a burst of physical passion he said: 'Oh, boys! You should have seen the "guinea" I danced with to-night; she was a "pippin" for fair and let me love her up in good shape. If I had had half a chance, I could have gone the limit, but I will get her to-morrow night.' "

Suppose this had been you, my young lady friend!

Yet this was said by a supposedly self-respecting young college man of a reputable young woman who had no idea of the thought that was committed against her, nor does she know it to this day!

Dis-creation vs. Re-creation

Prof. Amos R. Wells, editor of the *Christian Endeavor World*, says: "Dancing, like all Gaul, is divided into three parts; one-third is æsthetic, one-third is physical exercise, one-third is sensual. As to the first, the enjoyment of the fine music, of beautiful dresses, of forms and motion, these may all be had under better auspices than in the dance. A woodland ramble, a tennis tournament, an archery club, bicycle or horse-back riding, the concert-room—these furnish in God's own way tenfold more beauty to the eye and ear than is furnished by the finest ball given. As for the second third, the physical exercise, it is ill-timed, ill-enviored. Hot air, gaslight, excitement, midnight crowds, loaded supper-tables, noise,—these make a poor outfit for a gymnasium. Every investigator of the dance as now practiced in America, will agree that the third part into which this heathen Gaul is divided, is the stronghold of the province. The sensuality of the dance makes bold-eyed women of soft-eyed maidens; it makes swaggering rakes of pure lads; it changes love to flirtation and a game of flippant shrewdness; it makes applicable to manly America, Tolstoi's terrific strictures on ignoble Russia. It never *re-creates* a Christian; it *dis-creates* a Christian and *creates* a sensualist."

Says Dr. H. M. Tenney: "The testimony of one of our college presidents is, that of the students under his instruction the poorest scholars of the class have been the dancing scholars, and those students who have occasioned him the most trouble in the discipline of the college, have uniformly come from dancing communities. 'The tendency of these amusements,' he says, 'is always and everywhere, to create a distaste for mental application and honest work in those who love them; to make idle and frivolous and brainless men and women.' This is honest testimony, worthy of sober consideration. Having occasion to quote it in the presence of a well-known educator of Minnesota a few years since, he sent me a note from which I extract the following: 'After an experience of nearly a third of a century devoted to the cause of education, and especially to the management of institutions of learning for both sexes, I am fully prepared to confirm all that was stated by the college president referred to, with the added testimony that dancing and card-playing students are far less sensitive to moral influences and more liable to become subjects for discipline than are those who have not schooled themselves in those fashionable vices. I have also found during the nearly seven years of our struggles here to build up an institution worthy of the age, that

the social influences prevailing in this city among our youth, sustained too often by Christian parents, are among the most serious obstacles with which we have to contend.' Testimony to the contrary I am unable to quote, because I cannot find it."

Opinions of Dancing Masters

There is no question that even the dancing professors of the present day recognize the growing tendencies and immoralities of their art. The "United Professional Teachers of Dancing" at a recent convention in New York, discussed among other things the methods of correcting and reforming present-day dancing. One of them said this: "As a matter of fact, all dances need reforming when we witness the vulgar positions and nonsensical running and chasing around practiced in the ball-rooms of the Four Hundred to-day, and given the name of "round dance." It is no wonder that pastors and parents disapprove of the terpsichorean art. For the degenerated style of dancing of the present day, I have always held *that the college boy and the so-called educated classes are responsible*. The positions assumed by some of them in ball-rooms are positively indecent. The middle and poorer classes witness such things, and believing they are the fashion and correct, practice them and perhaps

exaggerate them. It is to rectify evils of that character and to elevate their art, that teachers of dancing are forming associations and holding conventions."

The "National Society of Dancing Masters" met in Boston some time ago for its twenty-third annual convention. One of them said this: "Dancing to-day is the most degrading thing on earth. It is demoralizing our young people. If it is allowed to go on, it will bring the country to ruin. The man who conducts the dance hall to-day is no better than a saloon-keeper." Other professors described them as "vulgar and improper," "indecent and disgusting."

The Presbyterian Board publishes the following: "The dancing school, instead of being called a school of easy manners ought rather to be styled a place where girls are taught to substitute the finesse of the coquette for true feminine delicacy, and where boys take their primary lessons in the arts of seduction."

