

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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New Zealand's First Lady Lawyer.

THINKING that some account of the first woman in this colony to take the LL.B. degree might be interesting to the readers of the WHITE RIBBON, I resolved to take advantage of a visit to Dunedin, and seek an interview with her.

My first conversation with Miss Benjamin was through the telephone. I had written to her previously, asking if she could spare time for an interview, and telling her the name of the friend with whom I was staying. A discussion through the telephone as to a suitable time and place was the result.

On the windows of an upper floor in one of the large buildings in Princes-street I noticed the inscription—

Ethel R. Benjamin,

Barrister & Solicitor.

On entering and sending in my name, I was, after a few minutes' delay in the outer office, introduced into the inner sanctum. From the side of a business-like office table rose and stepped forward a slight, girlish form. An oval face, broad forehead, and dark, speaking eyes were among my first impressions of the lady I saw before me. After receiving a pleasant greeting and a cordial shake of the hand, I plunged at once into the subject of my mission.

"I have been interviewed before, but not by a lady," Miss Benjamin said, laughing.

"Do you think the ordeal will be more severe?" I inquired.

"Oh, well, it is said that women are less lenient towards women than men are," was the cautious, lawyer-like reply.

"Yes, I am the first lady lawyer south of the line, but not the first British woman lawyer. There is, you know, one in India and another in Canada."

"I always had a liking for the profession. I knew I should have to take up something in order to be self-supporting, and the Legal Profession had more charms for me than any other."

"No, my family offered no opposition to my taking up the profession of law. On the contrary, my father encouraged and helped me in every possible way."

"It is true that the Legal Profession was not then open to women, and that the franchise had not yet been granted, but I had faith that a colony so liberal as our own would not long tolerate such purely artificial barriers.

I therefore entered on my studies with a light heart, feeling sure that I should not long be debarred from the use of any degree I might obtain."

"No, there were no other girl students in the law school with me, although there have been others since."

"How did I come out in my examinations?"

"Pretty well, I think. In my first year at the School of Law (Otago Uni-

versity), I took first place in the first class division in Jurisprudence and in Constitutional History, and Law. In the second section, I came out first in the colony in Roman Law, and this year I was first in New Zealand in 'Equity and Evidence,' bracketed first in Criminal Law, and bracketed first in 'Real and Personal Property.'"

"No, my health did not suffer in the least. Do I look like an invalid? I went to bed at 11 o'clock every night, and gave myself an allowance of nine or ten hours' rest, and, as you can see, this plan has agreed with me pretty well. I believe if students would give themselves a more liberal allowance of resting time they would do better work, and injure their health less. The minimum time in which the LL.B. degree can be taken is four years, and I did it in that time."

"Which branch of the profession do I intend to follow? I particularly wish to practise as a barrister, and hope some day to make my mark at the Bar. Of course, at present, I will not refuse any law work.

"Yes, I was asked to read a paper on 'Laws affecting Women and Children' at the next meeting of the Women's National Council, and thought at the time that that was rather a large order. I therefore suggested that the title of the paper be altered to 'Some of the Inequalities of the Law as regards Men and Women.' If this alteration be accepted, and nothing hinders,

I shall most gladly prepare and read such a paper before the Council."

"Yes, I am deeply interested in the 'Women's Rights' movement. Up till now I have been too busy to take any active part in the proceedings of the National Council. Some of the subjects have my heartiest sympathy."

"No, I have not heard that there was an idea among some members of the National Council to raise a fund for legal assistance to poor and friendless women. I think it an admirable suggestion. One of my own pet ambitions is to be useful to my own sex, and I hope to be able to arrange to set aside a certain hour of the day for giving advice *gratis* to men and women who cannot afford legal fees."

After a little friendly chit-chat, I took my leave, glad to think that our first New Zealand lady lawyer should have passed through her college course with such credit, and evidently with so little mental or physical strain.

I realised also that in the legal profession there exists a noble opportunity for service by women whose hearts are touched with sympathy for the weak and helpless.—PENELOPE.

A Book for To-day.

POWER THROUGH REPOSE.

BY ANNIE PAYSON CALL.

AMONG the many factors which make for the advancement and development of women perhaps none may be accounted greater than the desire for physical well-being. Coincident with the struggle for female citizenship and educational advantages has been the realisation that these blessings can only be possessed in conjunction with a fair measure of bodily vigour. The fashionable woman no longer boastfully sighs over her physical frailty and helplessness; rather do we hear of her feats in the world of sport. And

the thoughtful, conscientious mother has come to recognise in bodily health one of the greatest blessings nature can bestow. No effort will she spare that her daughters may be less handicapped in the race of life than she herself has been. To this end she gives herself to the scientific study of food, dress, and exercise, endeavouring to overcome hereditary influences.

But while devoting time to the cultivation of physical strength, it is equally important that we learn to rightly direct and conserve the force already possessed. And this truth is really the theme of the book before me. In some sixteen short chapters the writer directs our attention to the power to be gained for both mind and body simply through repose. As much attention should be paid to the avoidance of strain in all things, great and small, as to the development of muscular strength. The muscles are guided by means of the nerves, therefore our first object should be a training for the better use of the nervous force. Our nerves are tired and worn out with misuse. Even when we seek "Nature's calm restorer" many of us do not rest. "We hold ourselves on the bed instead of letting the bed hold us." "Our limbs are contracted, our fingers clinched, our teeth set, our face and throat muscles drawn one way or the other." Clearly in such case we are not resting. "There is no better way of learning to overcome these perversions in sleep than to study the sleep of a wholesome little child." First "let go of the muscles."

So with other forms of rest. "Do you hold yourself on the chair or does the chair hold you?" Much of the fatigue, too, caused by railway travelling or driving comes from this same strain—an unconscious effort to carry the train or carriage instead of allowing the same to carry us, or of resisting the motion instead of yielding to it. "The strain

which comes from an hour's nervous waiting when simply to let yourself alone and keep still would answer much better, is often equal to a day's labour."

