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# THE CHRISTIAN TREASURY

## A FAMILY MISCELLANY

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## HOW GAMBLING BEGINS.

## A PLAIN TALK WITH YOUNG MEN.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.



HOW gambling often ends is illustrated by the recent suicide of a young man of high social standing who was well known in the 'sporting' circles of New York. Tampering with cards and the roulette-table had aroused in him the same insane *furor* which tampering with the bottle arouses in the victims of strong drink. We are told that this wretched young man married; but 'even marriage did not cure him of what had become a positive disease. Little gaming parties in his rooms at the hotel, and reckless plunging at the public tables, soon ran away with all his winnings, and with the greater part of his fortune besides. At last, a few months ago, he found himself ruined. His former friends fought shy of him; and in a pitiably depressed frame of mind, he said: "I'll go to Philadelphia, and either make or break myself." To Philadelphia he went, with a revolver in his trunk. He played nearly the whole time that he was there. The record was monotonous. His old luck had deserted him; and one night he went to his room at the hotel and put a bullet through his brain.'

Such is one of the latest tragedies perpetrated under the insane infatuation of the gaming-table. But their number is legion. Many of the mysterious suicides which fill the records of the morgues, or haunt the depths of the rivers around our cities, would tell the same story. Gambling is prevalent to a degree which sober, quiet people never dream of. It is practised—often, indeed, in a small way and for moderate stakes—by thousands of young men in all our cities; practised in the privacy of their rooms at their lodging-houses, as well as in houses for 'professional' play. Employers little suspect—alas! fathers and mothers little suspect—what devilish mischief is going on under the cover of secrecy. Many of the larcenies committed in stores, counting-rooms, and banks (some of which are 'hushed up' in order to save reputations) are committed in order to cover up the losses at the card-table. On the other hand, the illegitimate winnings at the same tables will account for the fine equipage or showy turn-outs of certain fast men whose legitimate income is too slender to maintain such extravagance. Gambling is a moral pestilence that 'walketh in darkness,' and therefore its terrible prevalence escapes public observation. *It is not decreasing.*

This perilous practice, which so often becomes fatal to character and to the soul, begins, just as drunkenness begins, with playing with fire. At the bottom of the first glass of wine which the tippler tampered with lay

an adder. Underneath the first sixpence that is ever thrown down in a game of chance is concealed a serpent. When a young man makes his first bet, or puts up his first wager on a match or a race, or when he risks his first penny at a card-table, he puts a coal of fire into his bosom which is not easily extinguished; it may kindle into a conflagration which, in the tremendous language of Scripture, 'will burn unto the lowest hell.' The step that costs is the first step. Gambling for a penny is as essentially a *sin* as gambling for a thousand pounds. No sin is a trifle. My young friend, the moment that your conscience excuses the slightest departure from absolute right as a 'mere trifle,' that moment you have let the enemy slip in his little finger. It will not be long before you are in his grasp. When you lay down your first stake, even if it is only 'in fun,' you are actually *gambling*. Remember that there is always a first inch at the top of every precipice.

I am not addressing these 'plain talks' to young men as an extremist or a fanatic. What I said about the prevalent impurity of the theatre has called forth many confessions from the public press (even from apologists for the stage) that my charges were quite too true. I do not affirm that every one who ever plays a game of cards is a gambler, any more than every one who drinks a glass of wine is a tippler. But it is equally true that he who *never* touches an intoxicant can never become a drunkard, and he who never plays a game of hazard can never become a gambler. My own personal practice, at school, college, &c., was one of entire abstinence from cards as well as from wine-cups; and I have never repented of it either. All games of chance, when played in earnest, have a dangerous fascination. As Canon Farrar well says, 'there is a gambling element in human nature,' and we have got to watch against it, just as we must watch against inborn sensual appetites. With the excitement of a game of hazard comes the strong temptation to risk a stake on the game; as soon as the first stake is laid down, conscience goes with it, and literally the devil has a hand with you in the game. So strong is the fascination of this spell of sorcery that I have seen—in the public 'Conversazionhalle' of Baden-Baden—well dressed ladies watch the roulette-table until they became so bewitched with the play that they would furtively toss a gold Napoleon over on the table from behind the crowd: the 'gambling element' in them had taken fire. Now just here lies the peril with you, my young friend; the excitement of games of hazard sets you in a flame; then comes a small stake, then a larger: if you win, you

play to win more; if you lose, you play on to make up your losses. Before you know it, you are a gambler. The only safe and sure way is to *stop before you begin*.

