

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

VOL. 25.—No. 294.

WELLINGTON, N.Z., DECEMBER 18, 1919.

2s 6d Per Annum. Post Free.
Single Copy, 3d.

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Paul, the great Apostle, was centuries ahead of his time, and enunciated here to the Galatians a truth which, as yet, our own enlightened age does not fully realise.

We are sometimes astonished at the slowness of the people in grasping the wide conception that in Christ Jesus we are all one great harmonious whole; our nation only one in the great brotherhood of nations; our planet only one in God's great universe, and that not only our world, but all the worlds, are "bound by golden chains about the feet of God." The links of that golden chain are love and self-sacrifice, a love that overleaps the boundaries of country, race, creed, or colour, and applies the golden rule alike to black or white, bond or free, man or woman. Especially should we feel the sacred obligation to treat our coloured brethren, who give allegiance to our flag and are our fellow-subjects, with the spirit of love, courtesy, and self-sacrifice.

Parts of our vast Empire are moved with the spirit of unrest: Ireland on the verge of rebellion, India and Egypt seething with discontent. And these troubles are largely the result of the mistakes of the past, of the spirit of coercion instead of sympathy, and of the lack of imagination in the ordinary British statesman, his utter inability to put himself in another's place, or see any point of view but his own.

We cannot undo the past, but in the name of common sense, for the sake

of our common humanity, do not let us repeat these mistakes and hand on to our successors an Empire torn by the spirit of discord, when we might, by the healing power of an understanding sympathy and the application of the golden rule, knit together the various parts of our Empire in the bonds of love and unity. When the first slaves were taken across the Atlantic and sold in North America, no one guessed what a frightful convulsion of affairs was to develop. We cannot plead ignorance in regard to indentured labour. We have seen its late development both in Fiji and in South Africa.

We are told that indentured labour is different in Samoa from what it is in Fiji. We have never questioned this, but indentured labour in Fiji is a growth, and even those who introduced it never contemplated its becoming such an open sore. The introduction of indentured labour into Samoa is a little step on the down grade, but "Facilis descensus Averni," and Fijian plantation and South African compound give fair warning what depths can be reached even under the Union Jack.

The same old arguments are advanced. We are told the indentured labourer is not a slave. He certainly is not a free man, and therefore, to a greater or less degree, is a slave. The fact that some of these labourers are happy is no reason to leave them in slavery. Many slaves in Kentucky homes were happy, but that was no reason why the thousands who were unhappy should be left in slavery.

The Samoan plantations cannot be profitably worked by free labour. The same old lie that we read in U.S.A. If the slaves were set free national

bankruptcy would follow. Abraham Lincoln set the spiritual advance of his people before material prosperity and freed the slaves, and the country is richer and more prosperous than ever. One M.P. has said that the folk who oppose indentured labour in Samoa do not know what they are talking about. We think Drs. Burton and Andrews know more about the question than the M.P. who so grandiloquently discounts their knowledge. We do not ourselves lay claim to any special knowledge about Samoa, but we do claim to know the bedrock principles of Christianity, and every one of these is outraged by indentured labour. Would any of the people who defend this system like their own sons and daughters to be indentured labourers, even in New Zealand? The principle is outrageous and vicious; it raises deep indignation against us in India and elsewhere, and it lowers the morale of the people who own these labourers.

Even in Australia, when prisoners were hired out as servants, it is well known how cruelly and unjustly they were treated. Men can not be trusted to have slaves or servants under their absolute control. We sincerely hope that the elections will return to power men who will set national character and the principles of liberty and justice above material prosperity.

"In a hovel rude,
The King I sought for meekly stood.
A naked, hungry child

Clung round His gracious knee,
And a poor hunted slave looked up
and smiled,

To bless the smile that set him free.
I knelt and wept; my Christ no more
I seek,
His throne is with the outcast and the
weak."