After treating of the various ways in which we drift into nervous prostration, simply through a useless expenditure of force in matters physical, the writer calls attention to the misdirection of nervous energy in brain work. "Most of us think with the throat contracted, . . . the tongue held firmly, or the jaw muscles set. Each has his own favourite tension in the act of meditation . . . The same superfluous tension may be observed in one engaged in silent reading. It is certainly clear that for pure, unadulterated thinking only the brain is needed, and if vital force is given to other parts of the body to hold them in unnatural contraction we not only expend it extravagantly but we rob the brain of its own." So in listening attentively, only the ears and the brain are needed. Instead of being tired after listening to good music we should feel refreshed. "Yet so accustomed have we become to disobeying Nature's laws that the general impression seems to be that music cannot be enjoyed without a strained attitude internal and external. On the contrary, it is much more exquisitely enjoyed and appreciated in Nature's way. If the nerves are free they will catch the rhythm of the music." So, too, is it with the eyes. In a picture gallery, for instance, "we should not go out too far to meet the pictures, but be quiet and let the pictures come to us."

In the chapters on "The brain in its direction of the body" and "The direction of the body in locomotion" the author dwells on the unnecessary force expended when talking, "either in aimless motions of the body or in a certain rigidity of carriage, which tells as powerfully in the wear and tear of the nervous system as superfluous motion."

Talking should be with the vocal apparatus only, and with such easy motions as may be needed to illustrate the words. "In this change, so far from losing animation, a woman gains it, and gains true expressive power, for all unnecessary motion of the body in talking simply raises a dust, so to speak, and really blurs the true thought of the mind and feeling of the heart." The throat, too, frequently suffers from this tension, the voice being forced from it rather than from its proper place—the stronger muscles of the diaphragm. When sewing, the pain in the back of the neck, and the weariness at the waist, etc., result from the fact that the neck and waist muscles have been unnecessarily brought into play. So, too, with writing, there is frequently the same useless tension in either jaw, throat, or tongue—sometimes in one, sometimes in all.

Walking is commonly far more tiring than it should be, simply from the fact that we are constantly interfering with nature. "Women—partly owing to their dress—seem to hold themselves together as if fearing that having once given their muscles free play they would fall to pieces entirely. Rather than move easily forward, and for fear they might tumble to pieces, they shake their shoulders and hips from side to side, hold their arms perfectly rigid from the shoulders down."

In the chapter on "Nervous Strain in pain and sickness" Mrs Call exhorts her readers not to brace themselves to bear pain by clinching the fists and tightening all the other muscles. "Let go" is still her dictum. The reaction will be so much the less—drop the muscular tension and so the nervous strain.

The chapter on "Nervous Strain in the Emotions" is worthy the careful attention of those who have charge of young girls. "Anyone who knows girls feels deeply the terrible harm

which comes to them in the weakening of their delicate nervous system through morbid emotional excitement. . . . 'Look out not in; look up, not down; lend a hand,' is the motto that must be followed to cure or prevent nervous prostration."

Then we are directed to Nature's teaching—the quiet power in all Nature, the absolute rest in season, and then the full action when the time for change rolls round.

The chapters on "Training for Rest" and "Training for Motion" will be found a helpful study. With one sentence from that on "Mind Training" I must content myself: "Quickness and keenness of sense are gained only in proportion to the power of quieting the senses not in use and erasing previous impressions upon the sense which is active at the time."

L.M.S.



[We rely on our local Unions to send us news for this column. We cannot evolve it out of our inner consciousness.]

Brunnerton.

We have been mainly occupied of late with considerations for furthering the scheme proposed by Miss Kirk, of establishing a Boys' Club in the district. In order to raise funds for this purpose a tableau and musical entertainment was held on July 14, and though the weather proved unpropitious it resulted very satisfactorily, the proceeds amounting to £11 1s. Arrangements are on hand to procure a building, and we only await communications and materials to commence operations. Could Miss Kirk have remained with us the success of our venture would have been assured, as she completely won the hearts of our boys during her visit. On the last night of her lectures they lingered round the door as if loth to leave the building, then raised their voices in "three cheers for Miss Kirk" as she passed out. Our members have entered into the undertaking very heartily so far, and we hope soon to have this institution in working order amongst us.

Naseby.

On July 9 the subject of Narcotics was taken up. Extracts from a collection of papers sent by Mrs Venables, of Christchurch, were read. A full report was published in the "Mount Ida Chronicle."

A cottage meeting was held on July 23. An address to parents, based on Dr Norman Kerr's pamphlets "The Advantages of Bringing up Children on Total Abstinence Principles," was given by the Secretary.

A missionary prayer meeting will be held on August 6. This is the outcome of a circular letter from Miss Jack, New Zealand Superintendent of Missions. Arrangements are being made to commemorate our first anniversary.

Wanganui.

A social was held on July 14 to welcome Mrs Isitt to Wanganui. A large number of ladies attended, and listened with marked attention to Mrs Isitt's address. Mrs Isitt, who spoke brightly and earnestly, referred to the greatness of the work, and to the need of workers, and urged all present to join hand in hand with those who were fighting for the overthrow of the wrong. After a brief sketch of the pioneers of the movement, and a glance at the spread of the work from country to country, Mrs Isitt launched into her subject, "The Object and Aims of the Women's Christian Temperance Union." Most of the leading branches of the work were mentioned, and much useful and interesting information was given. Many present were evidently impressed by what they heard, and doubtless the result will be increased membership, and more earnest efforts on the part of all. Mrs Aitken and Miss Byers still further added to the attractiveness of the meeting by some beautifully-rendered solos. Refreshments were handed round, and the meeting closed with the Doxology.

Christchurch.

The fortnightly educational meeting was held at the coffee-rooms, Manchester-street, on July 28. Miss Roberts gave a very interesting address on "Alcohol." She showed the nature of the various kinds of alcohol, and described the process of fermentation. Nature, she said, rotted the grapes upon the branch, but art converted them into alcohol. If fermentation were allowed to proceed naturally, acetic acid would result, but when stopped at a certain stage alcohol was produced. She showed how the various

forms of alcohol burned in the air, and how all had a deadly effect on animal and vegetable life.

