

A New Game at Cards

ONE Sunday morning, visiting the vessels lying in the Regent's Canal basin, I found three captains playing at cards. When I had bidden them "Good morning," and shaken hands with them, one of them—the captain of the ship I was on—asked "Will you join us in a game or two?"

I replied, "Yes, with pleasure, but not till you have finished that game."

One said, "But aren't you a Methodist?"

"Yes, I am."

"And will you play a game on the Sabbath day?"

"Yes, I will join you."

There were some smiles, and sharp nods of their heads towards each other. At length one of them said:

"John, he's only chaffing you; it's more than his place is worth to play at cards."

But I gave my word that I would join them when their present game was over. When it was finished there was quite a stir, and the captain, gathering up the cards, called out:

"Now then, my lad, will you shuffle them or shall I?"

"You may place them on one side," I replied; "they are old and greasy; I won't touch them. I have a new pack in my pocket, which has never been used; and as it is the Sabbath, we cannot have a better day for beginning with them."

I shall not soon forget their looks of astonishment at the mention of "new cards." To be introduced by the missionary. Taking the cards out of my pocket, I said, "they don't need shuffling; I will serve them round. It matters not how many are present, all can play." The cards were embellished with texts of Scripture, and had been given me for distribution. When eight cards had been dealt out to each person, we took them up to see what they were.

"Ah! we are licked," said one of the captains; "he has done us brown and clean. How are we to play with these things?"

I asked them to be seated, and I would show them the game. I then took my card and read, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Now it was the next man's turn, and he read, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The third man read, "Look to Jesus," and the fourth, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." In the second round of reading my text was, "Unto you, O men, I call;" and in this way we continued until all the cards had been used up.

When this game was over it appeared to be a great relief to them; and yet they seemed uneasy. I offered to change cards with the captain.

"Yours are old and greasy, only fit for fishes; let me throw them over the ship's side, and you shall have my new ones."

"Done!" he shouted; "it's a good exchange."

I then proposed prayer, and two of them joined me in kneeling, but the other one declined, saying, "I like a bit of tobacco, and will have a little smoke while you hold forth." But, thank God, the Holy Spirit soon began to work on his heart, and dropping the pipe out of his mouth, he sank on his knees, weeping.

Before leaving, I invited them to God's house, but not one of them would promise to come; so I shook

hands, went on board the next vessel, and, when my work was done, hastened to the chapel. What was my surprise to find my three card-playing captains present there, listening to the Gospel. The minister's subject proved to be the sin of backsliding. On leaving the chapel, I followed one of the three, and asked how he enjoyed the service.

"Ah! my lad," said he, "you ought not to have been so hard on a fellow. You must have made haste to tell the parson about me, and he's been hitting me from the beginning to the end. Like Peter, I am a backslider."

I assured him that I had not seen the preacher that day until he was in the pulpit, and that I had not breathed a word about our morning card-playing to a living soul. It was the Holy Spirit that was calling him back; would he listen and obey?

"Yes," he replied, "I will, God being my helper."

He spent most of that day with us, and on the following Tuesday, after we had been praying with him, light broke in upon his soul, and he was enabled to rejoice in God his Saviour.

—*Friendly Greetings.*

Temptation.

"I WILL not leave thee, nor forsake,
Lean hard on me, my child,"
Thus spake the voice, with word divine,
Out of the night, so wild.

All day long my soul had been tossed,
Tempest and seaward driven,
I had well-nigh sunk in despair,
The clouds by no ray riven.

Temptation strong and trial sore,
Had reached my heart of hearts,
Wounds were bleeding, freshly made
By Satan's cruel darts;—

When "Peace, be still," in tender love,
Made storm and darkness bright,
Love healed the wounds that sin had made,
And gave me peace, that night.

Effect of the Bible.

TAINE'S "English Literature" has a remarkable passage with reference to the effect of the Bible on the English people, as read and learned for the first time from Tyndal's translation:—

"One hid his book in a hollow tree; another learned by heart an epistle and a Gospel, so as to be able to ponder it to himself even in the presence of his accusers. When sure of his friend, he speaks with him in private; and peasant talking to peasant, laborer to laborer, you know what the effect could be. It was the yeoman's sons, as Latimer said, who more than others maintained the faith of Christ in England, and it was with the yeoman's sons that Cromwell afterward reaped his Puritan victories. When such words are whispered through a nation, all official voices clamor in vain. The nation has found its poem; it stops its ears to the troublesome would-be distractors, and presently sings it out with a full voice and from a full heart. But the contagion had even reached the men in office, and Henry VIII. at last permitted the English Bible to be published. England had her book. Every one, says Strype, who could buy this book, either read it assiduously or had it read to him by others, and many well advanced in years learned to read with the same object."

It is said that the International Sunday-School Lessons are now studied by 15,000,000 children.

