

been shown to be futile; but indirect legislation offers more hope, and to those who argue that men cannot be made moral by law we must reply that conditions which make women immoral by necessity can be and must be altered by law.

The first piece of practical commonsense preventive work on these lines would be to so organise society that no woman need be unwillingly forced into prostitution. I recently heard the President of the National Vigilance League in America, a physician of high standing, in a moderate, carefully weighed speech, make the statement that of all the women now in this life in our country, only 20 per cent. are willingly such; the other 80 per cent. have been tricked, or betrayed, or forced, or kidnapped, or actually bought and sold for money into this slavery. Now, leaving aside all moral or humane considerations, let us simply say that, if this 80 per cent. were not compelled to enter this life, the problem of eradicating venereal disease would be vastly simpler. What an outcry would be raised if 80 per cent. out of 600,000 persons annually were compelled by inexorable destiny, the logical result of man-made social conditions, to be exposed to smallpox. Actually, our boards of health make more to do over one smallpox case than over all the venereal diseases in a whole State.

The indirect legislation needed to combat venereal disease is varied. First, there must be fundamental restriction of the traffic in alcoholic poison, for this is the main reliance and indispensable instrument of all corrupting agencies. Next, better school laws, largely made and largely enforced by women. The last report of the Chicago Law and Order League states that, in the man-ruled schools of that city, conditions of sanitation were responsible for much of the infection which had, in two years time, sent 600 school children into the venereal wards of the county hospital; and last year one of the most venerated and enlightened citizens of the United States, Miss Jane Addams, has been allowed by a corrupt mayor to retire from the School Board, where she was unable to do much except suffer heart-break. Again, in New York City, I know personally that Miss Rogers, when head of School Nurses there, tried, in co-operation with earnest women principals, to trace to its sources a series of cases of vaginitis which ran through the schools, but their inquiries were stifled by the medical officers of the Health Board, who said that the nurses were going beyond their province.

Next, better labour laws. The report of Miss Minor, probation officer in New York City, in the last Consumers' League report for that

city, says:—"Hundreds are victims of our industrial conditions—low wages, irregularity, and lack of work." Our child labour, to which male employers cling so tenaciously, is one of the first and earliest of predispositions to immoral life and to black as well as white plague, and vainly, so far, have the disfranchised women in our country appealed to the much-vaunted chivalry of man for the protection of the young.

Next, there must be juster systems of taxation, that the poor may not feel the heaviest burden; and, finally, there must be a real, not an illusory or intermittent, justice in the courts.

The most painful evidence we have had in our country of the real nature of the chivalry of man has been the recent decision of our Supreme Court setting free a number of men who had been convicted of carrying on the White Slave traffic as a business, on the ground that the constitution of the United States did not enable the Federal Court to deal with them. Under State laws they are practically immune, and our lower city Courts in large cities, as everyone knows, carry on a farcical system in dealing with prostitution, which is nothing more or less than an organised blackmail of these defenceless women. It is, therefore, impossible at present to punish dealers in the White Slave traffic. This is the real assault on womanhood which our old sentimentalist, Lyman Abbott, might well study, and which adds satire to the brutality of our lynch law for black men. The agents of the White Slave traffic are all white citizens.

I am told that in New Zealand, where the most advanced social legislation is in existence, prostitution has been brought almost to a vanishing point, and should be glad to hear this confirmed. Certainly it is clear that a social order with child labour abolished, young girls paid living wages, widowed mothers pensioned by the State so as to enable them to stay at home and care for their children, exhaustion through overwork—causing a natural aversion to all work—prevented by the legal eight hour day and abolition of night work for women and young men, extension of wholesome school instruction, manual training, and the development of scientific agriculture and horticulture, must go far towards reducing the *unwilling* numbers now found in the ranks of those who propagate venereal diseases. Then, only when we have simply the prostitutes by preference to consider, may direct legislation be something more than a farce.

Let me add that by no means do I undervalue the factor of education; on the contrary, I estimate it at its full value. Education as to disease brings the public to see the need of

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