

Purity Series No. 1.

Australasian White Cross League.

What is . . .

The White

Cross

League? .

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PATRONS.

His Excellency the Governor-General.
His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales.
New Zealand.
The Marquis of Linlithgow.
His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney.
The Right Reverend Moderator of Presbyterian Church of
Australia.
The President of the Australasian Methodist Conference.

OBJECTS.

PROMOTING—

- I.—Purity among Men and Boys.
- II.—A Chivalrous Respect for Womanhood.
- III.—The Preservation of the Young from Contamination.
- IV.—A Higher Tone of Public Opinion.

The Society emphasises obligations already binding on Christians; it does not impose new ones.

THE "WHITE CROSS OBLIGATIONS."

1. To treat all girls and women with respect, and endeavour to protect them from wrong and degradation.
2. To endeavour to put down all indecent language and coarse jests.
3. To maintain the law of purity as equally binding on men and women.
4. To endeavour to spread these principles among my companions, and to try and help my younger brothers.
5. To use every possible means to fulfil the command, "Keep THYSELF pure."

PURITY SERIES No. 1.

AN ADDRESS:

The White Cross League.

BY

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SYDNEY :

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ADDRESS :

WHAT IS THE WHITE CROSS LEAGUE?

WHY IS IT FORMED?

WHAT IS IT TO DO?

TO these three questions I desire to give some answer, which I commend with all possible earnestness to the minds and hearts and consciences of all Christian people, and especially of those to whom I have been here called to minister.

I. WHAT IS THE WHITE CROSS LEAGUE?

It is like an order of Christian knighthood, formed within the wider sphere of the Church of Christ itself, not to create or discover any new duty, lying beyond the teaching of the Gospel, and the scope of the great Baptismal Vow, but simply to band men together in a special resolution of unceasing warfare against one foul and terrible evil, which is eating out the heart of modern civilisation, and poisoning the growing manhood and womanhood of our people.

In the ideal of ancient knighthood there were these leading characteristics: First, the vow of personal purity, or chastity—curbing the natural appetite and passion, which God made, not to rule, but to serve the spirit within us—acknowledging emphatically the beauty and the ennobling influence of pure love—reverencing the body, as well as the soul, as being part of a man's true self, to be consecrated under the supreme law of his life.

Next, the vow of reverence for womanhood—recognising its finer, gentler, sweeter nature—delighting to shield it by manly protection from rude violence, from the excessive pressure of the burden of life, from all that can outrage the modest delicacy of thought and feeling, which is its chief beauty.

Thirdly, the vow of unselfish and unceasing devotion to warfare against all unrighteous cruelty, and especially all oppression of the weak or helpless—in that warfare counting it shame to turn back, in face of even the most overwhelming force, holding it as real a glory to have fallen in brave fight as to have conquered, and asking for no reward whatever but the opportunity of chivalrous service.

Lastly, the solemn consecration of all these vows under the sign of the Cross, indicating thereby the acknowledgment of purity as

“holiness”—that is, as the Divine image in man, renewed by the salvation of Christ, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, with “the strength made perfect in weakness”—professing in the warfare against evil simply to follow the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and to be ready, when He should call, to take up the cross in following him—willing not only to dare but to suffer, and often to find glory in what the world deems folly and shame.

These vows, translated out of their old forms into those which suit the needs and ideas of the present day, are precisely the vows embodied in the obligation implied in the very name of our “White Cross League.” It is a brotherhood of special warfare in the cause of purity; it enrolls itself distinctly in the name of our Crucified Master; it seeks—according to the true meaning of the word “knighthood”—no reward even of praise or dignity, but simply the opportunity of service to God and man, in the protection of the weak and helpless against outrage and wrong. It seeks to do that service, first, by resolving under God's grace to keep our own selves pure in thought and word and deed; then by bearing individual witness, according to our power and opportunity against all foulness wherever it crosses our path; next, by endeavouring to strengthen the protective

