

CORRESPONDENCE.

(The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed in this column.)

(To the Editor.)

Dear Madam,—

I have just been reading your report of the Presidential Address at the recent Convention, with its comprehensive tale of women's activities the world over, and feel that I ought to pass on to you a remark made on the matter by another reader of the same speech. "If only the 'White Ribbon,'" was the burden of it, "would tell us more about all the activities Mrs Taylor mentioned." Will it not? We women need such telling by those whose work makes them aware of much that the home-maker often cannot find out for herself, but ought to know, "For God, for Home, and Humanity." How many women, for instance, know that New Zealand can and does send to prison her aged and infirm men who are innocent of any crime but are homeless, and whose senile state of mind and body makes them "unwanted" in such "Homes" as we have? I have just seen an old woman of 74 in a women's prison—sent there for no crime whatever but that of being homeless and senile. We ought to have a State Infirmary for such cases, but we have only a prison! How many women, again, know that New Zealand still lacks altogether any protection for her feeble-minded adults, and any Homes or Farm Colonies for feeble-minded offenders? These latter, sentenced exactly as if thoroughly responsible, drift in and out of prison, helpless and friendless, and committing crimes through lack of understanding and self-control, when in mercy to all they should never be at large. It is the feeble-minded man who is the chief offender against our little girls. It is the feeble-minded woman who most often becomes a prostitute. Yet New Zealand women still let the national neglect of them continue—I am certain because women at large do not realise the fact, or how gravely they menace us all. I venture also, Madam, to enclose a letter from the pen of Miss Jessie Mackay, which contains information on the effect of Prohibition on hotel accommodation, that I fancy many a reader of the "White Ribbon" will not know, but will be very glad to have.

—Yours, etc.,

B. E. BAUGHAN.

Clifton, Sumner, May 7, 1927.

TEACHERS IN CONFERENCE.

At the recent Teachers' Conference, the question of married women as teachers was discussed. One male teacher showed rare insight when he remembered that marriage and motherhood were necessary qualifications for teachers.

Why should women be lost to the profession when they have the wider experience and deeper knowledge of child life?

Several women teachers resented the suggestion that only women whose husbands could not maintain them should be eligible for appointment. Why should they be compelled to submit to an inquisition of their private affairs? What connection is there between a woman's ability to teach and her husband's inability to maintain her?

One woman teacher struck the nail right on the head when she said that there were men earning £1000 a year whose wives did not have the price of a tram ticket.

Some years ago a head dressmaker told us: "I went out to learn my trade when my husband was earning £800 a year. I paid a nurse to look after my little ones. My husband was spending every penny in drink and racing. I knew he would lose his position, and I would have to keep my little ones."

It is the right of the child to have the very best teacher possible. The grading list is supposed to provide this.

Moreover, women who have been earning good incomes are not going to marry if they have to ask a husband for every tram fare they require. A married woman must be economically independent, and until that is done she should not be debarred from a square deal when applying for a position.

The honesty that is China's; the courage that is Japan's; the spirituality that is Korea's; the haunting sense of the infinite that is India's; the high idealism that is America's; the tenacity that is England's; the thoroughness that is Germany's; the laughter that is Africa's—we need them all, and we must have them all to develop a perfect world.

N.Z. W.C.T.U.
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