

WHY SHE DID NOT PLAY CARDS.

"My Jesus I love thee, I know thou art mine,
For thee all the follies of sin I resign,"

sang Mary Champion one bright morning in May.

"Good morning, Mary," said Madge Dill and Elizabeth Allan, from the street. "You seem to be in a very happy frame of mind this morning."

"Who could help being happy with such delicious air and sunshine."

"Aren't you coming in, girls?"

"Yes, if you are not busy."

"I am only dusting, and I can do that and chat at the same time."

"Of course you are going to Helen Payn's party, May," said Madge.

"No, I am not."

"Why not you received an invitation, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, why don't you go?"

"For several reasons."

"Don't you play cards?"

"No."

"I don't see why," said Madge, "everybody plays here, and if you don't you can't have any kind of a time. For my part I don't see any harm in a quiet game of cards at home."

"Give us your reason for not playing, Mary," said Elizabeth.

"There are Lil and Nan Lee. Good morning, girls, come in," called Madge, "Mary is just about to give her reasons for not going to Helen's party."

"Proceed, Mary."

"In the first place, girls, I am a professing Christian, and a member of the church."

"So are we," chorused all the girls.

"In the next place, I have brothers, and in the good Book we learn that 'each of us is bound to be his brother's keeper,' and 'if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth,' says St. Paul, and so say I; and farther on he says, 'it is not good to eat meat or drink wine, or anything, whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak;' and again, 'if any doubteth, he is damned if he eateth.'"

"I don't see what that has to do with card playing," said Madge.

"Listen, and I will tell you a story. The youngest child and only son and brother of wealthy parents learned to play cards at home. His parents and sisters taught him to play, and night after night played with him until he was the best euchre player in his 'crowd' of boys. He began by playing 'quiet games' at home, but became so fascinated with it, he played with the boys as soon as school was out, under shady trees or in old sheds, in fact, any place where they would not be disturbed. They never played for money, for their parents said it wrong, but they played for marbles and knives just for fun, not for 'keeps.' Finally he was sent away to college, and one day when he had spent all his 'allowance' and was 'hard up' he played for money and won five dollars. He wouldn't do it again, he said to himself, but it was not long till he needed more money, and he thought of that five dollars he had gotten so easily, and played again and won, and by this time his conscience, if he ever had any, was hardened, and after the second downfall he played without a qualm, and kept winning and growing rich, and, of course, when a man gets so low that he plays for money, he will drink, so it was with this young man. Finally his 'luck,' as he called it, was gone, and he lost heavily, and one day he wakened up to the fact that he was ruined, but he determined to play once more to try to redeem himself, and having failed took his own life, not having the courage to bear the disgrace of having ruined not only himself, but his father, financially."

"Now, girls, how would you feel if you had been his sister?"

"I would feel dreadfully," said Madge, "but that is an exceptional case, and, Mary, as I said before, everybody plays here, even the elders of our church, and why shouldn't we? When you are in Rome you should do as the Romans, or people will say you are peculiar."

"Noah's friends thought him 'peculiar,' and laughed and jeered at him for a hundred and