

THE WHITE RIBBON

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The White Ribbon:

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1897.

Christmas-tide.

Before our next issue will appear Christmas will have come and gone. It is a time for the renewal of old friendships, for the burying of old grievances, for the expression of kindly feelings and generous impulses.

All round the world there will be stately ritual, and feasting, and rejoicing. And in honour of Whom? A poor Man, sunburnt and often dusty; a village carpenter, with horny hands, and feet sore with tramping; Who denounced respectable church officials, and made friends with disreputable sinners; Who was regarded by the good society people of His day as a troublesome stump-orator. How strange! Christ a street agitator! A man without a stake in the country! Yet such was His appearance to those who had no eyes save for externals. But in Him dwelt the living God, the God of love, of mercy, and of peace. And the light of His message and life has never ceased to shine. Obscured often by clouds of superstition, of unbelief, of error, it has sent beams of sunshine into many a dark region and cheered many a heart.

We are slow, mournfully slow, to understand the lesson He taught, yet light is coming. Misty relics of pagan priestcraft still linger in our churches, dimming the beauty of the Son of Righteousness, but they will go. We are learning that God's temple is not

built with hands, but is in the hearts of men.

We are beginning to understand that whoso would claim brotherhood with Christ must also claim kinship with the erring and suffering. We are beginning to feel that we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves, and are a little ashamed.

Light has come into the world, but our eyes are heavy, weighed down with selfishness, and we see but dimly.

In this happy Christmas time, in the midst of our pleasure and merry-making, let us find time to pray, "Lord, open our eyes that we may be like Him whose birth we celebrate."

Disobedient Parents.

THE causes and effects of disobedience in children are a frequent topic. But how seldom do we hear anything said about disobedient parents? Yet if we do but trace the disobedience of children back to its original source, we shall inevitably find that it has its root in the violation of physical and moral law by the parents. As we sow, so shall we reap. And in nothing is the truth of this Divine fiat more strongly emphasised than in the marital and parental relations.

Young men and women become acquainted with each other, and under the influence of good looks, money, position, and other purely material considerations, aided by sex attractions, agree to marry. It never occurs to them to ask "Am I fit to become a father or mother?" Questions of health, hereditary tendencies, mental qualities, moral attributes, are all ignored. Their children are born with inherited moral, mental, and physical taints. During childhood, instead of wise, loving, and painful effort to cultivate the good and eradicate the evil tendencies, their parents show a careless indifference. The disobedience and disregard of law shown by the parents is accentuated in

the children, and so they grow up a disgrace and shame to their progenitors, and a danger to the community. It may be pleaded that many parents err through ignorance. This is true. The people perish for lack of knowledge. But wilful ignorance is culpable.

Our English law does not allow ignorance to be pleaded as a justification for transgression. Nor does the moral law.

People who voluntarily take upon themselves the privileges of parentage must accept the responsibilities that accompany the office.

Every child has a right to be well-born. No person has a right to become a parent unless he or she has good reason to believe that healthy offspring will result.

And the children having been healthily born have as much right to careful moral and mental nurture as they have to a good physical sustenance.

It is an imperative duty of every man and woman to study the laws that govern our being, and, having lived in conformity with them, to teach them to their children.

Were this done, much of the sin and disease that afflicts our race would disappear.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

OUR ANNUAL W.C.T.U. CONVENTION.—We have not yet received notice of the date of Convention, but on referring to our last Convention number of the WHITE RIBBON we see that "A hope was expressed that as next Convention would be held some time in February, delegates should be appointed in good time, and notification sent to the inviting Unions (Napier)."

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REPORTS.—We trust that the notices inserted by Miss Powell and Mrs Hill in our last issue have been acted on by the various secretaries and treasurers throughout the Colony. It is to be hoped also that the local superintendents