

WHAT THE PEOPLE TELL US.

THE two notes that follow below are specimens of what come almost daily, and often too from persons whom we know from long acquaintance to be what they themselves describe. Can our friends in more favored conditions do a nobler holiday deed than to wish practically some of them "A Happy New Year" by sending us the means to forward them THE REVOLUTION they seem so much to prize? Here are two notes from the remote west:

It pains me to have to write you to stop sending me THE REVOLUTION, for I like it very much, and shall miss it more than you can imagine. But I have not the means to pay for it at present, nor any way of getting it, for I have both hands tied. I cannot procure any subscribers, for my neighbors are as bad off as I am, and some even worse. I should have written before, but was waiting to see if something would not turn up so I could get three dollars to send you. I have received one number over my subscription for which I will enclose ten cents. Yours for Progress. *.*

DEAR EDITOR—whether Mrs. Stanton or Mr. Pillsbury: I wonder if you will print this thing I send! I wish I had money, like Gerrit Smith, to pay you for doing so. THE REVOLUTION is growing very precious. Do keep it free and radical. Don't even think of being "respectable." I am more and more thankful that you ever started the paper. I haven't paid for my copy, and it looks now as though I never can pay for a newspaper in cash again. Don't tell anybody but Miss Anthony. I am afraid she ought to stop my paper. Certainly I had rather go without it than to have it fail. But count me in as ready to help in any way that I possibly can all the good works you have in hand.

Cordially yours, *.*

Foreign Correspondence.

LETTER XL.

MANCHESTER, December, 1869.

THE subject that I have to bring before your notice this week is so difficult to speak upon that I should willingly refrain from all allusion to it. It is a matter which it would be impossible to discuss unreservedly, and it requires a strong effort to treat it with that calmness which a judicial inquiry demands. But the subject is of such painful and momentous interest to women, and its influence on family and social life is so great, that it cannot be ignored, and I feel it to be a duty to place it before you as definitely as I can.

The present aspect of the social evil of which I have to speak, though affecting specially only the most miserable class, is fraught with consequences, fearful to contemplate, that apply to all women, and the question must be dealt with plainly. We, in our happy homes, must take the case of the most unhappy and homeless of our kind into serious and solemn consideration, and use our utmost efforts to work wisely and surely against this "abomination of desolation," this "pestilence" that, with unseen footsteps, "walketh at noon-day."

The present phase of the question affords an instance, in all its bearings, of one of the worst, if not the very worst, result of the subject position of women in industrial, social, and political life, and furnishes a most powerful argument for their complete enfranchisement and for the perfect equality of their rights, responsibilities and virtues, on a basis of fitness and justice, with those of men.

Although the circumstances that have led to the present uprising of the moral sense against this awful wrong apply immediately to this country, with reference to recent legislation, there is no doubt that on the continent and in your country also the wrong and wretchedness to

which they refer are not less cruel and desolating in their effects.

In the Health Section of the Social Science Congress at Bristol this question was taken up: "Should the Contagious Diseases Act be extended to the civil population?" Mr. Berkeley Hill and Mr. W. P. Swaine, surgeons, read papers in favor of the extension of the act. Dr. Worth of Nottingham, Dr. C. B. Taylor, and others, opposed the extension of the act. The act of Parliament in question provides for a systematic sanitary superintendence of prosti- tutes in our naval and military stations, and virtually licenses vice of the worst kind. Much earnest discussion took place after the papers were read, and a very strong feeling in opposition to the extension of the act was expressed. Speeches in approval of the measure were made by medical specialists, and in several cases by ministers of the gospel. Finally, amid much excitement, a resolution was passed condemning legislation on the subject.

Ladies had been requested not to attend in the health department that morning, and, in order to allow of a full and free discussion, which their presence would have prevented, they acquiesced. Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, who took her place in the section as a physician, was the only lady present. But the women of the Congress were well aware of the importance of the subject under discussion, and how closely it touches the interests not only of the unhappy objects of the act of Parliament, but of every woman in the kingdom.