But it is not only from card-tables and faro-banks that mischief is to be apprehended. Many young men are tempted to 'take a small risk' in mining-stocks or other volatile stocks that were playing up and down in the market. I have known a half-dozen mere lads to 'pool' their earnings or their pocket money in a venture on a share or two of stock. This rage for dabbling in stocks turns hundreds of respectable young men into actual gamblers, although they would be shocked if the ugly name were applied to them. They are not shocked at the thing itself. Instead of feeling that only the money honestly *earned* is honestly got, they are seduced into hazardous ventures, which, in God's sight, are as genuine gambling as any that is perpetrated behind the locked doors of one of those 'hells' that defy the laws.

The dangers to young men are increasing from three causes. 1st, There is a growing passion for getting rich suddenly and easily. 2d, The gambling element is insinuating itself more and more into the trade of the country; the immense sudden gains or losses by 'corners,' 'pools,' &c., are evidences of this. Old-fashioned slow and sure methods of business are sniffed at; and he is accounted the smartest man who, by a sharp 'operation,' wins in a month what solid, sensible men used to earn in a life-time. 3d, The rapid increase of self-indulgent and luxurious living breeds and inflames this gambling spirit. That word *luck* is a dangerous word. Don't trust it. A life ordered according to God's laws is not a game of chance. Every pound got by any other method than inheritance or honest industry makes you poorer. Let it alone; or it may eat into your soul like fire. The awful tragedy described at the opening of this article *began* with the first sixpence laid down in a game of hazard.—*Independent*.

## ULRICH ZWINGLI.

BY REV. F. N. ZABRISKIE, D.D.



**NEW-YEAR'S** day was the four hundredth birthday of Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer. In our centennial ovations to the memory of Martin Luther let us not forget to pay a worthy tribute

to one whose star differeth from his in glory, but was kindled at the same source, and shines with as pure a light.

Zwingli was born January 1, 1484, in the Canton of St Gall. His parentage was of a higher class than Luther's, his father being a prominent official. He received a thorough education at the universities of Vienna and Basel, and entered the priesthood at the age of twenty-two, becoming pastor at Einsiedeln and afterwards at Zurich. He was also an army chaplain, and saw active service in Lombardy. He seems to have been keenly alive to the corruptions of Rome from the start, and began early in his ministry to oppose them. Herein he differed from Luther, having never passed through the struggles of the latter to conform himself to the system in which he was born. Einsiedeln was distinguished for its superstitious practices, especially to those who centred about the black image of the Virgin in the Benedictine Abbey, resorted to by 150,000 pilgrims every year. Zwingli set himself against these things, and preached the pure and simple gospel. By his scriptural preaching and his personal influence he had laid the foundations deeply for the Reformation, when the crisis came.

That crisis came to him, as it did to Luther, through Pope Leo's impudent and ill-advised traffic in indulgences. The pardon-peddler who came his way was one Bernard Samson. Zwingli confronted this man so effectively

that the town council of Zurich were induced to refuse him admission. So completely had the Reformer won over the people and the authorities that as early as 1520 it was ordered that the Scriptures should be used without note or comment; and two years after the Reformation was virtually adopted as the religion of the State.

Zwingli's movement was, however, independent of that of Luther. He took his stand as a protesting preacher two years before he had even heard of Luther. The independence of Switzerland served at once to remove this stream of religious revival from German influence, and to protect it from the repressive power of the Empire. Hence it both spread freely from canton to canton, and thence to France, Holland, England, and Scotland, and at the same time maintained its distinctive character, resulting in the Reformed as distinguished from the Lutheran theology and polity. It all had its beginning with Zwingli, but never was so completely dependent on him, or impressed with his personality, as the work in Germany with that of its leader. Each canton, in fact, had its own leaders, whose views served more or less to modify the general movement.

Zwingli had his perils and persecutions in the early stages of his work, and the Pope tried especially to buy him off by glittering offers of preferment. But he was inaccessible to the latter, and was upheld by the people and government of Zurich against the former methods of attack. By their arrangement great public debates were held in January and October, 1523, in which the Reformer came off with signal triumph, and the question was actually and officially settled so far as Zurich