Ashurst.

The inaugural meeting of the Ashurst branch of the W.C.T.U. was held in the Wesleyan Church on the afternoon of July 14, when Miss Powell, ex-President, and Miss Barry, Secretary of the Palmerston branch, conducted the meeting. Eleven members were elected, and the following officers were appointed:—President, Mrs Crichton; Vice-Presidents, Mrs Hutchings and Captain Law, S.A.; Secretary, Mrs Clarke; Treasurer, Miss Scott. In the evening a public meeting was held in the S.A. Barracks, when addresses were given by Miss Powell, Captain Law, and Mr George Grant. Solos were sung by Mrs Clarke and Mrs Hutchings. Mr Nutsey occupied the chair. At the close of the meeting another seven members handed in their names, so that in our little corner we have a branch of eighteen members. It was decided to hold the meetings on the second Wednesday in the month.

Colyton.

On Tuesday evening, August 4, we were fortunate enough to have a visit from the N.Z. Corresponding Secretary. The meeting was fairly well attended. Miss Powell gave a graphic account of the rise and growth of the W.C.T.U., and explained its objects. On the following afternoon seven ladies met to form a branch of the W.C.T.U., many were prevented from attending by the inclement weather. Our visitor, after reading the Crusade Psalm, in a few well chosen words explained the different departments of work. Miss Powell admitted all present as members of the Union, using part of the Initiatory service. The officers were then elected:—President, Mrs Robert Pudney; Secretary, Miss Carter. We have decided to hold meetings on the first Thursday in each month, and trust that the membership will soon increase.

Lyttelton.

The members of our Union decided to have an evening meeting for young people who could not come in the afternoon. There were about fifty present and a very enjoyable evening was passed. Mrs Whitby read Mrs Venables' interesting paper on Narcotics, and a lively discussion followed. The rest of the evening was filled by songs by Mrs Hiskens, Misses Clark, Hough, Meeke, and Bradley, Messrs Webb, and MacGregor, and recitations by Mr Ames Webb, and Mr A. Erickson.

The young people enjoyed the meeting very much, and we hope to gain new members by this departure.

About twenty of our members and friends walked to Raupaki last month and had an evening meeting with the Maories. The church was well filled, and some of the Maories told us how they enjoyed those meetings and wished we could go oftener. Mrs Webb read a piece about our Queen, and Mrs Whitby spoke on the bad effects of alcohol. Several of our friends sang songs which were highly appreciated. The meeting was brought to a close by singing "Some Glad Day."

Rangiora.

The ordinary meeting was held on Friday, July 31st, the two previous ones having lapsed. The Account for Convention numbers of WHITE RIBBON was passed for payment. Correspondence was received from the Superintendent of Narcotics and Superintendent of Mission Work, and were considered. A circular was also received from Mrs Cole, *re* influencing the Press, and it was resolved to do all in our power in this direction. A W.C.T.U. letter to absent members, urging their attendance, was brought forward by the President, and heartily approved by members. Resolved that we make enquiries about obtaining some. A letter from Rev. T. J. Wills was read, soliciting an order for his book in reply to Bishop Neville. Decided to obtain a copy for the Union.

Palmerston North.

A meeting of more than usual interest was held in connection with our Union on July 30th, at Mrs Caleb Whitehead's residence. The members responded heartily to Mrs Whitehead's invitation, about twenty-eight ladies being present. After a short address on "Hygienic Clothing" had been given by Miss Powell, Mrs Astbury, on behalf of the members, presented her with a writing desk as a token of appreciation of her work amongst us while President. Miss Powell goes from us carrying with her the good wishes of every member and followed by their prayers for her welfare and success.

The ordinary business meeting was held on August 6th, Mrs Wrigley, our newly-elected President, presiding.

Pahiatua.

Our indefatigable Secretary, Miss Powell, was here on the 24th of last month, and gave a stirring address on the evils of the drink traffic. At the close of the address several of those

present signed the pledge. Miss Powell was also successful in forming a branch of the W.C.T.U. here. A well-attended meeting was held in the Foresters' Hall. New members were proposed, and a committee formed for starting a Juvenile Loyal Temperance Lodge. The following are the officers appointed:—President, Mrs Burrows; vice-president, Mrs W. Vile; secretary and treasurer, *pro tem.*, Mrs Keen; corresponding secretary and reporter, Mrs Knight.

Greymouth.

The usual monthly meeting of the W.C.T.U. was held in the vestry of the Wesleyan Church on Thursday, 5th inst., twelve members being present. We again performed the pleasing ceremony of initiating another member. We also went through a good deal of routine work. Reports were handed in by the ladies who have charge of the Loyal Temperance Legion. Good progress is reported, and an increase, both in numbers and enthusiasm, among the young. The usual Missionary Prayer Meeting was held during the month in connection with the Union, at which a fair number of ladies were present.

Wellington.

On Thursday, 5 inst., our usual monthly meeting was held, and although the day was wet and cold a goodly number attended. In the unavoidable absence of our President Mrs Ostler took the chair, and gave a very practical, wise address, which was much appreciated. Several new members were received and the Initiatory Service was read. We have several other candidates who will be received at our next meeting. All arrangements were made for a meeting at Petone, which will take place on Wednesday, 11th inst. If we are favoured with a fine night we feel success is assured. Doubtless a branch of our Union will be formed there in a few days; Miss Kirk, New Zealand's organising officer, has promised her services to this end. It was decided to order two copies of Mr Wills' new work, "Bishop Neville's Mistake." Greetings from Miss Powell were received and appreciated. Two photographs of Mrs Barney were ordered. The visitors to Mothers' meetings were re-appointed, and messages of appreciation of former visits were received. A few friends were invited by one of our members to meet Mrs Isitt, who gave an interesting account of her work between Levin and New Plymouth. She has now gone to Plenheim to help our Union there.

