

day life? Is not one of the chief inducements to the weary worker, or the discouraged philanthropist, to seek rest and recreation in a novel, the expectation cherished that he will thereby be transported for a little season into a region in which the course of true love, even if it do not run smoothly for a time, is certain to bring the parties triumphantly through all their seas of trouble into a haven of happiness and peace, where he can leave them with a tranquil heart? What can be more disappointing, not to say exasperating, than for one to follow the fortunes of the faithful pair through all the vicissitudes of parental disapproval, cruel separation, misrepresentation, and calumny, then, after years of separation, to have the lover appear mysteriously at a critical moment, and rescue the heroine and her unappreciative friends from deadly peril, only to be shot down in the moment of triumph, and brought into the presence of his loved one, and her grateful relatives, repentant too late, in a dying condition; and then, still further, to have the bereaved maiden, a year or two after, marry the eminently respectable and approved family friend, who has been for years laying siege to her affections, in the sunshine of family favour? More exasperating still is the case of the two who, being evidently made for each other, and being thrown together for months or years in circumstances most favourable to the growth of mutual attachment, go on year after year each secretly devoured with love for the other, which each, yet, with successful and exasperating perversity, conceals and disguises from the other, until they finally separate and each goes the lonely way of disappointment, without ever having wit enough to divine the true state of the other's heart. Surely one needs but to stumble on a few such tales in succession in order to become ready to disavow fiction forever. And yet such is much of the fiction of the day. And some pretend to enjoy its realism!

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The Universal Rest-Day.

THE fining of four citizens by the magistrate of a suburban village, for the offence of playing golf on Sunday, has brought the question of Sunday laws and their enforcement again to the front in this vicinity. Almost simultaneously a somewhat sensational letter from the Secretary of the International Religious Liberty Association informs us that in the State of Georgia, U. S., a citizen who had, as a matter of religious conviction, scrupulously rested on Saturday, the Old Testament Sabbath, has not only been fined and imprisoned, but condemned to the chain-gang, for persistently working on Sunday; while in Mississippi another Seven-Day observer has been arrested and imprisoned for hoeing potatoes on his farm on Sunday. These instances, though the violation of the laws arose from different motives in the Canadian and the American cases, and though the penalties provided in the Georgia case seem almost barbarously severe, raise, to our thinking, precisely the same question. Whatever may have been the motive of the prosecuting parties in the respective cases, the real question is not, we maintain, theological or religious, but civil and sociological. It is not a question of enforced observance of either a Jewish or a Christian day of worship, but of the maintenance of a national day of rest. If either the Provincial or the State Sunday-laws have been enacted on religious grounds; if those who have violated those laws are being punished for having failed in a religious observance ordered by the statutes, then the legislatures have overstepped the bounds of legitimate civil administration and intruded within a sphere with which they have nothing to do—that of the individual in his relations to God. Their action becomes religious persecution and tyranny. We have to confess that most of the discussions which we hear from

day to day in regard to the subject, seem either to take openly or tacitly, the high religious ground. By some the Laws of Moses, by others, the precepts and example of the Apostles and early Christians, are pleaded as binding upon what is called, with questionable accuracy, "the Christian State." Those who so reason forget that we are not, as were the ancient Jews, under a Theocracy, and that the modern Legislative and Executive Authorities of the Modern State would find it very difficult indeed to establish their right either to interpret or to enforce any religious mandate. Religion is an individual, personal thing, and the more scrupulously our civic rulers can leave it untouched, save in their individual, personal capacities, the better for all concerned.

But that is merely one side of the question. It settles nothing with reference to the question of a weekly rest-day, binding upon all good citizens, and to be enforced by the civil authority. The question, and we hold it is a very large and vitally important question, is simply, Do the best interests of the State, *i.e.*, does the greatest good of the greatest number of citizens, demand that every seventh day be made legally a day of rest for all classes of workers? Can any intelligent student of Old Testament Scriptures doubt that the Sabbath, as originally instituted, free from the superstitious accretions of degenerate days, was more than a mere arbitrary religious institution, that it was based upon a profound physical and psychological principle? Can any candid thinker, with a fairly good knowledge of human nature, with all its physical and moral propensities and weakness, conceive clearly and patiently what would be the effect upon either the physical, the intellectual, and the moral condition, say even of the people of Canada, were all idea of a uniform rest-day to disappear, and every day be absolutely like every other day, and not shrink from the picture? Would not the physiologists be practically unanimous in assuring him that the regular recurrence of a day of rest and change is one of the most potent, not to say indispensable, of all agencies for conserving the physical energies of the race? Will not the psychologists agree that precisely the same law holds in the intellectual sphere, and that opportunity for rest and recuperation intervals is a *sine qua non* of the retention of a sound mind in a sound body? Who would not shrink in horror from his own conception of the terrible moral declension which would surely follow were there no quiet Sunday to cool the ardour of the greedy mortals working at fever heat along all the ten thousand lines of occupation in which human acquisitiveness lavishes the energies of body and soul for material good? Nay, we may go further. Would not a great moral degeneration of the race quickly begin were there no longer one day in seven in which men and women may not only have opportunity but find themselves in a manner constrained to the currents of thought and feeling, from the channels whether of business or pleasure, by which they are prisoned on the working days, and think for a little on those mysterious relations to the unseen, those higher problems of duty and destiny, which surely stand no less closely related to the highest development and true well-being of rational intelligences than the more practical and dulling pursuits of the work-a-day life?

Our question, though we have put it but feebly, is just this: Is it not true that a day of rest, hebdomadal, or otherwise, is, by the constitution of our natures, and the dulling influence of everyday circumstances and occupations, a necessity to the well-being, if not to the very existence, of the race? Grant, for argument's sake, that it is, and what follows? Is it not capable of the clearest demonstration that such a rest-day can be secured for the millions only by what will always seem to many a harsh, uncalled for, and unjust interference with their freedom of action? It is useless to