

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,262

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 1912.

Vol. XLVIII.

EDITORIAL.

THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which in reality is one for the suppression of the White Slave Traffic, is a Bill which if its objects were understood by nurses would receive the whole-hearted support of every member of our profession. It is inconceivable that after nineteen centuries of Christianity this infamous traffic in the bodies of women and young girls for the enrichment of men should be countenanced for an instant in a professedly Christian country, and we welcome the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Government hope to give facilities for the passing of the Bill, which has already been approved by the Home Office, during the present Session.

It is also with great pleasure that we have read the manly and outspoken letter on this subject in *The Times*, by Dr. Greville Macdonald, who writes that "Men in the past, not without reason, have been accused of a certain laxity on the subject, and even of a cynical acquiescence in a state of things abhorrent to all who realize this increasing curse of our civil life. The time has arrived when men must allow their finer feelings to exercise some control over public affairs, and to have done with Parliamentary limitations of the possible. The Bill is not drastic enough in the opinion of many, but is yet a long step in the right direction. Short though it be it is of supreme importance to the health of the people—physical as well as moral. . . The time has arrived for us men to affirm that another 20 years—such as those passed by Mrs. Josephine Butler in submission to insult, ignominy, cruelty before she secured the repeal of the C.D. Acts—

shall not pass fruitlessly and shamefully over our heads. The time has arrived for every man amongst us to realize that the essential womanhood of the unhappy white slaves is identical with that of our mothers and daughters, and that for the sake of our mothers' love we dare delay no longer. We are, as men, individually and collectively responsible, whether by active wrong or possible neglect, for this curse of our cities. Therefore, as men, every one of us must make what effort he can towards saving those innocent girls who, in their hundreds and thousands, are daily and hourly in danger of shipwreck."

When members of the medical profession speak out in this way, and when a meeting with a medical Lord Mayor in the chair is to be held in the Guildhall of the City of London, to support the general principles of the above Bill, we may hope that the question will be wisely and promptly dealt with. We advise nurses to obtain the Bill, and carefully study its provisions for themselves.

Meanwhile, let us realize that at the root of the evil of prostitution, and its attendant horrors, is the sweated labour and underpay of many women workers. To them the path of virtue is a thorny one indeed. The brightness, pleasures and enjoyment of life are impossible of attainment on the pittance which they earn, and youth naturally craves for happiness. But more than this the choice lies often between starvation and the streets, and a woman who has no vicious instincts often sells herself in order to earn the common necessaries of life. When men begin to deal seriously with the social question, let them see to it that the minimum wage paid in women's occupations, not excepting nursing, is one upon which they can live decently and in honour.

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