

WHIST PLAYING.

ARE you a good whist player, reader? or if your modesty will not allow you to say yes, I would ask you do you go in for the strict game? If you do, pray read no more of this nonsense of mine—select something else to while away your hour. My remarks will not be palatable to you, because I dislike the strict game and your player. I must confess I do not shine at the game, and this is account for the fact that I always avoid, if possible, sitting down to a whist table with old stagers.

In my time, I have inadvertently committed injuries on many people. On one occasion I lodged a few shots in a friend's back when attempting to knock down a pheasant. In my hurry once, on a frosty morning, I tumbled over an old gentleman, who, from his spiciness and juvenility of dress, I surmised was on conquest bent. It would be a vain effort to call to mind the number of ladies' dresses whose destruction has been due to my awkward feet. But in all these instances, and many others too tedious to narrate, a polite explanation always seemed to remove any angry or disagreeable feeling which might have been caused by me. One exception, indeed, does arise before me in the matter of torn dresses. On one of the many occasions, I happened to stumble on to a lady's train, instead of the customary amiable smile and sweet assurance that no harm was done, in reply to my eager but ill-expressed inquiries, this particular lady turned round sharply and asked me whether I had any eyes. "Did I not see I had done harm, and a great deal of harm!" This is very hard on a man, not naturally very audacious, surrounded by people who are mostly strangers to him, and when the injured lady has sported a train five yards at least in length. However, this is a solitary instance in a multitude of such cases; and what made it more remarkable and more awkward to me, was that the lady was young and handsome.

But it is at the whist-table I have been most annoying to my fellow-mortals. I say most, because I never remember, no matter what apologies I may have offered for my offences at cards, to have met with the slightest forgiveness from man or woman. I never sit down to play unless I am absolutely compelled, and I then do it with fear and trembling. And if my partner be one who has been playing whist any time these five and twenty years (weekly if not daily), and, horror of horrors, if this person be one of the tender sex, then, indeed, I feel that torture is in store for me, and I go anything but like a lamb to the slaughter. These old stagers never let you be at ease. If through some good fortune you make no mistake, then, whilst the cards are being shuffled for a new deal, it is their delight to speculate as to what would have happened if the cards had been played in such and such a way. They have all the combinations at their finger ends. You are lost in wonder at their prodigious memories. But if you have neglected to play up to their lead, or committed any of the faults—and their name is legion—to which a careless player is prone, then the interval before the new deal, which should be one of quiet and rest, is made the occasion for hurling a battery of indignant questions at your head.

A short time ago, I weakly consented, because there was no other fourth person present, to complete a whist party. I watched with eagerness my partner take the cards into his hands, and I soon perceived from his method of shuffling that my fate was sealed. I have learned from sad experience to recognise at a glance the shuffle of the rigorous player. There is a species of "no-compromise" in it, which cuts into my very soul. Things went well with me at first. I held such good hands that no matter what cards I played we won. But fortune was only playing with me, raising me up sufficiently high so that I might have a good fall. During this happy time my partner did not growl, and I was satisfied and at my ease. But all mundane things are transitory, good cards included. The luck soon began to turn, and with it my short spell of happiness tumbled to pieces. I must have made a dreadful hash of the play, if I may judge by my partner's indignation. Once, when I fondly imagined I had done well, my partner, as soon as the *entr'acte* came, queried in a tone of amazement, "Why, in the name of wonder, did you keep that king of hearts bottled up until the last?" I mildly suggested that—as it turned out—it made no difference. This explanation only made matters worse. I was indignantly told "not to take refuge in such an excuse;" that though we had lost nothing by it, still I had not played the game, and that I had made an egregious mistake in "bottling up" my king so long.

The term "bottling up," I must confess, nettled me, and I determined on seeing whether I could not bowl out this wonderful and most amiable partner of mine in some slip. The next deal gave me a good hand, and we nearly made the game. It was then my turn to deal, and whilst shuffling the cards, I remarked in a careless, airy, off-hand manner—not looking at my partner, but intent only on dealing the cards—and as if the observation I was making had come, as it were, casually into my head, "By the way, partner, it is a pity that you did not play your king of spades instead of a trump that time, if you had, we certainly should—" I caught his eye at this point, and I am ashamed to confess that that sentence never got finished: it died away into thin air; for a look of such unutterable contempt, mingled with amazement at my audacity, met my gaze as completely dumbfounded me. I had intended to say that "we certainly should have got out." But I believe if I had reached that, nothing short of an apoplectic fit could have satisfied his indignation.

X.Y.Z.

Over the tiny grave of the only body—that of an infant—washed ashore at Lydd, near Dungeness, from the ill-fated emigrant ship *Northfleet*, has been placed a slab with the simple inscription "God knows," that having been the touching reply of the parish constable when he was appealed to by the undertaker as to what name should be engraved on the coffin-plate.