Deterioration and Debauchery of the Dance

In a series of letters purported to be written by a brother to his sister, and printed in a current magazine, the brother says concerning the popular two-step: "Why, sis, it's an insult to call a thing like that a dance. There is no dancing in it: it is just a case of grab and slide

and shuffle: not a spark of poetic feeling about it; not the slightest talent is required to dance it. It is all right for 'kids' of eighteen or younger who know no better (?) but for a young woman and a young man to shuffle through such a fool thing is lowering to one of the most graceful of the social arts, to say nothing of lowering to one's self. I do ask that my dancing shall be reputable and graceful, and the two-step is neither one nor the other. It is a hideous and a rowdy shuffle. I don't wonder that Allen Dodworth, the father of American dancing, condemned it, and that at the last annual convention of dancing masters it was likewise condemned, and the teachers were asked not to give instructions in it any longer."

The round dance has deteriorated lower and lower until some of the most disgraceful dances have been introduced into this same polite society. At Palm Beach, two well-known society girls are said to have danced one of these vulgar dances on the sand, watched by a large crowd of people.

Society in New York has now taken up dances which would not be permitted by the police in the lowest theatres. One of these dances, the "Argentine Tango," is a dance of the natives of South America and is worse than the "Hooche Kooche" or the "Hoola Boola." The "Grizzly Bear," which gets its name from

the bear-like positions assumed by the dancers, originated with the negroes in San Francisco. Society has been shown the "grizzly" and is dancing it in its worst form with the bear-hug and all.

The most offensive feature of the "Turkey Trot" like the "Grizzly Bear" and the "Tango," it is said, results in the bodily movement of the dancers who in all the dances at a certain stage, get as closely together as it is possible to get and move.

A professor of dancing said: "Something will have to be done to prevent the spread of the popularity of these dances, as their effect tends towards immorality and is demoralizing the ball-room. I want it understood that I positively will not teach these dances. If society insists on taking these dances of the natives of the tropics and the Bowerys and of low places in Paris, dancing masters can not help it."

While these dances are not permitted in any of the public dancing places, they are danced by *fashionable people at private parties*, which goes to show that in so-called society the parlor dance has become even more demoralizing and dangerous than the public dance halls. What a warning to parents who advocate select parlor dancing!

The daring of the modern dance is perfectly

alarming. Under the guise of art dancers at a leading theatre in St. Louis danced with limbs unclad until stopped by the chief of police.

In Munich a Parisian dancer danced nude at a private entertainment of artists, was arrested by the police, and then defended in court by several of the artists on the ground that it was thoroughly artistic and respectable. One professor expressed the hope that the time would come when an advance in culture would enable the dancer to perform in public instead of privately. No wonder George Moore once exclaimed, "Blessed are the innocent, for theirs is the kingdom of Art."

Dancing the Cause of Immorality

Dancing, therefore, has become one of the greatest causes of immorality. Some one has said, "The dancing hall is the nursery of the divorce court and the training-ship of prostitution."

Prof. G. Stanley Hall is led to declare: "In place of the pristine power to express love, justice, penalty, mourning, fear, anger, consolation, divine service, symbolic and philosophic conception, and every industry and characteristic of life in pantomime and gesture, we have in the dance of the modern ball-room only a degenerate relic with at best but a very insig-

132 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

nificant cultural value, and too often stained with bad associations.”

Many other physiologists and psychologists in our universities, who have studied the question from a purely technical standpoint, go farther, and say that the ecstasy of the enjoyment of the dance, in the final analysis (after due allowance is made for the pleasure from the rhythmical movements and the rapturous music) is the *ecstasy of physical passion!* The flushed cheek, the languid eye, the fast-heaving bosom and half-recumbent position of the young woman, has been the signal to her partner that she is past her own control and can be swayed by his will. Woe to the girl, then, whose partner is not pure and high-minded!

