

## The Annapolis Fair.

As is my custom, I took an evening walk into the town of Annapolis, and having passed a pleasant evening with some of my soldier friends, and former comrades in battle, I was returning to my quarters; it was after 10 o'clock, and fearing I might be halted by the guard, I came the back way, and as I came by the Methodist Episcopal Church No. 1, my attention was attracted by a bright light at the open door, and thinking it must be a *glorious revival* that would be protracted to that late hour, I neared the door, through curiosity, and inquired of the door keeper if the meeting was not about closing; being answered in the negative, I asked who preached? He replied that it was "a Fair;" this reminded me of the great sport I had often had driving horses for the premium, and of the fat cattle I had often seen at country Fairs. A Fair! says I—a Fair! How can they have a Fair in a church! So I walked in, but halt! a man asked me for "ten cents," not having thought about paying to get into a church, this took me a little by surprise, but I paid, meantime inquiring if the elephant had performed yet, but passing through another door, I was still more surprised for instead of the elephant I beheld the preacher instead of fat cattle I beheld poor soldiers, and instead of fast horses I beheld fast women. And if you had seen how fast they took money out of my pocket you would have called them fast too. "Here sir—have your fortune told." I told her I did not believe in fortune telling—"O neither do I, it's only for fun." I told her I did not care, so I turned the wheel of fortune, and she told me I "was beloved by all;"—this provoked me for I knew she did not love me herself. So I started on but, "stop! you must turn three times,"—so I did, and she told me "I was married," and that I "possessed great wisdom," these being equally untrue, I started off in disgust, but halt! "Only ten cents." I told her she had said "it was only fun," and I would not have paid, but the preacher explained that the girls had turned *Gipsy for Christ's sake*, I paid the poor girl but had not got my wallet in my pocket, when a beautiful girl of sixteen, (pity her modesty,) asked me to pay for her. The beautiful smiles put on for the occasion, had the desired effect and soon I was minus another dime. Not waiting to hear her fortune, I hastened on, but only to be met by another fair damsel, dressed in purple and scarlet, with hair curled in beautiful ringlets, hanging in rich profusion over her youthful form, addressing me in the softest and most fascinating manner of her sex, her ruby lips whispered, "Wont you take a chance?" I was all amazement—certainly she does not mean for me to kiss her before all this crowd, but soon her blue coated attendant, who no doubt had paid dear for his whistle, and was trying to build castles in the air—told me about "a cake," and "such a beautiful cake, all iced with sugar and floating the stars and stripes." Well, I took a chance, paid the immortal quarter—drew a blank, and had not gone two steps until I was compelled to repeat the same, by a very pretty girl who talked so nice, I gave her a quarter, and traveled, but now I was told in great earnest by a boy that there was "an express package for me," I started but had not gone far when a news boy informed me, there was a letter in the Post Office for me. Then I will get the letter first. After paying the unlawful postage of "ten cents," I proceeded to read, "Dearest friend,"—yes I think you are dear. "Ten Cents"—only four lines and five lies—but I could excuse the writer tho' I understood she had been a church member for some time. I started to go to the express office, but being outflanked by the daughters of chance, I fell back in good order and sought refuge at Jacob's well—having drank of its sparkling waters, I began to think truly this is the land of my father's kindred and I shall be entertained for the night, but as I was about to return thanks for the hospitality of my father's kindred in the land of Mesopotamia, I was politely reminded by the fair damsel, that this was only the "ten cent well of Annapolis," and having watered the Campbell which I had with me, she demanded another dime. But soon Rebecca's brother Laban came out and invited me into the house—soon some of the servants treated me to some of the rich cake of Jacob's house, and a saucer of the highly flavored milk of human kindness congealed without ice by the heart of the giver. The Campbell was provided with the same fare, but refused to eat on account of the great noise kept up by the daughters of chance, in fact I could not keep him in the stall, he broke loose and I have not seen him since; this cost me sixty cents, and fearing to go out past Jacob's well I took another direction, and met the express man again, "A package" indeed! (?) Thinking perhaps some person had taken pity on a lame soldier, I paid the charges, ("only twenty-five cents,") opened the package, how are you, old black hat. Encouraged by this success, I immediately took a chance in a bottle of cologne, which I was assured was prepared expressly for the use of The Methodist Episcopal Church, and was a superior article. In this I was fortunate indeed, I drew the prize, but as I was about to carry it off, Miss Cologne, said in a very persuasive manner "If you don't want it, you can leave it." Willing to do any thing to please so beautiful a creature, I left it, and would have left my pocket book if she had asked it, for it was now nearly empty. Just then I felt something pluck my coat, looking down I was

