



THE Sunday question—the question, that is, as to what it is lawful and decent that one should do on Sunday—is once more disturbing the consciences of a number of highly respectable and worthy people in various parts of English-speaking communities, and though the matter has not seriously disturbed we New Zealanders at the time of writing, it is yet worth considering, for assuredly the wave will travel this way, and sooner or later some of us will be called upon to declare our opinions on a problem, the solution of which is really something more than difficult.

THE mail service so recently opened with Canada brings papers which show that the attention of our cousins across the pond has been seriously directed to the right answering of the query of how far Sunday recreation is permissible. It appears that certain young men in Toronto played golf on Sunday, and for this offence were 'run in' and somewhat severely punished. This fact drew from his shell that notable Church of England divine, Dr. Goodwin Smith. This gentleman, who has an almost world-wide reputation for high-mindedness and singleness of character, commented on the fact of the young men being convicted for golf playing on Sunday and then proceeded to remark:—

'HAD they been taking a dull walk, riding on horseback, or driving in a carriage, without any religious thoughts in their minds; talking and smoking, perhaps talking scandal in their club; reading French novels, or writing letters on worldly subjects, they would not have been offending against the law. The only thing apparently which the law condemns is a game; the only thing which it secures is gloom. Even children must not play on Sunday, and they are apt accordingly to dread the day.

'This Sunday question is of the highest importance and we ought to be able to discuss it without acrimony or imputations of wrong motives to either side. For my part I most heartily acknowledge the good intentions of those who desire to uphold the present system, and the correctness of their practical conclusions supposing their premises to be sound. If there is a divine command forbidding amusements in themselves harmless, to be enjoyed on a Sunday, we shall all admit that we ought to obey it. If there is not a divine command, we are all free; and, if we are free, we must respect each other's freedom. It is a mistake, I venture to submit, to assume that the plea for a free Sunday is merely a plea for license. It is a plea for mental and moral health. An ordinary man cannot do without a certain amount of pleasure. The character of an ordinary man to whom pleasure was denied would become melancholy, morose and liable to moral aberration.'

THE only question is whether the pleasure shall be healthy, as that of golf, or any other out-of-door game is, or unhealthy, as are some of those modes of killing time to which a strict Sunday law condemns ordinary men. Hardly anybody, it may be presumed, now maintains that we are divinely commanded to keep the Jewish Sabbath. Nobody except a Jew does in fact keep or pretend to keep it. The reasons given for the institution in the Fourth Commandment show plainly that it was intended for a primitive people. We are under no more obligation to keep the Jewish Sabbath than we are to keep the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Trumpets. On the words of St. Paul in Colossians ii. 16 (Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in

respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days), Dean Alford, than whom there is no better or more orthodox authority, says that, 'if the ordinance of the Sabbath in any form had been of lasting obligation on the Christian church, it would have been quite impossible for the apostle to have spoken thus.' The absence of other reference to the Sabbath in the Epistles has been noted as evidence of its disuse. If the dean's remark is true and the Sabbath is no longer obligatory, why should we allow its shadow any more than that of any other abrogated institution to darken our life.

'OUR æsthetic Sunday is of Puritan origin, and the Puritan's was an Old Testament religion. He was, besides, animated by a desire of opposing what he thought a Scriptural ordinance to the unscriptural festivals and fasts of the Roman calendar. Bishop Morton, one of the best representatives of Christianity in the reign of James I., and a decided Protestant, the question being referred to him by the King, decided that nothing must be allowed which would disturb the congregation during the hours of church service; but that, on the other hand, it must be left to everyone's conscience to decide whether he would or would not take part in the customary amusements, which included archery and dancing on the green, when the service was over. Of course, the good prelate would not have constrained or advised any persons to take part in the amusements whose spiritual nature called them to higher things. It seems to me that this is the compromise to which—and, let us hope, without breach of social peace or Christian charity—we shall come. Some parishes in England, I believe, have come to it already. Proposals of a compromise unfortunately seldom are welcome, and with relation to the car question, they are at once cast aside; but the result in that case will probably be that the opponents of Sunday cars will have reason to regret their determination to stand or fall by inexorable prohibition. It is needless and might not be becoming on my part, to warn the clergy against overbending the bow and connecting Christianity in its hour of trial with a restraint on innocent enjoyment, and with a gloom of which there is appearance in the gospel.'

POLICEMEN, taken as a rule, are scarcely an observant class of men, and though their opportunities are many, have rarely come before the world as students of character. It is therefore an almost petrifying surprise to find that there exists a police officer who is not only a student of character in the main, but of feminine character in particular—a policeman who through the medium of our English contemporary *Woman* has given his opinion on the various styles of women whom it would be unwise to marry. His advice to those about to marry is as follows:—

'WATCH the young lady walking slowly along, looking into all the shops as she goes. She takes the middle of the pavement, and saunters as though there wasn't a crowd behind, tryin' all it knows to dodge to one side or the other of her. She thinks of nobody's convenience but her own, not she! Of course, the street was made for nought but to show off her frock in! Or take another young woman—the one that's in a desperate hurry. Perhaps it's a rainy day, and she pulls her umbrella down in front of her face, and shoots ahead. She won't raise that bit o' silk for no one. Other folks have got to look out for her, and their sharpest and quickest, too, or they'll have that umbrella rammed into their eyes before they can shout "Jack Robinson!" If that gel poked a feller-bein's eyeball out, tain't likely she'd stop to say, "I beg your pardon!" What sort of wife or mother would she be, I'd like to know. Oh, it's in the little tricks you can tell the best what stuff a woman's made of.

