

"Penitentiary," or to label him or herself "penitent" before the world? The word is already abolished in the minds of those who in their very souls have abolished all traces of the ideas central to the C. D. Acts. On all sides, work is springing up in harmony with this abolishment. Normal, voluntary homes, where the sick soul can recuperate itself; houses without locks and bars, filled with a happy family life—that great and eternal antithesis to immorality and prostitution.

Valuable as the COMMON CAUSE note is, we do not really need articles or pamphlets to teach us that all is not well. Anyone with even a slight knowledge of facts knows that the system of compulsion—a system totally devoid of moral value—still exists in rescue work. All of us know of places where uniform must be worn—again setting certain sinners in a class apart; where doors are locked; where a girl's letters are read; where she may not leave a sitting-room without permission; where a spring button under her door communicates with a bell in the superintendent's room, so that she cannot leave her room for any purpose unnoticed at night, and so forth. The increasing difficulty of getting girls to go to "Homes" is the best commentary on this system. Yet we are told that this must be; that it is "impossible to manage" the girls in any other way. The truth is, that kind of management gives least trouble to the institution, not that it is "impossible to manage" any other way. What is needed is the right manager. "Find us the right staff," was at one time the constant appeal of a successful home run on voluntary lines. "It is quite easy to be a Pope," said a worker the other day. "The difficult thing is to stand aside and let a girl fight her own battles." Yet it is the only way, if any strength or initiative is to be developed. And it calls for a new type of worker, with the long-range vision; who, in the words of an article in the pamphlet we mentioned, "will deliberately refrain from action and appear to fail, and let the girl follow her self-chosen way; who will recognise that what is essential is effected through the girl herself, through the Divine Spirit, who may or may not choose the worker as His human agency." Till we have found and trained such workers, till the common mind accepts the necessity for them, we shall not have completed Josephine Butler's work. We shall still be under the bondage of the ideas central to the C. D. Acts, even in the work of reclamation.

L. HAY COOPER.

Ghosts.

A stranger in a strange town—one of our biggest and most prosperous provincial towns—my attention was arrested as I went about my business by a large placard announcing a meeting on Housing under the auspices of the Town Planning and Garden Cities Association, the meeting to be addressed by an expert from the Local Government Board and "Other Speakers." Here was something of vital interest—here the burning question of the hour was to be discussed; here those who were smarting under the injustice of no homes, or, what is worse, degrading homes, would meet and join hands with those who now at last were anxious and willing to provide the very homes that were required; it would be a meeting doubtless crowded to the doors, representative of every class, throbbing with ideals, hectic with personal requirements, magnificently superior to every difficulty, and utterly intolerant of delays.

So thinking, I turned back to my hotel, ordered my dinner early, cut out my usual cup of coffee, and hurried off to be in time—at the end of the day I prefer a seat to "standing room only." How now? Have I mistaken the hall? No queue, no motors, no excitement, the entrance dark and difficult to find—the populace, whether those who wanted to get or those who wanted to give, where were they? Alone and a little apprehensive, I found my way in.

Let me state the worst at once—that meeting was attended by forty men and seven women! Mark you, seven women! I sat down at the back of the hall, wondering at the queerness of things. Bit by bit, as I gazed about me, I saw that the hall was filling—filling with eager, shadowy forms, but they were ghosts—the ghosts of those who were not present. Gradually I made them out—reckoned up who they all were—a small knot of business men, evidently discussing ways and means, contractors and builders, doubtless; men and their wives, all with rather angry faces, telling one another their grievances; women alone, rows of them (probably their husbands cared little enough what the home was like), sullen and dangerous-looking, knowing as they did how their homes were becoming daily more indecent and immoral for themselves and their children; sweethearts here and there coming to hear how soon they might have the banners

called; soldiers to ask about the homes they fought to keep British; clergy worried for their flocks; rich men anxious to help. And women—more and more women I saw, yet all of them ghosts—oh, the pity of it! I saw women social workers, keen, unselfish, determined; women, happy and well-to-do, coming out of gratitude for their own spacious, begardened homes, anxious to forward the day of decency for all; Church Sisters, sweet-faced and intelligent, bringing with them some of the too submissive slum-dwellers who needed rousing to a more Christian impatience. Everywhere I looked I saw women, women—and then they faded out. They were but ghosts, ineffectual, powerless ghosts!

Why were they but ghosts? Did they not care enough—not love the good enough? Or were they not told? Were they too deaf to hear? Why were not their real selves compelled to come in? I sat up to attention. The platform was filling. There was the Chairman—a Town Councillor—there the L.G.B. expert, and there the "Other Speakers" (more Town Councillors and an architect), and, will you believe it, the "Other Speakers" were every one of them men? Not a single woman to speak for the home! What did it all mean?

Woman's place is the home—woman is the housekeeper—woman is responsible for the well-being of the children (all the old stock phrases rushed to my mind), and yet here was a meeting called to demand, discuss, and plan the very houses woman was to keep, and yet woman was not present to express her wishes, to be consulted, to give her weight to the resolutions—woman was not even honoured with a seat on the platform! *C'est pour rien!*

But more ghosts came along—they crowded up the platform steps, they filled the empty chairs, they overshadowed the men. Ghosts of women citizens, ghosts of women guardians, of women councillors, ghosts of women doctors, ghosts of settlement workers, of co-operative guild women, of teachers; ghosts of the Lady Mayoress, of the Bishop's wife, of the gracious lady of title, of the big-minded lady of wealth, ghosts of those most concerned, the brave mothers of large families. And these ghosts faded not away. All through the meeting I saw them there, and I heard them, too: "You should have bidden us come, you should have sent for us; all too gladly would we join and help, for without us you cannot succeed."

Sometimes the men faded to the background, and the platform, to me, was occupied by women only—women clamouring for homes. But no one heard them. They had not been asked to speak. They were but ghosts! I sat up to attention again, and listened to the speeches. The Chairman was lurid in his description of the discomfort the working man suffered, the architect pleaded for beauty, the Town Councillors blamed various departments for unnecessary delays, and promised a probable hundred and fifty houses by Christmas out of the ten thousand urgently required. But the L.G.B. expert cut the most ice: "Let the people themselves see to it. Let the people who need the houses clamour unceasingly. Let public opinion be organised and be noisy. Let the philanthropic associations—especially the women's associations" (ah, now we are coming to it!) "be ever on the war-path. Let the Women Citizens' Associations sit in the galleries of Council Chambers, watching, listening, and by their very presence influencing; and then let them question and criticise. Asking is not enough; you women have now the right to insist." Perhaps, being an expert, as I judged him, of heart as well as of head, the L.G.B. representative also saw the ghosts. Perhaps he was calling them to life, responsibility, achievement.

Politeness and thanks closed the meeting. The forty men and seven women had been informed, but, like myself, seemed unimpressed. Ten thousand houses were needed—one hundred and fifty would be ready by Christmas. Oh, ghosts—ghosts of women citizens, come out of the shadows, and be visible, strong, determined, in a word, victorious, for "hereunto-were you called."

ETHELDRED BROWNING.

The Enemy Within the Gate.

Far away on the West Coast lie the twin villages of Y and X, each possessing its own blue bay and its own particular silver strand. The green downs, intersected by narrow lanes—where high grass banks are covered with wild flowers—reach to the edge of the cliff, whence lovely views of the distant hills are seen. The grassy slopes creep down to the shore itself, and from the beach one can gather primroses, the orchis, or the marsh violet. The air is untainted by railway smoke, for the nearest station