

THE STANDARD.

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Suggestive.

Two kinds of people on earth I ween,
Are the people who lift and the people
who lean.

Whoever you go you will find the
world's masses
Are always divided in just these two
classes.

And, oddly enough, you will find, too, I
ween,
There is only one lifter to twenty who
lean.

In which class are you? Are you easing
the load
Of overtaxed lifters who toil down the
road?

Or are you a leaner, who lets others
bear
Your portion of labor and worry and
care?

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

WHAT IS WRONG IN CARD-PLAYING?

D. DAVID M. EVANS.

Card-playing seems to pervade every class of society. Card-parties for playing whist, euchre, and cinch, in various styles, are among the most popular evening entertainments in many parts of the country. Noble men and women of mature years, as well as young people, indulge in the recreation to such an extent in some communities that it may fairly be termed a "craze."

All admit there are serious evils connected with the play under some circumstances, but some maintain that they are not inherent. A common expression is, "There is nothing wrong in cards in themselves." It is contended that, when played by respectable people in a respectable place, cards are harmless and free from evil, except, perhaps, that the play is frivolous, and leads to a waste of time,—a common characteristic of all recreations.

Notwithstanding all this, is there not a prevalent feeling—a sort of instinct, even among its devotees—that there is something wrong in the play? Strip it of its vile associations, ignore its temptations to cheating, and its proneness to provoke quarrels, and yet there is a residuum of distrust which points to some hidden miasma to be feared. Parents dread to have their children learn to play, and tolerate it at home to prevent the greater evil of a stealthy knowledge in bad surroundings. Educational institutions forbid the play because of its vicious tendencies. The conclusion is inevitable that there must be something wrong "per se." What is it?

The play at cards is founded upon deception. That is the essential fundamental principle of the play. By the rules, the player who deceives his opponent the most adroitly, overreaches him the most cunningly, and misleads him most thoroughly, is estimated the best player. This reverses the ordinary

rules of morality by turning the vice of deception into a virtue, and crowning the arch deceiver with honor. By such ethics the moral nature is debauched, for the mind is made familiar with a species of deception deemed a virtue, and therefore justifiable under certain conditions. The conscience is made to recognize a legal deceit, established as a rule of conduct. Thus the habit of card-playing undermines character, and so blunts the moral sensibilities that it becomes easy, for the card devotee to carry the card-table ethics over into social and business life, a practice quite common. This is one insidious poison of the play.

Then, again, card-playing is a vicious recreation, because it is not a true game. It is merely a contest in deception, supplemented by chance. It leaves little or no room for brain power. It substitutes the pernicious principle of deception for the element of strategy, which is the only foundation of a genuine game. It confounds deception with strategy. This may seem to be a mere play upon words, but the difference between the two is radical in giving character to contests. A play founded upon deception has no uplift, no creative power, but it is of necessity harmful. On the other hand, the true game, founded upon "strategy," is uplifting and invigorating. A clear apprehension of this vital distinction will compel every thoughtful mind to condemn, even on this ground only, the play at cards.

But it may be said, "There is deception in all games." In chess, or checkers, a move may be made having no other purpose than to deceive an opponent as to the real point of attack. In blind-man's buff the captive uses every possible ruse to make the captor believe that he has caught some other person than the captive. In base-ball the pitcher does his best to mislead the man at the bat by throwing the ball in curves, or in some other peculiar way. All these are recognized as games the ethics of which moralists generally do not condemn. Is not the root-principle of the deception practiced the same as that used in card-playing?

Most assuredly it is not. The artifice to secure an advantage in these and in all true games is always such as can be successfully met by an opponent who adequately uses his knowledge and skill.

The purpose of the move on the chess-board needs only keen perception, quick discernment, and sound judgment to forestall it. The power of protection is left, by the rules of the game, in possession of the player who is attacked. He can meet the assault by the use of his wits. In the game is a species

of mental gymnastics which trains the faculties for service outside of such games.

In the game of base-ball, if the batsman exercises properly his judgment, is quick of eye, prompt in decision, and duly skilled, the pitcher will put forth his curves in vain.

Such artifices serve as tests of faculties, skill, agility, and strength. They call forth the powers of mind and body to meet emergencies, and are here called strategy to distinguish them from the practices put forth in card-playing.

On the contrary, in card-playing, by the concealment of the cards, by the element of chance, and by the rules of the play, the false pretense and the misleading ruse, constitute a deception against which there is no protection whatever. No penetration, no foresight, no perception however quick, no judgment however sound, no astuteness of brain can ward off an attack. Even should the victim, by a happy guess, conclude that a card was played to mislead, he would be helpless to defend himself, unless chance had furnished him with a certain card. His mental powers cannot assist him, for the rules do not call them into play. There is therefore here no battle of brains, nor trial of mental force, or physical power. It is a simple play of "make-believe," in which the most competent deceiver has the advantage. This is brought out glaringly in the so-called game of bluff, where it is frequently the case that the most audacious make-believer or "bluffer," although holding what is called the poorest hand, wins the money. I might add that, to be a true game, the cards should be played with the faces up so that the players could see them. Then they could exercise their foresight, make calculations, and provide for attack and defense, with such intelligence as they might possess, instead of being as now, victims of chance, and helpless in spite of their wits.

The distinction drawn between strategy and deception as the underlying principles of the true game, and the mere play of cards which is ranked as no game, may seem finely drawn. The difference between ozone and malaria is also slight. But one is invigorating and life-giving, while the other is baneful and death-dealing. So the true game is healthful, building up and developing mind and body for the serious work of life, while card-playing is degenerative, leading to a false standard of conduct, and to a dependence upon the hazard of chance. It is essentially demoralizing, with an influence akin to the play of "stealing" and "picking pockets," sometimes practiced by the "hoodlums" of the street. These plays cultivate, like card-

playing, undesirable qualities, but as they are not quite analogous, so they are not quite so vicious in principle; for they are wanting in the deleterious element of chance, and leave the victim some room for defense by the exercise of vigilance.

For these reasons it is evident that the common feeling of distrust as to the ethics and moral influence of card playing, does not rest upon prejudice nor bigotry, but upon deep philosophical principles.

THOUGHTS AND FACTS.

A friend of ours entered his library the other evening in the dark. He was perfectly familiar with the relative position of chairs and tables, and so did not think it necessary to strike a light. That day, however, his wife had changed the arrangement of the furniture, and before he knew it he had barked his shins and tripped, and when lights were brought in was on the floor struggling with a dictionary-holder—a wire contrivance that somehow had wound itself around his right leg. He told the story to make you laugh till you cried; but it was no laughing matter. He limped for a week, and deep cut on his right lip, which swelled to twice its usual size, gave you the impression that he had been in a prize-fight. The trouble with him was that he was guided by his thoughts to the position of the furniture, and his thoughts did not correspond to the facts. There is a difference between what we wish and what is; and between what might be or ought to be, and what is. A fact is ultimate. There is no dodging it or getting away from it. And if with the best intentions in the world you run into the table, even though you were sure that it was not there, you may give your knee a twist and perhaps take an ugly fall. The application in religious matters is evident—
[Watchman.

Were half the power that fills the world
with terror.
Were half the wealth bestowed on
camps and courts
Given to redeem the human mind from
error.
There were no need for arsenals and
forts,
The warrior's name should be a name
abhorred,
And every nation that should lift
again
its hand against its brother, on its fore-
head
Would wear for evermore the curse of
Cain

God's work should always be done
in a Christlike spirit
The life is long which answers
life's great end — [Young
Patient waiting is often the high-
est way of doing God's will.—
[Collier.