

# The White Ribbon

For God, and Home, and Humanity.

## Thought for the Month.

If there be some weaker one,  
Give me strength to help him on;  
If a blinder soul there be,  
Let me guide him nearer Thee. —J. Whittier.

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## How We Won the Six O'clock Closing

By Mrs. McDonald

"We want to get a petition to Parliament to have the hotels closed at 6 o'clock in the evenings, in the interest of our soldier lads," said Mrs. Atkinson, speaking to the Wellington Central Union of the W.C.T.U., during the first World War. "I want volunteers for tables we are setting up in the city streets. These tables will have a large calico placard, 'Hotels to close at six. Please sign this petition.' Those willing to help, please stand." No one stood. Dead silence, broken at last by Mrs. Atkinson saying, "Mrs. McDonald will help, I am sure."

"No, I could not think of it," was the reply; "besides, my family would not hear of my doing such a thing."

"Indeed," responded my friend. "Do you always consult your family's wishes as to what you will do?"

I laughed, and members laughed with me. "Well, if you put it like that, I suppose I must say 'Yes,' though you are making a mistake in asking me. I won't know how to go about it," I said.

"I will go with Mrs. McDonald," said Mrs. Helyer, our Treasurer; and then other members were drawn in to complete the wanted number.

The day came, bright and beautiful. Our stand was in front of the G.P.O. I left home with a prayer on my lips that God would work through me all the day.

Arriving at the Post Office at five minutes to nine, I found Mrs. Helyer seated in the only chair at the table. She told me Mrs. Atkinson had left word that I was to do the scouting and bring the people to Mrs. Helyer, who would take the signatures.

To me this was nothing short of appalling. I could not possibly go up to strange people and ask for signatures. I would look such a fool. The thought flashed into my mind, "A fool for Christ's sake."

Many a rebuff I had to start off with. Seeing a clergyman who had lately come to Wellington, I felt sure of a favourable reception. I was disappointed, for in a chilling manner he told me he was "not interested."

I felt dreadful; my face was flaming when I felt a touch on my arm, and a drunken sailor said, "Never mind,

missus, I'll sign. If I could save one of these lonely boys from temptation I'd be proud. Tomorrow I go deep-sea sailing to get away from the accursed stuff."

Going home after five o'clock, very weary, but quite happy, for we had got many signatures through the day, I was passing the telephone box in Pirie Street, when the inner voice said to me, "Go in here and ring up the clergyman; tell him what the drunken sailor said, and don't add any words of your own." I knew the church to which the minister had just come, and knew his name. I obeyed the impulse and thought no more about it.

Some time, long after, Mrs. Atkinson and I were at a conference. I cannot be sure at this long date after, but I think it was for Town-Planning. Mrs. Atkinson and myself had lunched together, and there was some little time before the afternoon session began. My friend said, "What would you like to do to fill in the time?" "What would you like to do?" I said. She replied, "Let's go to church. I have never been in—and lots of my friends go there. I would not like to go alone, but you belong, so it is all right."

We went, and on leaving, Mrs. Atkinson said, "You know, not many of the clergy of your church are sympathetic to our movement, but this one is."

"Don't you believe it," I cried. "He would not even sign for six o'clock closing." And I told her of his refusal to me, and the words of the drunken sailor who was listening, and of how I was led to repeat them to him on the telephone.

"Well, I was speaking to the clergyman who preaches here the other day, and he is out and out for prohibition."

What could we do but fall on our knees in thankfulness and wonder?

Only Mrs. Atkinson and myself ever knew the name of the clergyman and the church in connection with this incident, and we never let it pass our lips. It was too sacred an experience.

Extract from "Temperance and Prohibition in New Zealand":

"The first petition for six o'clock closing was presented by the W.C.T.U.,

and it contained over 63,000 signatures. Two later petitions for this reform were the combined work of the Union and the Alliance, though few will question that the securing of the signatures was largely the work of the women."

## TOURIST TRAFFIC

Legislators have talked lately of the need of a higher standard of accommodation for tourists. As one who has toured I endorse this. But first our legislators must decide this **IS** the tourist traffic encouraged primarily to increase the sale of alcoholic liquors. To decline to serve the tourist with tea or coffee at the dining table and place before him a list of 50 kinds of alcoholic liquor which he may order, and pay for, does not place the comfort of the tourist on a higher standard. Tea and coffee at morning and midday meals are enjoyed by the tourist, but the refusal to serve these at the dinner table at night does not by any means "raise the standard." A tiny cup of coffee available in the lounge after dinner may be an attempt to induce the tourist to order, and pay for, alcoholic liquor from the lounge bar, but this does not "raise the standard." To be wakened up four nights after midnight by prancing and chatter along the passage past your bedroom door does not "raise the standard" of accommodation even if it indicates good sales of liquor, in a very grand hotel. In my experience in N.Z. and in Australian travel the presence of alcoholic liquor does not "raise the standard," and N.Z. legislators should gravely consider the object of encouraging tourist traffic.

Tourer.

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