

**SAINTS AND SINNERS, A NEW
AND ORIGINAL DRAMA OF
MODERN ENGLISH MIDDLE-
CLASS LIFE, IN FIVE ACTS**

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Saints and Sinners, a New and Original Drama of Modern English Middle-Class Life, in Five Acts by Henry Arthur Jones

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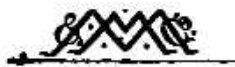
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HENRY ARTHUR JONES

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A NEW AND ORIGINAL DRAMA
OF
MODERN ENGLISH MIDDLE-CLASS LIFE

IN FIVE ACTS

BY
HENRY ARTHUR JONES
AUTHOR OF
'THE DANCING GIRL,' 'THE MIDDLEMAN,' 'JUDAH,'
AND 'WEALTH'



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PREFACE


I

THE passing of the American Copyright Bill is a fact of the highest import for English playwrights and for the future of the English drama,—that is, if the English drama has a future. It will indeed afford an accurate gauge of any individual playwright's pretensions, and of the general health and condition of the national drama. Hitherto the publication of an English play would have incurred the forfeiture of the American stage-rights, in many cases a very serious pecuniary loss. It would also have been attended with a very grave artistic risk. The best American managers—those who are capable of doing justice to the author in the production of a play—would naturally have refused to touch it unless their stage-rights were protected. It would have been presented,

if at all, under the worst auspices, and with the worst and most haphazard stage management and surroundings.

Under these circumstances it is a question whether the placing of a play in the hands of the reading public would have compensated for its loss of influence in its legitimate sphere on the stage, and for the discredit brought on the author by inadequate and irresponsible production and performance.

Further, in the present uncertain relations of English literature and the modern drama, an author may be excused for having some doubts as to whether the interests of either are to be served by the publication of plays whose perusal may only serve to show how sharp is the division between them. The American Copyright Bill removes these disabilities, and makes it inexcusable to yield to these doubts. If, from this time forward, a playwright does not publish within a reasonable time after the theatrical production of his piece, it will be an open confession that his work was a thing of the theatre merely, needing its garish artificial light and surroundings, and not daring to face the calm air and cold daylight of print. And further, if a custom does not now arise in England, such as prevails



in France, of publishing successful plays, and if a general reading public is not gradually drawn round the drama, then it will be a sign that our stage remains in the same state of intellectual paralysis that has afflicted it all the century. Our drama will continue to be a "Slough of Despond" in the wide well-tilled field of English literature, an irreclaimable bog wherein, as in John Bunyan's, "twenty thousand cartloads of wholesome instructions" have been thrown without improving the way.

But it will be urged that many successful plays will not "read" at all, while in many others the passages that charm us most in the study are those that bore us most on the stage, and the passages that do not strike us at all in reading sometimes come out in letters of fire at the theatre. This brings me to remark what it is one of the chief objects of this preface to enforce and illustrate, namely, that there is a certain very strong antagonism between the literary and theatrical elements of a play. Very often this antagonism is more apparent than real, very often it is the just rebellion of the theatrical ass (I am speaking quite figuratively) against carrying a load of literary luggage that does not belong to him; very often it is his native friskiness refusing to carry any