force of law and public opinion, which are the corporate witnesses of humanity against this deadly evil; lastly, by labouring to shield the young from pollution, and to rescue our brothers and sisters who have already fallen, bringing them back to Him who said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." To this service our brotherhood dedicates itself solemnly in the name and the presence of God; it trusts for its fulfilment not to human strength, but to the Divine grace; and therefore it seeks to sustain continual energy and enthusiasm by common prayer, by mutual exhortation, and by partaking of that Holy Communion, through which especially "Christ dwells in us and we in Him." It opens its membership freely to all who will take on themselves these obligations of service, and hail them by the consecration of that service under the banner of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. WHY IS THIS LEAGUE FORMED?

The answer is but too simple. It is because we are confronted at this moment, in defiance of decency, order, civilisation, Christianity, by the prevalence of a deep-seated and far-reaching power of impurity, organising itself as if it were an institution of society, which we must destroy, if we would

not have it destroy us. It begins even at an early age, in filthy words and indecent actions, often taught to the young through obscene literature, oftener still by men or older youths, who delight in doing, perhaps in mere recklessness, the devil's work of temptation and corruption of the yet innocent soul. Then, when the time of youth comes, awakening sexual desire, this preparation of evil bears its natural fruit in the actual uncleanness of fornication—either seducing and polluting women who have hitherto been innocent, or seeking connection with those unhappy women, who, having once fallen, make a trade of prostitution; and that desire, thus perverted, and indulged in to the destruction of all sense of shame, becomes like the craving for drink, a fierce evermastering appetite, demanding its gratification at all costs—the known cost to self of health, happiness, even the true humanity both of body and soul,—the cost to its victims of all that belongs to true womanhood, of all, indeed, that makes her life worth living. But there is a lower depth still, when those who have thus defiled and brutalized their own natures, take up deliberately the work of polluting society itself, either in unnatural delight in evil for its own sake, or for the gains of a miserable trade, making

its profit out of ruined bodies and souls—scattering broadcast upon the world obscene books or pictures—maintaining houses which are mere dens of prostitution, and which spread round them in a moral contagion worse than the most malignant disease. Mostly these forms of wickedness lurk unseen under the decent forms of society; sometimes they flaunt their shame openly—declaring that this impurity is the necessary law of human nature, an inevitable phase of youthful experience, even a mark of vigour and manliness—not unfrequently deriding the protests of decency and the indignant warnings of Christianity, as the utterances of a weak, prudish, obsolete conception of character and duty. Not the least outrageous manifestations of this wickedness is seen in the unequal dealing of society with the two sexes in relation to these various grades of impurity—condoning, almost commending, in the man what it ruthlessly condemns in the woman, and welcoming him with hardly a reproach, while it tramples her, the partner, perhaps the victim, of his sin, in the mire of hopeless degradation.

The ghastly disclosures recently made in England of an organized and systematized trade in the corruption of young girls, almost children—relying on the insufficiency of legal

protection against this foul outrage on human nature, and the still greater failure of public opinion in society to brand with righteous condemnation those, often in high places, who are guilty of such outrage—have stirred the whole civilized world to horror and indignation. Out of these have already come in England the amendment of the law, the formation of Vigilance Committees to watch over its enforcement, and a new impulse of energy in the efforts of all moral and spiritual influences for the purification of society. We cannot but fear that, perhaps in different and less organised forms, similar evils exist here; there is much indeed in our climate, our food, and our general habits of life to stimulate sexual desire to excessive vehemence. We shall be guilty before man and God if we shut our eyes to facts only too obvious, and if, in timidity or even in false delicacy, we fail to come forward in the name of Christ to bear honest witness, and to fight by every right means, against this evil, which is in the truest sense a “work of darkness”—a sin which, like some poisonous reptile, shuns the light and slays its victims unseen, and which, more perhaps than any other, plunges the soul into a moral darkness, over which the light of truth and purity and beauty plays in vain.