How to Begin.

Yes, I want to be a Christian, but I do not know how to begin.

Are you sure you are ready to begin if you know how?

I think so. I've tried for a long while.

Have you not tried to get ready to begin instead of beginning?

I don't know. I suppose one ought to think about it.

Has your thinking brought you any nearer beginning?

I'm afraid not.

Suppose you think of going to Boston. You start, and after you have gone some distance find you are on the wrong road; instead of going to Boston you are travelling exactly the other way. What would you do?

Why, turn about, and take the right track.

Would you? Why not stop and think, and think like this: Yes, I know I'm on the wrong road. This will never bring me to Boston, but I think I'll keep on awhile. Perhaps something will turn up to put me on the right road, or I may find a cross-road, or it may be easier turning bye-and-bye. I'd better be sure of the whole road before I turn back. Would that do?

No, of course not. I'd turn round, and set my face toward the city sure.

Cannot you use the same common sense in starting on the heavenly journey? You know you are on the wrong road. You know each day's travel on it only brings you so much farther from the right way. You will never make any progress unless you face right about. You are on the wrong track; turn and take the right one.

But how?

No matter how, or what, just now. All you have to do is to turn around. The man who was feeding swine did not get on until he had said to himself, I will arise and go. Then he got on his feet. He had begun the homeward journey.

If I only knew how to begin!

The way to begin is to begin. Resolve on that with all your might. Tell your Heavenly Father that you have turned round, and are coming home; coming somehow, even if you must crawl. Ere long you will find Christ coming out to meet you.

I'll do it. I'll right about face, to-day, now.

A Bit of Logic.

RUFUS lay at full length on the sofa, puffing a cigar, back parlor though it was; when Mr. Parker reminded him of it, he saw there was no ladies present, and puffed away. Between the puffs he talked:

"There is one argument against Foreign Mission work which is unanswerable; the country cannot afford it. Two millions and a half of money taken out this year, and sent to the cannibals or somewhere else. No country can stand such a drain as that upon it, with everything else it has to do. Foreign Missions are ruinously expensive."

The two young sisters of Rufus, Kate and Nannie, stood on the piazza and laughed.

"O Rufus!" said Kate, "you won't take a prize in college for logic, I'm sure."

"What do you mean, little monkey? And what do you know about logic?"

"More than you do, I should think. Just imagine the country not being able to afford two millions and a half for Missions, when just a year ago it paid over four millions for Havana cigars. Have you thought of that, Rufus?"

"And I wonder how much champagne is a bottle?" chimed in Nannie. "How much is it, Rufus? You know about ten million bottles are used every year. And, oh, why, Rufus, don't you know that we spend about six millions for dogs! Something besides Foreign Missions might be given up to save money, I should think."

"Where did you two grow so wise? Where did you get all those absurd items?"

"We got them at the Mission Band; Kate is Secretary, and I'm Treasurer, and these figures were all in the dialogue that Dr. Stephens wrote for us to recite. If you choose to call what he says absurd, I suppose you can; but he is a graduate from a College, and a Theological Seminary besides. I mean to tell him that two millions and a half for Foreign Missions will ruin the country; I want to hear him laugh." And then the two girls laughed merrily.

"You needn't tell him anything about it," said Rufus sharply. After the girls ran away he added, thoughtfully.

"How fast girls grow up. I thought these two were children, and here they are with the Mission Bands, and their large words about 'Secretaries and Treasurers.'"

"And their embarrassing facts about money," interrupted Mr. Parker. "Those girls had the best of the argument, Rufus," and then he, too, laughed.—*The Pansy.*

For Their Sakes.

It is not true that if we teach children to read they will not become victims to drink. An Oxford graduate came to me in vile and mean attire. But his speech at once revealed his social position and culture. He said, "It is useless to give me money. Watch, dress, every penny has gone for drink and will go again." After some time he signed the temperance pledge, and said with emotion: "Oh, that my mother had seen this before she died!" Teachers, you may not be absolutely safe, whatever your culture. But if not for yourselves, will you not for the children you teach, practice and teach abstinence? In how few years those children will be tempted to place their feet in the stream that has hurried away in its strong tide thousands older and stronger than themselves. Can you not persuade them never to venture into that treacherous tide? You love the children you teach. Can you endure the thought of those pure merry faces becoming bloated with drink, those hopeful lives sacrificed to the Moloch of the day? For their sakes abstain. Let them never be able to say, "Teacher drinks, why may not I?" Help them, then, by living counsel. Even in giving secular instruction higher truth may be taught incidentally. You can teach godliness and morality with out delivering theological discourses or ethical lectures. Thus if even in day and secular schools, how much more in Sunday-schools, children may be encouraged in the practice of total abstinence. Where there is a will, there is a way.—*Newman Hall D. D., in S. S. Times.*