A Blastèd Life

Mr. T. A. Faulkner, a converted dancing master, tells a tragical story that happened in Los Angeles a few years ago. It is of a beautiful girl deliberately singled out on the street, tracked to her home, to her place of business, and to her church, by a scoundrel bent on her overthrow. He enlisted the co-operation of a dancing master. She was invited to his dancing school. She consulted her pastor as to whether she should go, and consented only when he said he saw no harm. God pity such a care-

less pastor! Here she met the man who had planned it all.

She was invited to a grand ball, induced to drink, and ruined. The awful remorse gnawed upon her more and more. In time she was to become a mother. Shunned by all her old friends and companions, in despair she committed a greater crime and through it sealed her doom. When dying she sent for Mr. Faulkner. "I am so glad," she said, "that you came to see me, so glad to know that you are to expose the evil which buds in the dance hall. Do not delay your work. I have prayed God to spare my life that I might go and warn young girls against that which has made such a wreck of my once pure and happy life. When I entered the dancing school I was as innocent as a child, and free from sin and sorrow, but under its influence and in its associations I lost my innocence, my purity, my all. Promise me that you will go before the world and speak out a warning against the dance, and try to save young girls from the sin, the disgrace, and destruction dancing has brought upon me."

"I know the man," says he, "who was the perpetrator of the crime which was the cause of this sad death. He, to-day, instead of being hung for murder, as he so richly deserved, is a leader in society. His name often appears in the social columns of the daily papers of Los

Angeles as the leader of some fashionable dancing party or Kirmess. He has been the winner of several prizes in dancing, in fact, is an elegant dancer and is wealthy. These two facts gain for him admission to whatsoever society he chooses to enter."

Testimony of the Clergy

The testimony of ministers and priests who have to do with the spiritual welfare of young people is to the same effect. Archbishop Spaulding of New York is reported as saying that nineteen out of every twenty cases of lapsed virtue are traceable to the round dance. The Catholic confessional affords great opportunity for discovering the real condition of people's morals, and such testimony as this is startling.

Said Father Lockman, a priest in Wisconsin, "After twenty years' experience in the confessional, I have come to some certain opinions on the question of dancing among young people. It is my observation that many a young girl has been corrupted by the evil influence of the dance. If the fathers and mothers who think their children entirely innocent, could listen to some of the things that come to my ears as a priest, they would shed bitter tears."

Bishop Gore, of the Episcopal Church of New York State, said, "The gross, debasing waltz

would not be tolerated another year if Christian mothers in our communion would only set their faces against it, and remove their daughters from its contaminations and their sons from that contempt of womanhood and womanly modesty which it begets.”

Every religious denomination of importance in the United States (except the Mormon church) at one time or another has gone on record against the dance. Space forbids the printing of resolution after resolution of these many ecclesiastical bodies.

The Opinions of Other Trustworthy Witnesses

Boards of Education in many places, as the one in Elgin, Ill., have issued orders to the pupils in the public schools forbidding dances under school auspices, considering them destructive of good morals.

The universal testimony of Rescue Homes where unfortunate girls are cared for, is that the dance hall is the chief cause of the defections in girls' morals.

The Matron of the Woman's Home in Geneva, Ill., is reported as saying that over eighty-seven per cent. of the girls in that institution have confessed that their first downward steps were taken in the dance hall. One of the girls, when questioned how she came to be in the Geneva Home, said that she was given tickets

to a dance hall; when she got there she drank, because she would not be considered a "good fellow" if she did not.

The steps to ruin are very plain; first, the dance hall; second, intoxicating liquors; third, the house of refuge, if not the house of ill-fame.

The Chicago Vice Commission charges the dance hall with being one of the chief contributors to the delinquency of youth in that city, and the feeder of public and private prostitution. In the year 1907 more than 3,700 special bar permits were issued by the city of Chicago, practically all of which were to be issued in dance halls or in similar places. Think what destruction of young womanhood this spells!

Two Frightful Stories

In illustration of the corruption of the dance in respectable communities, I have the following incident from a distinguished Presbyterian minister in Ohio, who knew all the facts connected with it. It happened in a village in a farming community, composed of fine old families. Many of the young men and young women of the community had been away to college, and there were among the persons involved some who were —— college graduates. You will notice it did not happen in a city with its allurements or high-toned balls, but in a rural

community; and that it did not take place among blasé society people nor tempted shop girls, but among cultured and college young people.

