

THE GAMBLING MANIA.

From The Week.

A few weeks since, the London *Spectator*, in an article which reads too much like a half-apology for gambling, at least in its more fashionable forms, spoke of "the perpetual vitality and universal diffusion of the gambling spirit." "Probably," the writer said, "nine persons out of ten would be made happier by the knowledge that sometime within the next few weeks or months they will have the chance of winning an appreciable sum of money. It adds a little excitement to their lives, it sustains them under the pressure of present shortness of cash, it gilds the future with a contingent brightness." May we not venture to hope with a considerably larger percentage that nine out of ten the question of the manner in which the sum of money might be won would very materially qualify the joy of the anticipation?

The immediate occasion of the *Spectator's* article was the "Missing-Word" competition which for a time attracted so much attention in England and which was finally placed under the ban of the Lottery acts by a judgment given by Sir John Bridge. The *Spectator* accepts the judgment as wise and necessary under the circumstances, but, in so doing, bases its assent upon singularly narrow grounds. "In itself," it says, "a missing-word competition is just as innocent as a Derby sweepstakes at a club, and if the shillings paid bore the same proportion to the means of the players as is the case with the contributors to a sweepstakes, it would be just as innocent in its results." According to this view the crime is not in the thing itself, or in the aims and intentions of those who take part in it, but depends entirely upon the question whether those who engage in it can afford to risk the amount of money involved in what the court has declared to be a game of chance and consequently gambling, pure and simple. "The public is not concerned," says the writer, "how men spend their money provided it is honestly come by. But the public is concerned to prevent men—or boys—from being led on to spend money which is not honestly come by." In other words the Court was justified in declaring the practice in question a pernicious and a criminal practice, not because of anything wrong or evil in the thing itself, but because of the danger lest the passion to which it appeals might become so overmastering as to lead persons of limited means to procure money for the purchase of tickets by dishonest practices.

Such a view of the question is obviously superficial and if acted on would lead to class legislation of the most objectionable kind. The rejoinder which readily suggests itself is that every objectionable act or practice should bear its own burden. Let those who put their hands into the tills of their employers, or resort to other dishonest means of obtaining money to purchase tickets for "missing-word" competitions, be punished for the crime which they commit, rather than others prevented from the gratification of "a universal instinct," if the mode of gratifying it be innocent in itself and objectionable only by reason of ulterior consequences to which it may occasionally lead.

To those more radical reformers who regard the practice of gambling as in itself a vice and its consequences as only evil and that continually, the question takes on a much more serious aspect. Gambling has now come to be regarded by many of the best men in England as the national vice of Englishmen, if not of the British race everywhere. Whether and to what extent it may be practised among the wealthier classes merely as an exciting and fashionable amusement it is hard to say. Certain it is that the ruin and misery which it begets and in which it is probably more prolific than any other practice save that of drinking, are by no means confined to the lower or the poorer classes. In the United States, where it seems to be constantly breaking out in new forms, its source is by general consent to be found in the desire "to get something for nothing" which has been declared to be the great American vice. As such a desire lies at the root of every form of roguery, the practice of gambling, however fashionable in some of its forms, is at once classified as a member of a very disreputable family. True,

it differs from most other devices having the same end in view in that the losing party knows and voluntarily, so long as he is in a position to be regarded as a free agent, takes his risk. Of course he always does so in the hope that he may be the one successful in getting his opponent's property for nothing. This may palliate the offence, but can scarcely make it either innocent or harmless.

But while it might be easy to show that in its motive and aim gambling in every form is essentially immoral, something more than this is probably required to justify organized society in forbidding it by law. It is not the business of either law-makers or courts of justice to classify human acts as moral or immoral and to permit or forbid them accordingly. No enlightened citizen will permit the civil authorities to exercise lordship over his conscience. It is when the act or practice tends directly to the injury of society by depriving other citizens of their property without giving an equivalent, by incapacitating them more or less for honest industry, by corrupting their morals and provoking to such crimes as theft, robbery, murder and suicide, that it comes fairly within the cognizance of law-makers, to be prohibited with pains and penalties.

