

Parish Dramatics

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ONE Sunday morning, about three years ago, the more conservative members of a certain parish in a Middle Western city were given a severe shock that savored somewhat of scandal when upon entering the vestibule of the church their eyes fell upon a glaring poster which proclaimed in bold letters:

Wednesday Evening, January 12th,
THE PARISH PLAYERS
will present
George M. Cohan's Comedy Triumph
"SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE"
at
The School Auditorium

What did it all mean? How could the pastor countenance such a thing? Was the vileness of the stage to be allowed to corrupt the congregation?

But the pastor had anticipated all this; so, after making the usual weekly announcements, the good people were told that a parish dramatic club was about to make its initial appearance,—then came the "apologia." That Sunday morning the distracted parishioners learned for the first time in their eventful careers of the century-old affiliation of the Church and the theater. They were told that the Catholic Church was the Mother of the Drama; that she had ever regarded the stage as a most powerful moral influence on the lives of her children; that parish dramatic guilds in the Middle Ages were as old as the parishes themselves; that it was through the Church's inspiration and encouragement that the great Miracle and Mystery Plays sprang into existence, and that even today the most significant dramatic performance in the world is the product of a Parish Theatre,—the celebrated Passion Play of Oberammergau.

After Mass when members of the congregation gathered outside the church to exchange a friendly word, the general