

A SIMPLE GAME OF CARDS.

BY A CHRISTIAN MERCHANT.

I have often heard by very moral and good people that "there is no harm in a simple game of cards." This is all very well in theory, but experience and observation teach me that card-playing is one of the most dangerous, as well as fascinating, amusements that a young person of either sex can engage in.

When I was about eleven years old I went as a clerk in a store where the employees boarded with the proprietor and slept in a room over the store. The store opened very early in the morning, and closed at ten o'clock in the evening, so we should have spent all the time that the store was closed in sleep; but there was such a strange fascination in cards that we were often playing nearly half the night, and I know of no other game that would have so infatuated us as cards did. If we played checkers or any other game of skill, we did not become so interested as to deprive us of the rest we so much needed.

The associations and gambling tendencies of cards must be admitted by every one. They are the professional gambler's principal and I might almost say only—tool; and it never adds to the reputation of a young man to be seen playing cards, or for a pack of cards to be found in his possession. If a policeman should stop me, at night and find me with a burglar's "jimmy" in my possession, he would certainly arrest me, and I would be compelled to prove my innocence of intended burglary. So when Christian or truly moral people see cards in the possession of a youth, they look upon him with more or less suspicion.

Several years ago I had charge of one branch of the business of a large wholesale house in New York. I had for my assistant a young man who was admitted by all to be the most efficient young clerk in the establishment. He was living with his widowed mother, and had been morally and religiously trained. In that line of business there were several months in the year which were called the dull season, and during that period there was very little to do on the part of the junior clerks, so they restored to all sorts of amusements to pass away time. Games were prohibited by the firm; nevertheless they were accustomed to conceal themselves in out-of-the-way portions of the store and play cards. I one

day found a party of them playing "faro" with cards, and among their number was my assistant. I was surprised, but as there was little work to be done could not prevent him, I tried to dissuade him from such amusements, but failed. The appetite for gambling soon became fixed upon him, and from being one of the most promising and efficient young men he gradually became careless and dissipated, and a few months ago I met him on the street, out of employment, and his appearance showed him to be a drunkard. He wanted to borrow money of me and claimed to be in want. If he had kept himself from cards, and the associations that they led him to, he would have ranked as a first-class business man. Fortunately he never married, and his mother being now dead the disgrace only falls on his sisters. Games of chance are generally the beginning of a passion for acquiring wealth at the cost of some one else, or, rather, getting money without the giving of a proper equivalent.

I know of some professing Christians who play cards, but I never knew of any "card-playing" or "dancing" Christians who were very creditable to Christ.

Card-playing is no help either morally or financially to any young person, but it certainly is an appearance of evil in the minds of most Christians, and many business men. So as it is only a pastime at the best, I advise all young people to select such games as have undoubtedly harmless associations, such as chess, checkers, etc.

It may not be in itself positively wrong for me to play cards, but neither would it be wrong in me as a Sunday-school superintendent on coming out of a Sunday-school next Sabbath to go into the liquor or saloon on the opposite corner from the church and drink a glass of water. I may be thirsty, but I have no business to let my scholars see me put myself under obligation to a rum-seller, nor to mingle for one moment with Sabbath-breakers in a saloon. So want amusement, I have no business to seek it in channels principally occupied by gamblers, fortune-tellers, etc.

If we desire to be trusted, honored, and respected we must never be found engaged in any questionable amusement or occupation.—N. Y. Witness.

Those who defer their gifts to the death-bed do as good as to say, "Lord, I will give Thee something when I can keep it no longer." Happy is the man who is his own executor.—Bishop Hall.