“During the autumn a small circle of young people organized a private dancing club, and during the winter held these dances at the homes of their parents at intervals of perhaps one week. In the spring the pastor of the church came to his brother with a heavy heart. Of the number of young women, there were seven who were about to become mothers, and some of them were members of his church. Every one was from a fine family. The pastor said they confessed it had come about as a direct result of the winter of dancing.” The fact that there was no tough class in this community, that they were above the average intelligence, and that they were supposed to be of the purest moral characters, reveals the subtle snare found in the round dance wherever it is indulged. Neither heredity, education, culture, nor social standing were barriers high enough to prevent the demon of passion overleaping the walls which are supposed to be sufficient protection for the average moral person.

A pastor in an Illinois mining town some years ago, said that a big dance hall was run one winter in connection with a saloon. In the rear of the dance hall was a barn. One night,

after the girls had become inflamed with passion and intoxicated with liquor, they were taken to the barn. The result of this one night's debauchery was the birth of sixteen illegitimate children. Many of the girls were farmers' daughters. None of them prior to this night had been considered immoral. They were just ordinary young people, trapped by the dance and liquor and smirched by lust that put its incubus of shame upon innocent babyhood.

Statistics gathered by settlement workers and civic bodies over the United States corroborate the statement that the dance hall is responsible for the downfall of the vast majority of the inmates of houses of prostitution.

As has been remarked, no social amusement grants such liberties as the dance. What would not only be prohibited elsewhere, but, on the other hand, would be most scathingly rebuked by refined society, is condoned and approved on the dance floor. For a young man to take such liberties in the parlor of his dancing partner would not only be the grossest of insults, but would likely bring the police patrol. No young man who calls himself decent would think of being introduced to a young woman in a parlor and within fifteen minutes taking such liberties with her person.

It is passing strange that what a young

woman would not permit in her parlor to a self-respecting young man six months after such introduction, nor at any time unless because of an acknowledged reciprocating love she will permit on the dancing floor after the briefest kind of an acquaintance. Certainly there is nothing in all the realm of human relations that offers such unparalleled opportunities to the young man with sinister motives and wicked heart.

The Dance and the White Slave Traffic

The strength of the so-called "White Slave Traffic" is in the dance and the dance hall. It is a known fact to the police of cities that the "cadets"—but another name for "procurers"—haunt the dance halls, there to select the victims for their nefarious business. Unsophisticated young women, simply desiring amusement and recreation from their arduous daily toil, are trapped like flies in a spider's web.

Rev. Ernest A. Bell, Superintendent of the Midnight Mission, Chicago, one of the foremost in the fight against the White Slave Traffic, whose daily contact with the victims of vice, and whose Christlike labors have resulted in the reclamation of many "lost" girls, wrote me as follows:

As a faithful witness I must testify that dancing, drinking, and debauchery are the underworld triplets.

140 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

These three evils in the hands of the vice traffickers are the chief means of destroying girls and debauching young men.

The public dance halls are invariably bad, and are recognized recruiting grounds for procurers. They weaken self-control in both sexes, and feed the brothels alike with victims and patrons.

The select private dance is dangerous. When I sought the advice of Mr. ———, whom you and I love and honor as a man of generous views, he told me that he had allowed his son to take lessons in a very select dancing school in ———, with disastrous consequences. He said of dancing, "The girls, being purer, may escape, but the boys are so inflamed that they go home by way of the brothel."

A musician recently reported to his pastor in ———, that he had not slept the night before, after his dancing teacher, a woman, had voluntarily taught him how to gain wicked control of a dancing partner.

Very heartily yours,

ERNEST A. BELL.

