

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

THE VICE OF GAMBLING.

Rev. W. D. Reid, B.D., Montreal.

Last Sunday evening the Rev. W. D. Reid, of Taylor church, Montreal, preached a sermon on "Gambling," from the text "Casting lots." The prevalence of gambling in Montreal, the extent to which it was practised all around us, and the numbers of young people that were being drawn into this evil, had led him to take up this subject and utter a word of warning with regard to it. The preacher said, "There seems to be something in every man, which is fascinated by a game of chance. Gambling excites the faculty of calculation, love of gain, pride of skill, hope, fear, jealousy; these and many other sensations are aroused and heated by gambling. It was not necessary to go so far back to get examples of this evil. It was right here in this city doing its deadly work. Around us, upon all sides, are these abominable poolrooms going full blast every night of the week. These we have reason to believe are but dens of iniquity where youths get their first lessons in vice. And now one of our reverend (b) city fathers comes forward with the proposition that these pool rooms have not a sufficient opportunity of doing their nefarious work up till midnight, but that they should be allowed to remain open till two o'clock in the morning. It is to be sincerely hoped that he shall be allowed to remain at home and relegated to the limbus of oblivion, by his constituents, when the next election comes around. The preacher defined gambling, as "Anything whereby a person wins or loses property by mere chance or hazard"; and then dealt with the different forms of gambling, which he divided into four.

(1) Staking money on games of chance. Whether it was poker, or euchre, or whist, or billiards or pool, if money were put up on it and lost or won, it was but ordinary gambling. In this connection he said that he supposed there was no game that lent itself so readily to gambling and was so much used for that purpose, as the ordinary pack of cards, with the red and white spots on them. Doubtless many people would declare very decidedly that there could be no harm in a simple game of cards. In a sense that is true. There is no harm whatever in the cards per se. But when I look at the fact that these are the implements that are generally used for gambling, when I think of the tremendous hold that the game gets upon many minds, then I think of the jealousies, the strifes, the heart burnings they often cause, when I remember that I am commanded to "Abstain from even the very appearance of evil," I feel that I as a Christian man, cannot, dare not, play cards. Were I an inveterate card player, would it raise me or lower me in the estimation of even the card-playing section of my congregation? If I were sent for to go to a death bed to comfort some one who was about to pass over the Border, would it give you a pleasant sensation if I had to be aroused from the card-table to go to the dying one? I leave these questions without answer. And if it is not the best thing for the minister to do, what about other Christians?

(2) Another kind of gambling mentioned was that of BETTING. There is not the slightest doubt but that betting is becoming a perfect mania in Montreal. I am a great lover of clean honest sport. I love hockey, and base-

ball, and all other clean games. But in Montreal it has come to such a pass to-day that there cannot be a game but what it has to be befouled by abominable gamblers winning and losing money upon it. Nor can there be a horse race but what these human leeches are around trying to rob the unwary. And our authorities are none too active in bringing the law-breakers to justice. And even when brought to justice they are let off with a nominal fine, and then proceed with their nefarious traffic again. Let every right-thinking man ever frown down upon all forms of betting under all circumstances.

(3) We have gambling also on the STOCK EXCHANGE. I do not condemn all brokers as being gamblers. The Exchange is a necessity. It is the sort of nerve centre of Commerce. To buy legitimate stock and pay for it is quite honest and correct. But to buy large quantities of stock nominally, without paying for it, with the hope that the stock that you have never paid for will rise, and that you will make money purely because of the rise in the market is gambling. There may be different opinions on this matter, but I am convinced that dealing in stocks on margin is but one form of this great evil.