impolitely accosted by two rude looking boys (who no doubt learned their manners in this fair institution,) "give me a dime?" "give me a dime?" Here I began to count the cost of such folly, and found I had already lost two dollars and fifteen cents, or *five day's wages*, and had only twenty cents left, and fearing lest I should have to pay a "quarter" at the door to get out, I excused myself to the boys, and finally got rid of them by giving them my "old black hat." I was now shown a back room called "archery," where the fair mistress informed me, I could make a trial of my skill for *twenty five cents*, but I declined for I had only *twenty cents*, and I feared if I run *five cents* in debt, they might cast me into prison for it was a dark looking place. Here I beheld several soldiers intoxicated with water stronger than that of Jacob's well. They were shooting blind mice, white mice, dolls, and pin-cushions of so delicate a form they were encircled by garters, and altogether too small for a soldier. The condition of these men was fully appreciated by the daughters of chance; besieged on all sides they had a chance in everything, and one of them afterwards told me he lost between *five and six dollars* in these games of chance. It was now twenty-five minutes past eleven—and "while good men slept, and in light winged dreams ascended up to God." I left those daughters of chance and sons of folly, holding a midnight carnival around this "ten cent" alter, of modern vanity and frivolity; and as I walked home I pondered on the scenes which I had there beheld. This is a Christian land—these are professedly a Christian people and this house is their place of worship, where they meet to sing His praises and I am told that all I have seen in this "beautiful temple" is for Christ's sake, and being a believer in the truths of Christianity, I am disposed to look at it all with a friendly eye, but I must beg leave to ask the Reverend Shepherds throughout our country who presume to preside over the spiritual welfare of those young flocks of fair lambs that play around Jacob's well, if they do honestly believe that such "Fairs" are right? Can you show us where they are sanctioned in all of Christ's teachings? Can you point to a single justifying example in the history of the primitive Christians? Or do you suppose if Christ were here, He would sanction any such unhallowed conduct? Can you strap this "Lottery Box" upon your back, take this "fortune telling machine" in one hand, these "dice" in the other, fill your pockets with "white mice" and "useless toys," then kneel down in "the archery," or the "Ice Cream Saloon," and invoke the blessing of God upon such an institution?—Then as you rise up from such a sacrilegious devotion, I imagine I hear you sing:

Ten cents a chance in Jacob's well,  
O! have your fortune told,  
Here is a mouse, I'd like to sell,  
It is not very old.

And then the Doxology:

Praise Chance, from whom all blessings flow,  
Come shake these dice before you go,  
Praise Chance and drink a toast,  
And see who can drink the most.—AMEN.

Is it not an appeal to the depraved passions and appetites of humanity? Is it not giving your sanction, to games of chance, and training the youth of our land for the gambler's hell? Is it not an intrigue and deception unbecoming a Christian people? Is it not a studied and labor-ed effort to cheat all who patronize them, an act which cannot be justified by any purpose whatever? Is it not on the part of those fair youths who conduct them a sacrifice of modesty, and is not modesty virtue? Can any good intention justify such conduct? Or can such conduct have a good intention? Is it not foolish? Why not substitute instead of those miserable lottery tickets, common playing cards, and have "25 cents Ante," and if it be such a very good cause, perhaps some of the brethren would "go a blind?" Or would not a faro-bank be easier managed and more remunerative? But to keep up a vain show of morality, you of necessity condemn in word, what you teach by example? Is not your whole conduct, "straining at a gnat and swallowing a gambling saloon?" Did not Christ when He entered into the temple at Jerusalem, overthrow all such Fairs and cast out both those that bought, and those that sold, and began to teach saying, "My house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves?" He said nothing about "25 cents a chance," but having no where to lay his head he preached from the mountain top a free salvation to all. And such conduct was never sanctioned by the early Christians, no! never! Paul recommended that they give "according as the Lord had prospered them," but I do not read that he ever recommended that the house of God be turned into an ICE CREAM SALOON, or that the sisters should lose their sleep to sell articles of vanity, to decorate God's house with articles worse than vanity. No!—"The groves were God's first temples," and sooner would they have worshipped amid the deep, calm shades of the forest than have stooped to such acts, to purchase all the luxuries of earth. But the fact is, such "Beautiful Temples" are just now in fashion, and it is your pride that creates your imaginary wants, and to gratify that pride you stoop to means unbecoming and subversive of the religion you profess. For one moment imagine you see JOHN the Revelator, getting up a Fair and calling on the people to have their fortunes told, "Only 25 Cents!"

