

emotions of love to God, and benevolence to man. It is true that the right direction and exercise of this portion of man's nature can only be committed with safety and certainty to a higher guidance than that of man; but we have the clearest scriptural authority, as well as the most undoubted evidence from experience and observation, that the first and most important duty devolving upon those who engage in the responsible charge of the young, is that of endeavouring to preserve them *morally* from the evils existing in the world, and to fit them at the same time for filling a place there, with satisfaction to themselves, and usefulness to others.

Morally, then, as well as physically, man needs to look into the world as it is, just as he would look into it for the choice of a trade, or a profession, likely to be prosperous; but, at the same time with a degree of earnestness, proportioned to the superior value attaching to a man of *worth*, over a man of *wealth*, or worldly distinction. With this object in view, a parent needs as much to consider whether there is any prevailing evil in the probable future course of his son, likely to endanger his moral being, as he does to consider whether there is any prevailing tone or tendency of the public mind which is likely to prove injurious to his worldly prosperity. Many parents are well acquainted with this earnest, and often prayerful, looking forward into the future for the moral preservation of their children; and according to their different views of good and evil, and their different degrees of impression with regard to the requirements of Christian duty, various plans have been adopted in families, and even in communities, in the hope, that, by changing the social habits of the young, the rising generation may be enabled to escape the temptations of those who have gone before them.

Looking abroad upon the world, and seeing that the amusements of the gaming table present a dangerous, and often a fatal snare to the young; seeing also that the very spirit of gaming, even when conducted on a smaller scale, has something insidious and often pernicious in its own nature; but, above all, comparing the fearful ruin, the destructive passions, and the awful catastrophes of which gaming has been the cause, and the many evils following in its train, with the very small amount of *good* it is capable, under any circumstances, of effecting, such as the amusements of an idle hour, the beguiling of a weariness and pain, or whatever else might be ingeniously adduced in its favour—comparing these two features of the case, it has become the unanimous opinion of a large portion of religious professors, that the amusement of gaming should be banished altogether from their families and homes; and such is the prevailing conviction of the undesirableness of placing such a temptation in the way of youth, that the parents of such families would shrink with horror from the bare idea of being themselves convicted of the habit of card-playing, even without playing for money.

But there is another prevailing habit throughout English Society to a far greater extent than that of gaming—a habit which has ruined thousands, where gaming has ruined one—a habit which has been the cause of crimes, to which those of gaming, however dark and horrible in themselves, have been comparatively rare—a habit which has called forth floods of tears, to which those of the gamester and his family have been but as rivers to the ocean—a habit which has destroyed the body at the same time that it ruined the soul, producing a degree of degradation, weakness, and incapability of restoration, beyond what bears comparison with any other cause—a habit which, in the full extent and misery of its debasing and destructive power, can never be computed until the depths of Hell shall render up their multitudes to stand before the judgment seat, to tell by whom, and by what means, they were seduced into the fatal snare which led them on unknowingly at first, to that dark prison of eternal gloom—the Drunkard's grave. And yet

in full view of this appalling fact, the tenderest parents, the most scrupulous heads of families, the Christian guardians of the young, are seen every day playing—as they call it *innocently*—at this favourite game, and justifying themselves in doing so—telling the world that if, by their example, their children should become desperate gamesters, it is no fault of theirs,—they have played harmlessly for their whole lives—they entertain no wrong feeling while thus engaged—the spirit of gaming, as a pernicious spirit, has never agitated their minds: they rather esteem themselves performers of an act of merit, in exhibiting before their children the supreme virtue of moderation, by going just so far and no farther: in short—and the whole truth is generally embodied in this conclusion—they *like* the amusement, and they see no reason why they should give it up because others are not content to play in moderation.

There is a large portion of the human race who would do anything for their families, anything for society, anything for the world, but *give up what they enjoy*. They will engage in any great undertaking, at any risk of trouble or expense; but ask of them to lay aside any little personal indulgence, and they not only refuse, but are offended at the request. And yet the very spirit of love—of love to Christ, and love to man—is one which prompts the free and generous sacrifice of any personal gratification that may stand in the way of another's good, or that may be opposed in its remote or immediate consequences to the cause of the Saviour upon earth. Whatever actions spring out of the deep fountain of this love, are in their very nature free, they cannot be constrained; and it is the noblest prerogative of an enlightened and benevolent being, to offer up unsparringly whatever is merely a gratification of self-love, if required to do so for the good of the great human family, even were there not interest of a nearer and dearer character demanding the immediate personal considerations of every parent.

Suppose for a moment, it had come to our knowledge that a society was formed in some foreign country, for the express purpose of introducing into the common articles of English food some drug of poisonous quality, with the design of destroying sixty thousand individuals every year, by the most cruel, and sometimes lingering death. Suppose the poison to be slow and insidious in its operation, such as many constitutions could entirely resist, and even partake of daily without the least apparent injury. Suppose, however, that no one knew until full trial had been made, which were constitutions thus calculated to escape; while, on the other hand, the *certain cases* of injury were daily before our eyes, their cries of phrenzy or of agony resounding in our ears, and the fearful vestiges of their ruin and death laid blackening in our daily path. Suppose, too, that to the constitutions most liable to be injured by the poison, it possessed a peculiarly insidious kind of charm, calculated to quiet all apprehensions of danger, and at the same time to increase and stimulate the appetite which it gratified, to the extent of absolute craving, so that in its most pernicious operation, it was always most desired and sought. Suppose the society combining for such fatal purposes, had discovered that their poison was most welcome, and therefore most effectual, when infused in some well known and familiar beverage, such as tea, and that consequently they had devised means for mixing it with all the tea that was used, so that no person could partake of that refreshment without imbibing a certain quantity of the drug, which might, or might not, in their case prove a deadly poison. In addition to this, let us suppose that the finest constitutions were generally found to be the most easily assailed—the child of the mother's heart—her generous, frank, and noble boy—the pride of his father's home—the high-spirited and gifted youth—the joy of the family—the genius, the poet, or the wit: or the delicate and sensitive girl—the fond-hearted and impassioned vocalist, whose song was the music of her home—the tender