

# The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto May 20, 1897

## WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

“Defeated but not discouraged” is the hopeful, brave, motto of the Antis. It rose on the applause of Saturday Nights meeting in Association hall. It expresses an attitude for which there is reason to be thankful. “What next?” is the current question. The answer is that probably a protest will be lodged, and a recount will be demanded. Not with the intention of thwarting the will of the majority, but because there is reason to believe a recount will change the figures reported. Then there is a serious legal question at stake, for lawyers of eminence believe that no Sunday franchise exists, that such has not been conferred by past legislation and if not, no popular vote can create a legislative right. This position seems to be strong enough to cause the Company alarm. It must, in the interest of justice, fair play, and for the sake of conscience be pushed to the utmost. The point is no mere technical one. It is a matter of right and it would be utterly delinquent to allow Sunday cars and the consequent evils until such time as every right and proper effort to the contrary has been crushed by the superior power of the law of the land. In this matter it is not a question of pleasantries, but of stern duty. Antis! Do your duty.

## TORONTO'S DOWNFALL,

The battle has been fought and lost. We do not mean by this that the fight has been ended—only the first battle, that of the ballots, and the most important battle. The legal fight still remains and it is important, but the sad fact cannot be denied that sixteen thousand voters in Toronto have cast their ballots for Sunday cars. That is the most serious aspect of the case, for it proclaims that of thirty-two thousand people qualified to vote, a majority was found in favor of unnecessary Sunday labor, and of Sabbath desecration. The latter term is not too strong, for there is no justification under the sun for unnecessary Sunday work, and we have yet to find the advocate of Sunday cars who rests his case on the ground of necessity. Toronto has fallen. She held a unique position among the cities of the world. She was quoted as an example, and her example was encouraging to

the faithful in other cities where the load of Sunday labor had become too galling to be quietly borne. Now the enemy rejoices. If Toronto was not able to maintain her Sunday quiet what hope is there for Detroit, Cleveland and such cities? The defeat of Saturday is a serious defeat for the Sabbath Observance cause. It behoves the Christian people to take the matter to heart. There is need of humiliation, of sackcloth and ashes. The blow may have been permitted to humble our pride, as has been said, certainly it reveals a volume of opinion undreamt of in Toronto on the side of evil. The first duty is to humble ourselves before God and confess our shortcomings. In this city of churches, where the Bible is thought to be very generally accepted as the rule of life the surprise should be that as many hundreds as there are thousands should discharge a public duty contrary to the obvious precepts of God's Word. The result opens up an avenue for mission work, and we hope the churches will be quickened in their efforts to create a proper respect for the Lord's Day and be the means of turning the minds of the people from the worldliness which has taken such a hold of them.

It is true that a Presbyterian minister said or was reported to have said to the Presbytery of Toronto that he believed a Christian Sabbath could be observed even though cars were run on the Lord's Day. His shot was not worth the powder spent on it. His position is so utterly untenable as to be beneath notice, but to his shallow utterance some people attribute the loss of not a few votes. All we need say is that we hope he realizes his responsibility in the premises.

But there were influences more tangible and less subtle at work. The power of money was apparent. The power of the monopolists, of the capitalists, of those who scrupled not to sell their consciences for the hope of better times in business was painfully felt.

Liberty! shrieked the sycophants. Yes liberty, to make money on the Lord's Day. Liberty to force an army of hard working officials to work on Sunday. Liberty to forsake the city with its churches and worship for the beer gardens of the adjacent parks. The sacred cause of liberty was never more foully outraged. To the Street Car Company the service means gain, and if rumour be true the steamboats on the various Toronto routes will ply their trade on Sunday in order to share the unholy traffic. To face all this the most strenuous efforts must be put forth by all genuine Christians. Christians, as a rule, admit the precept that only works of necessity and mercy should be allowed on the Lord's Day. The labour entailed upon the car officials is unnecessary and unmerciful and will not be defended by any one who has regard for his theology or his logic. Therefore it becomes a Christian duty to oppose any further encroachments and to fight against a settled indifference to the evils of Sunday cars, such as may be engendered by familiarity with them.

We have to say that such vigilance will be found to be necessary. Our readers know that our warnings in the past on this question have been uttered with a knowledge proved by the course of events and when we warn of danger in the near future we do so knowing the intention of those interested in turning our Sabbaths to account for their own gain. Indeed but little secret is made of this intention, and on Saturday evening, at one of the city clubs it was the open boast of certain well-known men—the more dangerous because they appear in the guise of Christianity—that they would make the “Sundays hum” and scatter old-fashioned ideas to the winds. The words of one of these men were “Gentlemen, this is only the beginning. In a short time you won't know this city. We'll make business go, and make things lively all round. We have taken the first step