Rambling Notes.

BY THE NEW ZEALAND CORRESPONDING SECRETARY.

I am sure our White-ribboners all over the colony will feel interested in the aggressive work which is being carried on in the Palmerston North district. By invitation of a member of the district Union residing at Ashurst, on June 9, four Palmerston White-ribboners drove out to that town. It was a raw, cold afternoon, and glad were we to find ourselves seated at Mrs Crichton's hospitable fireside. After tea we repaired to the Wesleyan Church to take part in a public meeting for women; Mrs Crichton occupied the chair, and the audience numbered nine. However, nothing daunted, we went faithfully through with the programme—which included short addresses by Mrs Grace and Mrs Butters, while I explained the objects of the W.C.T.U.—and we secured three bright girls as a nucleus for the future. On July 14 I again visited Ashurst, accompanied by Mrs Barry, the district secretary. The afternoon meeting for women was well attended, and a branch organized with twelve members. Captain Law, of the Salvation Army, was the first to sign, and at the evening meeting our Army friends gave up to us their hall and did everything possible to make the meeting a success. The building was well filled and we enrolled more women, bringing the membership up to eighteen. Moral:—Never be disheartened, and "despise not the day of small things." Mr George Grant, who had come out to speak at our meeting, drove us home, and a merry trio we were, in spite of a bitter wind and driving rain.

The Woodville friends had for some time been anxious for a branch, and meetings were arranged for Monday, July 19. The weather was most unkind—cold and wet—and I almost hoped they would wire, "No use to attempt meeting this weather." As they had more faith than I, they telegraphed that they were expecting me, and the noon train found me *en route*. A slip on the line detained us for three-quarters of an hour; a Lutheran pastor engaged me in conversation, and we had a battle royal on the subject of women speaking in public, Paul, of course, figuring largely. At three o'clock a number of ladies assembled in the Foresters' Hall, Woodville, where a bright fire had been lighted. After explaining the objects and scope of the work, a branch was organised. A Good Templar social at

night further raised our membership by three. The next afternoon and evening were spent, under the guidance of my kind hostess, Mr Cox, in visiting a number of ladies in the neighbourhood and interesting them in the work. On Wednesday afternoon I travelled to Dannevirke, to speak at a Band of Hope social. All the friends being engaged in the preparation of the tea, I procured a list of the principal ladies in the town likely to join us, and sallied forth. My official position was duly set forth on my card, but the magic letters W.C.T.U. meant nothing to them. How I laughed in my sleeve, for I think they took me for a *book fiend*! As soon as I mentioned *Women's Christian Temperance Union* the scene was changed, and I met with great cordiality and attention. [N.B.—Profiting by this experience I now write the words in full.] The evening meeting, which included a farewell to Rev W. and Mrs Judkins, was a great success, and at the close several new pledges were taken. Next morning, after writing a local for the paper, and inserting an advertisement calling a meeting of women in the Town Hall for Friday afternoon, my hostess—the Mayoress—drove me out to visit some likely members. Arriving at home at noon I found a letter from Ormondville stating that the infant Union commenced by Mrs Isitt in June last were expecting to meet me the same afternoon. There was just time for a hasty dinner before the train started, and upon arrival at my destination I was met by Rev T. J. and Mrs Wills, and taken to the house of Miss Paterson, the secretary. Here the friends soon gathered, and after an interesting talk together one more member was enrolled. I was kindly entertained at the Vicarage, and favoured with an insight into Mr Wills' new book, which I hope will be circulated as widely as possible, as it will be very useful to our work. All secretaries will shortly receive an advance notice of the work, and I would urge that they get as many orders for it as possible, particularly among Church of England friends.

Returning to Dannevirke on Friday, in the afternoon I met the ladies interested in our work, and enrolled several as White-ribboners. The office of president proved a terrible stumbling-block, and finally an early date was fixed for a meeting to elect officers, which, I understand, has since been done.

On Saturday I travelled to Pahiatua, where I was the guest of the Mayor,

Mr Job Vile. After Church on Sunday evening I addressed a public meeting in the Town Hall. Rev H. Beggs took the chair, and in announcing the meeting for women the next afternoon he besought the women present to do anything they were asked—a request which bore good fruit the next day when we formed a branch, as no difficulty was experienced in electing suitable officers. As I passed through Woodville another meeting of the Union there was held, and on the Wednesday I returned to Palmerston. Foxton was visited next day, and a branch started there, which will have the advantage of the fostering care of Mrs Astler, of Levin. In all nineteen pledges were taken, and thirteen subscribers for the WHITE RIBBON secured.

Just before posting I may mention that an energetic Union has been formed in little Colyton, and four subscribers to the WHITE RIBBON secured.

PLEDGE.

LOYAL TEMPERANCE LEGION.

Trusting in God's help, I solemnly promise to abstain from the use of alcoholic drinks, including wine, beer, and cider, from the use of tobacco in any form, and from profanity.

Items from Miss Slack's Monthly Letter.

WORLD'S CONVENTION.—Much interest was shown in the great International Convention during our B.W.T.A. meetings. Letters from Toronto gave information of elaborate preparations which are being made on every hand.

B.W.T.A.—On May 31st Lady Henry Somerset gave a reception to the 750 delegates attending the Council meeting. The first part of the evening was spent in pleasant social greetings, and refreshments were supplied and music, after which Lady Henry, in a graceful speech, welcomed the delegates and introduced Miss Willard's chief coadjutor, Mrs Stevens, as one who had been a loyal, successful worker for more than 20 years, and on behalf of the delegates presented Mrs Stevens with a basket of beautiful flowers. Then, after Mrs Stevens, speeches were given by Lady Windeyer, Miss Solly, Mrs Kirk, and Mrs Chant. During subsequent meetings, resolutions were passed against any re-introduction of the C.D. Acts in England or India, and in favour of the principles of direct veto and local option. A cable was received from Miss Willard, the key-note of which was "higher." The Council sent a cable of grateful, loving greeting in reply.

