

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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WANTED—A SOLUTION.

The war is making many demands, and these demands are increasing. Great sacrifices are being offered at the shrine of Mars, and greater sacrifices will be necessary before this terrible conflict is ended. Weapons are being forged at a rate never before known; but it is the man who directs the weapon that counts most. And men are wanted, not by the thousand merely, but by the thousand thousand.

Halt! Your country calls you—and England expects! So runs the clarion call of this sea-girt Dominion to every mother's son of fighting age and ability within our borders. The need is clamant, and we are proud to state that the appeal is not being made in vain. Young men are "signing on" daily, urged thereto by the British love of adventure, love of justice, and love of Empire. Just all that our soldier-sons may be called on to endure who can say? May the God of Battles guide and protect each one leaving our shores and faring forth to the fight.

While their departure from these favoured isles will be tinged with sadness, the hope of service, and perhaps of renown, will minimise that feeling. It is those that are left behind who will realise most deeply the "sadness of farewell." It is a noble thing to offer one's life for King and Empire. Not less noble is it for fathers and mothers to endorse that offer. It is in many cases easier to say "I go" than to say "You may go." Mothers especially, at such times as these, realise the bitter truth of the inspired

sentence, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own heart also."

Yet mothers in Great Britain, and no less, mothers in this Britain of the South, are giving their consent—proudly and confidently—although the word may be spoken with a trembling lip. Each true mother will say in effect, as she gives up for Empire those whom she first gave to the Empire, "I give them for God, and Home, and Every Land:

For the wrong that needs resistance!
For the cause that lacks assistance!
For the future in the distance,
And the good that we may do.

But whilst New Zealand mothers may be willing, and are willing, to give their sons to fight against the Empire's foe, and for Justice, Righteousness, and Peace, yet they know full well that those sons will meet many an enemy before they meet the Germans. Indeed, they are meeting them to-day, before they leave our shores. Temptations in camp and city have already assailed our soldiers, and in some cases the foe has won! Manhood has been disgraced by a minority among the troops, and motherhood has been made to blush thereby.

Not the least of the temptations in question has been that coming through liquor. True, the canteens have been dry, and for that we are thankful; but in the cities the open bar has been a lure, and many citizens who should have known better have been the tempters of manhood. With the result that the King's uniform has been disgraced, and manliness has been dragged in the gutter,

Urged by such facts as these, a deputation, representing the Alliance, Temperance Lodges, W.C.T.U., Y.M.C.A., the Salvation Army, and Ministers' Association, recently waited on the Minister for Defence in Wellington, and urged him to take steps to prevent, if possible, this crying evil. Mr Allen, in replying to the deputation, said that drinking by the soldiers, and other evils, had caused himself and his colleagues much anxious thought, and if any feasible way of dealing with the problem could be presented he would only be too thankful to act upon it. He could not see his way to declaring all the hotels in the city and suburbs "out of bounds." Some hotels had been subjected to such treatment, and if any other hotel broke the law in inducing the soldiers to drink liquor that hotel would be dealt with promptly and firmly. Also, if any citizen contributed to making any of the men drunk they would, if detected, be given short shrift.

Mr Allen said that it was impossible to prevent some "wasters" coming into camp, but he was trying to weed these out wherever that was possible. In conclusion, he reiterated his willingness to adopt any reasonable remedy that might at any time be put forward.

The case, so far as the motherhood of New Zealand is concerned, was put in a nutshell by Mrs A. R. Atkinson: "The mothers are willing to give their sons to fight the Germans, but they are not willing to give them for this."

Here for the present this grave matter stands. Who will furnish a