TELEGRAMS.

(From our Daily Contemporaries.)

LONDON, March 12.

The wool sales are marked by considerable languor, and prices continue to recede. Prices average one penny lower than the opening. 14,000 bales have been withdrawn. The French markets have been supplied.

There is no change in the wheat market. It is estimated that there are about a million and a half quarters afloat, and that foreign arrivals will be large.

The late political crisis in Victoria and the battle of Protection v. Free Trade are criticised hopefully by the London 'Times,' which says though the Free Traders may now be defeated their triumph is not far distant.

SYDNEY, March 16.

Archbishop Polding died to-day, and will be buried on Monday.

March 19.—Archbishop Polding's funeral was attended by great crowds. The procession was fully three miles long.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE ENEMY OF EDUCATION!

SHE is specially noted for this work of education. She alone—the Catholic Church alone—makes ignorance such a crime as to exclude from the kingdom of heaven. Ignorance, alone, in Catholic theology, is such a sin as to exclude man, without any other sin, from the kingdom of heaven. Do you not all know, my friends, and have we not all been taught since our childhood that there can be no salvation without a knowledge of at least the principal mysteries of faith? The Church of God is founded on this knowledge; she cannot exist without it, much less flourish and triumph, and pursue her apostolic career amongst the nations. Knowledge is her first principle, because *Deus scientiarum Dominus*, God is the Lord of knowledge, and, adds the apostle, "He that is ignorant shall be ignored and unacknowledged of God." Nay, more, the Catholic Church depends more than any other institutions, I will not say religion, for there is no religion outside the Catholic Church, there are forms of opinions calling themselves religion, but religion means the *cultus Dei*, the worship of God, and that worship must be one, it must be true, it must absorb the whole intellect and heart, by faith and Divine grace, it must take the whole man and put him in the presence of God for the purposes of worship, or else it is no religion. The Catholic Church, I say, depends more than any institution in this world on education, whether we consider her dogmas, that is to say, her belief or her practice. Think, my dearly beloved, how finely intellectual is the religion which is based and founded upon the mystery of the Incarnation, and demands, my beloved, of its children to grasp the mighty thought that God became man, that God became man—so that out of our two natures the Divine and the human only one person, and that person Divine, sprang forth. This mystery is so great in itself, in its intellectual power, and in the demand that it makes on our intelligence that the greatest philosopher of old, the masters of all human knowledge, were unable to grasp it in its immensity; and yet the humblest Catholic child not only receives and believes it but promises it every time that he says, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us." "Mother of God," behold the whole mystery of the Incarnation. This mystery, the fundamental one, is followed up by a series of the highest and most arduous intellectual truths. They come to us, it is true, in the shape of Divine assertion; they come to us upon the authority of the Almighty God who utters them, and of the infallible Church which interprets them. But tell me, is it no small act of intellectual power to grasp the idea of a God revealing unchangeable truth, that is to say, manifesting His own nature—of a Church on earth unchanging, infallible, bearing witness to that one truth, and standing up for it against all the powers of this earth and all the powers of hell?—Father Burke.

THE BLACK BOOK OF RUSSIA.

THE Polish Historical Society of London has already dealt one blow against the cruel tyrant of the land of Sobieski by publishing a widely-read address to the Slavs of Turkey warning them to beware of the Czar and the emancipation which comes from St. Petersburg. Expressing the warmest desire for the liberation of the Turkish Christians from oppression, the Polish Historical Society bade them be on their guard lest the Cossack slip in and take the place of the Bashi-Bazouk. What the Poles have now done against their tyrant, however, cast, into the shade all the effects of the memorable address to the Slavs of Turkey.

In a powerful volume, bound in sepulchral black, and appropriately called the "Black Book of Russia" from its horrible contents still more than from its gloomy binding, the tale of Muscovite barbarities during the last Polish insurrection is related with a simple pathos which freezes the blood with pity and horror. The deeds of demons let loose might fail to rival the abominations of which the officers and soldiers of Russia were guilty. As was said of Bulgaria, it can be said of Poland, that at every stage of their progress, murder, and rapine, and arson, the burning of towns and villages, the ravishing of women, the slaughter of old men and children, the massacre of the weak, the wounded and the sick, marked the march of the Russian armies. It was a scene from the lowest depths of hell, rather than anything merely inhuman. We can fancy the consternation with which the Muscovite Government must recognise this terrible resurrection of its crimes. If Poland has no longer a strong arm to strike, she has a voice to denounce to the execration of the civilized world the butchers of her nationality and the persecutors of her faith.—Liverpool United Irishman.