'THERE'S a third kind of young lady, she sometimes looks so meek and mild, you wouldn't think butter'd melt in her mouth. Like as not she's a pretty, little, fair thing, with fluffy hair. You'd pass her, and go away supposin' her an angel, if you didn't have the chance to see her waitin' for her bus, like me. She gets a hard look in her eyes, and a line around her nose, when she sights the thing a-comin', and begins walkin' along in the gutter with the crowd aimin' to catch it. It stops, and then begins the struggle! If you'll believe me, that delicate cretur'll square her elbows, knock a man's hat over his eyes with her umbrella, pitch a fat old

lady clean off the step of the bus, and send a small child reelin' into its mother's arms, but she'll find a seat for herself inside that vehicle. Then she'll grab the best corner, close to the door, if it rains, and look daggers at everyone who brushes against her to get by, or, if it's a fine day, she'll be up on top, if she topples everybody else overboard. Such a one as that I wouldn't have for my wife, not if she was as lovely as Mrs Langtry.

'BUT silliest of all the silly women I see in the street is the one who'll hail an omnibus, and then keep it waitin' her convenience while she kisses and gushes over a friend. I suppose she's by way of fancyin' it looks sweet and innocent, and makes the men who're watchin' envious-like; only if she could see inside their heads, and know what their thoughts was—wall, it's my belief 'twould be a bloomin' while before she did the same over again. Oh, yes, Miss, of course I see as many, if not more, nice women on my beat than I do nasty ones. But I don't set myself up high enough to be no judge of them. I was only thinkin' of the sort I'd tell men not to marry. And you know you asked me what I was smilin'—cryin'—about just now.'

FROM the *Wairarapa Star* one gleanes the information that the latest social craze in Australia, and therefore the coming craze for this colony, is the Carpet Pin Club. It would appear that present opportunities for flirtation are not sufficiently numerous or satisfactory. This is probably not the impression an impartial person would be possessed of after a sojourn in Sydney Society, or a Sunday walk round the domains. The facilities for flirtation for all classes from 'Arry and 'Arriet upwards seem to the stranger unexampled and unequalled. Much would ever have more, however, and the Carpet Pin Club is one way of obtaining it. The badge is, so we are told, a carpet pin, and the idea is that when you sally forth so arrayed and meet one of the opposite sex also decorated with the badge, it shall be your privilege to enter into conversation without waiting for the usual but occasionally rather irritating introduction. Married ladies are eligible as members, and so are married men, though why is a mystery. They say in the 'Mikado' 'Married men never flirt.' In this colony, where, if things do not rapidly mend, girls will have to do the courting owing to the scarcity and wariness of the male, the Club should be started forthwith. It might be probably set going at once in Wellington. This paper, ever willing to advance the cause of social progress and civilization, will gladly have the promoters photographed in a group at its own expense and reproduce the picture in the GRAPHIC. It would certainly be a grand additional inducement to entice the tourist to our shores. Some member of the House might suggest to Government that such a group, when produced, should be added to the pamphlets of New Zealand scenery which are, we learn, to be distributed wholesale in the Old Country and on steamship packets.

THERE appears to have been a considerable flutter of excitement in the Oamaru district over the announcement that the opium habit prevails to a terrible extent in Oamaru. The rumour is apparently well substantiated since the *North Otago Times* asserts that one young man has spent £800 in two years on the drug and its consequences, and is now a hopeless wreck morally and physically. At the same time I confess that, with no disrespect to the *North Otago Times*, the story that any great number of Oamaru men are addicted to opium-eating or smoking seems to me to require a certain amount of salt. Oamaru is a brisk and busy and withal a thriving township, but its young men scarcely suffer from that amount of excitement which would drive them to the use of sedatives.

THE epidemic of larrikinism which recently prevailed in Auckland having been to some extent subdued in that city, has broken out with some virulence further south. In a certain Hawke's Bay township they seem to have reached the furthest extreme of the mischievous stage, and may be expected shortly to embark on the ruffianly. So far, however, the adventures are rather more humorous than usual. Explosives have been planted in the hearths of bachelors' wharves, and other rather foolish but fairly innocent pastimes indulged in, including the locking of a congregation in a church during progress of service. This feat was so thoroughly carried out that the congregation were unable to get out for a considerable time, when an opening was made through the back, out of which the church-goers were able to emerge one by one.

An old-fashioned tobacconist lost his trade through not keeping Frossard's Cavour Cigars, 8 for 1s 3d. (Adv. 2)