

most intellectual and useful expenditure of the time, from then until three o'clock the next morning, was to sit down at the tables and play cards. A gentleman whose wife was at a distant settlement, in order that she might be present to enjoy this game of cards, had sent all the way to her home and invited her to come by rail and take a hand in it. My informant was invited to play also, but refused, but was there and witnessed the others' enjoyment until a late hour and finally retired to bed, but was informed the next day that this party had kept up their card-playing until three o'clock in the morning.

Here is an instance of people who have gone to administer in the ordinances of the House of God for their dead, occupying their time in the worse than idle habit of playing cards. I say that this was an evil. I say that evil will grow out of such practices as this; and I say that every Latter-day Saint, whether he goes to the Temple or stays at home, ought to constitute himself a teacher in relation to this matter, and set his face like flint against this evil and pernicious practice. The best you can say of it is that there is no good in it, except to kill time; and if people have time which they can murder in this manner, they have more leisure on their hands than ever I have. I call it the murder of time; and not only so, but the murder of the spirituality of men and women that engage in such a practice. Its natural tendency is to evil, and not to good. I asked one person what good there was in it, and I was told, "Oh, it killed time!" This is the only virtue that I have ever yet heard in regard to card-playing. I do not signalize card-playing as a pernicious thing in contradistinction to other practices that simply tend to consume time, to waste precious moments, and to dull the sensibilities of the head and the heart. Anything that tends to a morbid desire for that which is not beneficial is a sin in the sight of God, and it ought to be cried down, whatever it is. It is no more card-playing than it is checker-playing, if checker-playing is indulged in to the wasting of time. Perhaps the one is as pernicious as the other, although I have not noticed in my life the same tendency to evil in playing checkers for amusement as there is in playing cards. As I understand, it takes four or more to make a good party at card-playing, and they get to cheating one another and practicing fraud in order to win. You cannot do that in checkers. I know a little about checkers myself. I protest against every practice that has no better recommendation for it than the wasting of precious time. I pronounce it wrong. And I say to the Latter-day Saints that idleness is one of those things set down in the revelations of God to this Church as evil, which we should not indulge in, "for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer," and "the idler shall not have place in the Church, except he repents and mends his ways." Card-playing creates idleness, and worse than that. Much might be said to show you the great danger there is of people who indulge in this practice being led from step to step until they become gamblers—and worse than that; for one crime leads to another, and when men get started upon the road of crime, however small the beginning, they go with accelerated speed the longer they continue in

that path, until they fall finally into utter ruin.

ROUND-DANCING.

I am going to preach another little discourse in regard to round dancing. I have been out in the country lately, visiting the conferences, and at one place I understood that the President of the Stake had finally concluded that the Presidency of the Church had let up with regard to their objection to round dancing, and he had actually gone and danced in that way himself. Wherever I have been, the Presidents of Stakes have enquired of me as to what is the wish of the Presidency of the Church with regard to this practice of round dancing; for they say that in the parties in Salt Lake City and those held in the theater, round dancing is all the rage, and "is it possible for us to prevent this practice here when it prevails so much at headquarters?" The question is, have the Presidency of the Church let up on this matter, and do they counsel the people now to round-dance all they please? Now, I do not suppose that any more evil would grow out of two innocent persons dancing a waltz (if innocent persons do such a thing), than would out of the playing of a game of cards. Two or three persons might sit down and play a game of cards and no evil come out of it, for that once; but if they indulged in it until they became infatuated with it, then it results in harm and may lead to destruction. So in relation to round-dancing; people become infatuated with it. It is a practice, to say the least of it, out of which nothing can possibly come calculated to ameliorate the condition of mankind or to elevate the moral standard of men and women. Therefore, the Latter-day Saints ought not to tread where no good can be found. We ought not to cross the line from our own ground on to that of the adversary; for when we do we place ourselves in his power and he will take advantage of us if he can. I think I may safely say here, speaking as I do in the presence of the authorities of the Church, that the First Presidency do not encourage, do not endorse, and do not recommend round-dancing. On the contrary, they deprecate it. They are sorry that some of our young people desire it and will indulge in it in spite of counsel; and we hope and pray that the day will come when they will pay stricter attention to the counsels of men who have experience, and whose only desire is the welfare of the youth of Zion. We do not give you counsel with a view of curtailing your legitimate enjoyment. We would rather increase your enjoyment in every proper way. But this is not something that will add to your enjoyment ultimately, because the tendency of it is toward passion, lust, and immorality. Some may call me an old fogey for making this declaration; but I have been young myself, and have passed through the stages of youth, as many are passing through them today. I have had an experience perhaps that some of my younger friends have not; and I say, without fear of successful contradiction, that round-dancing is an evil, because, if for nothing else, there is no good in it. Further than that, it is wrong because evil may come out of it, and often very great evil, too. As a result of this familiar contact of men and women in the dance, their native modesty, and that respectful regard for each other, and proper de-

corum which should exist between men and women, are broken down. They become familiar with each other's touch and feelings in such a way as to lead on to greater evil. Therefore, I say it is an evil in Zion. And I think I can say, as speaking the minds of the Presidency of the Church on this subject, that we deprecate it, and wish that it did not exist among us, and we would like you to curtail it as much as you can and if possible stop it. We do not want you to be unwise in this matter. A skillful horse trainer who has a fractious horse does not draw the reins tight all at once, but he pulls up gently, guiding and directing and, so far as possible, steering clear of the obstructions in the road, until in time he is successful in quieting his fractious animal and getting it under control. Deal gently with the youth. Act cautiously and warily with them, and kindly withal; for it is our love, for them that causes us to speak in this way. We want to save and exalt the youth of Zion, and bring them back into the presence of God. Therefore we talk this way. We say to the Presidents of Stakes, to the High Councils, to the Bishops, to the presidents of Seventies and the Seventies, to the High Priests, and to the Elders in Israel, set an example in these matters that I have referred to, and wield an influence where you labor that will be felt for good. It is necessary that this should be done.

SECRET SOCIETIES.

There is another little thing I want to speak upon. It is in relation to a subject that has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the Presidency, and especially to my attention while I have been attending the conferences in the outer Stakes for the last few weeks. Last night, after meeting, a good brother approached me. I trust he is here, because I want to talk to him. He is an eminent man, in some respects. He has been on missions, I believe, and has borne many responsibilities at one time and another in the Church. He put into my hand a copy of the constitution and by-laws of a certain society which is seeking to enlist the Latter-day Saints as its members. When he spoke to me about it, I saw in a moment that he was thoroughly imbued with the idea that to join this secret association was the proper thing for Latter-day Saints to do. I read it in his countenance and saw it down deep in his heart. This alarmed me. I have been alarmed a little about it a good many times, from the representations that have come to us in relation to this matter. I could read you the principles laid down in the constitution of this particular association, but I do not wish to name it, because I wish to make no distinctions, nor to antagonize one against another. I do not consider one better or worse than another. For my part, I hold this position: that as for me and my house, we have enlisted to serve God, and I have come to the conclusion long since that it is impossible for me to serve God and Mammon. I cannot carry water on both shoulders without spilling some of it. I cannot wear the yoke of Christ and the yoke of Belial at the same time, and call the yoke of Christ easy and His burden light. Some of these articles in this constitution are most excellent. There are no better contained in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, simply because they are taken directly from the Gospel. They are: peace on earth and good will to