

# U.S.A. and the W.C.T.U.

By Victoria Grigg

If I tended at any time to become depressed about our work in New Zealand, the thought of the great achievements of our White Ribbon sisters in U.S.A. would be as a rift in the clouds. When Prohibition was made effective in January 1920, 177,000 saloons were closed and 507 distilleries shut down, 1,247 breweries ceased an annual production of 1,800 million gallons of beer. All liquor advertising disappeared from newspapers and magazines. Surely, the tremendous success of Prohibition was shown by the fact that, in 1928, 224 out of 275 liquor cure hospitals closed for lack of patients.

In 1919, there had been organised the Association against the Prohibition Amendment. The issue of revenue was raised, and, through newspapers, which had lost the income from liquor advertising, attention was captured from a public bewildered and confused by financial distress. It was unfortunate that, though the majority of citizens wanted the law enforced, in very many cases, their elected representatives were subservient to liquor interests. Even so, Prohibition was a success in that there was a decrease in crime and an increase in savings. Bodies, such as the Salvation Army testified as to the decrease in their social work.

It was again unfortunate that so few actually voted at the polls, on the issue of repeal, but when repeal was carried it would have been easy for our American sisters to sit back with folded hands and say that it was no use starting all over again. Nothing was further from their thoughts, and it is in great part due to their efforts some States are wholly dry and nearly 1,000 out of some 3,000 American counties are dry.

**Last year, the W.C.T.U. in U.S.A. gained 50,000 new members.** Let these facts hearten and enthuse each one of us.

Before I left London, I spent an afternoon with Mrs. Heath, the World Secretary, who had just returned from the U.S.A. Diamond Jubilee Convention. It was a real disappointment for me to miss this, but I was fortunate in having many other contacts with the W.C.T.U.

In New York, I called at the State Offices and met there Mrs. Helen Estelle, the State President. She is also Treasurer of the N.C.W. in the U.S.A. I always had a feeling of belonging each time I entered W.C.T.U. offices and meetings. Other interesting experiences in New York were a visit to N.C.W. offices and a visit to U.N.O., at Lake Success, where I heard Mr. Jacob Malik speak. I was sorry to miss Mrs. Ella Boole, former World President, for I heard she would have given me a warm welcome.

In Washington, it was a pleasure to meet that good friend of New Zealanders, Miss Clare Lusby. She was hostess to Mrs. Kasper and Mrs. Mackie, and had also entertained Mrs. Don, Mr. Charles Todd and other Temperance workers on their visits to the States.

She showed much kindness in entertaining me, and using her car for my benefit. I was able to speak at three meetings in Washington, all in private homes. One was an evening one—Miss Lusby's Union at Tacoma Park. This is near the big Seventh Day Adventist printing works and has a number of S.D.A. members. Another was a luncheon party with a very good attendance. I remember an interesting member there, an artist, the wife of a sculptor. She had just been drawing illustrations for a book, "Flowers of Palestine," and had them with her. The third meeting was a small but vigorous union, near the Capitol. The members were organising a strong protest to a proposed licence for a store in their neighbourhood.

I also visited the offices of the Parliamentary Officer, Mrs. Stewart, in the Methodist Headquarters near the Capitol. She is very much on the alert and needs to watch every encroachment of liquor interests.

In the Capitol itself, it was a thrill to see the statue of our great founder, Frances Willard, the only woman, among many eminent American citizens.

It was depressing to see liquor sold in so many stores and drug stores, and I heard it said that some eating-houses encourage children to watch the television sets in their premises with the idea that they will be future customers for drink. I cannot forget the sight of a group of children gathered round a television set in one of these places at a time in the evening when they should have been home. The television set in that place was showing nothing but scenes of shooting and violence.

The liquor advertisements in many American magazines, women's and other publications of good standing, are as subtle and cunning as they could possibly be, Satan transforming himself into an angel of light.

They are an awful menace to youth in their suggestions that the drinking of alcoholic liquors is absolutely essential to right living.

During my stay in Washington, Mrs. Pandit, the Indian Ambassador and sister of Nehru, gave a big reception to members of other embassies. The newspapers remarked that her reception was obviously none the less popular for its lack of strong drinks. Fruit juices of all kinds were served

## A LETTER FROM MRS. CHRISTIAN

Chicago, 10/8/50.

My Dear Sisters,

This very wonderful travelling that my husband and I have been doing, has left me much less time than I had anticipated for keeping in touch with "White Ribbon" readers. There is always so much to be done and the time goes by very quickly.

I must write to tell you that, during the past fortnight, I have visited our beloved World President Emeritus, Dr. Ella Boole, at her home in Brooklyn, New York. The day before my visit, she had celebrated her 92nd birthday and her room was filled with lovely flowers. She had been ill during the previous three weeks, but was greatly improved, and was up and able to converse with perfect fluency and great charm. We spoke of the World Convention and she sent messages of remembrance to the Misses McLay and others. It was a wonderful privilege to have had this contact.

Miss Estelle, the Assistant World Treasurer, had invited me to lunch with her and she had then driven me to see Dr. Boole—a kindness I very greatly appreciated.

Then, yesterday, my husband and I went out to world-famous Evanston. Here, the U.S.A. National President, that gifted and notable woman, Mrs. D. Leigh Colvin, was our hostess and took us all through the premises, which are really wonderful, and then, through the place of hallowed memories, "Rest Cottage"—the home of the late Frances Willard.

How lovely it was! The very spirit of our beloved and revered founder seemed to linger there.

We were guests with Mr. and Mrs. Colvin for the evening meal, and had a very delightful time with these most distinguished people.

Last week-end, we were at Windsor, Ontario, and met the President and some officers of the Windsor County Union at the home of the President, Mrs. Jackson. We had a most pleasant evening.

Unfortunately, most Unions are in recess, this being the hot summertime, and, believe me, it is **hot!**

With greetings to all readers,

I am,

Yours in W.R. Bonds,

M. CHRISTIAN.

to the guests. I felt proud to think that a woman had set this example to other ambassadors.

In Washington, I had pleasant contacts with the Federation of University Women and through my contact with Negro members, was able to attend part of the Annual Conference of the National Council of Negro women. I hope to say something of this next month, and also of further contacts with the W.C.T.U. of the U.S.A.