

NEW YORK SABBATH COMMITTEE.

The Report of the eleventh and twelfth years (1867—1869) of the New York Sabbath Committee cannot be allowed to be passed over in silence. Its intrinsic merits are great, but it is impossible for your Committee to do it anything like justice in the few words they have room for. "The Committee is composed of twenty gentlemen, laymen of the City of New York, of different denominations, associated for the promotion of one object, which is briefly stated in the second article of their constitution as follows: 'The object of the Committee shall be, by personal influence, by the aid of the pulpit and the press, and in all judicious, prudent and practicable methods, to promote the observance of the Sabbath.' Their efforts to maintain the Sunday clause of the Metropolitan Excise Law have been indefatigable, and attended with blessed results. "This law, enacted in 1866, approved itself at once as no previous law on the subject had ever done, as practicable and efficient for the ends designed. While it secured to the city treasury an annual revenue from licences, of a million and a quarter of dollars, in place of the few thousands under former laws, and greatly diminished the number of places where liquor is sold, the most important effect of the law resulted from that feature of it in which the Committee are especially interested, namely, the clause prohibiting entirely the liquor and beer traffic on Sunday. The enforcement of this clause resulted at once in giving us "Sabbaths substantially undecorated by drunkenness and disorderly proceedings." Whereas, in previous years, arrests on Sundays had always numbered, on an average, twenty-five per cent more than on other days." Under this law the arrests on Sundays were reduced to only one-half of the average on other days. There has been formidable opposition to this salutary law, particularly on the part of 'those whose craft was curtailed,' and the dissipated part of the German population. At several German anti-Sabbath and anti-Temperance meetings it was resolved, "that they would never vote for any man who is in favor of Sunday and Temperance laws," and at the State Constitutional Convention, June 23rd 1867, a petition was presented, that the reading of the Bible in the public schools be prohibited by the Constitution, and all Sabbath laws abolished."

The New Yorker "Demokrat" closed a number of anti-Sabbath articles with the following: "The evil we combat is the observance of Sunday as a public institution generally, and the Sunday legislation as a class-legislation which does not harmonize with the fundamental laws of the Union—Equality of rights for all! No caste of priests! Either entirely abolish the observance of Sunday as a public institution, or close the churches on Sunday."

To counteract these vile efforts for the repeal of the law, and to draw out an expression of public sentiment in support of it, a mass meeting was held, and attended by many eminent citizens, at which Judge Woodruff presided. Amongst those present was the Rev. Newman Hall. A circular was issued by the Committee, which was distributed throughout the state, headed: "Shall we have a Sabbath?" Powerful efforts were used by the enemies of the Sabbath to gain their object, but they proved unsuccessful. Amendments were made in the Assembly, but were defeated in the Senate, and the Legislature finally adjourned, leaving the law upon the statute book.

In 1869 renewed efforts were made to have the law repealed by the anti-Sabbath party. They failed in this, but succeeded in getting the Assembly to pass an amendment permitting the sale of lager beer on the