Nor is this all. These procurers travel the country over, going into towns, hamlets, and even smaller country districts. They are gentlemanly in bearing, they wear spotless linen, and up-to-date clothes, perhaps the insignia of some fraternal order. They introduce themselves to the young men of the community as traveling men, and in turn are introduced to the finest and fairest young women. These human vultures who, under no pretence whatever,

would be admitted to these young women's parlors are given, through society's formal introduction, *carte blanche* privilege to encircle the waists of these young women in the dance within a few moments after such introduction. Their gentlemanliness, their grace in dancing, their conversational powers are attractive, to say the least, if not alluring, to the inexperienced girl. The dance gives them ample opportunity for gracious compliments, and even flattery, for an extra pressure upon hand and waist, for unexpected excitement of the passions, for refreshments, and a quiet tête-à-tête between dances, for inquiring into the girl's home relations, her aspirations, her plans, etc. If the girl is dissatisfied with her home, and is desirous of going to the city for employment, information is given her and plans are suggested. Frequently friendships thus begun are followed by brief courtships and mock marriages. Lodge balls, charity balls, and other dances are now known to be used by these villains for their nefarious business. If ever a young woman is allured by them to board a train, she is as good as lost, for in spite of the vigilance now instituted by the railroad companies and the Young Women's Christian Associations of the various cities, the girls are accompanied or met by the procurers and driven away in closed

142 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

cabs to the brothels. When once there, there is practically no escape.

General Theodore Bingham, formerly Commissioner of Police in New York, recently declared, "There are fifty thousand young women and girls lost in the United States every year. They simply drop out of existence." Some of these find honorable employment, but the majority are swallowed up in the maw of the monster vice. It is estimated that at least sixty thousand are required every year to fill up the ranks of professional prostitutes. It was reported recently that within a period of thirty days seventeen hundred girls had been lost between New York and Chicago, all of whom were still missing.

To know that young women thus expose themselves to these frightful temptations and possible ruin can be explained only by their dense ignorance.

That the business does prey upon the trusting innocence and dense ignorance of womanhood is the most pathetic side of this peril. It is because women do not understand the real meaning of the dance, and are slow to believe such facts as are printed herein, that the traffic in blood goes on and so many thousands each year are sinking hopelessly to despair.

There is nothing that these human vampires so desire as to have respectable people approve

of and even participate in dancing, for they know that as long as decent people do not know and at the same time are accessible through the dance, they are bound to continue to succeed in securing victims.

In a personal letter to me, Mr. Faulkner enclosed the following letter sent him after he had written his startling book. No more tragical story could be told of a victim of girlish innocence and motherly ignorance. The poor girl was more sinned against than sinning. May its reading stir the heart of every reader!

After reading your book, I take the liberty to address a letter to you in which I will give you a brief sketch of my life and ball-room experience. If you can use it to advantage, do so. I thank God there is one courageous enough to publish the ball-room as you have portrayed it in your small book.

I was born in Boston, Mass. My parents were Methodists. They moved to Cleveland, Ohio, when I was quite young. For some reason unknown to me, they united with the Presbyterian church in Cleveland. They knew very little about the sins of the world. They took great care in raising me: in fact, very few girls have the careful training I received. The only place I went was to church, and mother was always with me: I knew no wrong. I was as pure as an angel when mother wanted me to learn to dance. She said it would make me more graceful, that the members of our church had formed a select dance club and wanted me to join them. Oh! I would to God I had read such

144 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

an article on the ball-room as you have published. It would have saved me and many another pure and innocent soul from disgrace and a life of shame, to which the ball-room leads.

How well I remember the first party! I was dressed with my arms perfectly bare and a very low-necked dress. That evening was the first time a man encircled my waist with his arm and drew me up to his bosom. I was shocked and mortified at this, the waltz position. But I saw all the rest were assuming the same, and before the evening was over I began to like the dance. I did not then know whether it was the dance I liked or being enveloped in a man's arms in the space of a waltz. I remember the one I enjoyed dancing with most was the Sunday-school superintendent! Sweet emotions would creep over me as we swayed back and forth over the floor. He always had plenty of partners,—the girls said they enjoyed dancing with him so much. The young man who could not arouse those emotions, we would not care to dance with the second time. Without that, the waltz was very tiresome. On the following Sunday we could not look one another in the eyes with the same frankness as before. Even up to this time I knew not that I was doing wrong. Mother was always present: through her ignorance and innocence she could not see that I was being hurled to perdition,—so I gave full sway to the dance.

One night I attended a grand charity ball given to raise money for church purposes. Under the influence of the emotions derived from the dance, another girl and myself fell victims of the ball-room that night.

