

THE WEEK.

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The Week,

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

At the annual meeting of the English Sunday Society last month, the Duke of Westminster, who presided, after premising that any abuse of the day of rest would be altogether out of sympathy with the sentiments of the society, said he thought it desirable that recreation of a harmless, enjoyable, and educational character should be provided where possible, so that Sunday might be relieved from the dulness and gloom to which they were unfortunately accustomed. That, we apprehend, is about the position of the advocates of Sunday Reform in Canada. It will serve no good purpose, in discussing this question, which has forced itself into prominence, to rail at the apostles of rational Sunday recreation as "Sabbath breakers." They do not propose to open libraries, museums, art galleries, and permit music in the parks as counter attractions to, or as substitutes for, the churches and divine worship. It is a lamentable fact that the idea of attending a place of public worship is one of the last which occurs to the ordinary artizan or labourer. And we must deal with facts as they are. Further, all thinking men will acknowledge and insist that anything tending to interfere with the retention of the seventh day as a day of physical rest and refreshment for all classes of the population would be much to be deprecated. But the effort to drive the masses to church by shutting up every other institution must end in disastrous failure. The argument that the encouragement of Sunday recreations would involve an additional employment of Sabbath labour is not sound, for the principle that there must be a certain amount of work done is admitted by every man who eats a meal, rides to church, or uses a train on Sunday; and, as the Duke of Westminster observed, what is now required is that it should be extended in a direction favourable to the well-being of society. It is not unreasonable to sacrifice the convenience of a few when the many are to reap benefit. The question is not one of principle but of degree. No moderate man believes or hopes that public opinion in Canada would ever sanction a serious disregard of the sacredness and repose of the day; but surely that is a mistaken religion which would preach—*aut ecclesia aut nulla!* The results of throwing Kew Gardens open to the public of London were shown in a letter from Sir Joseph Hooker read by Professor Tyndall at the Sunday Society's meeting. Six hundred and sixteen thousand people visited that delightful spot in the course of last year on Sundays alone—almost the same number as patronized the place on all the other days of the year put together. And it must be remembered that thousands of citizens who cannot reach such resorts on any other day reach them on Sunday. This is even more true of Canadians than it is of Englishmen, since the proportion of working-

men who have Saturday afternoons to themselves is much greater in the latter country. The results of permitting bands to play in Hyde and Regent Parks have also been eminently satisfactory. The bugbear with which many well-meaning opponents of Sunday Reform alarm themselves is the "Continental Sunday." This, also, is a mere matter of degree. There is nothing to be said in defence of horse-racing on Sunday—though, *en passant*, it may be noted that Chicagoans, not content with Sunday concerts and theatrical performances, now want Sunday races. But Chicago is not in Canada. Françoise is none the worse, but the better man, that he can take his wife and children to an open-air concert, or *ducasse*, where he can smoke his cigarette and sip his cup of coffee or light *bock*, instead of rambling around the streets in an aimless fashion. Men of his class will have some recreation on Sunday, and if it is made legal and kept respectable, they will take their families, which is infinitely better for all concerned. If not permitted to do this, they will take some sort of recreation all the same, but the restraining influence of women being absent, the line dividing recreation from dissipation is more likely to be crossed. Lord Bramwell, who, as a judge, claimed to know something of crime and criminals, characterized the objections to rational Sunday recreation as "stupid and utterly without foundation," and with characteristic boldness advocated a recurrence to the old English era when the people enjoyed out-of-door games on the Sabbath day, and when cricket was played on the village green. There is still a great deal of prejudice to overcome—prejudice not in all cases founded on reason; but the time must come when "the monotonous gloom" of the English and Canadian Sunday, which was unknown to the former before the Commonwealth, will be dispersed.

As might have been expected from the "record" of the accuser, Mr. S. H. Blake has been triumphantly acquitted by the Law Society of the charges brought against him by Mr. J. A. Macdonell. It will be remembered that the harebrained complainant, who has earned a most unenviable notoriety in connection with several shady semi-political transactions, categorically charged Mr. Blake with unprofessional behaviour. This accusation, which the Law Society found "utterly groundless," becomes all the more contemptible since it was an attempt to injure Mr. Edward Blake through the reputation of his brother. Both these gentlemen, however, would have treated the affair with the silent scorn it deserved; but the Law Society very properly demanded that the slander should be made good. His utter failure to do this adds one more to the many reasons why a name redolent of so much ungentlemanly and questionable conduct should no longer remain on the rolls.

A FEW days ago the New York *Graphic* inserted a notice concerning THE WEEK which contained a number of statements utterly devoid of foundation. The paragraph, which was evidently inspired by some malicious person, only derived importance from the fact that the author seemed to have picked up some information on the internal economy of the office. A letter correcting the misstatements was sent to the editor of the *Graphic* for publication, but was not inserted—which, seeing that it was accompanied by a private communication was, to say the least of it, not ultra courteous, and has necessitated this protest against the too common practice, amongst conductors of presumably respectable and fair journals, of inserting unsupported slanders concerning contemporaries.

THE WEEK has completed half a year of existence; and though it has not been exempt from the difficulties which beset the commencement of every enterprise, those who are connected with it can say with truth that they have every ground for satisfaction and hopefulness. Their objects have been to provide Canadians of all parties and opinions with a fair and open field for the discussion of the questions of the day, especially those which most affect our own country; to afford to Canadian talent an opening which it greatly needs, inasmuch as it is practically excluded from the English periodicals and not freely admitted to those of the United States; and thus to prevent Canada, if possible, from ceasing to be a distinct centre of intellect. With these aims it was hoped that Canadians would have sympathy, and the hope, so far, has not been disappointed.