

ing "Missing Word Competitions," a feature of his paper. The method was to select a descriptive passage and omit one word, and the readers of the paper who chose to pay one shilling for the privilege, had the opportunity of guessing what this word was. If they guessed the right word they won a prize of about \$85; if they failed they lost only their shilling.

The missing word craze which this scheme developed is almost incredible. In December last the passage selected for the competition described the effect of placing bits of camphor on the surface of pure water, and ended by observing that they would twirl about in a manner that was truly ———. Nearly five hundred thousand answers were sent in with the necessary shilling. Of these one thousand three hundred and fifty-eight persons guessed the missing word correctly, it being in this case "unaccountable." A total sum of nearly one hundred and twenty thousand dollars was received by Mr. Pearson for this one month's competition alone, but it does not seem that the enterprise was very profitable to him, as the prizes paid reached nearly this amount.

When the gambling had thus developed, happily the law intervened, and after a long contest in the courts missing word competitions have been pronounced illegal as violating the law against lotteries. But the craze is instructive. The competition was planned skilfully so as to entrap a large number. The cost of competing was small, the prize was relatively large and the chances were enticing. It seemed so easy to make a little money without earning it!

It is to be feared that among the vast majority of young people especially, very loose views of the dangers of gambling prevail. If the simple rule be laid down and followed, that no game shall be played for gain, many stones of stumbling in this respect will be avoided. If the further principle be followed that it is mean and unmanly to try to win money without earning it, all danger would disappear. One of our wise men has said that the darkest hour in a young man's life is that in which he plans to get money without working for it.

It is vulgar and sordid to introduce money-getting into our sports and amusements. Is not a competition in speed between two noble horses of suffi-

cient intrinsic interest without betting upon the result? Is not a game of whist enticing enough without the element of money for the winner being added? If not, then the righteous man will avoid both classes of amusement. The high-minded gentleman ought to do the same, for it should seem that a nice sense of honour would scorn to use money, wrung from a friend without giving any value for it. And what of the lottery? Surely the experiences of mankind ought to point the finger of warning to every one tempted to try chances in so hazardous a field. The best governments have declared them illegal. The wisest men have tried to crush them as snares to mankind. Anyone who takes any part in them is deliberately encouraging one of the greatest curses and frauds of modern times.

#### FOR PARISH AND HOME.

##### BAR ROOMS.

ONE does not look for high rules of moral conduct in a bar-room, nor expect the bar-keepers to turn preachers. Some have done so, and their familiarity with sin in its grosser forms makes them appreciate more keenly its remedy. But when they become moral reformers they cease usually to be bar-keepers. It is, however, interesting to see that there are bar-rooms and bar-rooms, and that an honest effort may be made by the bar-keepers themselves to purge their places of their worst impurities. The late Mr. Montagu Williams, one of the most upright and kindly of London magistrates, used sometimes to don threadbare attire and thus disguised to go about East London as a sort of modern Haroun-al-Raschid, who might be called upon the next day to pass judgment upon the people with whom he had mingled on the previous night.

England is still so far behind in the things that make for moral progress, that the bars are open for certain hours on Sundays, and one of the saddest sights of London is the crowd of men and women to be seen of a Sunday morning standing before the doors of the bars waiting for them to open. Walking in East London on a Sunday morning, Mr. Williams was struck by the number of persons passing in and out of a certain public-house. "I wondered," he says, "wherein lay the peculiar attraction of the place, and in order to solve the mystery, entered. The

bar proved a very remarkable one. It was crowded, but no one was smoking, no one ordered a second glass, and no one was using improper language. All was as quiet and orderly as a Sunday school. I confess I was thunderstruck.

"As I stood staring about me I caught sight of a card headed 'Rules,' printed in bold type, which hung upon the wall. I read as follows:

1. No smoking on the premises is permitted.

2. No loud talking or obscene language is tolerated.

3. No customer is supplied with more than one drink, until he or she has been off the premises for half an hour, at the end of which period only one more drink is supplied.

4. No refreshment is served to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drink, and if one of a company of friends is in this state, none of them will be served."

No smoking, no swearing, no drinking to excess, these were the rules of the bar-room! If our own keepers would try to carry out at least these reforms they would be doing good, and would weaken the reproaches that with too much justice may be urged against them as a class.

##### IMPROVING COMPANY.

IT is of great practical importance that young men have friends who will encourage and direct them. Union is strength. In the battle of life the want of a sympathizing companion may be the very point on which an otherwise brave combatant may at last give way. In this fight, as well as others, "shoulder to shoulder" is the most potent principle, both for the defence and the onset. Here and there in history you may read of some hero who, single-handed, has foiled an army; but, taking the common standard of humanity, even a brave man is easily over-powered by numbers when he stands alone. There are some points of analogy between that warfare and ours. To most men the sympathy of tried friends is a substantial support in the conflict with moral evil. Right-principled, true-hearted companions are often "the shields of the earth," which the all-ruling God has at His disposal, and throws around a youth to protect him from the fiery darts of the wicked one. — *Arnot, in the Parish Visitor.*