

## A WORD TO BICYCLISTS.

WITH much regret we saw in the organ of bicycle riders a notice that at their recent meeting at St. Catharines, Sunday was to be used, first for a general reception of visitors, and afterwards for sight seeing.

We sympathise warmly with young men in cities who have a longing for fresh air on Sundays. But we are unable to see why in order to obtain a breathing of pure air, they should ride their wheels many miles over dusty roads during all hours of Sunday. The utter disregard for the Sabbatical rest shown by cyclists their apparently ostentatious defiance of public opinion, shown by riding so much when others are on their way to Church, by no means do credit to the judgment or feelings of these young travellers, who display a degree of moral obtuseness, or indifference, which bodes ill for their future.

We do not affirm that riding a "wheel" on Sunday is a sin, but we do say that it is a very rapid way of falling into evil habits. In the old land companions often walk out on fine Sundays to the village churches round the city or town in which they reside. This combines an innocent, indeed laudable desire to improve the health, with an observance of religious duty which of itself is no small help in that effort.

The hard, oftentimes shamefully severe hours imposed on young clerks in stores and offices, will never be modified by young men making a secular holiday of their Lord's Day. The young have suffered in this respect terribly from the hard puritan spirit which is so ingrained into modern business life. Your thorough going puritan thinks there are only two things worthy a man's attention, one is, the making of money, the other is, getting to heaven after the first is accomplished, and there spending eternity in reflecting upon the glorious fact that he left a "pile" to his descendants. To the first effort he gives six sevenths of his whole time, to mark its relative importance. To impress this idea upon all in his service he compels them to devote as many hours day by day as human nature can endure, so that no erratic ideas as to life having other and higher aims and possibilities may have time to germinate during their leisure moments.

One of these utterly abominable beings recently rebuked one of his staff for retiring on a competency that he had saved. In doing so he boasted that he, though now past seventy, and wealthy, still kept up the early and long hours of arduous business life—especially praising himself for being down every morning in time to see that the clerks were at their desks punctually. What a glorious result of a life stretched beyond the Psalmist's span!

That is the spirit engendered by puritanism, and young men have to thank it for the slavish severity of long hours, rare holidays, and a general sense of being regarded as mere machines out of whom work to the utmost must be ground out at the lowest cost. This it is which almost compels young men to use Sunday for recreation. The Catholic Church

sets her face dead against this everlasting, unremitting toil. Her policy is to make life not six sevenths wholly a money seeking time, and one seventh a dreary solemnity, but rather to give to all time some "sweetness and light," by lifting men out of the grossness of material cares, and causing the Sabbath to be a delight and a refreshment to body, soul, and spirit.

If young cyclists, and those of other tastes, reflected they would recognize the Church as their best friend, as *the Church is a perpetual antagonist to narrow, harsh, puritanic ideas as to six sevenths of life, the year round, being only for work.* The worship of the Church they would find to be, or their influence would cause it to become so refreshing and elevating that the old exclamations would be again general, "I was glad when they said, let us go to the house of the Lord,"—"it is the Lord's Day, we will rejoice and be glad in it."

## THE CHURCH AND THE POOR.

THE signs of the times clearly indicate that there is a tide beginning to rise which will be the great movement of the early coming time. The spread of education has engendered a feeling of discontent at the social conditions now surrounding the lower class of workers. Those who have no other source of happiness, as many have not, than superciliously looking down upon their fellow creatures who occupy less comfortable stations in life, may turn up their noses as much as they will at the growing discontent of the so-called "common people," those people are bound to go up higher in comfort, or to make trouble.

Canada has, we believe, a larger proportion of inhabitants than any other land, who are in comparative comfort. In no other country are the streets so devoid of rags. But we have bad quarters in our towns and cities, bad every way, miserable houses, wretched drainage, foul surroundings, cramped space, and a general condition of discomfort. That vice is the parent of this condition of things is *only half the truth*, for vice is created, stimulated, almost necessitated, by degrading domestic surroundings.

We rejoice much that certain Toronto Aldermen have made a move to compel all dwelling houses in that city to be of not less than a certain size, and each one to command the exclusive use of a certain open space, both conditioned on the laws of health. That regulation will be a great temperance reform.

