

THOSE DOUBTFUL AMUSEMENTS.

I am tired.

Tired of a great many things, but especially tired of hearing and answering questions about the so-called "doubtful amusements."

"Should a Christian play cards?" "May not a Christian dance—just a little?"

"Won't you let us go to the theatre with a clear conscience, dear Professor Cobweb, if we will be careful to select only proper plays?"

Don't you see, young people, that such questions answer themselves? You don't need to ask me or any one else whether you shall play crokinole, or whether you shall ride the bicycle, or whether you shall go to hear Mark Twain lecture. You ask me about card-playing, dancing, and theatre-going because the all but universal Christian conscience has condemned those amusements, because they are under the ban of Christian sentiment, and you want my say-so to bolster up your uneasy consciences.

Now there is no duty urging you to do any of these things,—nothing but your inclination. On the other hand, the vast majority of Christians advise you not to do them. Conscience is all on one side. This being the case, I could afford to grant that these three amusements are perfectly proper, and yet have the very best of reasons for urging you to let them alone, namely, respect for the opinion of the great body of our Lord's children.

Of course I do not propose to take it for granted that these amusements are harmless, but there is absolutely no need to enter into that argument at all. This other argument should be conclusive.

But what a low standard of Christian living is indicated by such questions: Do you suppose Paul, when the Vision stopped him on the way to Damascus, thought twice before he asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and asked first this other question, "Lord, if I become thy disciple, may I still go to the games in the circus?" Do you suppose John, when the Master bade him leave all and follow him, replied, "Yes, on condition that I may still join now and then in a village dance?"

The truth of the matter is that when one has really become a lover of Christ; loving him with heart and mind and strength and soul, filled with a sense of eternity, with a passion for the winning of souls,—he is ransomed henceforth from such petty concerns as a pack of cards, or a shaking of feet to a fiddle, or a procession of painted women on the stage. His meat and his drink henceforth, his absorbing pleasure, is to do the will of his Father.

Not that he will not play. Indeed, no one plays better than a Christian, knows more games, and jollier ones. The world is full of them—games as far superior to cards, dancing, and the theatre as the light of the blessed sun is better than gaslight. But

even as Paul said, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth"—so the Christian will have nothing to do with doubtful amusements, or doubtful books, or doubtful customs, or doubtful drinks, or doubtful anything else, while there is any doubt about them, while there is in them any possibility of hurting a single soul of those that Christ gave up his life to save.—*Caleb Cobweb in Golden Rule.*

A WORD AS TO BOYS.

"Mothers," says an exchange, "train your boys to be neat in the house. They should be taught to look after themselves, and to keep their hats and coats in their proper places. Teach them this habit, and you will save many annoyances, and you will also do a kindness to the boys by teaching them neatness and self-respect."

Boys, as well as girls, should be taught to help in the house. How often we have been disgusted to see that the girls are made to help at the housework while the boys are allowed to play checkers, or sit at the fire toasting their toes.

A boy can help clear away after a meal, sweep the floor, polish the stove, or wash the dishes, just as effectively as a girl. He, as a rule, is stronger.

He will love his home more, and when he becomes a man, and has a home of his own, he will respect his wife all the more for having been taught to respect his mother and sisters.

MORE THAN CONQUERORS.

There are two ways of looking at our trials. From the one standpoint, our chief object is to get through them without being defeated and crushed. We look upon them as enemies, and feel we have won a victory if we have escaped them with our lives; but there is a higher way of looking at them, namely, as opportunities of gaining much more than a victory and barely escaping with our life. We regard them rather as challenges to compel us to be our best, and to rise to a place of victorious power that we never could have known had the trial not come.

It is unworthy of us, as the children of the King, to go through life with downcast faces and complaining tones, barely getting through our trials, and looking on every side for sympathy. Not so did our Master suffer. Let us honor Him by victorious suffering and a spirit of triumph that spurns the foe and disdains to pity ourselves or ask for human sympathy. God wants us to cultivate the heroic spirit and to look upon every trial and difficulty as one of God's blessed challenges to come up higher. We should go forth into every battle with the old shout, "Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."—*Christian Alliance.*

