

LETTER FROM MISS ANNA GORDON, WORLD PRESIDENT OF THE W.C.T.U.

At last we have the personal details about our Japanese comrades, for which so eagerly we have been waiting. In spite of the terrible loss of all National W.C.T.U. property, books, public school posters just off the press, and all personal effects, these wonderful women, after appealing to us for warm clothing for the suffering poor about them, have entered upon a nation-wide campaign, through petition and public meetings, to persuade the Government not to rebuild the vice section in Tokyo, and to do away with the regulation system. Madam Yajima was carried to safety by four soldiers detailed by the First Regiment, and through four miles of burning streets and fleeing refugees in the heart of the night she took this journey. Her heroism and holy vision inspire us to greater deeds and more unselfish devotion. I trust many Christmas gifts will reach our friends in Japan.

Through Miss Agnes Slack's Bulletin you are kept informed of the comings and goings of our world's W.C.T.U. general officers and our busy world organisers. You know of the splendid accession to our ranks of one thousand comrades of the new National W.C.T.U. of Lithuania, thanks to Miss Slack's invitation and convincing appeal. We also welcome a newly-organised W.C.T.U. in Korea, and a Foreign Auxiliary Union there, as a result of Miss Christine Tinling's devoted work the past few months.

From dear comrades in many lands are coming letters of deep and affectionate sympathy for the earthly loss of our beloved Deborah Knox Livingston. The letters are written with love for her, and eloquently testifying to the world-wide appreciation of Mrs Livingston's exceptional personal charm and her rare power as a leader in our great reform. I quote our Japanese friend, Mrs Kubushiro, of Tokyo, who attended our Philadelphia Conventions, and went with us to Toronto. Her letter in other than her native language beautifully expresses the tender human note in all our hearts:—

"We do heartily mourn for that great, beautiful soul of Mrs Deborah Knox Livingston. She is the first foreign woman for whom I have ever shed the tears of sad devotion. We

cannot call it a death, but the transportation of the field of work. Such a charming, fire-like woman! O, how I loved her! Do remember me to Dr. Livingston—that I, the woman of the Eastern hemisphere, do share the sadness of this great loss. But I hope our dear comrade will be nearer to us than before."

The tie that binds together the hearts of our women in forty or more lands is a very close one. At the Christmas-tide may we covenant anew to love and serve God and one another. Let us help make true the prophecy of the beloved founder of the World's W.C.T.U., Frances E. Willard, who said: "One of the choicest fruits of Christianity will be the growth of a bond of brotherhood and sisterhood so close among all nations, races and peoples, that we shall become truly kindred one to the other."

Yours, for world-wide peace, purity, and prohibition,

ANNA A. GORDON.

PERSONAL.

Mrs Lee-Cowie left our shores by the Makura, sailing on February 12th. She is going to Glasgow as a delegate to the World's Sunday School Convention. Mrs Cowie intends visiting U.S.A., India, and Australia. She writes of her deep regret at missing our next Convention, and prays that we may have an inspiring Convention. Mrs Cowie hopes to return in time for the next poll.

We deeply regret to hear of the serious illness of Mrs Nimmo, our much-loved Superintendent of "Work Among Seamen." While at work collecting for Radium Fund she was stricken down and had to go to hospital. We are very glad to know that she is improving. Our sympathy and our prayers are with her in her hour of weakness and suffering. May she speedily be raised up again.

WOMAN'S SPHERE.

They talk about a woman's sphere,

As though it had a limit,
There's not a place in earth or heaven,
There's not a task to mortals given,
There's not a blessing or a woe,
There's not a whispered yes or no,
There's not a life, or death, or birth,
That has a feather's weight of worth

Without a woman in it.

CORRESPONDENCE.

COLOURED LABOUR IN SAMOA.

(To the Editor.)

Dear Madam,—In your issue for September you kindly allowed me space in which I warned your readers against a too hasty eulogy of the new conditions regarding coloured labour in Samoa as outlined by the Administrator in his report to the New Zealand Government. You will remember that he said then the indenture system would be replaced by "Free" labour, and the danger I foresaw was that the suggested change might easily be one of name only. I am sorry to say that my fears seem too well grounded if we are to accept as correct the widespread report of the Administrator's remarks on Christmas Eve, when addressing business men in Apia. "The three years' engagement system will be adhered to," he declared, "as although free labour has been substituted for the old indentured system, it is not intended to keep Chinese labour longer than three years in Samoa in future." The position is, briefly, that "recruiting" will be carried on as hitherto, the three years' contract system will continue, and as before, the wages, conditions regarding pay, housing and transport, remain unchanged; and lastly, as previously, the labourers enter Samoa "free" men. The two items of difference between the old system and the new are an alteration in the rate of pay in view of the labourers "finding" themselves, and the concession that the labourers can choose their employers. But in what sense, may I ask, are these recruits "freer" than they were before? The inherent badness of the indenture system lies in the "contract," by which the labourers are bound,—we can scarcely say, in truth, that they bind themselves,—to a fellow mortal for a term of years without the possibility of freeing themselves, irrespective of every consideration apart from the purely commercial value of their labour. This system remains as before. That the labourers are free to choose their employers from an extremely limited number of planters, all occupied in practically the same pursuits, scarcely constitutes "freedom" in the general acceptance of that term as applied in New Zealand. The fact is the whole thing is a carefully prepared camouflage adopted for the obvious pur-