A Society of medical men and others for procuring an extension of the act to the civil population has been in existence for some time. Since the Social Science meeting a second society—consisting of both men and women—has been formed to oppose the extension of the act and the attempt made through it to outrage and debase women for what has been defined as "the object of giving an artificial security to promiscuous fornication;" or rather to attempt this, for competent judges declare that, from the nature of things, the means employed are wholly futile and inefficient.

I send you some pamphlets circulated by the New Society.

(I.) REPORT ON THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACT—SHOWING THE EXPENSE, IMPOLICY, AND GENERAL INUTILITY OF ITS PROPOSED EXTENSION TO THE CIVIL POPULATION. By John Simon, Fellow of the Royal Society, Surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital, Lecturer on Pathology, and Medical Officer of the Privy Council.

Of this Report I can only say that it fully bears out the promise of its title. The OBSERVATIONS that accompany the Report show clearly the cruel, immoral and despotic nature of the law as it now stands, together with its utter inability, so far as the repression of disease is concerned.

(II.) For a full and powerful statement of the whole case I refer you to the pamphlet by Prof. Newman, which I forward to you, recommending to your consideration and use in such ways as you deem wisest and best. The title is:

THE CURE OF THE GREAT SOCIAL EVIL, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RECENT LAWS DELUSIVELY CALLED CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS. By FRANCIS W. NEWMAN, Emeritus Professor of University College, London. London: Trubner & Co.

For obvious reasons I cannot give you a complete summary of the contents of this noble and Excellent Essay. Here is the first paragraph:

"Under the name of the Great Social Evil our newspapers have, for years, alluded to an awful vice, too evidently of wide prevalence. Private effort is powerless to prevent: it can but too late rescue a few frail victims. Charitable persons, though well aware how much better it is to tear up roots of evil than to lop twigs, yet have no other form of action, but to slave at a task which is comparable to mopping out the ocean."

Then follows the history of the insidious introduction of the act of Parliament in 1866, legislating for the naval and military stations, and the not less insidious attempt of last session for the extension of this act. "There is great danger," says Professor Newman, "lest by such stealthy extensions the advocates of the measure gradually get into its grasp the women of the whole country. The evidence printed in the blue book clearly shows, that the police can totally dispense with the magistrate, and do actually terrify chaste women into signing their names (and submitting to the law). The public, on seeing the title of the act, could not guess its nature (it was supposed to refer to the Cattle Murrain.) Now that the secret has been revealed (though very few prints seem willing to aid in informing the nation of the facts), amazement and indignation are stirring many bosoms. Ladies, young and old, are filled with horror at the outrages offered to their sex, and lay aside reticence. I have not heard the name of a woman who is not intense in aversion. A Society has arisen to oppose the intended bill. Disgusting and ghastly as is the subject, noble-hearted ladies are coming to the conviction, that the inevitable debate of it over the breadth of the land is a painful but salutary medicine. If, through the conspiracy of the press to suppress information, the party of resistance be crippled; if, in consequence, the bill become law, it is safe to predict that it will be to the classes now ruling a most funereal victory. All that part of the nation which has faith in family sanctities, in constitutional law and in sacred personal rights, as paramount over all materialistic arguments—will be thrown, as never yet in England, into the scale of democracy. It will be said truly: 'No plebeian Parliament would ever have passed so disgraceful a law.'"

To this introduction succeed the details of the measure, which I cannot give you. They are not suitable for the open page of a newspaper, but every woman of mature age should know them, and I leave it to your own judgment to decide how you can best disseminate the knowledge.

The first part of Professor Newman's pamphlet is published separately, and will be most valuable in furnishing a lucid and luminous statement of the subject.

THE MORAL TREATMENT.

This is the title of the second part. It opens thus:

"But a challenge has been thrown out to those who reject this bill, not to be mere obstructions, but to suggest some cure for the frightful evil. To that task I now address myself;

(1.) "The first head of Cure is obviously to punish those whose guilt is foremost and most fruitful: these are the Seducer and his Accomplices. Hitherto there is no pretence in England of punishing the seducer as such. Men, who alone make the laws, make them with little account of women. One might fancy that legis-

lators either fear to be legislating against their own sons, or are conscious of personal guilt; else why, for 600 years, have they been so very lax? As to the seduction of *their own* daughters, they have no fear; though they would shoot through the heart the man who perpetrated such a thing. But if it be only a poor girl—how much does either House of Parliament care?"