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The White Ribbon:

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY.

MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 1897.

Lady Henry Somerset on Prohibition.

Much interest has been created by the evidence of Lady Henry Somerset before the recent Royal Commission in England. According to the *Westminster Gazette*, she is said to have justified teetotalism because of the assistance the example gave to others. She did not advocate Prohibition. "If we have a fair field and no favour, the trade died, well and good; she had too much respect for the liberty of the subject to wish for coercion." The supporters of the Liquor Traffic have been exulting in some of our daily papers over the fact that Lady Henry does not advocate Prohibition, and some of the friends of Temperance have been correspondingly pained to find that so prominent a temperance worker had apparently changed her views. We venture to say that there has been a misunderstanding of terms, and that if Lady Henry knew that what we call "Prohibition" is really Local Option, she would be one of its staunchest advocates.

Our public houses are only kept open by the direct vote of the people, and we are absolutely satisfied that were a similar law in operation in England, Lady Henry would be one of the first to urge the people to vote "No License." We have always thought it a mistake to call our "Local Option," "Prohibition," and we believe that this mistaken title has roused much needless

opposition. Lady Henry is opposed to coercion, and there are thousands of people in the colony who will sympathise with her in this. There is a repellant sound about "Prohibition" that is ominously like coercion, and unfortunately many people do not distinguish between the mere name and the thing itself.

The C.D. Acts.

During the coming session no effort should be spared to secure the repeal of these infamous Acts. We are assured from time to time that we are guilty of needless alarm about the Acts. "They are," we are told, "as dead as Julius Cæsar." Yet every year or two stealthy attempts are made to induce our civic authorities to put them into force. Alarming reports are spread to the effect that disease is rampant, and then it is stated that nothing can be done unless compulsory measures are taken. It is therefore plainly evident that so long as these Acts are on our Statute Books there is a real danger that they may be put in operation any day. There is much need that we should profit by the painful experience of English women and take no rest until these shameful Acts are swept away. For the sake of their daughters, aye, and their sons too, for the sake of their sex, we beseech the women of our Societies to be up and doing.

* * *

Perhaps some who are not well informed may say, "If these Acts diminish the disease, ought they not to be enforced?" To that plausible query we would say emphatically No! To do evil that good may come is not right, and never will be. To enforce an Act that is a terror to a modest woman, but not to the shameless one, that encourages impurity with the hope of safety, that shuts the door of hope against the tempted and fallen, and which experience has shown to result in the maintenance of a State

harem, cannot be right under any conditions. But, fortunately, we need not dwell on this question. The laws of God are not made in a patchwork fashion. There is no conflict between the moral and physical laws.

It cannot be too often repeated that the C. D. Acts do not prevent disease. The experience of the highest medical authorities in England, America, India, and the continent of Europe shows that the Acts are powerless for the prevention of the terrible physical results of unchastity. Nay, more, they show that the methods of checking the disease actually result in spreading it.

* * *

What then should be done? This is not so easy to answer in a few lines. The roots of unchastity are many, and are deeply planted.

To get at them thoroughly it would be necessary to make a study of the conditions — physical, social, educational, and political — of the life of the various classes of our people. In the meantime we can but scrape the surface and do what the C. D. Acts fail to do, viz., deal with the physical effects of wrong-doing. The hospital authorities must be roused to a sense of their responsibility. Our hospitals are maintained by public money for the cure of disease. If vice leads to physical suffering to the innocent as well as to the guilty, then means must be taken to mitigate, and, as far as possible, cure that suffering. Special wards must be provided to which the afflicted may voluntarily come for proper treatment. There is no necessity for compulsion. Let the means be provided, and sufferers will not be slow to take advantage of it.

Further there must be preventive work. Our children should be taught the physiological conditions of their being. Society should exact the chastity from men that it exacts from women. If a healthy public

opinion on this question can be formed, the evil will be much diminished. The first step in this direction is to abolish the C.D. Acts.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTE. — The Editors do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions expressed by Correspondents.

To the Editor.

MADAM,—

1. I send the following suggestions *re* languishing Unions. It seems to me that a great deal might be made of the Literature Department, but it seems such a great task that it can scarcely be undertaken by one member in one place. I would suggest that until the time comes when we can have a separate W. C. T. U. Depôt of our own in New Zealand, that the Literature Department be decentralized somewhat on the following lines:—A leading bookseller in each of the four large centres might be induced to keep a supply of the W.C.T.U. literature, just as is done in the case of the S.P.C.K. in some places. Then our Literature Superintendent, with a special staff under her, instead of being employed making up parcels of literature, might sample the literature, and send short reviews to the WHITE RIBBON.

2. Many of our Unions are not making the progress they should for the want of people of education, or leisure, or both. I would suggest a circular-letter, addressed to mothers, written by a well-educated, business-like person, of motherly instincts, setting forth the aims and objects of our Union, making the fact patent that the mothers of future citizens cannot afford to do without our help, and ought therefore to give their support to our organisation. Each Union could get copies of this letter and circulate it among the leisured class of its own community, and where opportunity offers, back up the letter with personal effort.

3. Every Superintendent of a Department might send a circular-letter to every Union, setting forth the claims of her own Department, and enquiring what is being done. In addition to being a stimulus, this would give the Unions topics for a good many meetings, and would help to ensure system.

4. Where the community is too small to establish a Union, one agent

might be procured for the WHITE RIBBON. The agent could be supplied with literature at the cost of the District Union.

An organising agent is perhaps beyond our means, but there are scores of townships where the WHITE RIBBON and the W.C.T.U. are unknown quantities. The District Unions might do something here, if not by an actual visit, at least by correspondence.

Trusting some of these suggestions may prove useful,

I am, etc.,

WHITE RIBBONER.

Naseby, August 2nd, 1897.

OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

DEAR MADAM,—Will you kindly allow me space to intimate that, until further notice, my address will be c/o Mrs Schnackenberg, Mt. Albert, Auckland. The President for the Palmerston North District is now Mrs Wrigley, Cuba street Parsonage. May I suggest to all concerned the advisability of making a note of these changes on their Convention number, as also new addresses which may from time to time appear in your columns?

