

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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Edited by Rev. Wm. Inglis.

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SABBATH OBSERVANCE AND THE  
WORKING MAN.

THE following paragraph lately appeared in one of the New York newspapers.

"There is no discontinuation of work on some of the new buildings going up in this city on Sunday."

This is just an indication of how matters naturally go when once the sanctity of the Sabbath is trifled with. Once it ceases to be a holy day it cannot be long retained by the great mass of the people even as a holiday. "Works of necessity and mercy" are, of course, at first the grand all-prevailing plea. Then comes the cant about fresh air, worshipping in the fields, and the elevating, "humanizing" power of good music and open museums. But the end of all this is not far. Mammon, greedy, grasping, conscienceless, and oppressive, watches its opportunity and soon forces the toiler to work on all the seven days of the week, with equal assiduity and at equal length. Of course it has all to be done gradually. First, there is the excuse of some great special "push"—"a thing that won't occur again for years." Then strangely that "push" comes back again and again, till the novelty and the objectionableness of the whole have been worn off more or less. And then it becomes "use and wont," as evidently it is in New York with the bricklayers and carpenters, just as it has long been with the printers and newspaper men. Any one can see that the same process is being pushed in Canada, and will succeed, too, if the overwhelming force of Christian and prudent public opinion do not prevent. We have already more than the "beginning of the end," and blatant, bullet-headed mammonism already declines in support of the matter being carried to its legitimate issue. Railways are being more and more "operated" on Sabbaths. Newspaper offices are being always opened at an earlier hour on Sabbath evenings, preparatory to the issue, no doubt, of "Sunday editions." Open telegraph offices on Sabbath will soon be demanded on the old "necessity and mercy" plea. We understand that arrangements are being made for Sabbath telephonic service on the same plea. And who in the end suffers most from all this? The working men undoubtedly, though they are too often ready to barter away their birthrights for a very mean mess of pottage, unaware, as they are, that by and by they will have, when it is too late, to mourn over seven days of enforced labour, paid for by even less than they now receive for the six.

If newspaper offices are open on Sabbath evening, and men have to commence work, as we understand it is proposed they should, even in Toronto, at seven, will any say that things will stop there? Why, it is not so many years since it was the boast of Toronto newspapers that there was no Sabbath work done on them at all. It was proclaimed upon the house-tops that no such work was necessary, and that the man who said it was was either a knave or a fool. By and by, however, the move was made to have the fires kindled and the places made comfortable, so that the men might start at midnight. That that sham has long since passed away is too notorious for discussion, for the click of the types has a great while ere now been heard long before midnight. If the new move we speak of prevails, the men will start work just at the usual hour, and all that will then be necessary to complete the "new departure" will be an hour or two of additional work on Sabbath morning and the pleasant little exercise of distributing type on the Sabbath afternoons, so as to have everything ready for a fair start at seven! What a consuming farce all this is! It exceeds all power of farce, especially when com-

bled with an affected desire for an unbroken weekly rest, and for "Sabbath sanctification." The hypocrisy stands complete when we bear in mind the item-hunters continually at their daily chase, the sermon reporters at their weekly drudgery, and all the other ecceteras which a not very vivid imagination can easily gather up in order to complete the ideal of the Sabbath rest in a daily newspaper office under the new and greatly desired dispensation of liberalism and anti-bigotry. But if newspaper offices, and telegraphs and telephones must all be open on account of the "onward march of civilization" and "enlarged ideas," why not restaurants and dram shops? Why not wholesale stores and pea-nut stands? Why not the "higher drama" and the penny gaff? Why not everything? Foolish, self-sufficient, and not overly intellectually brilliant men are urging forward such a change, and in their own fantastic fashion are crying out that ministers of the Gospel oppose such tendencies simply because they are afraid that under the more "liberal" ideas involved their influence will be lessened and their churches thinned. If they were animated with nobler ideas themselves, they might be able to imagine even Christian ministers urged on by nobler considerations than these, might even come to understand that mighty, far-reaching consequences were involved in this controversy, and that the honour of God as well as the good of humanity might have far more to do with the so-called "Sabbatarian" efforts than either the question of church attendance or of congregational finance.

Will any one soberly say that one solitary person among all the thousands of loud-tongued brawlers who cry out about "necessity" and "mercy," "family affliction," "hurrying to sick and dying beds," and so forth, care one single straw about anything connected with Sabbath trains, or open post offices, working telegraphs, and accessible telephones, except what helps to put money into their individual pockets, or to forward their plans of self-indulgence? Convenient dissipation? There may be such, but if so, we have, unfortunately, never come across them, and have never met with any who had. Will any one say that a single train would be run on Sabbaths, or a single telegraphic message sent, or a single telephone line kept open, but for the money to be made by the process? Has benevolence, or mercy, or patriotism anything to do in the matter? Some may have the courage to say that they think it may sometimes have. If so, they are courageous indeed, and their faith is as great as their courage, both being undoubtedly enormous.