After comparing our treatment of an heiress, who is a ward in Chancery during her minority, and that of the minor whose whole wealth is her good character, and showing how carefully we defend the former, while we allow the latter to be ruined with impunity, the writer points out the axiom that *public law is the great teacher of morals* and suggests suitable punishments for offenders who ruin young girls, and for the wealthy supporters of houses of ill-fame. He regards such offences as felony and fittingly punishable with prison and hard labor, and concludes thus:

"Whether any but a plebeian Parliament, or a Parliament in which *women* hold numerous seats, will ever enact penalties of adequate severity, many will doubt. But now that these horrible movements towards contented national impurity force chaste and modest persons (and not least those women who are our chief pride) to look at the enormous evil with steady eyes; I cannot yet believe that the existing Parliament will fail to admit sound *principle*, however timidly and weakly they may apply it."

(2.) "The second great measure—needful for many other reasons, but equally needful against the great social evil—is, the suppressing of drink-shops—of tipple-houses, as our old law calls them. I have already observed that they are dens of seduction. A woman is first poisoned, then ruined; while the potion bedims her understanding and impairs her self-control. Chaste feeling is benumbed before the victim herself is at all aware. * * * The drink-shops are fatal, chiefly by debauching *young people under age*. Careful parents cannot save boys above fifteen from their influence."

(3.) "But further: several of our public institutions need to be fundamentally reorganized, primarily our churches. Both sexes in common need frank instruction in detail, concerning matters to them of primary importance; which instruction they never get. These institutions pretend to teach morals; but they do not. They are chiefly concerned with lofty doctrines, which, whatever their value to elder hearers, shoot over young people's heads. The churches, by their pretensions, and by the inordinate reverence paid to them, so preoccupy the field, that other moral teachers would have no chance of an audience. Nearly all women who are seduced by men, are seduced at a tender age, at which they cannot have the faintest prospect of the dreadful future which awaits them. It must be imputed (I suppose) to the faithful warnings given by Catholic priests, that Irish Catholic women are so chaste: let this be some set-off against our Protestant horror of the Confessional. Nevertheless, the experience of at least all Latin Europe, besides the natural instinct of every pure heart, tells us, that priestesses, not priests, ought to instruct girls as to the morality of the sex, and the cruel results of its violation. Let boys be taught under a man, girls under a woman, perhaps a matron, so as to secure that on this subject, which is of all the most vital to young people, they shall not have to learn from their own bitter experience. It is now wholly omitted.

Girls are not even warned, what an odious hypocrisy every mercenary marriage is likely to become; how great is the evil and the danger from marriage without love, and how unnatural is the legal relation thus super-imposed. Much less are they taught not to be lenient to those men who have debased themselves before marriage, or urged to exact from men a high standard of chastity. Much more might be hinted here; but priestesses will find plenty to say, without hints from men. A clergyman also will be able to speak more simply and instructively to youths in the absence of women; and *spiritual* instruction will be only the more effective when built upon a broad foundation of faithful and detailed *moral* teaching."