Yours in the Work,

MARY S. POWELL,

N.Z. Corresponding Secretary.
Palmerston N., Aug. 2nd, 1897.

DIVORCE IN ICELAND.—The divorce laws of Iceland form a guarantee for the best protection of women against the caprices of 'changeable man,' says *Ladies' Home Companion*. If for any reason husband and wife cannot live harmoniously together, and decide to separate, they go before a clergyman, who uses every power of logic and persuasion to induce them to reconsider their determination. Failing in this, they are granted a letter of separation, and each goes his or her own way. If there is only one child this goes to the mother; if more than one they are equally divided, unless one of the parents is regarded as unfit to train them, in which case they are all given to the other. After they have lived apart for three years, and are still inclined to remain separated, the injured party may apply for a divorce; and if the application is based on Scriptural grounds it will be granted, leaving each free to marry again. The fact that there is no 'social evil' on the island shows the high moral status of the women.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

MRS LEAVITT.—Our old friend, Mrs Mary Clement Leavitt, writing to a gentleman in Christchurch, says:—"Every summer since my return from the long journey has been spent in the Homeland; the first two winters in Honolulu, the third in Vera Cruz, Mexico, the fourth at Nassau, Bahamas, and the fifth (last winter) in Jamaica. Within a year I have held 239 meetings, have written 2506 pages, and travelled 7997 miles." We are always glad to hear of Mrs Leavitt, whose name will be held in honour wherever a branch of the New Zealand W.C.T.U. exists.

The interest in Prison Reform is steadily growing. A capital meeting, arranged by our good friend Mrs Seivwright, has been held at Gisborne, and is reported in another column. Our Gisborne friends are fortunate in securing a Minister in the person of the Hon. Mr Carroll, and we are glad to notice that the Church, represented by Canon Webb, is alive to the importance of Prison Reform. It is to be hoped that other towns will take the matter up as vigorously as Christchurch and Gisborne have done.

PIONEER WORK.—From time to time we have the pleasure of recording the advent of a new Union. In another column will be found an account of the doings of our Corresponding Secretary. Miss Powell is possessed of a happy restlessness which insists on her getting to work at every possible opportunity; and it will be seen from her account that she has been successful in establishing several new branches. With Mrs F. W. Isitt also at work in the North Island, we may expect to see every community there with a branch of the W.C.T.U. We hear, indirectly, that Mrs Hewitt is still busily at work among the Maoris, but no direct reports have reached us. As we have not got her address, we take the opportunity of reminding her through our columns that the European White Ribboners are greatly interested in their Maori sisters, and that this paper, being the official organ of the W.C.T.U., affords a most fitting medium of communication.

MRS BARNEY.—Our recent visitor, Mrs Barney, left Victoria at the end

of June for New South Wales, but will return there for the month of September, and visit some of the country towns. Mrs Barney has had warm welcomes and successful meetings in Australia.



* POETRY. *

THE LOOKER ON.

The world was full of the battle,
The whole world far and wide;
Men and women and children
Were fighting on either side.

I was sent from the hottest combat
With a message of life and death,
Black with smoke and red with blood,
Weary and out of breath,

When I found a cheerful stranger,
Calm, critical, serene,
Well sheltered from all danger,
Painting a battle scene.

He was cordially glad to see me—
The coolly-smiling wretch—
And enquired with admiration,
“Do you mind if I make a sketch?”

So he had me down in a minute,
With murmurs of real delight!
My “colour” was “delicious,”
My “action” was “just right.”

And he prattled on with ardour
Of the moving scene below—
Of the “values” of the smoke-wreaths,
And “the splendid rush and go;”

Of the headlong, desperate charges,
Where a thousand lives were spent;
Of the “massing” in the foreground,
With the “middle distance” blent.

Said I, “You speak serenely
Of the living death in view;
These are human creatures dying,
Are you not human too?”

This is a present battle,
Where all men strive to-day;
How does it chance that you sit apart?
Which is your banner, say!

His fresh cheek blanched a little,
But he answered with a smile,
That he fought not on either side—
He was watching a little while.

“Watching!” said I, “and neutral!
“Neutral in times like these!”
And I plucked him off his sketching-stool,
And brought him to his knees.

I stripped him of his travelling cloak,
And showed him to the sky—
By his uniform—a traitor!
By his bandiwork—a spy!

I dragged him back to the field he left,
To the fate he fitted for:
We have no place for lookers-on,
When all the world's at war!

CHARLOTTE P. STETSON.

British Women's Temperance Association.

BY REV E. CLOWES CHORLEY.

LONDON was not attractive on Tuesday. The skies were lowering, the streets muddy, and the atmosphere depressing. But once inside the Westminster Congregational Chapel all sense of dreariness was driven away. This historic Nonconformist Cathedral was bright almost to gayness. The Stars and Stripes and our own Union Jack relieved the somewhat sombre gallery, and the deft fingers of devoted British Women had transformed the platform into a garden of flowers and palms. Behind the President's desk hung a white silk banner, bearing a map of the two hemispheres, with the motto, “Christ for the World.”

To those accustomed to a clerical conference the scene was a somewhat strange one. The solitary representatives of the male sex were two or three men in the Press pew. The spacious floor of the chapel was well filled by delegates representing the seven hundred branches scattered all over the country. Well-known Methodists like Mrs Sheldon Amos, Mrs Curnock, Mrs Price Hughes, and Mrs Lamb were present, together with several of the Sisters of the People attached to the West London Mission.

The platform was a notable one. The central figure was the President, Lady Henry Somerset, who has filled that office with distinguished success for seven years. Miss Agnes Slack, fresh from her tour in America, sat at the secretary's table, and Mrs Pearsall Smith, whose venerable face looked out from underneath a quaint Quaker bonnet, took charge of the minutes, whilst the superintendents of the various departments also occupied seats on the platform.