On returning home late I found mother quite worried; to her inquiries I told her my first lie. Of course she believed me. On the following Sabbath I could not attend my Sunday-school, I had started on my way to ruin. I then vowed I would never dance again, but to my surprise my parents had arranged for a select dance to be given in my own home, and the brute who ruined me—my private dancing teacher—was there. I was compelled to treat him with respect. He had me at his mercy. To my horror I soon learned that it had been found out that I had lost my character. I was excluded from society. Every finger was pointed at me with shame,—I became desperate. Finally I met the one who was the cause of my trouble; he offered to take me to Chicago and marry me, to which I consented. He took me to a house in Chicago, and left me saying he would soon return with a minister. It was the last I ever saw of him. I soon found out I was an inmate of a disreputable house. I could not leave, having no place to go. I was out of money, with character gone, so I sank to the lowest depths of hell, where many another innocent soul has gone before me. I learned from my landlady that the ball-room Apollo, the private dancing-teacher, the very one who led me to ruin, was in her employ. While I was in the house, two other girls were brought there who met their ruin as I did,—in the ball-room. And the men who were the ball-room Apollos received their commission. All this happened inside of eight months after my own mother sent me on my road to ruin by having me learn to dance.

But I praise God for the Salvation Army lassies

146 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

and their Rescue Homes! I was rescued by them, saved by the blood of Jesus; I am a worker for the Master to-day, having a good Christian home. I hope this will be a warning to some mother!"

The ignorant mother, the innocent girl, the worldly Sunday-school superintendent, the private dancing lessons, the careless church members, the select home dance, the church charity ball, the vile dancing-teacher, the house of prostitution, were all guilty together,—who shall say which will be the most culpable before God at the judgment?

The following indictment against "sin" also forcefully describes the cunning and deceptive character of the dance:

"Sin is composed of nought but subtle wiles,
It fawns and flatters and betrays by smiles;
'Tis like the panther, or the crocodile,
It seems to love and promises no wile,
It hides its sting, seems harmless as a dove,
It hugs the soul and hates when most vows love.
It plays the tyrant most by gilded pills,
It secretly ensnares the soul it kills.
Sin's promises—They all deceitful be,
Doth promise wealth, but pays us poverty;
Doth promise honor, but doth pay us shame;
And quite bereaves a man of his good name;
Doth promise pleasure, but doth pay us sorrow,
Doth promise life to-day, pays death to-mor-
row.

No thief so vile, nor treacherous as sin,
Whom fools do hug and take much pleasure
in."

Attempts at Reform

'Attempts are being repeatedly made to sterilize and purify the dance. I have friends in social settlements who are trying the experiment. They feel that the natural craving for such amusement should be met by furnishing it with proper environment. I appreciate most heartily the sincerity of these attempts, but I can but feel they are dangerous. *The essentially wrong principle abides, whatever the conditions.*

Recently even a church in Chicago began holding weekly balls. The opening night the pastor declared, as he looked upon three hundred gay dancers, "It is the proudest moment of my life. Dancing is, in my opinion, the greatest asset the church has to-day. These weekly dances will be beneficial in approximately the same measures as will my sermons."

As sincere as this minister evidently is, it seems pathetic that he should be so stupid as to declare virtue's greatest enemy the church's greatest asset, and that he should not see that his sermons must have tragically degenerated if they now make an appeal on a level with the dance. How the heart of Christ must ache

148 Across the Dead Line of Amusements

over such lowering of standards and catering to worldliness to help conserve the young life of the city. With the appetite created and the indulgence fostered by a pastor and a church, who can predict the ultimate consequences of such shepherding of the sheep and feeding of the lambs?

Discussing the dance as I have from the moral standpoint, it seems to me unnecessary to discuss it from the higher Christian standpoint and standards of holy living and influence. If dancing is not moral, then it immediately passes out of the realm and argument of casuistry and the plea for abstinence for the sake of the weak brother.

If these arguments have been fairly proven then no person who has the simplest notions of right and the ordinary standards of morals can indulge conscientiously and modestly.

To the Christians at Rome, in a city where every form of iniquity ran riot, dancing not least, Paul wrote: "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, let us walk decently as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