(4.) "Another institution which needs fundamental reform, in the cause of public purity and modesty, is, the treatment of female maladies by male surgeons and physicians. * * * If we could look at the matter with fresh eyes I believe we should call our present practices a mischievous and intolerable indecency. We need to return to the sentiment of all antiquity and of all Eastern people which was also that of all Europe. But when modern science arose, men kept it to themselves, and thereby expelled women from their natural place of physicians and surgeons to women. * * * Not only would they minister in child-birth and in general female illness, but they would be invaluable in rescuing the unhappy harlots. To women physicians the poor lost ones would come willingly whenever it was necessary. No compulsion would be needed, no agonizing shame would be incurred, none of them would be hardened in depravity. Priestesses and female surgeons combined would carry out a truly great work. Women are not only the natural purifiers of men; they are also the natural rescuers of their own sex, to whom no good man can come very near. They would kindly and pitifully withdraw the harlot from her dreadful course, would cherish her modesty, aid her to conceal her shame, throw a veil over the past; and, instead of branding 'Prostitute' on her forehead, would strive to mix her in the crowd of unspotted women. Many of those uncounted thousands might be thus rescued by the tender intervention of ministering angels, if Parliament would but assign proper funds so as to equip women for the task. Do you set male surgeons to a compulsory introspection of these pitiable outcasts? Oh, how can men be so cruel on the one hand, or so unconscious of cruelty on the other! It is women's work: men have no business to touch it, or to study it. Greek, Turk, Indian cry out shame upon them."

(5.) The evils of a standing army, with barrack life and martial law in time of peace, occupy the remaining pages of this valuable pamphlet. But, as the subject is treated from a British national point of view, I shall not occupy your space with it.

Believe me, very truly yours,

REBECCA MOORE.

THE BUCK EYE STATE.—The most gratifying intelligence pours in from all directions. A correspondent from Belfontaine, Ohio, reports a recent discussion at West Liberty, attended by more than five hundred people, including the *élite* of the whole region, in which the following question was most ably considered: "Should the Elective Franchise be extended to the Women of America?" Able disputants contended on both sides, but the audience decided in the affirmative, by large majority.

FRENCH SOCIETY BY A FRENCHMAN.

Most persons who read books and papers attentively, will be surprised at the picture of French manners and character in the lower ranks of society, as delineated by M. Prevost Paradol in a late address before the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh. The *New York World* is authority for the few following excerpts:

"The Catholic Church in France has steadily increased for the last thirty years; and that is even more powerful in the provincial towns and among the *bourgeoisie* than among the peasantry in the wholly rural districts. This feeling has been greatly increased by the resentment and fear which the revolution of 1848 and the threats of socialism had spread through the conservative part of the nation, and it is the conservative reaction against socialism which has mostly revived clerical influence in France. While this has gone on among the upper and middle classes, the revolutionary classes and the democratic party at large, begin again, as of old, to consider the Catholic Church as their most powerful and their bitterest enemy, the consequence being that the old struggle between the revolution and the church has arisen afresh and was never so virulent as now. The church, notwithstanding its moral and material progress, among the conservative classes, is in danger if a new revolution comes, and in such an event there are chances of its being treated as a public enemy. The church is a compound of moral greatness and moral miseries, and, when looked at closely, it is easy to understand the admiration and devotion as well as the hatred it inspires. The church in France has grown stronger with each succeeding year, because the conduct of the clergy is generally good. The women, who have great influence in France, are mostly and earnestly attached to the church, and also because Christian and natural virtues, blended as they were with religion, enveloped and sustained it.

The French woman of the middling class, not the lowest, having a mind more clear than her heart is warm, has the self-control to enable her not only to make a reasonable marriage, but to make the best of it.

The man who bears nearly the whole weight of the social fabric, who pays the bulk of the taxes, and especially the blood tax, is the French peasant. He is generally a meritorious but a small proprietor, and, as such, timid and without strength to stand against the government. The habit of regularly paying his taxes, submitting to military service, and readily obeying any representative of the Emperor, high or low, is so ingrained in him that he does not even consider the possibility of acting otherwise. He is very ignorant, and very careless and indifferent as to politics, looking on his vote as something given him by the Emperor, to be used as the Emperor commands. Still, a change is coming—the democratic party is hitting hard at the taxes and the army; they have begun to impress on the mind of the peasant that he can do something to throw off or alleviate the burden of the old yoke; and if that belief takes hold of the peasant's mind, universal suffrage will threaten the country with a new and unforeseen danger. The peasant is anything but a socialist; he is the hardest and most avaricious of masters; and if he once comes to see that he is really the master of the State, he will be inclined to treat it as the Gascon treated his horse, when he resolved to teach that poor animal to live without eating.