I should like to pay my tribute to the admirable way in which these five hundred women conducted their debates. The most perfect order prevailed. The aisles were clear, even at the most exciting moments. On rising the delegates address the chair as ‘Madame President.’

Movers of resolutions are allowed ten, and subsequent speakers five, minutes. These times are strictly observed, a special official being appointed to notify the time-limit by ringing a bell. Those who assert that women are not qualified to take part in deliberative assemblies should attend the meetings of the Council, and then they would for ever hold their peace.—*Methodist Recorder*.

* WOMEN'S * SOCIETIES *

SOUTHERN CROSS SOCIETY.—On July 5th, Sir Robert Stout delivered a lecture on “Arctic Exploration” and Nansen's voyage in the Fram. At the meeting on July 19th Miss Kirk read a paper on “The Moral and Social Aspects of Temperance.” The Secretary read a letter from Mrs Cunningham, Christchurch, in which she requested the Society to pass a resolution in favour of the appointment of women as visiting justices to the female side of the prisons. Miss Greenwood suggested that it might be better for women to act as justices with men at first, until they had gained some experience, and urged members not to “abolish the men at present.” After a hearty laugh this was agreed to, and the resolution was put and carried. The Secretary then read a letter from Mrs Tasker, inviting the Southern Cross Society to a meeting to be held on Wednesday to decide the question as to the place of meeting of the next session of the Women's Council. After discussion the Society voted unanimously against the meeting being held in Wellington. Both Lady Stout and Mrs Plimmer said that it would be much better that the meeting should be held in Auckland next year, so as to give time for the feeling of friction that was caused by the disagreement of this year to pass off. Delegates were appointed to attend the meeting on Wednesday and instructed to vote against the meeting being held in Wellington. In the event of the decision being in the affirmative the Southern Cross Society unanimously voted the sum of £5 towards the expenses, and agreed to offer hospitality to the visiting delegates. It was also decided to get a definite estimate of the proposed expenditure from Mrs Tasker, but to decline to agree to any vague proposals as to the deficiency being made up afterwards. A letter was read from Miss Dalrymple, re the establishing of an order of merit for women who had promoted the interests of their sex. Lady Stout pointed out that the Women's Council and other women's societies in England had been moving in the matter. After discussion Lady Stout was appointed to wait upon the Administrator of the Government and ask his opinion upon the subject and report at next meeting. A number of new members were enrolled.

GISBORNE WOMEN'S POLITICAL ASSOCIATION—At a recent meeting of this Association, the President introduced the subject of prison reform by reading extracts from Oscar Wilde's letter to the *London Daily Chronicle* of May 27th, in which he instanced many cases of red-tapism and cruelty, and records the dismissal of a humane warder for giving a sweet biscuit to a hungry little child, clothes small enough for whom the prison wardrobe could not furnish! He specially pleaded that one case of lunacy may be inquired into—that of a young soldier, insane either by "the dispensation of Providence" or rendered so by the miseries of Reading Gaol. "No report by the medical commissioners," declares Oscar Wilde, "is of any avail. It is not to be trusted. The medical inspectors do not seem to understand the difference between idiocy and lunacy—between the entire absence of a function or organ and the disease of a function or organ." Passing on to Mrs Cunningham and her work, Mrs Sievwright told her audience that quietly, for at least seven years, perhaps for many more, a lady, strong, capable, and wise as she is tender-hearted, had been working on the women's side of the Christchurch prison, and generally also among the outcasts of the city. She had sent a circular to the women's associations throughout New Zealand, asking their co-operation. The circular having been read, Mrs Scott spoke to its contents, and urged the Association to endorse Mrs Cunningham's proposals. Canon Webb said that though he had not by any means thought out the whole subject—his work never having led him within the prison—he rose to express his sympathy with the proposed reform. Women must be better able to understand the wants of women than men. The sense of the community seemed to be growing to the improvement of our prisons,—punishment for crime was not inflicted out of vengeance. It ought to be corrective, and the treatment of people in prison should keep in view sending them out to lead more decent and useful lives instead of hardening them in crime. Even one of the early Popes had said that punishment was of no use unless as an educative measure. The Hon. Mr Carroll was willing to give all reasonable assistance, and, when the matter had been duly submitted to the Minister of Justice, he had no doubt the Ministry would consider it, and the appointment of female Justices to the women's side of the prison would then become part of their policy. He was

aware the whole subject was claiming the attention of the thinkers of the day, and as the world went on the body of reforms grew stronger. His own idea was that we must turn our attention chiefly to reforms *outside* the prison. We must alter the conditions that render so much crime possible. Mrs Sigley proposed, and Mrs Townley seconded, the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:—"That the Secretary of the Gisborne Women's Political Association be empowered to forward a petition *re* Visiting Justices to our female prisons, and also as to the appointment of an assistant female inspector." Mr Sievwright was delighted to hear Mr Carroll speak in such strong terms of the need of improvement of social conditions. He was very pleased to see him at this meeting to-night, and would like to propose a hearty vote of thanks to him for waving another engagement in order to be present. The vote of thanks was carried by acclamation, and this closed the proceedings.

CANTERBURY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE.—

A general meeting was held on Aug. 6th, in the Women's Christian Temperance Union Rooms, Gloucester street. A resolution to the effect that the members of the House of Representatives for Christchurch and suburbs should be invited to meet delegates from the Canterbury Women's Institute and other Societies on August 27, to consider the resolution as to prison reform, passed at a recent public meeting, was carried unanimously. The following resolution was also unanimously passed—"That a Conference of Delegates from the various Associations of Christchurch should be invited to meet delegates of the Canterbury Women's Institute, to discuss how best to ensure the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and hospital treatment for patients suffering from contagious diseases." In speaking to the resolution, Mrs Sheppard quoted largely from the testimony of experts. The Army Sanitary Commission, the highest hygienic authority, composed of such men as Sir D. Galton, Surgeon-General Sir J. Fayer, J. M. Cunningham, Lieutenant-Colonel W. S. Pratt, and J. A. Marston, had reported as follows:—"That facts lead us to the conclusion that a compulsory lock-hospital system in India has proved a failure, and that its reinstatement cannot, consequently, be advocated on sanitary grounds. In stating this conclusion, we may add that we are merely repeating the opinions which the Army Sanitary Commission have uniformly