It is in the painful consciousness of the presence of this terrible evil among us—encouraged or connived at by many who have no excuse of youth or ignorance, and (to say the least) not adequately condemned by society at large—that our White Cross League has been formed.

III. WHAT IS IT TO DO?

It is based in principle on two profound beliefs: first, that the evil can be adequately dealt with, only if we meet it at its source; and next, that, without disparagement of other influences for good, the one great strength against impurity lies in the inspiration of Christian faith.

The true remedy for a moral evil must be itself a moral power. It will be well to amend the serious defects of the law in New South Wales, at least up to the present English standard, in respect especially of the protection and rescue of the young; and we trust that not another Session of Parliament will be allowed to pass, without an imperious call for such amendment from the aroused moral feeling of the community. It will be well, again, to see that the indecent obtrusion of temptation and vice in our streets and public places is put down with a strong hand; it may be needful to form Vigilance Committees, to

close brothels in any neighborhood, and to see that the law is in all cases efficiently carried out by the police. It will be well to invoke a sterner condemnation of those who are known to be defiled with these sins, by the verdict of decent society, and especially by the female influence, which so largely rules it; for the lash of honest public opinion will scourge criminals whom the law fails to reach. But yet it is clear that all these things touch only the external manifestations of the foul disease with which we have to deal; the cause of the disease itself lies in the weakness or sinfulness of the soul, and it can be met only by the spiritual forces which have their dominant influence there.

There must be an appeal to the mind; which our Society will seek to bring home by direct teaching, and by the dissemination of wholesome and instructive literature.

Much, very much, of the evil in its early stages is due to sheer ignorance, which can be, and must be, dispelled.

Boys are left utterly in the dark as to the simplest physiological facts of their own bodily nature, with its needs and appetites, and of the right place which sexual desire and connection are intended to fill in the propagation of the race. They are left unwarned against words and habits of indecency and

acts of self-abuse, to which they are tempted by awakening appetite, and impelled, almost forced, by corrupting influences from without. On these points there rests a painful but undoubted responsibility on parents, elder brothers, friends, teachers—to guard the young when they pass beyond the age of childhood, and perhaps leave the protection of home.

Young men, again, are too often left without warning against the false and pernicious teaching of common talk and popular literature; assuming, as a matter of course, that youth, if it be vigorous, cannot be pure; that impurity is but a passing phase of early days, "sowing its wild oats" and "seeing life" in all its worst forms, without any permanent evil either to soul or body; declaring in the name of a "science—falsely, so-called," indeed, and scouted indignantly by all true scientific authorities*—that fornication is for the average man actually a condition of vigour and health, and that the impulse to the gratification of sexual desire is not only as natural, but as irresistible, as the force of hunger itself. We sorely want literature of an outspoken, yet modest type, which will boldly recognise and combat these deadly falsehoods; bringing to bear upon them both the terrible warnings of experience, especially through the

foul disease, which is the child of licensed impurity, and the teaching of true science as to the right conditions of health and manhood, and the right force and proper control of sexual desire. We want our young men to know—what is seen as unquestionably true of all who think—that this desire is implanted in men, in various degrees of force, simply as a means to an end, and that, except so far as it fulfils that end, it is a gross folly, as well as a foul sin, to give way to it. That end is fulfilled only in the sacred institution of marriage.* On its physical side, it is the begetting of children, for the accomplishment of the command given to mankind, "to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth,"—children who, under the protection of parental care and love, shall be trained to good service in their generation. On its moral side, it is the hallowing of the power of love in the soul, at once the most vivid of all emotions, and the strongest principle of self-forgetting and self-sacrificing action; and it is the creation of the most sacred moral relations, of husband and wife, of parent and child, of brother and sister, on which rest the happiness and goodness of humanity. Till these purposes can be accomplished through marriage, it is the bounden duty, as it is undoubtedly within the power, of every true man, to

