

P R O S T I T U T I O N

CONSIDERED IN RELATION

TO ITS

C A U S E A N D C U R E.

BY

JAMES MILLER, F.R.S.E., F.R.C.S.E.,

PROFESSOR OF SURGERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, ETC., ETC.

SECOND EDITION.

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JAMES MILLER,¹⁸¹²⁻⁶⁴ F.R.S.E., F.R.C.S.E.,
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P R E F A C E .

THE following pages were, by request, contributed to the Review Department of the *Edinburgh Medical Journal*. It has been thought that, published in a separate form, they may be of service in helping to leaven the community at large with sounder views than are by many entertained on the painful and pressing subject of which they treat.

The writer having been asked to put his name on the title-page, has not felt at liberty to decline that responsibility; and will only say, in explanation, that nothing but a strong sense of duty could have induced him to undertake the task, in any form; while it is the hope of being able in some degree to meet an urgent want of the present day, that alone emboldens him to put forth what is avowedly but a faint and feeble sketch of a large and terrible picture. His outline may be meagre, and his colouring imperfect; but both are believed to be true—too true—to nature, so far as they go. At some points, too, the pencilling may perhaps seem coarse, and the brush laid too broadly on; but it was feared that by no other mode of handling could a true or impressive representation of the stern facts be conveyed; and it was felt that questions of taste and style ought to give way to the requirements of duty and of truth.



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PROSTITUTION, ITS CAUSE AND CURE.

PROSTITUTION is truly an unsavoury subject to handle. Nevertheless, the right handling of it is very needful in the present time; and an opportunity having been given, we venture in all humility, yet in all faithfulness, to undertake the duty—on a limited scale. We must be brief, yet shall try to be comprehensive—our object being not the historical, or speculative, or sentimental, but the practical.

First, a word as to *extent*. It is not easy to arrive at accuracy in estimating the number of actual or professed prostitutes in any given locality. In London, for example, different authorities have varied in their guessing, from 80,000 to 8000. Recent investigations incline to fix the number at 10,000 as “a probable approximation.” So be it. The sum is a terrible one, pregnant of vast results in debauchery, disease, and death to individuals—of degradation and danger to the community at large. Let any one walk certain streets of London, Glasgow, or Edinburgh, of a night, and, without troubling his head with statistics, his eyes and ears will tell him at once what a multitudinous amazonian army the devil keeps in constant field service, for advancing his own ends. The stones seem alive with lust, and the very atmosphere is tainted.

Our transatlantic friends take a characteristic view of the subject, testing it by the dollar. Dr Sanger, of New York, calculates that, in that city, an aggregate capital of nearly four millions of dollars is invested in the business of prostitution, and that the expense entailed on the general public, by the working of this foul capital,—

in the hire of the women, in drinking, doctoring, pauperism, and police—is above seven millions of dollars annually. Translate that into the equivalents of sin, crime, corruption ; what a foul and festering sore does it disclose in the body politic, one that may well tax all our powers of head, and hand, and heart to cleanse and cicatrize !

As in every other malady, our first business is with the *cause*. That we shall find to be multiple. It affects the woman, the man, and general society.

First, as to the woman. 1. Is she impelled to prostitution by the strength of sexual desire ? Sometimes ; but, on the whole, rarely. In general, even the furiously lustful prostitute has become so secondarily ; by indulgence, her passion grew strong ; at the first, it was comparatively weak, and quite controllable. In most cases of seduction, the yielding of the woman is not so much, if at all, to the force of animal desire in herself, as to the gratifying of this in her lover. “ There is in the warm fond heart of woman, a strange and sublime unselfishness, which men too commonly discover only to profit by—a positive love of self-sacrifice—an active, so to speak, an *aggressive* desire to show their affection, by giving up to those who have won it something they hold very dear. It is an unreasoning and dangerous yearning of the spirit, precisely analogous to that which prompts the surrenders and self-tortures of the religious devotee. Both seek to prove their devotion to the idol they have enshrined, by casting down before his altar their richest and most cherished treasures.”¹

2. An abundant cause of prostitution, in the lower ranks, is the force of early habits and education—education, not in knowledge, but in vice and crime. Children are born to unchastity. Their parents are the offscourings of the earth : the first words a daughter hears are those of cursing and blasphemy ; the only example her childhood sees is that of obscenity and vice ; such youth is an apt learner ; and, at the age of ten or twelve, she may be both a prostitute and a thief—her lapsed state having proved rather a simple progress than a fall. In Paris, we are told that ninety-five hundredths of all the public women are thus born and reared.