held—that venereal diseases in the army of India could not be repressed by such restrictive measures, and in support of this statement we may refer to the memoranda on the Indian sanitary reports issued from this office for many years. We believe that the best practicable means of diminishing the prevalence of these diseases is to be found in establishing a system of voluntary hospitals and in providing the soldier, as far as possible, with healthy occupation and recreation." General Goodenough, of South Africa, had marvellously improved the condition of his men by holding the regiment that was most diseased in least esteem. Dr J. Birbeck Nevins averred that the system was immoral, and that professing to make vice safe and placing it under State supervision and approval tended directly to increase immorality. It was impossible that what was morally wrong could be hygienically right. The system, he said further, was unconstitutional, as it destroyed the civil rights of the "unfortunate" woman, and endangered the liberty of every other woman in the community. Again, he said that, from a medical point of view, the system was a failure. Every person who supported it should be able to prove that it greatly diminished disease; but no such proof could be given. The Acts had been tried in England in eighteen garrison towns, from 1869 to 1883, but the medical results were utterly insignificant, and no responsible person proposed to re-enact the laws. The Secretary of State for War had declared in the House of Commons on June 13, 1894, that although no fanatic on this subject, he had no desire to restore the Acts. In Europe public opinion was strongly adverse. The Commissioner of Police in Paris, stated that seven out of eight women evaded the law, which was supposed to be enforced in that city. A sub-committee was appointed to invite representative men to meet the conference which would deal with the subject.

AUCKLAND WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEAGUE.—

A meeting of the League took place on August 4th. Mrs Daldy presided. A letter was read from Mrs Cunningham, Christchurch, expressing a hope that the Society would earnestly petition Government that women instead of men should be appointed as visiting justices to female prisoners; also, that an assistant female inspector be appointed. After some discussion the following resolution (moved by Mrs Duffy, seconded by Mrs Craig) was carried:—"That this meeting sym-

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pathises with Mrs Cunningham in her efforts *re* moral reform in our prisons, and will be glad to act with her in any movement which she may initiate." Mrs Nicol brought up the question of free admission of women to the galleries of the Legislative Chamber. At present a woman has to get a ticket from a member of the Assembly to obtain admission to the gallery. If the gallery were full she was denied admission, even if an elector, to the public gallery. She thought the public gallery should be free to all, without regard to sex, and that such a restriction was an insult to women. At the next monthly meeting Mr E. Bell will read a paper on "Reform of Elections."



THE HOME.

Health.

BEING A PAPER READ BY MRS A. WELLS, OF CHRISTCHURCH, AT THE RECENT SESSION OF THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND.

II. — HYDROPATHIC TREATMENT OF DISEASES.—(Continued).

To illustrate the use of these various applications I will take two or three typical cases and speak of what I have known to be their successful treatment. A little girl was attacked with virulent diphtheria. The fever ran high and the throat was so inflamed that she was unable to swallow. The first thing necessary to be done was to allay the fever. A large bath of cold water was brought to the bedside. The bed was protected by folded blankets, and then

the work began. Towels wrung out of cold water were applied down the spine, over the abdomen, to the neck and chest, and round the head; and changed as fast as they became heated, which they did so rapidly that constant attention was necessary for more than three hours. At the same time the legs and feet were packed in blankets wrung out of hot soapy water and covered by dry ones. At the end of three hours the fever was entirely conquered, some spoonfuls of weak acetic acid and water were administered as a gargle, and most of the growth removed. An injection of hot soapy water was given to relieve the bowels, and then the neck was packed with a cold towel covered by a dry one; a hot water bag covered with a damp flannel was placed to the feet, and the child slept continuously for eight hours. All danger for the time was averted. Next day the fever ran up again slightly, but it was soon reduced by placing the little patient in a hot, soapy sitz bath, which was followed by a sponging with tepid vinegar and water, and then by a gentle rubbing from head to foot. The gargle of acetic acid and water was again given, the throat packed with cold cloths, and next day the child was playing about as usual.

Another child suffering from bronchitis and croup was given up by the doctors, when a friend was asked to take the case. On her arrival she found the child breathing with great difficulty. The poor little thing was wrapped up in a blanket and two flannel gowns, and was being steamed before a roaring fire. My friend's business of removing the baubles being completed, the child's neck and chest and back were first well and gently rubbed with good olive oil. Then a hot bran poultice was applied to the neck

and chest, and wet cloths cooled with ice were applied to the spine. The little feet and legs were at the same time placed in a small blanket wrung out of boiling soapy water. For five hours my friend persisted in this treatment, renewing the cold cloths as frequently as they became heated, but at the end of that time a marvellous change had been effected. The trouble was conquered, and the little sufferer fell into a most refreshing sleep. She slept for eight hours, and when my friend returned next day she was eating bread and butter. Similar treatment was continued for three days, when the little one was perfectly restored.

A young lady suffering from typhoid fever of two weeks' standing was given up by the doctors. The poor thing was in a terrible state. The fever had deprived her of sight, speech, and hearing, and for days she had lain unconscious. Some hot, soapy water was prepared, and she was sponged under the bed clothes from head to foot. This was followed by sponging with tepid vinegar and water. Then a barilla soap lather was applied as a poultice over the abdomen, and sips of cold water and acetic acid were given at intervals.

Next day a head bath was managed. Cold compresses down the spine, round the head, and over the abdomen, were frequently applied, and the feet and legs packed in hot, soapy blankets. Several small injections of warm water were also given. For nine days the treatment with cold cloths, injections, warm and tepid spongings, hot, moist pads to the feet, and sips of acetic acid and water was continued. But the slow recovery was owing to the fact that not only had the fever to be fought, but also the effects of the drugs administered previously.

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