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## The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, Aug. 6, 1896.

### The Perils of Pleasure.

A WORD may not be out of place at this holiday season on the danger of giving ourselves up too much to the pleasures of life, to the neglect of spiritual claims and duties. We need physical and mental rest and recreation, and nature seems to have pointed to the hot summer months as the most suitable for recuperation of body and mind. But the holidays ought to be the Christian's annual Sabbath, a quiet space of time given up from the world to pure, health-giving exercises, and religious meditation. We do not wish to make a suggestion here against enjoying to the full the legitimate pleasures with which a bountiful Creator has bestrewn the earth. Nature beams with pleasures that ought to delight the heart of man. The sciences offer an easy key to nature's storehouse by which the wonderful works of God may be discovered and contemplated. Human nature also offers a field; subtler and more fascinating, yet open to the enquiring mind: and rational sports and amusements there are in abundance to meet the worries of business and the weakness of limbs. But in the reasonable and right use of these, the claims of Christ must not be forgotten nor belittled, nay all things—whether we eat or drink—should be subordinated and subdued to the needs of the Christian life.

While this truth is applicable everywhere and at all times, there is special need for remembering it during the holidays, when a natural reaction against the routine and restraints of regular habits and conventionalities asserts itself, and therefore a danger of travelling too far on the alluring path of liberty.

### Railway Traffic on the Sabbath.

A judgment of great importance has been given by the Supreme Court of the United States on the subject of the running of Sunday trains. A freight train was run (presumably with perishable goods) by the Alabama Southern Railroad. The law of Georgia provides that all freight trains shall stop on the Sabbath day, not later than eight o'clock a.m., excepting those which are loaded with live stock which may run to the nearest stock pen. Mr. Hennington being convicted by the Georgia courts of Sabbath breaking, appealed to the

Supreme Court of Georgia on the ground that the law just referred to is repugnant to the Interstate commerce legislation of the United States. The court rejected this contention.

The following extract from Chief Justice Bleckley may be read with profit by our legislators, courts, and laymen:—

“There can be no well-founded doubt of its being a police regulation, considering it merely as ordaining the cessation of ordinary labor and business during one day in every week; for the frequent and total suspension of the toils, care and strain of mind and muscle incident to pursuing an occupation or common employment, is beneficial to every individual, and incidentally to the community at large, the general public. Leisure is no less essential than labor to the well-being of man. Short intervals of leisure at stated periods reduce wear and tear, promote health, favor cleanliness, encourage social intercourse, afford opportunity for introspection and retrospection, and tend, in a high degree, to expand the thoughts and sympathies of people, enlarge their information, and elevate their morals. They learn how to be, and come to realize that being is quite as important as doing. Without frequent leisure, the process of forming character could only be begun, it could never advance or be completed, people would be mere machines of labor or business—nothing more. If a law which, in essential respects, betters for all the people the conditions, sanitary, social and individual, under which their daily life is carried on, and which contributes to insure for each, even against his own will, his minimum allowance of leisure, cannot be rightfully classed as a police regulation, it would be difficult to imagine any law that could.

“With respect to the selection of the particular day in each week which has been set apart in our statute as the rest day of the people, religious views and feelings may have had a controlling influence. We doubt not that they did have, and it is probable that the same views and feelings had a very powerful influence in dictating the policy of setting apart any day whatever as a day of enforced rest. But neither of these considerations is destructive of the police nature and character of the statute. If good and sufficient police reasons underlie it, and substantial police purposes are involved in its provisions, these reasons and purposes constitute its civil and legal justification, whether they were or not the direct and immediate motives which induced its passage, and have for so long a time kept it in force. Courts are not concerned with the mere beliefs and sentiments of legislators, or with the motives which influence them in enacting laws which are within legislative competency. That which is properly made a civil duty by statute is none the less so because it is also a real or supposed religious obligation, or is then statute vitiated, or in anywise weakened, by the chance, or even the certainty, that in passing it the legislative mind was swayed by the religious, rather than by the civil, aspect of the measure. Doubtless it is a religious duty to pay debts, but no one supposes that this is any