curb his natural appetite by steady self-control, and, if it be necessary, by the hardness of stern self-discipline. Need we labour to show that in fornication or seduction, every one of these is deliberately rejected? It shuns—sometimes by disgraceful means—the begetting of children, or leaves them, if they are begotten, to be the wretched outcasts of society. It is an indulgence of selfish appetite, rendering the soul incapable, because unworthy, of pure self-denying love. It ignores, or tramples upon the moral responsibilities implied in marriage, perhaps glorying in a careless freedom from them all. Thus, perverting natural desire, it must sin against true manliness; it must destroy the health of body and soul; it often draws down the penalty of foul disease, visiting not only the sinner himself, but in many cases his innocent children; still oftener it brings with it an enervating weakness of body and mind, which denies a man even the chance of playing his right part in the world. These plain truths need to be plainly taught.* Evil is here every day wrought from a want of thought and knowledge, which must be met with all the more care and resolution, because, from the nature of the case, it lies beyond the reach of ordinary conversation and public teaching.

But the true appeal is to the conscience and the heart. Moral influences are far more efficacious than intellectual teaching, be it ever so sound and forcible. How shall these be called out? To bring out the obligation of the moral law is easy. The law of temperance, soberness, and purity can be impressed on the soul as a fundamental law of human nature, which is, of course, a law of God. We have, thank God, the power of appealing to the instinctive sense of shame, which should be carefully sustained and guarded till it grows into a developed principle of delicacy and self-respect. We can surely make men understand that true humanity demands and can achieve the subordination of all appetite, be it ever so strong, to the rule of the spirit within us; we can show, with some aid from physiological science, what habits of self-denial, in meat and drink, of activity and manly exercise even (if need be) of hard labour and austere self-discipline, will aid the innate power of the spirit to control the flesh. We can bring out the universal witness of mankind against impurity, in the laws and institutions, the language and literature, of the world. We can make a still higher and more direct appeal to the law of God, recognised in the inner consciousness as Divine, when it sounds in the direct trenchant

simplicity of the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." It is not, I repeat, difficult to manifest in unanswerable clearness the witness of the moral law; even they who sin most deeply acknowledge it in their lucid intervals; the conscience of mankind at large accepts it as a thing of course.

But what is really needed is not knowledge of the moral law, but the in-dwelling power of a high moral inspiration. The dark experience of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is especially exemplified in relation to the possession of the soul by the demon of uncleanness. Of what use is it to acknowledge the law of purity to be "holy and just and good," if we find another "law," a constraining and unnatural power, "of sin in our nature, bringing us into a captivity," which we do not care or hope to break? We must find a victorious spiritual force, above man and yet in man, pervading mind and conscience, heart and spirit, which can drive out this fierce passionate force of evil. Where shall we find such a force? It must be, of course, ultimately the power of a Divine Spirit acting on the spirits of men. But how shall that power be realised? There are some who rely on it as felt in the instinct of purity, the natural sense of shame, the natural loathing of foulness, the spirit of personal honour and

self-respect; there are others who recognise the Divine Voice in the stern warnings of experience, appealing to the strong motive of self-preservation, over the wrecks of human nature, which strew everywhere the shore of life; there are, again, many who rely on the Divine witness in the moral sense of righteousness, the yet stronger impulse of compassion and love, and the enthusiasm of humanity. We value all these influences; in each and all of these we acknowledge the voice of the Spirit of God within the soul. But we believe above all things in the light and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ—renewing and exalting all their natural forces of good, but adding to them a divine power of its own. This was the spiritual force, which may be fairly said to have re-created Purity as a living power, in an age of advanced material, intellectual, æsthetic, social civilisation, which was nevertheless a sink of engrained and unblushing corruption. The presence of "Christ in us," renewing the soul to the Divine Image and Sonship of the Heavenly Father, regenerating it by the in-dwelling grace of the Holy Spirit—a presence which hallows the whole nature, the body as well as the soul and spirit—a presence, which is the unalienable privilege of all who are brought into the Christian covenant—this it is which alone has