(4) A fourth kind of gambling was mentioned by the preacher as RAFFLING. How often we have been besieged by some apparently philanthropic person with: "Won't you take a throw for a poor widow woman, or for a sick man, who is raffling some article?" Oftentimes this raffling is carried on right under the auspices of the church of Jesus Christ. How often when we enter a place where a "Church Sale" is going on we are asked to "take a throw for a beautiful doll," etc. Or there is a wheel of fortune that we are invited "to try our luck at." Or there is a fish pond, where we are supposed to pay so much for a venture. All these are but forms of gambling. Is it not a lamentable thing to see this evil carried on under the guise of religion. Not only is this true of churches, but of great and worthy philanthropic institutions. Not very long ago a noble society that does much good in this city, had a "Sale," and it just turned into a sort of wild orgy of gambling, and Christian people vied with each other buying and selling throws on various articles, until some of us, at least bowed our heads in shame. Now, I denigrate exceedingly the joining together of gambling and good honorable "Sales of work." A paper here in Montreal has been carrying on a splendid crusade against gambling, in many ways. Among other plans, it has secured the opinions of many of the leading men of Montreal. But it has weakened its case very much, by going to men who own large stores, and while their expressed sentiments are ostensibly against gambling, and they start in that line, they usually peter out into a tirade against churches having "Sale of work." Of course no person for a moment expects that these merchants are going to be particularly cordial towards competition, which takes some money out of their pockets. Why, it is a matter of money. I am just as strong an opponent of gambling as any one can be, but I am equally strong in contending for the Christian legitimacy, yes and advisability of our churches giving women, who may not have ready money, the opportunity of turning their spare afternoons into money by making good honest clothing, and selling it at a good honest price

for the church. And I am firmly convinced that the Almighty smiles upon the self-sacrifice involved in such work done for Him. Let us separate the two things. They have no necessary connection.

The reasons given against gambling were, that it produces intemperance, it wastes money, it destroys morals, it ruins the soul. The preacher closed with a strong appeal to all not to countenance gambling of any kind whatever.

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

The Scientific American, in a review of the progress of science during the past year deals with this subject as follows: "In the past twelve months wireless telegraphy has maintained its hold on the interest of the public, because of a number of interesting conditions, scientific and otherwise. Early in the year both Fessenden and De Forest made extensive essays to give us cableless telegraphy; but the result of their experiments, like those previously made by Marconi, were futile in so far as transoceanic work is concerned, and the submarine cable still holds its own. The constant litigation that has been waged between the oceanic interests over patent rights had weakened the hope that an end might finally be reached in which the limitations of the various claimants would be clearly defined, and the question decided whether or not the Marconi company was to have an absolute monopoly on wireless transmission. One of the untoward features, at least on this side of the Atlantic is the sale of their securities by several of the largest companies. The majority of the companies that are engaged in this practice are over-capitalized, and have not earned, and are not now earning, dividends. The promoters of these companies have in many instances led the public to believe that the system they advocated was perfect and that a means of selective, it had been evolved. For this and other reasons the transmission of messages overhead has not been as much of a success as some of the more optimistic of the owners of a million shareholders had hoped for. The interior stations scattered throughout the country have been utilized to educate the masses in the possibilities of wireless telegraphy rather than for the interference of telegraphic business. Among those who are engaged in the practice of the art—and this includes not only numerous operating companies but the armies and navies of the world as well—the lack of selectivity has brought about a state of affairs that borders on chaos, for only one or two stations in the active zone of radiation—and this often means a radius of a thousand miles—can send at the same time. To circumvent this extinction of messages by interference and other difficulties that arise from it was the purpose of the International Wireless Telegraph Conference, which convened within the last two months in Berlin. But even if all its recommendations were adopted, the fundamental problem would in no wise be solved. It is interesting to note in this connection that at this conference Poulsen exhibited his newly-developed selective wireless telegraph system, which he believes and which we all hope will be commercially selective instead of theoretically selective as has been the case of its predecessors. Should the new system come true then the past year will go down in the history of wireless as the most progressive period since the beginning of the art."

Never cast aside your friends if by any possibility you can retain them. We are the weakest of snenidhrifts if we let one drop off through inattention, or let one rush away another, or we hold aloof from one through petty jealousy or thoughtless slight. Would you throw away a diamond because it scratched you? One good friend is not to be weighed against the jewels of the earth.