The most advanced modern legislatures and governments have not hesitated to bring certain forms of gambling within the area of practices to be regarded as criminal, but hitherto the lines seem to have been drawn with a good deal of arbitrariness and caprice. Distinctions are made where it is hard to see that any real differences exist. In England, where, as we have seen, the Lottery acts are rigid enough in some respects, and are strictly enforced, not only are exceptions made in certain respect—horse-racing for example—but the forms of gambling thus excepted are some of them practiced in the most open manner, sanctioned by the example of the highest persons in the realm, and tacitly approved even by Parliament itself. And yet no one, we think, can doubt that this one form of gambling is productive of more crime and misery of the kinds above described than could possibly result from all the "missing-word" competitions that could be carried on by all the newspapers in the kingdom. But the jewel consistency is not always conspicuous even in acts of parliament.

In the United States a determined effort is being made to bring gambling in all its more popular forms under the ban of criminal legislation. Some progress has been made. The Lottery act is scotched, if not killed. "The endowment orders are dying of their own iniquity." An act is now before Congress to prohibit the gambling "in futures" which has become so gigantic an evil in the republic. The prospects of its being passed are good, though it is naturally being met with the most determined opposition from interested parties. In the mean time, betting on horse races, or future prices of staple articles of trade, and on athletic games grows constantly worse. "The latest movement is taking shape, or rather seems about to take shape, in the organization of a National Anti-Gambling League." The deplorable effects of the passion, as seen in all grades of society, are certainly sufficiently alarming to warrant the union of all good citizens in Canada, as well as in the United States or England, in an organized and determined effort to put a stop to, or at least to stamp with the brand of illegality, every unmistakable form and phase of the gambling evil.

Renan is the fountain head of much of the milk-and-watery agnosticism of the day. The mental attitude towards "revealed religion" exhibited by the characters of so many novels is greatly due to his influence. Without his aid it would never have become popular with the general reader, who knows less of the "higher criticism" than he does of astronomy. Yet his influence as a theological writer is already on the wane. The public is satiated with Robert-Elmslerism, society has ceased to be interested in the "serious doubts of candid souls," agnosticism is no longer talked in drawing-rooms by young ladies and gentlemen anxious to be thought clever. In short, religion is settling down into fresh channels, after a quarter of a century's friction with Darwinism.—European Mail.

Christian Endeavor.

TOPIC OF WEEK.

BY REV. W. S. M'TAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.

FEB. 5.—Joy in God's service and in His house. Exe. 6; 16. Romans 14; 16 19.

Joy is an important element in religion. It is promised to God's people and prepared for them, (Ps., cxxxii, 13; Ps., xevii, 11, 12.) It is one of the fruits of the Spirit, (Gal., v, 22.) It is not dependent upon the outward circumstances of the believer, (Phil., iv, 4; II Cor., vi, 10; James 1, 2; Matt., v, 11-12), but it may be temporarily lost on account of sin, (Ps., li, 12.)

Giant Despair may fall into fits in sunny weather, but there are many reasons why the Christian should always rejoice. Once he was the slave of sin but Christ has given him liberty; once he wandered in the dark, now he walks in the light; once he was under condemnation, now he is free; once he was dead in sin, but he has been quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit. Religion is neither a shrew nor a cynic. When it enters the home it does not drive joy away. It does not post up the notice, "No trespassing here," around the fields of pleasure. It checks no laughter. It represses no innocent merriment. A heathen convert, when told by the missionary to sing softly, replied, "Sing softly! Is it you, our father, who tells us to sing softly? Did you ever hear us sing the praises of our Hindoo gods? How we threw our head backward, and, with all our might, shouted out the praises of those who were no gods! And now do you tell us to whisper the praises of Jesus? No, sir, we cannot; we must express in loud tones our gratitude to Him who loved us and died for us."

If the Christian rejoices in God's service, he will not desire to go back to worldly, carnal pleasures. There is a great deal of speculating as to whether it is lawful or expedient for a Christian to do this or that, but if his heart is overflowing with the joy of religion, he will have no desire to walk upon debatable ground or to engage in any questionable amusement. There are some Christians who are constantly looking into Satan's pleasure ground and they are unhappy. They are miserable when they remain out and they are even more wretched when they enter, for conscience remonstrates with them for being there. The best antidote to this unhappiness is to get the heart full of the joys of religion, and then, though Satan spread his allurements, though he promises pleasures and delights his offers can be spurned and spurned without regret.

