

## A NATIONAL DUTY.

In the course of his reply to a deputation on 1st September from the Wellington Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, the Minister of Education, the Hon. J. A. Hanan, said: The child problem was a National problem. It was of immediate and supreme importance in every British community, which was being seriously depleted of their strongest and physically fit men. The race and its future must be seriously considered. There was absolute need for a live and vigorous movement being set on foot and an organisation effected to establish an Empire bureau for child welfare. Inquiries should be made and reports on questions concerning the welfare of children and child life among all classes of the community; investigation of such questions as infantile mortality, the birth rate, orphanage, child study and child psychology, neglected, deficient and delinquent children, degenerating diseases and influences, parental control, etc., and progressive legislation affecting children in different parts of the world. He desired to emphasise what was a National necessity—that is to say, of taking all possible means in New Zealand to secure physical education for and development of the rising generation. Organisations for spreading instruction in nursing and the rearing of infants must be strengthened. The State must render judicious aid in this matter. It must vindicate the right of every child to be well born, and during its helpless years to be well nurtured. Some valuable work in this direction was being done by the State, but there was room for improvement, such as providing sufficient sanitary accommodation in schools, as regards providing playground areas and as regards effective dental and medical inspection of school children. Moreover, play and physical exercise, especially in the case of girls, must receive more recognition, likewise instruction in physiology, hygiene, and domestic science. He paid a tribute to the valuable services rendered by many public-spirited women belonging to societies for the promotion of health of women and children and other humanitarian services. The safeguarding and conserving of child life, and the healthy and physical development of the rising generation was a subject of

pre-eminent State interest. Every statesman in the Empire who had a due sense of his responsibility should make this subject a predominating feature of National policy.

## WORLD'S W.C.T.U.

Rest Cottage, Evanston, Illinois,  
U.S.A., Dec. 16, 1915.

My Dear Comrade,—Christmas Day draws near—the blessed season when every heart in all the world ought to be flooded with holy happiness. As I send you this message of affectionate greeting and good wishes for the new year, I do so with profound sympathy for all our many comrades in the war-swept countries. Daily we bless God for the sacred tie of comradeship in the World's W.C.T.U., a bond of unity and love strong enough to survive even the strain of the world's most appalling war.

It was inevitable that the World's W.C.T.U. Triennial Convention, due to meet in 1916, could not at this time be called. We shall sorely miss the joy of meeting our comrades from many lands. We shall miss the educational value of the discussions of old and new plans, and the renewed consecration to our world-wide work which our Conventions always enkindle.

The high standard of service demanded in the European war has brought prominently to the front the fact that alcoholic drinks are an enemy to efficiency, and has strongly emphasised our great principles of total abstinence for the individual and prohibition for the State and Nation. The important bearing of prohibition upon national prosperity and national security is to-day understood by all nations. We must be ready for a mighty programme of constructive work as soon as the European war is ended. We trust that in the sad stress of relief work made necessary for all women in the belligerent lands, our White Ribboners will remain united as local organisations, ready at the close of the war to return to their former blessed activities, and upon a larger and broader scale than ever before.

Praying for God's guidance at this critical moment in our world's history, and for His rich blessing on all our hearts.—Affectionately,

ANNA A. GORDON.

## "I'M SORRY."

### FOR MOTHERS.

Throughout a long and tiring day, my son,  
A loveable, but most mischievous one,  
With disobedience and noisy play  
Vexed me, until my patience giving way,  
I marched the young offender off to bed,  
Waiting beside him till his prayer was said,  
Then, turning a deaf ear unto his plea,  
"O, mother, mother darling, do kiss me."  
I left him, and resumed some work begun,  
And for a space forgot my naughty son.

But in the restful peace of eventide—  
My anger and impatience having died,  
Remembering his plea, I sought his room,  
Tip-toeing softly through the silent gloom,  
Fearing to wake, yet loth for him to miss,  
Even in slumberland his good night kiss.  
But, as I bent above my laddie's face,  
Lo! I was 'prisoned in the child's embrace;  
And, as I smoothed the damp hair on his brow,  
He sobbed repentantly, "I'm sorry, now."

He had not slept—how could he when unblest!  
I drew the tear-wet face close to my breast  
And kissed him fondly, then away I crept,  
For with that seal of peace the laddie slept.  
Pardoned and blest, in sweet contentment he  
Had closed his eyes, and slumbered peacefully,  
Whilst I, as one who had new light received,  
Mused on the thoughts my soul had just conceived,  
Could human love condone more than Divine?  
God's great heart be less pitiful than mine?

And my soul answered, No! when Death doth come,  
And we, too, sorry, grieving in the gloom,