

can fight for a free and independent life and a well-ordered home. For the living wage means not only that the wage-earner shall live, but that he shall live well. RUSKIN has wisely said that there is no wealth but life, and it is the duty of the nation to clear away the impediments that hold honest and industrious people from coming to their own, developing their best capacities, enjoying that life "more abundant" to which every human heart is drawn by an instinct as irresistible as the force that draws the tides towards the sun. Poverty and dependence are the curse of women and all the world.

For this reason I am an avowed advocate of such a change in social conditions as shall stamp out the disease and contagion of poverty even as medical science is stamping out leprosy, smallpox, and cholera; and I believe the age in which we live will yet be characterised as one of those dark, dismal and damning ages when some people were so dead to the love of their kind that they left them in poverty without a heartache or a blush.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND SOCIAL LEGISLATION.

It is not generally supposed that members of the Upper House are extremely anxious to see women sitting in the halls of legislation; yet a perusal of certain debates on social politics, as reported in *Hansard*, would almost lead one to imagine that, by revealing their own incompetency, these gentlemen intitled "honourable" are seeking to pave the way for lady law-makers. A few more such exhibitions of ignorant and one-sided legislation and New Zealand women will be roused to a revolutionary pitch of indignation. Under the auspices of the Christchurch Women's Conference, a meeting to protest against the action of the Council with regard to these social questions was held in the Y.M.C.A. Rooms on October 10th. Miss Hookham, President of the Canterbury Women's Institute, presided, and a goodly number of ladies attended, representing organisations of which women are members.

The first resolution—"That this meeting protests against the refusal of the Legislative Council to endorse the action of the representatives of the people in raising the age of consent"—was moved by Mrs Cunningham. In an able speech Mrs Cunningham stated, on the authority of the heads of the two largest maternity homes in Christchurch, that the large majority of the girls who enter the homes are under eighteen. She also pointed out the irreparable injury inflicted on a girl, physically, mentally, and socially. Then the iniquitous wrong inflicted on the children of such immature mothers! By far the lesser evil was,

perchance, for a few innocent men to run the risk of blackmail. The motion was seconded by Mrs McKee, and carried unanimously.

Mrs Munnings moved. "That this meeting protests against the refusal of the Legislative Council to endorse the action of the Representatives of the people in repealing the C.D. Acts." England repealed them so many years ago. Are we to go back? We cannot make men moral by act of Parliament, but laws have power to increase wickedness. The resolution was seconded by Mrs Wells: Our ancestors laid down their lives for the liberty of all and not for the license of the few. What says the Great Teacher on the principle of such laws? We may no longer condone the sowing of wild oats. We cannot sow evil and reap good. Immorality we shall always have in our midst! Things shall not be as they have been. Men and women with diseased bodies should not be allowed to propagate their kind. Mrs Newton remarked upon the acknowledged and proved uselessness of the laws from a sanitary point of view. Immorality and disease are increased by the enforcement of such laws from the fancied security they give. The laws of God should be studied so that coming generations may be pure. The resolution was carried unanimously.

The third resolution—"That this meeting protests against the refusal of the Legislative Council to endorse the action of the representatives of the people in amending clause 196 of the Criminal Code Act"—was entrusted to Mrs Field. The heartless absurdity of the law as at present is patent to all mothers. This motion was seconded by Miss Bain, and also carried unanimously.

ON FRIENDSHIP IN ONE'S PRIVATE CIRCLE.

Woman may easily be friends, free with and trusting each other. There is no natural obstacle against such friendship, but such mental errors as intolerance, envy, and class-prejudice may be obstacles. Women, as a whole, possess solidarity.

With respect to men, there is naturally rather rivalry than sympathy between them; but this is so often overlaid by the more recently evolved goodwill, that a free and trustful friendship results.

With respect to a man and a woman, there is every natural inducement to freedom, friendship, and trust; but this natural union has been broken, and the sexes estranged in various ways, by man's selfish desires, cunning, and domination, and a resulting timidity, suspicion, stand-off etiquette and dissociating customs and habits on the part of woman.