conquered, and will conquer, the sensual power of Impurity. Before it the spirit of uncleanness stands abashed and rebuked, like the demons, who cried out as in pain before Our Lord's Incarnate Presence on earth. To the questions—"Shall I take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? Shall I defile the body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" there can be but one indignant answer, "God forbid!" It is to this supreme power that the White Cross League would appeal. It seeks the white flower of Purity under the shadow of the Cross; it supports individual struggle by an union of Christian brotherhood.

It is asked—Why create this special brotherhood, to labour in what is, after all, the bounden duty of every Christian as such, and of the whole Church of Christ? The answer is that we fully recognise, as our form of admission distinctly shows, that our pledge is no oath of obligation to a new duty, but simply an "acknowledgment" of what is implied for each in membership of the Christian Covenant. But we desire to enlist in our crusade against a special evil that power of voluntary association which plays so effective a part in our commercial, social, and political life, and which, if rightly harmonised with, and subordinated to, the great natural ties of

humanity, is clearly an appointed factor in the true progress of our race. We feel the need of such voluntary association all the more in regard to this special purpose, because through it we can speak plainly and earnestly against an evil which, from the nature of the case, can seldom be dealt with through the public channels of influence and teaching. Experience has already shown how much such association for good can do; and has utterly dispelled all fear of its interference with the general sense of larger Christian obligation and larger Church unity.

But, above all, I would urge upon all Christian men, into whose hands this address may fall, to consider the need of being in some way up and doing in this holy warfare. The whole question of the future of human society, here as elsewhere, is a moral question. The material resources, given us in such rich abundance, the freedom, personal and political, which we enjoy, even the knowledge now being widely diffused by our educational system in all its graduations—all these are, of course, important elements of true progress. But the supreme need in our domestic and common life is simply righteousness—the righteousness in ourselves of manliness, temperance, and purity—the righteousness towards men of "truth in love"—the righteousness towards

God of the loyalty of absolute faith, and the service both of reverence and love. The time is a critical time of large hope, not unchequered with deep anxiety, and of singular intensity of struggle between truth and falsehood, good and evil, faith and unbelief. The conflict, in which our White Cross League, desire to enlist the manhood and growing youths of this generation, is one of the most vital and urgent phases of the universal struggle. The voice of our Master sounds, stern with the sternness born of love, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." Our very Christianity implies the obligation of this service. In measure we see and reflect now the image of His Divine Purity; and we have the hope hereafter of being like Him when we see Him as He is. Let us show that "every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

APPENDIX.

PAGE 12.—* I quote on this the indignant words of Sir James Paget to his class—"Many of your patients will ask you about sexual intercourse, and expect you to prescribe fornication. I would just as soon prescribe theft or lying, or anything else that God has forbidden."

PAGE 13.—* Timely marriage of those who have kept themselves chaste is the great security for the physical and moral well-being of a community. Here we have this immense advantage, that such marriage is possible, and even easy, in all classes of society, if the young will be content to begin in modest thrift and simplicity, and fight the battle of life bravely together, without needless luxury and ostentation.

PAGE 14.—* They are thus taught with thoughtful and convincing earnestness in Dr. E. Blackwell's "Moral Education of the Young in Relation to sex" (Hatchard, Piccadilly, London). The result of the argument is thus summarized.

"Early chastity strengthens the physical nature, creates force of will, and concentrates the intellectual powers on the nobler ends of human life.

"Continenence is indispensable to the physical welfare of a young man till the age of twenty-one; it is advantageous till twenty-four; it is possible without physical injury through life.

"The passion of sex can be safely and healthily gratified only by marriage, illegal relations producing physical danger, mental degradation, and social misery.

"Individual morality can only be secured by the prevalence of early purity; and national morality by the cumulative effects of heredity."



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