

THE LOSING GAME.

A WORD TO YOUNG MEN.

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UR woodcut is taken from a German picture, which is at once a masterpiece of art and of impressive teaching. It presents to the mind, through the eye, as much truth as is to be found in many a volume. Satan is playing a game with a young man for his soul. The arm of his chair is an open-mouthed lion, whose claws grasp a human skull. The chess-board is the lid of a stone coffin; this game is played in the chamber of death. The front of the coffin displays a weeping, winged woman, whose body is crushed with the loathsome tails of two hideous creatures, whose grinning teeth are buried in her distended wings. According to the pleasing fancy of the ancients, the human soul is represented by a gentle female with wings. The two repulsive monsters are Error and Vice, by which the soul, which should soar to Heaven on the wings of faith and love, is made the hopeless slave of earth. The woman, feeling her guilt and shame, buries her face in her hands—type of the sinful soul that at length struggles madly to break the devil's chains, which at first it welcomed with gaiety. . . . Of the pieces on Satan's side, the king, with a crooked feather in his cap, represents Satan. The queen, holding out the intoxicating cup, is pleasure. Then you have indolence with a sow's head, sleeping on an unhewn block; anger, a turkey-cock in a rage; pride, with a peacock's tail, spurs on his heels, an order on his breast, a full purse in one hand, and the other stretched out as if giving command; falsehood, with a cat's head, and a dagger behind back; avarice, lean gnawing his own hand, and holding a chest under his arm; and impudent unbelief, kicking against the cross. The eight pawns are doubts—small harpy-like creatures, with sharp teeth and bat's wings.

On the other side of this strange chess-board, the king represents man's soul. The queen, holding a cross, is religion. The officers are, hope with the anchor; truth with torch and shield; peace with the palm (already in Satan's hand); and in the corner near it, humility with head bent in prayer; innocence, a little child with hand held out for help; and love, two children kissing. The pawns are the heads of worshipping angels, and represent prayer.

THE GAME.

Satan is winning. He has already taken from the youth, innocence, peace, love, humility, and five angels' heads; he has robbed him of all these four virtues, and nearly destroyed his faith in prayer. The youth has mastered only one doubt, and one vice, anger. Satan is pressing forward all his force,—pleasure, unbelief, evil doubts, &c.—against religion, which stands protecting the soul. For there is hope of a man, so long as this is not clean lost.

What a deep designing eye Satan has! His very hairs stand stiffly out with determination. He glories in the ruin he hopes soon to complete.

But how sad and careworn is the youth's face! Sin is the hardest work he ever tried, and he now fears that all may be lost. But when he began, nobody was more light-hearted than he. All is explained by one word—*cheated*. By lying promises, Satan drew him into sin's hazardous game, and he is winning it by playing falsely. But Heaven, as well as hell, strives with man for the price of his precious soul. The angel looks on sadly: and will, we may hope, by awakening his conscience, rescue the youth from destruction.

YOUNG MAN!—Is this a picture of your life thus far? If so, be warned. You are playing a losing game. Stop ere it be too late. Stop *at once*. Now is the accepted time; Behold, *now* is the day of salvation.