The joyous Christian does much to commend the Gospel to others. How many have been cheered by the ringing words of Habakuk, (Hab., iii, 17-18.) How inviting a religious life appears as one reads the biography of Frances R. Haver-gal. When the poet Carpani asked the composer Haydn how it happened that his church music was so bright and cheerful, Haydn made this reply: "I cannot make it otherwise, I write the thoughts I feel; when I think upon God my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart it will be pardoned me if I serve Him with a cheerful spirit."

God expects and the world has a right to expect that Christians will engage in Christian service with joyfulness. They should carry to men glad tidings, but neither griefs nor doubts. Only thus can they expect to glorify God and be helpful to their fellow men.

"A singer sang a song of tears,
And the great world heard and wept;
For he sang of the sorrows of fleeting years,

And the hopes which the dead past kept;
And souls in anguish their burden bore,
And the world was sadder than ever before.

A singer sang a song of cheer,
And the great world listened and smiled;

For he sang of the love of a father dear
And the trust of a little child;
And souls that before had forgotten to pray

Looked up and went singing along the way.

for them to have in their possession, as it had been shown to the cure, who pronounced it a bad book, and who had also told them to put it in the fire, and it would save them their wood, as it was not fit for anything else. The book being on loan, they resolved to return it to the owner.

In St. Sauveur a New Testament was sold to a family. It was shown to one of the vicars of the parish, who pronounced it a bad book, a Protestant Bible made by Chiniquy, and sold purposely to make Protestants or pagans. He asked the woman if she consented to his burning the book, which she did, and saw him place it in the stove, and it was consumed.

A New Testament was sold to a family in the little village of Stadacona. It was shown to the cure, who condemned the book to be burned, and in giving his judgment, said his only reason for doing so was that in a good Catholic book they never said "Marie," but always "Ste. Marie." It was then shown to this woman that the cure had erred in making such a statement, for in the New Testament of Archbishop Ballargeon, which had the Pope's sanction, it read just the same as in the De Saci Testament. Places were marked, and the books left to compare. When last seen, she acknowledged them to be much the same, and declared them both to be good books, and guaranteed that, so far as she was concerned, the cure would burn no more books.

In the light of these facts it would be too much to say that the priesthood willfully deceive the people about the Scriptures circulated by the Bible Society, but one thing is quite evident that "they do err not knowing the Scriptures." Is it any wonder that a Literary Review should be condemned, because of its independent thought when the Holy Scriptures is a prescribed book? In the mandement of Cardinal Taschereau of August 16 last, a most extraordinary document, he says, "War to the bad books! They are colported everywhere, in the public squares, in the railway depots, on cars, in the prisons and hospitals, on the markets, and in the dwelling houses. Error is disguised under all forms, and is concealing itself, in order to be better propagated, under the cover of falsified Bibles, small tracts full of lies, irreligious pamphlets and papers injurious to the faith and morals." It would be a good thing for all concerned if some of our esteemed Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen would point out at once wherein the De Saci version of the Holy Scriptures violates the text of the Latin Vulgate, or wherein it differs from the accepted Greek text, as we are of opinion that it would be found, that, if any freedoms are taken with the text of either, it is in favor of Romanism rather than Protestantism, and that it is in no sense a Protestant book other than Protestants are desirous that Roman Catholics should have the Book of Books, believing that "the Scriptures make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Let us earnestly pray to God for those who are so deluded, priest and people, that they may be divinely enlightened as to the true character of the Holy Scriptures, their use and supremacy. If needful we are prepared to furnish name, street and number of parties mentioned in this statement, also names of the different cures who have burned, or ordered the Holy Scriptures to be burned. (Signed) Edward J. Stobo, Donald Tait, W. T. Noble, T. Y. Lefebvre.

SCHIFFMANN'S ASTHMA CURE.

Instantly relieves the most violent attack, facilitates free expectoration and ensures rest to those otherwise unable to sleep except in a chair, as a single trial will prove. Send for a free trial package to Dr. R. Schiffmann, St. Paul Minn., but ask your druggist first.

"Handsome is that handsome does," and if Hood's Sarsaparilla doesn't do handsomely then nothing does. Have you every tried it?

TO PREVENT THE GRIP.
Or any other similar epidemic, the blood and the whole system should be kept in healthy condition. If you feel worn out or have "that tired feeling" in the morning, do not be guilty of neglect. Give immediate attention to yourself. Take Hood's Sarsaparilla to give strength, purify the blood and prevent disease.

Hood's PILLS cure liver ills, jaundice, biliousness, sick headache, constipation.