

Play Is Unclean

**Dixon's "Clansman" Should
Not Have Been Permitted
to Play in Seattle or Any-
where Else.**

**"Tainted Money" the Only
Phrase to Apply to Profits
Taken From Anything So
Utterly Degrading.**

"THE CLANSMAN" should not have been permitted to play in Seattle. It should never have been permitted to play on any stage in America.

The readers of the Dramatic Department of The Times will naturally ask, why did not The Times say that the play was objectionable last Monday? Simply because that is the very thing "The Clansman" management wanted The Times to do.

The play as produced here, and we imagine, as it was produced everywhere in the country, considered solely as a piece of dramatic construction, is worthless. The company playing in it was remarkable solely for its mediocrity.

We have then but one thing left to consider—the subject matter. About this the less said the better. The play is founded upon and revolves around a crime. The worst crime the world has ever known. That a young person could witness "The Clansman" and not be harmed thereby is incredible.

In elaborating the revolting theme of the play its author and its producers dare to have enacted on the stage two scenes for which both these primarily guilty parties and the very actors who appear in them should be ridden on rails after having been carefully and considerably tarred and feathered.

Men who take money from such a source may not be worse, but they are certainly no better than those who profit by the social evil.

"The Clansman" organization deliberately attempts to excite the negroes of the communities in which it is to appear. If it can create enough disturbance to make the colored people talk of injunctions or race demonstrations it has accomplished its purpose. Carefully worded advance notices explain how unobjectionable the play is in just the fashion Shakespeare's immortal "Antony" tells the people of Rome how honorable is "Brutus"! And the theatre is jammed!

The net result—injunctions never quite striking fire, or when they do, flashing vainly against good lawyers—is big business everywhere. The better element of every community stays consistently away. The big audiences are made up almost exclusively of people who do not attend legitimate attractions or who at the best turn out for only the most lurid melodramas and most boisterous burlesques.

Had The Times printed the truth about "The Clansman" last Monday it would have contributed directly towards filling the play's unclean coffers. Every possible effort was made by "The Clansman" management to persuade The Times either to say that the play might cause ill feeling among the colored people of the city, or that it was about a theme which should not be tolerated upon the stage, or when it came to the dramatic criticism to lay bare to the public just what the play was about. These efforts failed.

The Times had even considered refusing to mention the name of the company in the paper till after its departure from the city. This course would have been turned to "The Clansman's" advantage, however, so after careful consideration the following review was prepared and printed:

"Thomas Dixon's play, 'The Clansman,' much heralded and much discussed, thanks to a well-organized, hard-working press bureau, began a week's engagement at The Moore last night before a large audience.

"Beyond very pretty stage settings, a remarkable child-actress, and the fact that it is a dollar show playing in a two-dollar house, there is very little to attract interest in the production. To a student of reconstruction days the historical accuracy of the work is interesting and the staging and lighting of the last scene of the third act is both impressive and beautiful.

"From the standpoint of dramatic construction 'The Clansman' could hardly be more shaky. The comedy, saved only by good acting on the part of Barry Maxwell as 'Nelse' and Maude Durand as 'Eve,' is forced—literally dragged in by the ears. The part of 'Lynch,' the mulatto lieutenant-governor, is well handled by Charles J. Wilson, and M. J. Jordan lends dignity and conviction (save the mark!) to the part of 'Stoneman.' Joseph L. Sweetney was sufficiently repulsive as 'Gus.' The balance of the cast, excepting only little Miss Mercereau, is featureless."

The Dramatic Department of The Times has but one aim—but one excuse for existence—to tell its readers the plain, unbiased, unvarnished truth about the theatrical attractions that come to Seattle. Every effort is made to learn in advance what a play is like and The Times makes no advance promises as to the merits of a production that it does not feel can be filled to the letter. Once a play appears in Seattle, nothing on earth can prevent this department telling what it believes to be the truth about it.

The truth one time in a thousand may have to be delayed, as in the case of "The Clansman." When such a course is necessary it will happen, as this time, that the readers of the department will be puzzled by The Times' lack of frankness. But in the end the truth will be told—as now.

—C. R. R.
