

editing a paper. The unions regretted that ill-health necessitated Miss Smith's resignation, and trusted that soon health and strength would be restored to her. The money subscribed was most gladly contributed by the members as a small token of their appreciation of her long and faithful services.

Miss Smith replied feelingly, expressing her thanks for the Unions' kind thought for her.

It had been ascertained that Miss Smith hoped some time to form a library of standard works, and it was suggested by the friends that she would prefer choosing the books herself, so it was decided to hand the money subscribed to Miss Smith to use as she thought best.

CALLED TO HIGHER SERVICE.

Mrs Harriet Wright Brand, of Indianapolis, joined the great company of WHITE RIBBONERS who, one by one, are gathering in the Homeland above, on July 9th. As National Treasurer her fitness for the responsibilities of such an office was fully recognised and valued, as she was four times re-elected and the position now left vacant will not easily be filled. In accordance with Miss Gordon's wish after the weary spirit had left the body, it was taken for a short time to historic Rest Cottage and there her office comrades gathered and paid loving and tearful tribute to her worth. At the burial service a significant fact was noticed as Miss Gordon knelt beside the open grave: the sound of the city clocks striking the hour of noon brought to each mind that "it is always noontide somewhere," and as the chain of prayer which is unbroken arises from the bands of the Women's Christian Temperance Union the world over, the power of prayer must be felt in the success of the fight for the overthrow of all that "defileth or that worketh abomination."

News of the Day.

AMERICAN MEN-O'-WARSMEN.

Writing to the editor of *The Press* on Fleet Week in Auckland, the Rev. Leonard Isitt concludes with the following:—

"Half the American Fleet are total abstainers, and the rest of them will, in my judgment, bare comparison for sobriety with our own Jack Tars, but

that does not alter the fact that during several days of Fleet Week drunken men were to be counted by the score, reeling in and out of the public houses, staggering along the streets. On the Wednesday I saw eight fights in about twenty minutes. At the racecourse, where, in defiance of the wishes of the committee, and in violation of a definite understanding, the racecourse committee succeeded in getting a license, the sailors were lying round dead drunk by the half dozen, and a van had actually to be chartered to cart them away. We had snap-shots taken to prove the truth of this, and if the liquor men have got any common sense they will leave Mr Palmer alone. Every man in the fleet that the liquor sellers could make drunk they did make drunk, and the fact that the whole fifteen thousand were not in the degraded and bestial state that they reduced some hundreds of the poor fellows to was not due to any restraint on their part."

THE BIRTH RATE.

Miss Jessie Mackay, our late Associate Editor, writes the following interesting letter to *The Press*:—

Sir,—Our politicians have been reminding us again that the population question is at the back of most public men's minds at present. From President Roosevelt, from the British Parliament, from the Pan-Anglican Conference, from a thousand men's assemblies all over the civilised world, as well as from our own Upper House, rises the dirge of the empty cradle. Most have a pet list of reasons, among which the selfishness of women invariably takes first place; most have a pet panacea, or at least palliative. Many of these palliatives are wise and worthy, so far as they go; witness the Attorney-General's praiseworthy proposal to encourage country life, with its healthy simplicity, by helping land settlement. This and other proposed aids to parents in rearing children have a certain value, though they do not touch, and never can touch, the main issue. For, in the last resort, as in the first, it is not a man's affair at all.

But there are intermediate issues with which men have everything to do. It is the duty, we readily grant, of every patriot, in Parliament or out of it, to remove every obstacle in the way of right parenthood. Our politicians, with the best will, follow the lead of the Old World in advocating such petty inducements as small remissions of taxes, small grants of cheaper land, etc., things ludicrous in

face of the mighty responsibilities and sacrifices involved. The Eternal Purpose works in large circles where cause is for ever and ever being rounded into effect; the human purpose works in short, crooked lines, which generally break off at the critical point. The population question is not to be settled in a year or a century, but it can be helped in a thousand ways from this day onward; and the greatest, most readily effectual, of these ways now lies to our hand this very summer.

Among the palliatives recommended by our public men, only the economic aspect is considered. But the physiological aspect is infinitely more important. It is here enactments must work, if at all. But how? Well, the first and greatest foe and bar to infant life has been found. England has found it, and is working at last with feverish energy against it. Her Commission on Infant Mortality put drink far beyond and above every other known cause. The independent investigations of the Press, as voiced by G. R. Sims in clear, forceful, unanswerable facts, showed that here was the rock on which infant life was being dashed to pieces. The lower classes (the higher, too, for that matter) were proved unfit for parenthood on this count alone. Besides the numberless congenital diseases alcohol is father to, medical authority declares that the power to nourish infants naturally is lost not only by drunken mothers, but by the innocent daughters of drunken parents. And this power, once forfeited by alcoholism, is never restored to posterity. If we have learned anything by the present movement for infant life preservation, here is food for reflection.

The upshot of the matter is this: The "patriotism" which goes about wailing and disclaiming over the empty cradle may be tested in a twinkling, and must be finally tested in three months' time at the polling booth. A man who believes in checking population may logically vote for continuance as at once the most ready and most lasting means of achieving that end. If those, however, whose windy jeremiads now pierce the skies can face the thousands of New Zealand cradles empty, or worse than empty, and speak and vote for the traffic directly responsible, let them hold their peace from now on, for shame's sake! What use is the "patriotism" that is not worth the price of a glass of beer?—

Yours, &c.,—JESSIE MACKAY.

Christchurch, September 1st.