We are unable to see any remedy for the wrong, and the evil, but wrong most bitter, and evil most grievous is it for young females to be kept at work all day, long hours, the week through, *for wages that do not keep them.* We hold as a fundamental economic principle that no human being has a right to the time and labor of another without such reward as will *maintain* the laborer. The slave owners even obeyed that law, and Christian men do not reach the slave owner's standard of equity in dealing with their servants.

We are much pleased with a vigorous protest recently made by the Rev. Canon Furse against

the old fashioned notion that poverty and foulness of life are according to the Divine Will.

"One view which a Christian may take of the poor is that their existence is a Divine ordinance. This traditional view of poverty is taken from the standpoint of some isolated texts in the Bible—e. g., "The poor shall never cease of the land;" "Ye have the poor always with you." This well-meant acceptance of the Word of God, colouring with a hue of piety the conservative traditions of the English world, is the author of that system of "pulpit-routineers," as S. T. Coleridge designates the clergy, which preaches patience to the poor and charity to the rich. One outcome of this view is the false but colourable impression made on the minds of English workmen that the clergy, and indeed all Churchmen, are gracious to the poor, but like to keep them poor. In this suspicion that the Church wishes to keep men poor there is implied a charge of patronizing, which at the best is contemptuous and unsympathising, and is absolutely remote from the rare virtue, the sense of justice and right. It follows not unreasonably that, in the mouths of men with acrid temper, and seasoned with over-much salt, the same phrases, "kindness to the poor," "patronage," and even "charity," may be used in *malam partem*; and the kindly advances of the privileged may be flung back by the unprivileged with muttered rage and insolence. Now is this view of poverty (however kindly expressed by religious talk) tenable by the Christian citizen? Is this Scriptural? Is it after the mind of God? I answer, "No." To survey human society with the presumption that poverty is a permanent institution in the kingdom of Christ, ordained by His Father, is in my judgment unwarrantable. And if a word here and there in Holy Scripture be tossed in the face of my denial, I say it is an example of that abuse of Scripture by which the letter is made to kill.

I do not forget that love is a theological virtue, and that justice is only a cardinal virtue; but I venture to say that that form of love, which has been received in the mind of English phraseology and is reissued with the modern stamp of charity, but it is inferior in worth to justice, and of the two virtues justice is incomparably the rarer of the two. Philanthropy, benevolence, world-bettering, pitifulness, are common as wild flowers in modern England; but justice is rare, and is as brave and noble as it is rare. Charity, in the modern sense, may be sentimental, effeminate, and unwise. Justice is masculine, robust, and the attribute of kings. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

It is not just that the Church in England should have allowed towns and cities to be over-populated without making provision for the moral and religious welfare of those multitudes; and then, when ignorance and misery and drunkenness and lust have propagated themselves through two or three generations, and hereditary predisposition to physical and moral disease has increased by geometrical progression, to turn round and say to the natural inheritors of this depravity, "Your misery is due to your own fault; your fetid air in workshop and garret and cellar may drive you to the gin-shop—but it is your own fault; your stifling single room for a family of grown-up sons and daughters may send your girls into the streets and your boys to the felon's cell, but it is your own fault!" I see no justice here; no equity in condemning the viciousness which our own neglect has propagated:—

Then at the balance let's be mute;  
We never can adjust it.  
What's done we partly may compute,  
But know not what's resisted.

Poverty like this, which means a famine of the soul, a drought of all sweet springs of the heart's best blood, a destitution of every rag of righteousness to cover the stark nakedness of the child of sin, cannot, I conceive, be the poverty of the poor who in that most kindly and beneficent book of Deuteronomy are declared never to cease out of the land. So far as Socialism insists on justice being done to these our brethren, I think the Church should not pass by on the other side.

## THE REIGN OF CHRIST.

I PROPOSE to speak to you to-night something about the present reign of Christ over our hearts by love. I will speak for a little while of our relation to human love after our disappearance from the earth by death. I will speak briefly, for it is perhaps an unwholesome subject to think about too long. In this matter we have the advantage of having a picture, so to speak, painted for us by the cynical genius