

The influence for evil on the father who repudiates his responsibility towards his offspring needs no indication. Then why should men who are leaders of the country encourage such shirking of responsibility, which is proved when we get the information that though the women who have husbands to support them are to be allowed so-called Maternity Benefits of 30s. a month from the State, the girl who cannot show this mark of respectability cannot claim this grant through the father of her child, and it is left to the merciful members of her own sex to fight for the salvation of her body and soul. It is this that makes women say they ought to have a word in the management of State affairs.

It is a disgrace to our country that France can have men at the head of their State to realise the crying need of such help, and therefore avert the ghastly catastrophe that we so often read of in our newspapers of a girl driven out of her mind to do a desperate thing because she has no other alternative. And, to add to this sin, is it human that a man should be allowed to condemn a girl to the gallows—aye, and don the Black Cap in doing it—for what?—? And where is her companion, who is as much to blame, and more, for he knew the consequences? "Let him who is amongst you cast the first stone." How many times are we told in Scripture to forgive? and especially are we told to be merciful to that sin. Yet we find the greatest of our leading men excluding all possible help, on the one hand, and on the other holding meetings to discuss the abolition of the White Slave Traffic. But do they pause to ask how many are drifting to that traffic for the very reason that they are condemned when they have sinned through men? Some time ago it was stated in a weekly paper that help in this cause only increased the number. This, it can be proved, is not the case, for the simple reason that the number of illegitimate births in Great Britain is steadily declining, both in actual numbers and also in proportion to the population.

Whereas in England and Wales there were 43,693 illegitimate births in 1860, there were only 36,189 in 1907. Out of every thousand births in England and Wales in 1860 as many as 64 were illegitimate; in 1907 the proportion had sunk to 39. In Scotland, during a slightly longer period, the illegitimate births had sunk from 84 to 64 per thousand. In Ireland the rate per thousand has always been the lowest, being only 24.

In France the State not only provides funds, but the actual building, where the child is received without money or votes, or questions as to parentage, &c., and is gently nurtured by gentlewomen until of age to go out into the world. True, we have our Foundling Hospital and Dr. Barnardo's great Home, but these are not the same; we should have help from the State, for the mother's future as well as the baby's. Of what use is a girl's life after she has had the environment of prison for months, perhaps years? Yet this is to be avoided, and is avoided, in France.

E. DANA.

## OUTSIDE THE GATES.

### WOMEN.

The Society of Women Journalists will hold their Annual Dinner at the Criterion Restaurant on Saturday, November 2nd. The President, Mrs. Charles Perrin, will take the chair, and a number of distinguished guests will attend. The dinner will be followed by a *Conversazione*.

At a united demonstration of the Churches and Synagogues, held last Sunday in the Lyceum Theatre, London, a resolution was passed unanimously asking that the Criminal Law Amendment (White Slave Traffic) Bill be passed in its original form, at which meeting we are glad to note that the Bishop of London took an active and fearless part.

The Bishop said he did not believe that one person in ten knew how this awful traffic had spread all over the world. It was computed that for one great city alone 5,000 girls were procured every year. Did the public realise that every railway station was watched, that every steamboat was watched, that a body of men existed for nothing else than to procure girls for the traffic—a perfectly well-paid, organised traffic throughout the world?

If they were going to defeat it they must have the hosts of God as carefully organised and as energetic as were their enemies.

The Bishop gave instances of the "ruthless cruelty" of the traffic, and remarked that we were doing practically nothing to stop it. Even when a Bill was brought in it was watered and whittled down until it was practically useless. Observing that he was prepared to risk arrest on a false charge, the Bishop said the police knew the men engaged in the traffic well.

Mr. Claude Montefiore declared that London was "a sort of clearing-house for the white slave trade."

The National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, upon the proposal of Lady Laura Ridding, carried unanimously the urgency resolution which approved of the necessity for Clause I. of the Act to be passed in its original form, and of the amendment of Clause 3, so that its provisions should apply to all premises habitually used for immoral purposes.

In seconding the resolution Mrs. James Gow said she attended the debate in the House of Commons, and was appalled by the ignorance of the subject amongst the Members who spoke. Since then nothing had been more striking than the apathy shown by the Committee to which the Bill was referred.

Mrs. Alice Baker, of the National Council of Women of Victoria, said this was a question which had got to be decided by women. The Bill as it had passed through committee was practically worthless. They must have a much stronger measure.

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