

THE SOCIAL GAME.

A STORY FOR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN.

DON'T go, girls, don't," said a silver-haired friend of my mother's, who visited us occasionally, when we were talking about attending a card party. "Don't go, girls, don't," she repeated. "Why, Aunt Mattie," we asked, "why not go? Do you think card playing just for amusement wrong?"

"I think so."

"Why everybody plays now. Just a few evenings ago we were at Professor Ball's; cards were brought, and we all played. The Professor's son and daughter both engaged in the amusement, and all the best families do the same."

"Even if all those you speak of permit and help in card playing, does that alone make it right?"

"No; but if such families think it right, I would not like to set myself up as a pattern of goodness, and refuse their invitations, and tell them that I thought their actions wrong," I answered impatiently.

Aunt Mattie's face flushed a little, and I noticed her thin, white hand tremble as she brushed back a silver lock from her forehead. She looked at me a moment with a blending of pain and tenderness; then said:

"Mina, if you will listen, I will tell you something of my past life."

I told her I would be glad to listen, for she was a pleasant talker, and I loved her society. She continued:

"A long time ago I was the mother of a darling little boy. My husband died when my child was but three years of age. After that, all my care, all my ambition was for that boy. I tried to teach him to be manly, to be honest, to do right under every circumstance. I had means sufficient to give him every advantage he needed for education and position. At the age of twenty-one he had graduated in a university of standing, was a large, fine-looking man. I looked upon him with feelings of motherly pride and deep affection. I expected to see him rise and fill some honorable and useful position."

"Then, as now, it was the habit of some to play cards for amusement. I tried to persuade Joe not to play, for I always had a strong aversion to that kind of a pastime. For a time he heeded my wishes. But one evening a young lady whose society he loved, and who had a strong influence over him, persuaded him to play his first game with her. What a pity that woman's hand should ever lead astray! He, like many others, thought there was no wrong in it, and that it could in any way do him any harm. But cards had

a strong fascination for him. In those parlor games, where prizes were offered, he was usually successful; that fact stimulated him to play in other places and for money. In less than a year from the time he played his first parlor game he was a confirmed gambler.

"One night, playing, he lost, and lost heavily. He lost not only his own money, but some he held in trust. When the last dollar was gone, being wild from his loss, and heated with wine, he arose from the table, drew a knife, and buried it in the body of his antagonist. He was sent to prison for life. For ten long, dark years I was the mother of a murderer; then a change came. He was taken sick, he tossed on a bed of pain for many long weeks. One night he stepped out from his prison bed, and went into the great unknown future. For long years the grass has been growing upon his grave, but no time can make me forget my great sorrow, nor the cause of it."

"Now, girls, don't go to card-parties. Don't engage in that sort of amusement. Don't be the means of giving to some young boy a knowledge which may lead to ruin. Woman should lead to purity and good. She will never do it by card playing."—*Western Advocate*.

GOD'S MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE.

Almost every one who looks back upon a long Christian life can remember sometime when God took him by the hand and led him almost forcibly to an unforeseen end. Dr. Guthrie, the great Scotch Presbyterian, speaking of such a time, says he set off one day to visit an old, paralyzed woman, whose daughter was obliged to leave her alone all day, while she earned their support in a flax-mill.

It was not Dr. Guthrie's regular time to visit her; he was following an unusual impulse, and on the way down to her lonely dell he met an acquaintance with whom he had something of interest to discuss; but in the midst of their talk he broke off abruptly, under a strange and inexplicable feeling that he should go at once and make the visit to the old woman. He wondered at this feeling, but he ceased to wonder when he opened the door of the cottage and found that the fire had toppled down in a burning mass, and was flaming at the very feet of the poor, helpless creature, who in another moment would have been on fire. The good man never doubted (how could he?) that God had led him thither and had hastened his steps on the way.

Lord I would clasp my hand in thine,
Nor even murmur nor repine,
Content whatever lot I see,
Since tis my God that leadeth me.