

POPULAR AMUSEMENTS.

A Clerical Defense of the Theatre and Opera.

From the Chicago Post, Nov. 9.

Rev. Robert Laird Collier, pastor of the Church of the Messiah (Unitarian), delivered last night what might be called a "sensational" sermon on the subject—"The Relations of the Church to Popular Amusement." He announced his text to be in First Corinthians, seventh chapter and thirty-first verse, "Use this world as not abusing it," and proceeded to take the ground, which probably has never before been assumed in the Chicago pulpit, that the drama and the opera are harmless and proper amusements for Christians as well as for others: the reverend speaker, it is well known, is himself an occasional visitor to the higher places of dramatic amusement.

After first referring to the fact that the theatre is generally denounced by the evangelical sects—although they did not, he claimed, show why they were sinful—and then dwelling upon the premise that the American people are overworked and need more amusement, the speaker proceeded to speak of the drama and the opera. The following are extracts from his remarks:— "I recognize as a universal in the race the dramatic instinct. I have traced, in this people, the entire history, in brief, in summary, of the origin and history of the drama. There is no need of that to-night. The drama is as ancient as the race. Furthermore, much of the biblical literature, in its spirit and in its form, is dramatic. I am not quite sure but that the very first chapters in Genesis are dramatic; I am quite sure that Job is dramatic; that Ruth is; that Esther is dramatic. Shakespeare, the peerless poet of centuries, had no fiction in the world and no dramatic history, had no plot been for the dramatic instinct and aptitude of the Milton. The grandest poets that God has given to the world have been its dramatic poets. And, furthermore, human character has its highest representations in the drama. I confess that I never saw such power; I never remarked such nature in any Christian pulpit that it was every my privilege to sit under as in Joseph Jefferson's "Rip Van Winkle." It is nature, not art. So simple; so true; so beautiful; so moral. No sermon scarcely written in the world, except that of Christ, when He came to the adulterous woman, ever illustrated the power of the drama and the opera to win the wanderer, as that beautiful little piece, so perfectly rendered by this genius which God has given to illustrate in the drama the power of love over the sins of the race. I wonder who among the Ministerial Union ever saw Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle?" Let us give to these friends the advantage of our judgment of their ignorance. Ristori, Rachel, Booth, Murdoch, especially Davenport and Jefferson, are all God's gifts to us to be cherished. It is the educator. It is in no wise to be apologized for.

And in regard to the opera, I need only, I think, say that, so far as the legitimate opera is concerned, any one who objects to it, on moral grounds, must either be ignorant of it, or I think, for the most part, that those who object to the opera are—there certainly must be a moral weakness in the nature of such objectors. To say that the opera is corrupting is to say the most irrational and foolish thing that man is capable of. I say that a man must be ignorant of what the opera is; must have been wholly without the knowledge of it, or else brought to its hearing a lascivious nature to begin with. I admit that very many excellent persons do not enjoy the opera. Not only excellent people morally, but cultivated people intellectually, do not enjoy the opera. Many of our finest minds go to the opera and come away, feeling it was a waste of time, and who can enjoy it in any way, or who can be brought to feel a profound sorrow for such people, because they do not know the infinite delights and joys of which, by their lack of musical culture, they are deprived. But it is their duty simply to say they do not like it. It is a sorry religion that rejects it on the score of principle; because they cannot they won't let anybody else. The music of the opera is the principal thing with people that attend. The score is nothing, with many it is absolutely nothing, if they can catch the passion of the music. And the more they know of the drama and the opera, the more they say, once for all, that all dressing is conventional. If it had the sanction of long usage, the dress of the extreme dancer would in no wise be considered vulgar. And then we are not to confound the incidental with the fundamental. This is incidental, and I do always feel myself that the management of our theatres and operas mean to catch the low and vulgar by this dancing of the legs, and to treat the high and noble by the words of endorsement, as I have no sort of personal fellowship or respect for them who, if you take the conventional opinion of men and women who consent to it, are not fit companions for our sons and daughters. But let me relate what the gentlemanly manager of Wood's Museum said to me within the past six months:—"Sir, I never bring a piece upon my stage that I do not use my pencil very freely upon." Speaking of the depraving tendency and the downward tendency of tragedy and comedy, he said, "I could not bring a single piece that had not been played before the elite of London fifty and sixty years ago. I could not bring to my place an audience that would not hiss it off the stage;" and I tell you, furthermore, what you may always remark, that whatever is proper, and high and elevating, wherever there is a moral sentiment that is lofty and noble, it uniformly receives the approval of the audience; and it has not been my misfortune to be in a theatre for several years past where anything low and mean and depraving was not hissed. Of course, I attended only the better sort. I then wish to say that the music of the opera would be lost to the world, as it could take no other possible form. It elevates and refines the taste and spirit. I really don't know but that it would be a very sensible thing if our congregations would make it a stipulation, when they engage their ministers, that they would accept a season ticket once a year to the opera, to cultivate their taste in musical matters.

