

The King's Highway

An Advocate of Scriptural Holiness

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness—Isa. 35-8

VOL. XXXII.

MONCTON, N. B., SEPT. 30, 1936

NO. 25

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

A maxim lingers in memory from life's early years; a saying that was a standard of economic philosophy in the country place where we were reared. "You can't beat a man at his own game", the old folks used to remark, when some one recited a tale about country folks at the county fair, or at a picnic who thought they could make some money by betting on a "shell game" (whatever that may have been), or on "fortune" wheels. The scene was described vividly. Some young man with hard earned money watched the game for a time with growing interest. If some one on the inside won, so much more did his interest grow, until he staked what was to him a small fortune on the turn of the wheel . . . and lost. At least "our folks" always lost.

A young man attending the World's Fair in Chicago some thirty years ago became interested in one of those gambling devices. He decided he could beat the game and took out of its hiding place a twenty-dollar coin, which he placed in the game. It got away from him so quickly that he almost gasped with surprise and a sense of loss, and immediately he lost all interest in the World's Fair and wanted only one thing, to get back home. Another man, an old and greedy type of man, risked ten dollars at the County Fair and when he lost he looked about to see what he could salvage. It was back in the horse and buggy days, and he spied the robe that belonged to the "sharper's" rig and carried it off, saying he would get that much out of it.

Hearing these tales our old folks used to say wisely, "You can't beat a man at his own game." In our childhood we took seriously these statements of country folk philosophy, and have reaped benefit from the experience. As a result we have always despised and ignored all kinds of gambling ever since. There is something about the professional gambler that seems to us like the spirit of some other world than this rational, work-a-day world in which we live. His game is to get something for nothing. It is a certain kind of robbery. It is a scheme to get men and women who have money under the influence of a certain mania, and by flipping a few cards, or throwing dice, or turning a wheel, or shooting some balls to take their money away from them. Gambling is at home in every evil place; and by the same law of association and character it is the enemy of all that is good. Why should a man work hard throughout any work day if he can rob his fellowman at night at the card table, and get something for nothing? Thus the gambler reasons. We are told that there is a subtle intoxication in gambling that becomes so strong that it often becomes the prevailing passion of life.

It becomes the agency of some of the most horrible "rackets" in cities that are to be found. The news columns a few weeks ago reported such a racket in New York City, where gam-

blers became associated with certain political clubs of the city where wealthy young women used to meet in the afternoons when their husbands were at work. As is often the case, card parties were common, and the betting was heavy, with the women losing just as heavily. Then to pay these debts attractive young women were inveigled into signing notes which could be paid by hiring their bodies out in places of vice. The uproar in some social circles was no small affair when their husbands found out how the gambling debts were being paid.

We are afraid of this spirit of trying to get something for nothing. A city editor traveling in France recently reported in his paper in this city, that the government of France has of late given its encouragement to betting on the races, and other such schemes, and then taxing the money heavily in the effort to lure the thrifty French people to bring their money out of hiding. It seems to work, says Mt. Burrell, but as a result, honest business suffers, and many of the small merchants and business concerns are going into bankruptcy.

When the spirit of getting something for nothing becomes national in scope, the thrift, the spirit of honest toil, of earning a living by hard work and economy by the natural process of free competition is done for. When people come to think that their country owes them a living simply because they happen to be living here, they are on the road that leads to ruin. We have heard that in the days of Patrick Henry, and the early struggle for national life, the people responded to the challenge, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Time passed and the country in the Civil War period responded to the appeal, "Give me liberty!" Once again time brings in another period of national spirit, which finds expression in "Give me!"

We read recently in a widely circulated magazine, the story of a lady who, with her husband, had spent seven years in the far north, years that covered the period of the great depression. In June, 1935, they returned to the United States, and for a few weeks traveled extensively in certain states. It would be of interest would it not, to read some of the impressions of a person who went away from the country before these recent history-making years, who earned her living by helping her husband wrest from the cold north land a meager income and who then came back, a traveler from this other world of primitive conditions. Well, these paragraphs are quoted from this writer. She says:

"We saw many disturbing, fantastic things. Most disturbing, we saw a noticeable change in many people's outlook on life. There was an unmistakable tendency to want something for nothing; to expect aid as an inalienable right; to say: 'The Government is paying for it, so we might as well have it', or, 'If I don't get my share, others will.'

"To us it seemed that too many people, encouraged by the Government itself, were relinquishing the will to fight their own battles, to stand firmly upon their own feet; forgetful that the price is the forfeiture of independence and self-respect.

"Like others, we want security. But, to us, security does not mean depending upon a government to tax money away from some one who has earned it by production in order to give it to us for not producing."—Wesleyan Methodist.

WOOD IN A STORM

Louisa M. Alcott tells the following story of her kind-hearted and benevolent father and mother:

"One snowy Saturday night, when our wood was very low, a poor child came to beg a little, as the baby was sick and the father was on a spree with his wages. My mother hesitated a little at first, as we also had a baby. Very cold weather was upon us, and a Sunday to be got through before wood could be had.

"My father said, 'Give half of our stock, and trust Providence; the weather will moderate, or wood will come.'

"Mother laughed, and answered in her cheery way, 'Well, their need is greater than ours, and if our half gives out, we can go to bed and tell stories.'

"So a generous half went to the poor neighbor, and a little later in the evening while the storm still raged, and we were about to cover up our fire to keep it, a knock came, and a farmer who usually supplied us appeared, saying anxiously:

"I started for Boston with a load of wood, but it drifts so, I want to go home. Wouldn't you like to have me drop the wood here? It would accommodate me, and you needn't worry about paying for it.'

"Yes', said father; and as the man left, he turned to mother with a look that much impressed us children with his gift as a seer, 'Didn't I tell you wood would come if the weather did not moderate?'

"My mother's motto was, 'Hope and keep busy', and one of her sayings was, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and after many days it will come back to you buttered'."—The Christian.

JOHN WESLEY SAID:

"Nearly fifty years ago a great and good man, Dr. Potter, then Archbishop of Canterbury, gave me an advice for which I have ever had occasion to bless God. If you desire to be extensively useful do not spend your time and strength in contending for or against such things as are of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open and notorious vice and promoting real spiritual holiness."

—Wesleyan Methodist.