3. A more painful, and perhaps equally prolific cause, is poverty. Look to the female operatives in large towns—the sewing girls, milliners, factory workers, etc. It is generally understood, so as to

¹ *Westminster Review*, July 1850.

be quite proverbial, that out of these the ranks of the fallen are mainly recruited. How? In some cases, no doubt, from the cause previously stated—evil and early associations; in some, also, from vanity, imprudent acquaintanceships, intemperance, etc.; but, in a very large number, from sheer want. With hardest labour, the woman barely can support herself in the veriest necessities of life; and, if she have to maintain another—a sister, a child, a parent—the effort is clean beyond her reach. The evidence produced by Mr Mayhew is painfully clear upon this head. “I struggled very hard to keep myself chaste,” says one victim, “but I found that I could not get food and clothing for myself and mother, so I took to live with a young man. He said he’d make me his lawful wife, but I hardly cared so long as I could get food for myself and mother . . .

. . . . There isn’t a young girl as can get her living by slop work.” A widow, who works at slop trousers, says, “we make about 4s. a week, but we must work till nine or ten o’clock every night for that. I earn *clear* just about 3s. At times I was so badly off, me and my boy, that I was forced to resort to prostitution to keep us from starving.” “I do the best I can with what little money I earn,” says another, “and the rest I am obligated to go to the streets for. I can’t get a rag to wear without flying to prostitution for it. My wages will hardly find me in food. Indeed, I eat more than I earn.” Yet another—“on my soul, I went to the streets solely to get a living for myself and child. I am the daughter of a minister of the Gospel, and I pledge my word, solemnly and sacredly, that it was the low price paid for my labour that drove me to prostitution. In my heart I hated it, my whole nature rebelled at it, and nobody but God knows how I struggled to give it up. Had I remained at shirt-making, I must have been a prostitute to this day. I have taken my gown off my back and pledged it, and gone in my petticoat—I had but one—rather than take to the streets again, *but it was all in vain.*”

4. Another fertile cause depends upon the insufficiency of the dwellings of the poor. There is literally no room for decency. Town and country both offend in this, but especially the former. For a whole family there may be but one small room—never more than two; and the inmates herd together like mere animals. Parents, grown up sons and daughters, and little children, may be all huddled into one spot a few feet square. In some cases, there is, besides, a lodger; in others, a newly married couple may be introduced.

This state of things is known to obtain even among the sober, and industrious, and well-doing. They would be virtuous too, but how well can they? Their very bringing-up is fatal to all sense of modesty. Women, consequently, are thus reared immodest, if not unchaste; predisposed to part on easy terms with what they have never known to value. This, we say, obtains to some extent, in regard to the family of the otherwise well-doing peasant or artisan; how much more urgent the downward force on all womanly shame, when you superadd to such a habit of promiscuous herding, intemperance and dishonesty? Again,—Look to the public night-dwellings of the poor in crowded cities. Matters are incalculably worse. A young girl, in search of work, comes to town, as yet quite innocent of its ways. She knows neither friend nor home, and is thrown upon the lodging-houses. Fancy her ushered into one of these, such as is described by an inmate thus:—"Between three and four dozen boys and girls sleep in one room, the beds were horrid filthy, and full of vermin; there was horrid carryings on. We lay packed on a full night, a dozen boys and girls squeezed into one bed. That was very often the case—some at the foot and some at the top—boys and girls all mixed." Fancy a country girl, we say, forced to take shelter in such a den as this. Shocked, she retires, and seeks a better; and, perhaps, she is successful—but only in degree, for all are more or less at variance with the commonest sense of decency; and after a while of such companionship, no wonder that she parts with self-respect, and sinks at last a scarce unwilling victim into the sweltering mass.

