

## COMMON SENSE ABOUT GAMBLING AND "DRINK"

BY THE LATE ARCHBISHOP THOMSON.

I want to say a few words of common sense about the question of Gambling, and then a few more words about "the Drink" expenditure of working men.

In the first place, as to gambling, I say there is no such thing as fair or equal gambling. We will suppose here are two men, and they have just received their wages. Each has £3, say, in his pocket, and they bet on dog races, or adopt some of those very intelligent modes of getting rid of their money: and one of them finds he has won the other's money, while the other, of course, has lost it. I say that it is not an equal transaction. Of course they may be perfectly fair and honest, but one of them has gained £3 that he did not expect to have, and does not quite know what he is going to do with it, and the other has not only lost £3, but he has lost the food for his wife and children for the next fortnight. He has lost his own self-respect, and perhaps the good opinion of those of his employers who may hear about the transaction. I therefore say the man who has lost has lost a great deal, and the man who has won has won almost nothing.

Another word on this subject is, I think, worthy of consideration. It is supposed that if people play quite fairly, and go on playing long enough, the thing will right itself, and they will have lost or won about as much, the one and the other, at the end of a year or two years. But, let me say, a man who indulges in what he calls unlimited play, forgets one important factor in the calculation—he forgets that his purse has a bottom to it. After a little time he will find that his last coin is staked, and his play is suddenly arrested just at the point when he needs to go on; and whatever his fine theory is about bringing the circle round, and all the rest of it, he cannot carry it out because his money is gone.

He is ruined; there is an end to him: and he and his theory go into oblivion.

I should like also to say that round about the associations of gambling in this country all sorts of rascaldom do gather. There is no chance of having fair play, because play brings a man into contact with those whom he cannot respect, and whom in any other transaction of life he would most carefully shun.

Why then do not our pulpits teem with denunciations of this thing? Why is it not a subject of constant remonstrance between the pastor and his flock? It ought to be so. I think it is partly this, that there is an idea that it is a little difficult to make it plain to people why they ought not to gamble. A man says, "I am the best judge of what I can afford to do," and tells his pastor not to interfere with what is not in itself a vice, as he could not prove that the thing had been pushed to a vicious excess. But have you noticed that in the book of Holy Writ our Lord says, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"? If then it can be shown me that my action, whatever it be, however seemingly innocent in itself, is injurious to the faith, the

prosperity, or good condition of any one of those whom Christ loved equally with myself, that thing I am bound to abandon. I am not to ride rough-shod over their consciences and their rights. I will desist from it; for if I cannot prove that it is wrong, I can prove that it is injurious.

Well, now a few more words about the "drink" expenditure of working men.

The income of the various classes of the country amounts annually to about a thousand millions, of which the so-called working class—but I hope we all work a little—receive about £440,000,000, and the middle and higher classes, who are not dependent upon work for their daily bread, £560,000,000. Out of their incomes the working class—according to the same authority—Professor Leon Levi—spend 20 per cent. in luxuries, and the middle and upper classes about 14 per cent. I am not making this as a charge, but it is a fact, and it shows very clearly to my mind, and especially when I remember what we see in the newspapers about the sufferings of the working class, that they have a greater power in their own hands than they have as yet taken advantage of.

Just look only at these figures as proving the expenditure of this country. The drink expenditure is about £122,000,000; and at one time, when the iron and coal trades were flourishing, it went up as high as £147,000,000. Now, that is a most portentous figure. But you will say it relates to the whole country. Well, as the incomes are about half-and-half, we will take only about half of the £122,000,000 and put it down to the credit—or the discredit—of the working class, and then we shall have £61,000,000 as spent by the working classes on that article of drink alone—I leave out the other luxuries—or, in other words, about one-seventh part of the income of the class whom I am addressing is spent in drinking.

These figures are perfectly enormous. Such figures have often been quoted before—they are indisputably exact, and they tell me plainly that if the working class would throughout practice the virtue of thrift, which I believe many do practice, their condition would be very different, and the condition of their wives and children would be changed as from darkness into light. My advice to you is to consider the virtue of thrift, to consider those little bits of blue ribbon that I often see in sundry button-holes, and to consider that they really mean the difference between poverty and comparative prosperity.

Of course the money spent on drink means a good deal of drunkenness; and both as to gambling and drunkenness, I would ask, What right has any man to injure others while engaging in them? What right has any man to take his children's bread and turn it into drink, or squander it in these foolish pursuits? Depend upon it, the prosperity of the working classes and the whole future of this country, from the highest to the lowest, depends in a great measure upon our getting rid of those sins which deface society, and often make Christianity a by-word of inconsistency before the nations of the earth who do not practice them. We can all do it, and we ought to do it. The next time you see boys playing at "pitch-and-toss," give them,

in your own form, an idea of what you think of that transaction, and what it may lead to.

In a word, have done with these vices and put them out from among you. Make it a rule to think that, as to the drink, you had better do without it; and that, as to the gambling, you must.

### CHORUS OF EDITORS.

(With apologies to Mr. W. S. Gilbert.)

The poets that bloom in the spring.

Tra-la.

Are preparing their mystical odes;  
And soon they'll be having their fling,

Tra-la.

When winter is well on the wing.

Tra-la.

They'll be bringing their efforts in loads.  
But times, though advanced, we will not be behind:  
Arrangements we're making of mystical kind,

Tra-la-la-la-la, Tra-la-la-la-la,

For the poets that bloom in the spring.

The poets that bloom in the spring.

Tra-la.

A welcome will always receive;  
A welcome fit for a king.

Tra-la.

With a most ingenicous thing

Tra-la.

That poor mortal brain could conceive.  
We're superintending a long-wanted boon:  
No use shall we have for a fighting man soon,  
Tra-la-la-la-la, Tra-la-la-la-la.

For the poets that bloom in the spring.

Oh, ye poets who bloom in the spring,

Tra-la.

'Tis only but right you should know,  
That this little, wonderful thing.

Tra-la.

Which works with a pull of a string.

Tra-la.

Conducts you with ease down below.  
And while in seclusion you moodily stay,  
Your diet will consist of "odes" thrice a day,  
Tra-la-la-la-la, Tra-la-la-la-la,  
By your brothers who bloom in the spring.

A MORE IMPORTANT POINT.—Jack.—  
"Amy, we shall have to elope. Would you marry without your parents' consent?"

Amy.—Of course I would; but, O Jack, how about the wedding presents?"

A little chick of four years, at Pawtucket, R. I., surprised his mother the other night by adding the following to his evening prayer: "God bless papa and mamma and Aunt Lizzie, and Bubber Hiram, and Tilley, and all the other kids."

"I remember," said a boy to his Sunday-school teacher, "you told me to always stop and count fifty when angry."

"Yes. Well, I'm glad to hear it. It cooled your anger, didn't it?"

"You see, a boy came into our alley and made faces at me and dared me to fight. I was going for him. He was bigger'n me, and I'd have got pulverized. I remembered what you said, and began to count."

"And you didn't fight?"

"No, ma'am. Just as I got to forty-two my big brother came along, and the way he licked that boy would have made your mouth water. I was going to count fifty and then run."