## CHARIVARIS, ABDUCTIONS, ETC.

PERHAPS it is not so much that matters are really growing worse, as that more publicity is being given to all the details of every kind of crime. Be this as it may, sufficient evidence is being every day presented of abounding and abandoned wickedness, even in places and among people where better things might have been expected. The recent fatal issue of a *charivari* in the neighbourhood of Ottawa, has revealed a state of things among too many of the rising generation, that is simply shocking. Nor is there any reason to believe that the young men in that locality are worse than those in other parts. Almost everywhere the same story is being told of a growing lawlessness and brutality which augurs ill for the future. The rowdy element seems to push itself forward with growing energy and impudence; so that such scenes as those which preceded the murder of the poor old man Wetherall are increasingly common. Complaints come from city, town and village of foul-mouthed young ruffians congregating at street corners or in vacant lots, making the night hideous with their obscene blasphemy and riotous horse-play, and rendering it quite impossible that unprotected women or girls should pass without being grossly insulted, if not criminally assailed. How is all this? Is it all the natural outcome of our civilization? Of course strong drink is almost always an important factor in such proceedings, and the tavern corner is the favourite place of resort for such reprobates. Is this coincidence merely accidental, or is it the most natural and necessary illustration of cause and effect? No one can have much hesitation about saying which. Is the fashionable philosophy coming practically down to the lowest strata of society, and producing the natural effects to be expected from its great principle—"Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die"? What

have all the various "regenerators of society," with their pet schemes, to say in the way of remedy for such a state of things? They are ready enough to cry that the religion of the Bible has lost its power. They are doing their best to counteract its influence. What are they prepared to put in its place? They have nothing. They, in fact, don't pretend to have anything. In the presence of such iniquity they but fold their hands and try to reconcile themselves to the inevitable. Their talk of what is "beautiful," or "useful," or "becoming," or what not—What does it amount to? What motive power does it possess? What influence has it ever exerted in reclaiming the lost, or in raising the fallen? None whatever. No doubt it may be replied that all this exists side by side with Christianity, and in spite of all its efforts. So it does. But what efforts apart from that despised religion of the Cross are being made by the many who say that they know better, to remove those plague spots upon our social life and make us all what we ought to be? Christianity has not done all that is necessary, yet what else but Christianity—who else but Christians are even making any attempt in that direction? We know of none; and however saddened and disappointed Christians often may be, as they see iniquity abounding and the love of many waxing cold, they will not, they do not, lose faith in the grand Heaven-given remedy, which is doing more than anything else, or than all other influences put together, for the purification of society, and the elevation and salvation of the race. We are told often—in this *charivari* case among others—that the young rascals who figure so offensively in such deplorable proceedings are often the children of respectable and professedly Christian parents. How is this? Are these and other parents doing their duty to their boys? Is family order not greatly relaxed? Is the old charge not still to be brought against too many fathers, that their sons make themselves vile and they restrain them not? The old-fashioned family order and discipline, it is said, were too stern and oppressive. The old ways, it seems, were harsh and unlovely. Is the only remedy for that, even if the fact were so, the abrogation of all order, and the settled permission for the young to grow up as they please and to live as they like? Surely not. These lawless outbursts of folly and crime have to be met by law and punishment, but neither of these, nor both combined, will supply the effective remedy. Surely, then, it becomes those who believe they have that true remedy in their hands, to redouble their efforts in having it so applied both afar and near, that the terrible plague so manifest and so widespread may be effectively staid.

## THE IRISH LAND BILL.

WE have no wish to enter the realm of party politics, or, indeed, of politics of any kind, except so far as these may bear upon the moral and religious well being either of our own or of any other land. It would be absurd to say that a religious newspaper has *nothing* to do with any such secular topics, at any time or in any circumstances. Far be it from us to limit ourselves in any such fashion. But there is a fitness both in the time and manner of any such references, and we are persuaded that THE PRESBYTERIAN during its whole course has not, in this respect, even in one instance, overstepped the proprieties.

The great Irish Land Bill is a measure of such importance, and is likely to exercise so mighty an influence in coming days, not only on the country for whose benefit it has been drawn and passed, but on others as well, that we make no apology for giving an abstract of its chief provisions, as this has been going the round of the newspapers. We take it for granted that this abstract is substantially correct in the information it gives, for we cannot say that we have had any opportunity of fully verifying the particulars. Should such be the case, as we believe it is, we fail to see how the measure can be spoken of as an act of "oppression," "confiscation," and so forth. It seems to us, on the contrary, to be exceedingly moderate and reasonable, and as such likely in coming days to be made in some of its provisions considerably more stringent, and extended over a far larger area than is at present contemplated. If the holders of unjust privilege were not proverbially short-sighted, we might have been surprised that the landlords of Ireland and their sympathizers and friends in the House of Lords