

selves unspotted in a corrupt world.

Angela Burdett Coutts and all almoners of the King of Heaven.

Mother Cecile and all women loving and large-hearted in counsel.

Elizabeth Fry and all pitiful women.

Agnes Jones and all devoted nurses.

Queen Victoria and all noble Queens.

Lady Margaret Beaufort and all patronesses of sacred learning.

Mary Rogers (stewardess of the Stella) and all faithful servants.

Ann Clough and all true teachers.

Mary Somerville and all earnest students.

Susannah Westley and all devoted mothers.

We are glad to note that Miss Dock's paper on "The Need of Education on Matters of Social Morality" has been widely quoted in this month's *Shield*, the official organ of the International Federation for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice. In that journal we find reported the moving speech of Mr. Walter McLaren at the annual meeting of the Ladies' National Association, in which he said: "The root of prostitution was planted in the inferiority of the position of women. . . .

The fundamental error was that women existed for men and not for themselves. So long as that error was confirmed by the law leaving or placing women in a position of inferiority so long would women be bought and sold for the pleasure of men, and so long would the social injustice of prostitution continue. It was the outcome of the idea that the woman being the inferior could be used by men and sacrificed by men. They claimed that the same moral law was binding on men and women alike. It was a view which the world would never adopt until it had first discarded the error that the legal position of women should be inferior to that of men. The idea that the person of a woman could be taken for the pleasure of a man was the inevitable outcome of the belief that a woman had not the same legal rights as a man. Until they changed this fundamental error they would preach the doctrine of equal moral obligations in vain.

"Once let women feel that their rights, their liberties, and their persons were their own, that they stood as the equals of men in law and civil rights, and they would soon recognise and demand that moral obligations should be equal also. The extension of the Parliamentary vote to women was the first step to equality before the law."

Mr. Walter McLaren urged members of the National Association to work for this as the most powerful means of obtaining that for which they were united—namely, the abolition of the State regulation of vice, and the removal of the cruel wrongs which present views of morality inflict upon women.

The Natal Legislative Assembly has rejected the Women's Suffrage Bill by 17 votes to 12. The reply to that insult should be no emigration of decent, self-respecting woman to Natal, and those who can earn a living should leave it and go elsewhere.

## Criminal Assault.

### CONVERSE WITH THE COMMON HANGMAN.

I once conversed on this terrible question with "the common hangman," and it came about thus: I was on a visit to my god-mother in the little town of Horncastle when I had this interesting experience. In her district was a poor, grief-stricken woman, who did a tale unfold. She was separated from her husband; as she graphically expressed it, "to live with him gave her the creeps." He was a shoemaker, and he seemed well-to-do. He was often from home—buying leather, as he explained, but the wife's suspicions were aroused, as he always returned richer than when he left home. By-and-by, to her horror, she learned he was the hangman—Marwood by name.

At the time of which I write—now 35 years ago—this man, "between his cases," plied his trade in a little ground floor shop, looking on the Horncastle parish churchyard. He was in turn plagued and shunned by the townsfolk, and kept his door locked and his window curtained. Consumed with curiosity, I determined to pay him a visit, but on what excuse? I examined my little stock of boots and shoes; they were all in walking trim, but with the aid of scissors I wrenched off a heel, and with its shoe in a little parcel slipped off one evening to do and dare. A girl friend went with me to the corner, but, faint of heart, would go no further; so with many qualms I approached the door, and gave it a nervous tap. The key grated in the lock, and there I stood face to face with this gruesome "officer of the Crown." Taking courage, I walked in and asked him if he would mend my shoe. When he had examined the damage he said, with a twisted smile:—

"Own up, young lady, and confess you want to speak with the common hangman."

"That's just the truth," said I.

Seated on his stool, he picked up tacks with which to readjust the heel, and as there was no chair I sat on the table with the lamp.

"Now do tell me interesting things," I pleaded. Tell me how you came to be the hangman—surely it was not merely for money; that would be terrible."

"If I was to tell yer as there was a bit of conscience about it, could yer believe that?" he said; "or would yer think it all a lie?"

"Oh, indeed I could believe you," I said, warmly.

"That's 'ow it was at fust," he replied, looking so earnestly at me. "If it wasn't for the common hangman, young girls like you couldn't walk out in safety. There's wild beasts about—pray you never meet 'em; the hangman's rope is all they fears. That's what made me take to the business fust; it was a sense of justice, but, Lord love yer, who'll believe it? And," he added, slowly, with a sigh, "there was money in it."

My silly heart, which had been all pit-a-pat, was now quite calm. We conversed long and earnestly on matters more ghastly than polite. He told me his most repulsive duty was confining the skirts round the ankles of women criminals before adjusting the rope; that he had never "boggled"; that he was not the man he had

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