The ATLANTIC CABLE.—An official statement has been recently published, giving the average number of messages sent every day over the Atlantic Cable and the average daily receipts during the existence of the different rates of charges. When the communication was first opened between Ireland and Newfoundland, £20 was charged for a message of twenty words of five letters, but this rate has now been reduced to £3, and in future the restriction as to the length of the words will be removed. Under the original tariff 23 messages, paying £505, were on an average transmitted every day, and under the present tariff, 163 messages, paying £501. Although the proportion between the reduction of the rate and the increase of the business is not exactly the same, yet there is sufficient encouragement to still further diminish the cost of transmitting messages. The American managers believe that the price should be decreased until the point is reached when both cables will be fully employed.

THE DAILY EVENING TELEGRAPH PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1898.

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RAILROAD LINES.

NORTH PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD.

LEHIGH ROUTE.—Shortest and most direct line to Bethlehem, Easton, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, Hazleton, Pottsville, Wilkes-Barre, Mahanoy City, Mount Carmel, Pottsville, Scranton, Carbondale, and the points in the Lehigh and Wyoming Coal Regions. Passenger Depot in Philadelphia, N. W. corner of FIFTH and MARKET STS.—On and after NOVEMBER 15, 1898, the following trains will leave Philadelphia, N. W. corner of FIFTH and MARKET STS., as follows:—

At 7:00 A. M.—Morning Express for Bethlehem and Easton, connecting at Bethlehem with Lehigh Valley and Lehigh Valley Expresses for Easton, Allentown, Catawago, Blainville, Mauch Chunk, Pottsville, Scranton, Hazleton, White Haven, Wilkes-Barre, Pottsville, and all points in Lehigh and Wyoming Valleys, also in connection with Lehigh Valley Express for Mahanoy City, Mauch Chunk, Pottsville, Scranton, Carbondale, and the points in the Lehigh and Wyoming Coal Regions. Arrives at Mauch Chunk at 11:00 A. M., at Pottsville at 11:30 A. M., at Scranton at 12:00 P. M., at Carbondale at 12:30 P. M., at Mahanoy City at 1:00 P. M., at Pottsville at 1:30 P. M., at Wilkes-Barre at 2:00 P. M., at Hazleton at 2:30 P. M., at Easton at 3:00 P. M., at Bethlehem at 3:30 P. M.

At 10:00 A. M.—Accommodation for Pottsville, Scranton, Carbondale, and the points in the Lehigh and Wyoming Coal Regions. Arrives at Pottsville at 12:00 P. M., at Scranton at 12:30 P. M., at Carbondale at 1:00 P. M., at Mahanoy City at 1:30 P. M., at Pottsville at 2:00 P. M., at Wilkes-Barre at 2:30 P. M., at Hazleton at 3:00 P. M., at Easton at 3:30 P. M., at Bethlehem at 4:00 P. M.

At 1:00 P. M.—Accommodation for Pottsville, Scranton, Carbondale, and the points in the Lehigh and Wyoming Coal Regions. Arrives at Pottsville at 3:00 P. M., at Scranton at 3:30 P. M., at Carbondale at 4:00 P. M., at Mahanoy City at 4:30 P. M., at Pottsville at 5:00 P. M., at Wilkes-Barre at 5:30 P. M., at Hazleton at 6:00 P. M., at Easton at 6:30 P. M., at Bethlehem at 7:00 P. M.

At 4:00 P. M.—Accommodation for Pottsville, Scranton, Carbondale, and the points in the Lehigh and Wyoming Coal Regions. Arrives at Pottsville at 6:00 P. M., at Scranton at 6:30 P. M., at Carbondale at 7:00 P. M., at Mahanoy City at 7:30 P. M., at Pottsville at 8:00 P. M., at Wilkes-Barre at 8:30 P. M., at Hazleton at 9:00 P. M., at Easton at 9:30 P. M., at Bethlehem at 10:00 P. M.

At 7:00 P. M.—Night Express for Pottsville, Scranton, Carbondale, and the points in the Lehigh and Wyoming Coal Regions. Arrives at Pottsville at 9:00 P. M., at Scranton at 9:30 P. M., at Carbondale at 10:00 P. M., at Mahanoy City at 10:30 P. M., at Pottsville at 11:00 P. M., at Wilkes-Barre at 11:30 P. M., at Hazleton at 12:00 P. M., at Easton at 12:30 P. M., at Bethlehem at 1:00 A. M.

RAILROAD LINES.

READING RAILROAD.—GREAT TRUNK LINE.

LEHIGH ROUTE.—Shortest and most direct line to Bethlehem, Easton, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, Hazleton, Pottsville, Wilkes-Barre, Mahanoy City, Mount Carmel, Pottsville, Scranton, Carbondale, and the points in the Lehigh and Wyoming Coal Regions. Passenger Depot in Philadelphia, N. W. corner of FIFTH and MARKET STS.—On and after NOVEMBER 15, 1898, the following trains will leave Philadelphia, N. W. corner of FIFTH and MARKET STS., as follows:—

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AUCTION SALES.

LIPPINCOTT, SON & CO., AUCTIONEERS.

On Monday, November 14, 1898, at 10 o'clock, at the stock, goods, lease, and fixtures of a fancy goods and variety store, comprising the usual assortment of goods, to-wit:—

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AUCTION SALES.

BUNTING, DURBIN & CO., AUCTIONEERS.

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On Monday, November 14, 1898, at 10 o'clock, at the stock, goods, lease, and fixtures of a fancy goods and variety store, comprising the usual assortment of goods, to-wit:—