

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

VOL. 21.—No. 245. WELLINGTON, N.Z., NOVEMBER 18, 1915.

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Single Copy, 3d.

TEMPERANCE ACTIVITIES DURING THE WAR.

SHOULD THEY BE SUSPENDED?

A very fine article with the above heading appears in the "Reformer," W.A. It commences: "Ever on the alert to turn moments of public excitement to profitable account, the liquor dealers of the Empire have, since the commencement of hostilities, lost no opportunity of pushing the sale of intoxicants, irrespective of its disastrous effect, upon the men engaged in labour upon which the success of the issue largely depends. So that they might have a free hand at this time, they have urged that the temperance leaders should suspend operations during the currency of the war, so that the Government might not be harassed, but be left free to devote their whole thought to the prosecution of the war. In a word, they have desired a truce which would leave them free to conduct their business unrestrained by the public sentiment engendered by Temperance activities. . . . The very suggestion of such a truce was a crime against the nation and the brave men who, on the battlefields of Europe, are fighting for the honour of the Empire and the good of the world. We go further, and say that it could only come from those who are confederate against the best interests of the country and the honour of its citizens. The obligation of the moral forces of the nation to the soldiers in the field demands, not suspended operations, **but increased activity in the campaign against the national enemy**, for whilst they are

risking their lives in defence of the Empire, the liquor traders are pushing a business which is a perpetual menace to their loved ones at home."

Isaiah of old said: "When God's judgments are abroad in the earth the world will learn righteousness." The prophet spoke from an intimate acquaintance with Israel's history. National calamity ever followed national sin, and was Jehovah's call to them to penitence and humiliation, and to "put away the unclean thing from their midst." This same God is our God, and in this time of national calamity is calling us to arise and banish the unclean thing from our Empire. The nation that in the strength of God has conquered the evils within has no cause to dread the foe without.

King and statesman, warrior and priest, physician and manufacturer, are now all in agreement with every class of social reformer that the liquor trade is England's greatest enemy. The noble old statesman who passed to his rest years ago said, "England must conquer the liquor trade, or the liquor trade will conquer her." How nearly prophetic were his words this war has shown. The statesman of to-day says: "England is fighting three enemies, Germany, Austria, and Strong Drink, and the greatest of them is drink." Surely if ever the call of God came clearly to a nation in the hour of calamity, it comes to our Empire to-day to down and crush this foe to national efficiency, this destroyer of the souls and bodies of men. Driven by the necessity for defending her very existence as a nation, England

has passed the "Defence of the Realm Act." Under this Act, ten areas have been defined (either ports or munition areas, or both), in which the sale of liquor has been restricted to a few hours a day, in most places only between the hours from noon to 2.30 p.m., also all treating is forbidden, and the law is strictly enforced.

On the 28th of last September the Victorian Alliance held its 34th annual meeting, which was one of the largest ever held. The President, in his opening address, said: "The drink trade will take some fighting, for it is as securely entrenched as the hordes of Germany. It has allies everywhere, and I have no hesitation in saying that our Cabinets and Parliaments are contaminated by it. The Council you elect to-night must give their best attention to this, and in the coming year we must make some sacrifice. I have given my best on the platform, in the pulpit, and press. There is a great need for everybody's best. I want you to put first things first, to give no pledge to any politician until you know his views on this great question. . . . No man can deny that to-day one great and half-forgotten Biblical truth is receiving transcendent expression. Sin is working death. Take our own country. For a long time past many have been convinced that intemperance was one of our deadliest sins. But now, in a moment of intense national danger and strain, the scales have fallen from the nation's eyes. Drink has been revealed for what it is, a deadly and insidious foe of all the nobler energies of our race in its fight for all that it holds most dear, something