No! He chose rather to tell them without charge, the fortune of Babylon, and the final overthrow and sorrow of all those who bought and sold in her "Fairs" of luxury and vanity. Or PAUL when he entered Athens, setting up a Post Office and writing "billettoux" to the Athenian soldiers, "Only ten Cents!" and all to decorate the temple of that God whom ye ignorantly worship. No! He chose rather to rebuke such folly and gave his life a sacrifice to the plain unvarnished truths of Christianity, preaching humility and self denial, obedience and LOYALTY to the powers that be. Or imagine you see PETER with the keys of heaven and earth in his hand standing by the door of the church of Annapolis, at the midnight hour demanding "ten cents" of all who chose to enter, and after he had got them in, dressing up the young and fair sisters of the church, in purple and scarlet, curling their hair and prompting them to ask the soldiers to "take a chance" in some article of vanity or luxury, "Only 25 Cents," and all this to buy himself a spring sofa, and marble pulpit. No! PETER spent his nights quite differently and you might have heard him at the midnight hour denouncing all such folly and offering all "a chance" in the kingdom of heaven "without money and without price." Again imagine you see MARY going around with her alabaster box of precious ointment "Only 25 Cents," O! the idea is perfectly ridiculous, yet these pious shepherds attend these festivals and sanction them by their august presence, but I must confess I never saw any of them "take a chance." Now I beg leave to say to all such shepherds, would you not feel more noble worshipping in a plainer house built by honorable means? Could you not sit more comfortably in a rude seat purchased by honorable means than upon a spring sofa purchased by the sacrifice of your moral dignity and Christian consistency? Would you not feel more like a minister of Christ, standing behind a rude pulpit purchased by honorable means, than you do behind your marble structures purchased with the proceeds of your "Archery," your "Fortune telling machine," your "lottery and dice boxes," and "white mice," to say nothing of the sacrifice of the modesty of the fair ones of your flock. If ye be men of honor, do you not dispise such chicanery for any purpose whatever? And as Christians, instead of spreading those rich carpets upon your floors should you not seek to spread the rich tidings of the Gospel in heathen lands, and instead of painting and frescoing the walls of your temples should you not seek to paint the name of JESUS on the walls of heathen temples of idolatry, or to paint the letters of the alphabet upon the minds of some of your ignorant servants.

But having seen the Fair I concluded to attend divine services the next Sabbath evening, in the same "beautiful temple," accordingly I accompanied some of the faithful and was politely conducted to a seat in the gallery. "The Beautiful Temple" was crowded. The "daughters of chance" were there, and the sons of fortune sat beside them, but I could see no sign for "Ice Cream," and "Jacob's Well," was not there, but the Reverend came, he had no "Fortune Telling Machine," no "Chance Box," no "Dice," as to the "White Mice," I could not say, but soon he opened the "Archery" of Truth, and "took a chance" in Esther—"If I perish I perish." The subject was perseverance, the discourse delightful, and the conclusion, "Come to the Fair! Come every night until the debt is paid," just as if a soldier's money was made by such "midnight chances," and as I walked to my quarters I pondered on what I had heard. "If I perish—I perish," but I cannot go to the Fair, for I have not money enough to buy a postage stamp. If there should be no Fair when the Invalid Corps is paid, I cannot practice this "Perseverance," and my chance will be hopeless.—Again he said: "Come every night." Is not this a wicked allurements to the waste of precious time? If a soldier desires to give anything can he not give it in one night? And does not such perseverance as he preaches, tend to reduce to poverty and want the poor soldiers who have given their ALL, to a cause I never heard HIM PRAY FOR! Even if these Fairs are right, would not one night be enough for each pay day? I'm sure one night "strapped" me. But the worthy Patron of Chances, informed us that he had "neglected to take up the usual collections for The Tract Society, and for The Sabbath School cause," of course, because of the debt on "THE BEAUTIFUL TEMPLE," and as I looked upon its grandeur, "I said—Beautiful! beautiful! indeed—but what a pity to neglect the education, even of one child for all such vain beauty and grandeur."

In conclusion I would say in all kindness to these Gospel Ministers who patronize and conduct such "Fairs,"—IF THIS IS RIGHT, WHAT IS WRONG?

In my opinion, when vice and immorality become Christian virtues then will such "Fairs" become Christian institutions, and you will occupy an enviable position, but under the teachings of CHRIST, and His Apostles, your position is ridiculous; and as you cannot defend your course by any acknowledged rules of morality, I would advise you to repent of your past folly, and instead of practicing "such chicanery" to use the last dime of the wounded soldier to carpet the walks of Treason, you give the remainder of your days to deeds of love, charity and LOYALTY.

Very Respectfully, Yours,

INVALID SOLDIER