

## SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTERS.

### MORAL AND SOCIAL HYGIENE.

Dear White Ribbon Sisters,—

In a letter received from the Defence Department some months ago, it was stated that a booklet of warning and instruction, similar to that issued to soldiers, entitled "The Dangers of Venereal Disease," would be issued by the Department of Public Health. So far this booklet has not been issued. Will the Unions write to the Minister of Public Health, the Hon. G. W. Russell, urging that this pamphlet for civilian use be issued without further delay?—I am, yours in W.R. bonds,

MARY MCCARTHY,

Supt. Moral and Social Hygiene.  
Wellington, July 2nd, 1917.

### PEACE AND ARBITRATION.

It is difficult at a time like the present, when the whole civilised world is in the throes of a great conflict—a conflict which all engaged in it are firmly convinced is necessary in the interests of freedom and righteousness—to think and speak of peace. We constantly hear it said that this is not the time to dwell on thoughts of peace, love, universal brotherhood; that we must wait till the war is over before bringing these ideas forward. And yet, surely, if there is one time more than another when our highest ideals need to be emphasised and brought before men's minds, is it not now, when these very ideals are in danger of being forgotten? If, as some of us believe, it is the thought of one generation that moulds the character and creates the atmosphere of the next, then it is now, amidst the strife and the conflict, that the preparation must begin for the peace so earnestly desired.

The question that most deeply concerns us is how can we individually help in the bringing in of that glorious time when war shall be no more? It may not be possible, even if it were desirable, to put an immediate end to the war now devastating the world; that war has its roots in causes which are far-reaching—the growth of ages of thought and action along certain lines, and these causes must work themselves out before peace can come. We are now reaping the bitter harvest of a long policy of self-seeking and

mutual distrust, and none can turn away its fruits. But these causes will be worked out in due course, and then will come the time for reconstruction; it is for this we must now prepare, striving constantly, by the creation of a thought-atmosphere of love and unselfishness, to make it possible for the new civilisation to be based upon right instead of might, upon love instead of hate; co-operation and mutual helpfulness instead of self-interest. This is work in which women especially, who are not actively engaged in the conflict, can take part. There are two ways in which we can thus help in the reconstruction of the future, and I should like to point out how these are embodied in the two resolutions in connection with this subject, passed at our last Convention. (See Convention number of "White Ribbon," p. 4.)

1. First, we can help by the power of our own thought. Perhaps we hardly realise what that power is, how every thought we cherish exercises an influence, in proportion to its intensity, upon the mental atmosphere around us, affecting all who come within its reach, either for good or for evil. If we did but realise this; if we did but understand how every unkind or angry thought of ours is strengthening the forces of evil, and making the return of peace more difficult; and how every thought of love is helping to send out a counteracting influence, we should be more careful what kind of thoughts we allow our minds to dwell upon. It is because of this power which we all possess, the power of setting up thought-currents which help in determining the nature of the thoughts of the world and the action resulting therefrom—it is because of this that we ask our members to make a habit of sending out day by day thoughts of love and peace. Rev. Rhondda Williams, of Brighton, in a sermon preached last Christmas, says: "Mind and spirit are the greatest powers in the world. If only the mind and spirit be set on the side of righteousness, righteousness will prevail; and if they be distinctly centred on peace, peace will come. Every mind creates a certain atmosphere, kindles a certain fire of influence. When many minds are moved by one spirit, lit by one fire, then a great force is generated that travels far. What is greatly needed

at the present is a multiplication of men and women who will determine to send out into the present atmosphere of the world the greatest possible force of good-will, who will earnestly desire that the nations shall come to an understanding, that the war shall cease, and that the King of Peace reach His throne. Be continually thinking it, feeling it, praying for it; get your friends to do the same, until this becomes the atmosphere of life about you. You may be sure other groups will do likewise, and the waves will meet, the flames will catch and blend. They will make a powerful force, a great fire. . . . Such a concentration of minds, moved by the One Great Divine Spirit, would make an atmosphere in which the Governments could discuss their great problems with a bias towards agreement. That is our main business as religious people in this crisis."

2. The second way in which we can all help in this work of reconstruction is expressed in the second of the two resolutions referred to, bringing before us our responsibility towards the children. I do not think we can possibly lay too much stress on the importance of implanting right ideas on these matters in the minds of the children. The future lies with them, and according to the principles given them for their guidance now, will be the spirit that rules the world in the days to come. If they are allowed to grow up in an atmosphere of international rivalry, self-interest, and distrust, perhaps even of retaliation and hatred of those whom we call our enemies, then there is little hope of the dawning of a better day for the world. We all probably know something of the tendency in many of our schools to foster the spirit of so-called patriotism, meaning by this the furtherance of our own country's interests, it may be even at the cost of others. Cannot this be replaced by **international** patriotism, the desire for the good of all nations alike, and of our own simply because we are a part of the great brotherhood of nations, in which each one can only find true prosperity in the prosperity of all? When this spirit prevails amongst all nations, war will become impossible, and it is by the education of the children upon these lines that the ideal of a lasting peace can be most surely attained. Rev. V. T. Pomeroy, than whom I