

at a later date, when the observance of two rest-days—one every seventh and one every eighth day—became too burdensome, the Christian Sabbath was made the sole legal rest-day of the Empire. But alas for this union of Church and State! For, instead of Christianity christianizing paganism, paganism paganized Christianity, so that the Sabbath became degraded along with other ordinances and the Dark Ages ensued. John Wycliffe's translation of the Bible was the beginning of a reformation in England which issued in Puritanism, whose Sabbath has been the butt of so much ridicule. The Puritans doubtless committed errors of judgment in this and other respects, but they made a serious, and judged by the character of the men their system produced, a successful attempt to reverence the ordinances of God.

But we are more particularly concerned with the conditions of the institution in our own country in this second decade of the twentieth century. Here the truth, to sensitive souls, is appalling. Until, say a quarter of a century ago, owing to the superior piety of the fathers, and to their influence upon the present generation, a good degree of respect for the Sabbath was maintained, but since that time the defences of the institution have been broken down, one by one, until we have about every form of desecration of which the most depraved so-called Christian countries have ever been guilty. A bull fight in Madrid on Sunday in the year 1800 was no worse in principle than the tennis playing we had at Kingsport in the year 1914. It is common knowledge that shooting and fishing on the Sabbath are practised quite extensively. At sea-side resorts games are played, boats are hired and wares are bought and sold. To minister to this unholy traffic illy stables are run full blast, and automobiles, bicycles and private teams, in ever increasing number, join the degrading procession. An advertisement appeared recently in a popular magazine, which aptly illustrates the spirit of the present generation. On one page a family is represented as spending Sunday at home in the most dejected attitudes, and on the opposite page the members of the same family are pictured as off in high