

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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Outlines of the Woman Suffrage Movement in New Zealand.

III.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union had its origin in the United States of America. In December, 1873, under the inspiration of a temperance address delivered by Dr Lewis, of Boston, earnest women in a number of the towns and villages of the State of Ohio were moved to concerted action against the drinking saloons.

The movement became known as the Women's Temperance Crusade, and its success was most extraordinary. So great was the wave of enthusiasm created, that in fifty days the liquor traffic was swept out of no fewer than two hundred and fifty towns and villages. But marvellous as their success had been, the women at the head of the movement saw that if the drink traffic and its attendant evils were to be kept at bay, sustained and systematic work would be necessary.

The workers in the various towns were therefore formed into Unions, and in November, 1874, these hitherto separate bodies were linked together in an organisation known as the National Women's Christian Temperance Union of the United States.

The Union flourished exceedingly, and in the early part of the year 1883 a more ambitious project was launched. The idea was to call into existence an

organisation which would embrace Unions of Christian Temperance women workers in every civilised country in the world. The "World's" W.C.T.U. was therefore organised, to which was affiliated not only the Unions in America but also the large and influential body known as the



MRS MAY WRIGHT SEWALL.

British Women's Temperance Association.

The new organisation was fortunate in its selection of officers, who were both gifted and enthusiastic. Under their direction several able women were sent out as "round the world Missionaries." By this time the Union

had greatly enlarged the scope of its labours.

Not only was evil found to be hydra-headed but it was discovered that among the members of the Union there was great diversity of gifts. Educative, preventive and rescue work was therefore undertaken, papers and books were published, homes and hospitals were established, and at the present time some forty separate departments of work afford ample employment for the varied abilities of the members. Each department is worked under Superintendents, who are responsible for its efficiency, and the system works admirably. Thus a local Union appoints Superintendents for such departments as it may think suitable. The Superintendents initiate and keep going in their neighbourhood the work of their several departments. Each local Superintendent reports to and is assisted by the District Superintendent of her department, who reports, in turn, to the National Superintendent. The National Superintendents communicate in like manner with the "World's" Superintendent, and this method has been found to be both elastic and effective. The Women's Christian Temperance Union is a living protest against the assertion that women have no constructive ability.

In February, 1885, Mrs Mary Clement Leavett, one of the "round the World Missionaries" before mentioned, landed in Auckland on her way round the