

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE STAGE

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The Truth about the Stage by Corin

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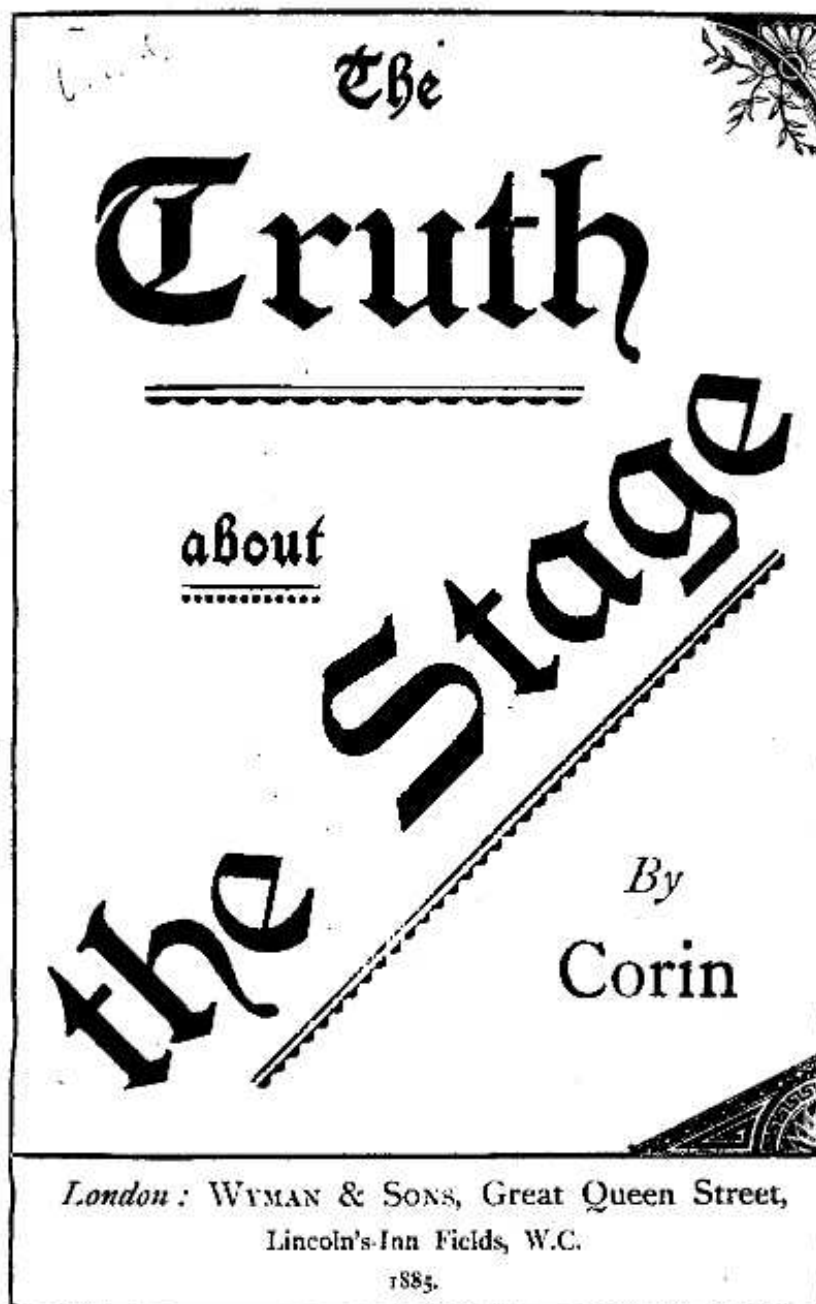
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CORIN

**THE TRUTH ABOUT
THE STAGE**

PRICE ONE SHILLING.



Truth

The

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about

the Stage

By

Corin

London: WYMAN & SONS, Great Queen Street,
Lincoln's-Inn Fields, W.C.

1885.

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THE
TRUTH
ABOUT
THE STAGE.

By CORIN.

"SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THE STATE OF DENMARK."
Shakespeare.

LONDON:
WYMAN & SONS, 74-76, GREAT QUEEN STREET,
LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS.

1885.

PREFACE.

THIS book has been written with a twofold object. Firstly, to point out the temptations and dangers which beset aspirants for histrionic fame, and to warn stage-struck youths and maidens, who wish to quit the sphere of life in which circumstances have placed them, for the perilous and precarious vocation of a player.

Too many persons are, moth-like, dazzled by the artificial glitter of the stage. Theatrical life is surrounded with a halo of romance, which is rarely dispelled until the fatal step is taken and when it is too late to turn back.

After twenty years' experience in London and the provinces, I have come to the conclusion that the ephemeral glory of the stage is not worth giving the best years of one's life to obtain.

The actor has no social status, his calling does not rank with the other professions, and only the few who advance to the front are recognized beyond the confines of the theatrical world.

The black sheep of the stage, sketched in the following pages, are typical of at least sixty per cent. of the players of this country. I have been careful to

"Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice,"

and I am able to prove every statement I have made with regard to the Bohemianism which characterises the larger section of the dramatic "profession," and the low standard of morality that unfortunately exists.

On the other hand, I have acknowledged the noble efforts of the few high-minded managers, actors, and actresses, who are doing their utmost to improve the stage by imparting a healthful tone to the drama and its exponents.

It is also my earnest desire, as will be found in Chapters XI. and XII., to direct public attention to the want of a proper training-college for actors and actresses, based on a system hitherto unattempted.

For the reformation of the stage all conscientious artistes must fervently pray. None, save the pariahs of the theatrical world and the vampires who fasten upon ambitious amateurs, and marshal them to ruin, will regret the day when all theatres are used for legitimate purposes only, and when the love of dramatic art for the sake of its elevating influence shall be the only passport to the British stage.

CORIN.

LONDON, 1855.

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THE TRUTH ABOUT THE STAGE.

CHAPTER I.

MY FIRST INTRODUCTION TO THE STAGE.

My First Pantomime—A Stage-struck Infant—Kean Redivivus—A Pilgrimage to the London Theatres—A Manager's Advice—The Theatrical Organ—The Fatal Advertisement—My First Engagement—The Theatre Royal, Tullibody—The Drunken Tragedian—A Swindling Manager—Lodging Hunting—A Scotch Shanty—Sanitary Affairs in the Highlands—The Dismal Comedian—A Versatile Actor—Sandy Macdonald's Story—A Wonderful Theatrical Poster—The Rival Gaffs—Refreshments—The Struggle between a Man and a Donkey—Wreck of the Royal Theatre of Varieties—A Conspiracy to Swindle—Scotch Cooking—A Fluffy Rehearsal—The Scenery of a "Fit-up"—An Inhuman Father—The Fate of the Daughter of the Drunken Tragedian—A Mushroom Manager and his Victims—Immerality of Low Actors and Actresses—The Treasury—Half-a-crown for a Week's Work—A Scotch Sabbath—The Drunkards' Train—Theatrical Wardrobes—The Performance that did not come off—An Audience of Two—The Behaviour of the Dead-heads—Our Visit to the Town Hall—The Christy Minstrels—A Pack of Drunkards, and Worse—My Escape from Tullibody.

MY dear mother little knew the harm she was doing to her favourite son, one afternoon, thirty-five years ago, when she coaxed him to sleep, in order that he should keep his eyes open during the performance of the pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Irwell, that evening.