

NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

(Incorporated)

Organised 1885.

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"Fairlight," Tauranga.All matter for publication, reports, etc.,
should be in the hands of the Editor by the
15th of the month.**Business Manager:**Mrs. J. H. GRIGG,
1 Mallam Street, Karori, Wellington, W.3.
Telephone 26-903.All Union advertisements must be sent to
the Business Manager, to whom all payments
for Advertisements, Beacons, Y.P. Supple-
ments and subscriptions must be made.

The White Ribbon.

"For God, and Home, and Humanity"

WELLINGTON, NOVEMBER 1, 1948.

OUR GREATEST NATIONAL ASSET

BY JESSIE HIETT

I read recently that practically all the accidents in the Swiss mountains during the last generation or two are due to inexperienced mountaineers stepping on what appeared to be a grassy slope. These novices do not attempt to step on the ice, for they see and understand how dangerous it is. But, because the grass is green they imagine it is safe, when as a matter of fact it is as slippery and deceitful as the ice itself.

We are comparatively safe when a thing is nakedly evil and it advertises itself as such, but when some evil is clothed in the garb of respectability and decency it lives on the unsuspecting. Nowadays, drinking in many circles has been so clothed with a garb of respectability that many people are being deceived by it. Young people at the very beginning of life are an easy prey to this slippery, deceitful danger and step out unsuspectingly, and too often they are morally and physically drifting towards drunkenness and immorality before they realise their danger.

What are we doing about this drift? What better way than to build character in our own girls and boys and teach christian citizenship. The future of our nation depends largely upon the way our young people live today and the responsibility they will accept and the habits that are formed

in early life. It is for us to help them to see what is right and wrong. As we well know, the greatest asset the world has today is its children. Right training is our best investment. Money invested is good, but nothing can compare with a christian trained citizenship.

Mrs. Joseph Kitto states "There is no such thing as a bad boy or girl. They have no conception of sin and badness when born. They are but a flower given us to cherish and protect. The first thing they notice is the actions of mother and father. First we must consecrate their lives to Christian ideals. Obedience in the home is one problem that parents have to face. Children today have too much freedom and too much money to spend."

They do not know the value of money or time. This is the beginning of the drift. A penny today means nothing to even a very small child. It must have threepence or sixpence to spend for ice cream or sweets on the way to or from school. If they have the proper food at home they do not need it. What a treat a stick of lollie was to us, but today it means nothing to the children. The next step towards drift is when the children are allowed to listen to crime and murder stories over the radio or at the movies. It is most important that parents go with their children to the pictures and that pictures with good morals are chosen. Another danger of slipping is when their minds are poisoned with the trash which is often printed in funny magazines. There are plenty of good, clean books for them to read. If parents were alive to their responsibilities they would see that only clean, wholesome books were read by their children.

Do the majority of parents keep their children off the streets? Do they make the home and backyard attractive that they may find pleasure in staying at home? There is no let up for parents if their children are to be saved from the slippery, dangerous places. Surely we can find children to fill our L.T.L.'s and Bands of Hope, our Sunday Schools and Junior C.E.'s.

To build character is more important than any social engagement, any investment in money or shares.

Here is an essay written by a boy who has been trained in his home from infancy. The title, "How a boy can help have peace."

"To keep peace in the world, we must start when we are young. We must first start at home. We should try to

get along and not quarrel or fight with our brothers and sisters. We must obey our parents. Then when we go to school we must be honest and play fair with our school mates. We should not cheat and we must obey our teachers. We should be kind and courteous to all the boys and girls. We must help each other. If we do these things when we are young then when we grow older we will not want war or have hard feelings against other people."

I feel sure that this boy would be a total abstainer and one who was taught the true spirit of Christ likeness.

What influence are we as well as the parents exerting on every child we meet? Let our watchword be "Safeguard the child." In 1775 Paul Revere rode through hamlet, village and town sounding "the Alert." Paul Revere knew that the safety of women and children, the homes and the lives of American citizens were endangered. The dangers threatening the civilisation of American Colonies in 1775 were from without. The dangers threatening our New Zealand homes are within. I have spoken of the necessity of Christian training in the homes of our land. We must sound an Alert to the mothers and fathers of our country. There has never been a greater menace to civilisation and to the cause of righteousness and to Godly homes than the menace of drink is today. Young people belonging to Christian homes are being enticed by friends to take a little wine at social evenings and wedding parties.

Teach your children to be total abstainers. Be total abstainers yourselves. Christian men have become drunkards through the social glass. Alcohol is no respecter of persons. It creates a craving for itself, and then comes a desire for more, and before the one who commenced with one glass realises it, the desire for more becomes an incurable habit, and down he or she slides to a lost eternity.

Parents, the time is now to train your girls and boys to choose whatsoever is pure and of good report. The upward way in training is not the easy way, but the results are glorious. Clean bodies, clean minds, clean hearts, children grow into men and women of whom you will be proud in the days to come, for they will be working for a cleaner, purer world to the glory of our Blessed Lord and Master, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your influence is making or marring the lives of those who are watching you.