5. A fifth cause is vanity and love of dress. A poor compliment it is to any woman's charms of face, that they need gay and costly trappings to set them off; and it must be a plain figure that calls for hoops, and flounces, and crinoline, to hide its contour. Yet after such things how many women, young and old, rich and poor, fair and ugly, seek earnestly, as if to them, in mundane things, dress were in truth the one thing needful! Society, we have no hesitation in saying, is out of joint in this; and reform, rank and radical, is urgently required. The upper classes themselves suffer under the existing state of things in many ways,—of which we need not now inquire further: and so long as they will insist on appearing only when bedecked in showy and costly apparel, so long will the classes beneath them continue to suffer sadly from the contagion. A cook, on a Sunday or a gala night, may rival a duchess so far

as silks and satins go ; and a tiring woman oft-times looks, at a distance, by much a finer lady than her mistress. Vanity and love of show is inherent to the human heart ; and, when aggravated by the force of custom or fashion, it is too often a besetting sin with woman,—growing, in the case of many, to an absolute and absorbing passion, for the gratification of which every other consideration will be forced to yield. And so it happens that many a girl, from this cause alone, adds to the wages of her lawful calling the earnings of iniquity.

6. Another cause is intemperance. “A woman that drinks will do anything,” is too true a proverb ; and its interpretation is easy. The alcoholics, habitually, or even only occasionally in excess,—and to a young healthy woman very little proves truly excessive,—stimulate the animal passion, while lowering the moral control ; at the same time reason is perverted and obscured, while imagination burns brightly ; and so, partly through lust, but mainly by yielding, in hot and hasty inconsiderateness, to the pressure of entreaties, the nature and tendency of which she has neither time nor temper to determine, she falls an easy prey. The seducer knows right well the value of the “refreshment,” even when undrugged, with which he plies his victim.

By and by the unfortunate grows a hardened prostitute ; and then, what made her so, keeps her so. Remorse has often been busy in her breast, and conscience would fain speak honestly. Both must be silenced ; and drink is found a ready remedy. Its constant use begins, not in vicious craving for its stimulus, but in earnest, agonizing thirst for its narcotic power. The body could do without the one, but the racked mind may scarce exist without the other. Drink then becomes necessary to maintain the prostitution, and prostitution must be continued to provide the drink. Terrible reciprocity ! “Our decided impression is,” says Dr Sanger, “that not one per cent. of the prostitutes in New York practise their calling without partaking of intoxicating drinks ;” and hear the weighty words of a poor London Magdalene,—“*No girls COULD lead the life we do without gin !*”

7. Another cause is ignorance. The less educated, the less capable of resisting temptation to sensual indulgence. Other things being equal, this holds true of man and woman alike. Cultivation of the mind, even in its mere intellectuality, and much more when also the moral nature is included, brings both self-respect and self-

control. The great majority of prostitutes are either most imperfectly educated or absolutely illiterate; and, comparing trade with trade from which they have come, those callings will be found the most fruitful which require the least exercise of the thinking power. "In the total number reported," says Dr Sanger, as to the prostitutes of New York, "there are only four, or exactly one in every five hundred, who relied for support on any occupation requiring mental culture."

But it is time we addressed ourselves to causes operating on the other sex; and this we will do more briefly.

8. In man, the sexual passion is stronger than in woman. It is in its nature aggressive. In the normal state, it is perfectly under control of both the intellectual and the moral nature; but, under the culture of vicious thought and practice, it grows in strength till it assumes the position of a master passion. Means for its gratification, then, are apt to be deliberately planned; and much more is such an act made probable, if, to the addition of favourable opportunity, there be added the stimulus of alcoholic indulgence. Full many a man is led captive to the impure embrace of the harlot, who would have stood firm against the temptation, had it not been for the previous act of intemperance, which, while it stimulated his animal desire, obscured his reason, and depressed his moral power.

9. Marriage customs have to do with prostitution. In the upper ranks it has unhappily become fashionable to abstain from marriage, unless under the protection of comparative affluence. A young man, however prone to and fitted for the marriage tie, is doomed to singleness, unless he can secure such annual revenue, even at starting, as shall not only provide all necessities, but even most of the luxuries of married life. In consequence, during this time of probation, he is exposed to all the temptations of desire, perhaps unmet by mental, moral, or religious control; and, accordingly, he turns to such means of gratification as prostitution places within his reach, and the lax morals of the society, in which he may happen to move, scarcely reprobate.

In the lower ranks, again, premature marriage—the very opposite condition of things—may lead to prostitution. Young people, little other than children, without character, without means, without principle, without thought, rashly link themselves as man and wife. Like in many respects to each other, but still "unequally yoked," in all right sense of the term, they fall into habits of idle-

ness and intemperance ; and, growing desperate by and by, as they fall deeper and deeper into the pit of poverty, the young wife takes to eking out her scanty means by systematic barter of that honour, the existence of which, poor thing, far less its value, she scarce ever had learned to know.

This brings us to speak of causes common to both sexes.

10. First and foremost stands irreligion—prolific parent of every vice and crime. Without its restraining power in the heart, the creature is impelled to all sensual indulgence without let or hindrance.

11. But, besides, there is a strange looseness of morality in reference to unchastity, even in many of those who profess religion, after a sort. Intemperance they abhor, theft they will utterly away with, but a well-concealed and discreetly conducted “frailty” they have much apology for. More of this anon.

12. And meanwhile we will enumerate but one other cause,—the slackness of our civic rule in permitting prostitution, brazen-faced and open-handed, to prowl upon our streets for prey. The thief is dogged anxiously by the detective, and even mere suspicion of his craft is sufficient for arrest ; but the prostitute, though such by habit and repute, and seen in the act of ensnaring the silly one, is left undisturbed in her vocation.

And now, having thus sketched imperfectly the causes from which prostitution has grown into a monstrous evil, terrible in extent, and hideous of mien, we come to the weighty matter of its cure : the preliminary question at once starting up, What shall it be ? palliative or radical ? Is the sore to be as neatly and comfortably dressed as may be, from day to day, with mollifying and deodorizing appliances, and suffered to run on ? or are means to be taken to heal and dry it up ? Is this foul fungus on our social surface to be kept as sweet and savoury as unguents will allow, with scarce an attempt at pruning, or repression of its growth ? or is it to be made to wither and decay, down to the very core ? There is diversity of opinion on this point. But we have no hesitation in advocating the radical cure ; differing therein, most materially, from the two latest authors who have written upon this subject, namely, Mr Acton of London, and Dr Sanger of New York. Both of these, we take leave to say, are most unsafe guides. They take a wrong figure in at the very commencement of their calculations ; and no wonder if, in their summing up, they go far astray.

They start with the assumption that prostitution is inevitable in the very nature of things. Dr Sanger, quoting an author to this effect—"Suppression is absolutely impracticable, inasmuch as the evil is rooted in an unconquerable physical requirement"—agrees with him; himself stating that "it is a mere absurdity to assert that prostitution can ever be eradicated," and going on to ask us to "believe that it would be a prudent step, instead of trying to extirpate the evil, to place prostitutes and prostitution under the surveillance of a medical bureau, in the police department." At all this we cease to wonder, when, by and by, we read his deliberate opinion that "the practice of circumcision seems instituted with a direct view to the preservation of the chosen people from venereal contagion." The Great Lawgiver having solemnly announced, and unchangeably determined that fornication shall infer judgment and condemnation, yet, seeing it to be inevitable, through a "physical requirement" (necessarily of His own creating), provides means by a religious observance that it may be practised with impunity to the bodily health! If this be not blasphemy, it is at least nonsense, absolute and unmitigated.

Mr Acton, without committing himself to such gross absurdity, is yet equally unsound; starting thus:—"I am one of those who look upon prostitution as an inevitable attendant upon civilized, and, especially, closely packed population." Giving up the whole case as it truly stands (and as we hope to show) by his fallacy No. 1, he then goes on to perpetrate fallacy No. 2, by stating that prostitution is to the female but a transitory state, from which the majority emerge, in the course of a few years, into actual or comparative respectability; and that, therefore, it is the interest of the community to "see her safely through" that period and state of transition. Now, in the first place, we demur to the fact that prostitution is, to many women, but a temporary fate. We do not believe that, after a few years (of sowing wild oats, as it were), they leave it—but little the worse, if any. It is contrary to our own observation—it is not consistent with general belief—and it is inconsistent with facts which obtain elsewhere. According to Mr Tait, the experience of Edinburgh is that, "perhaps not less than a fifth or sixth of all who have embraced this course of sin die annually." And in New York, Dr Sanger assures us, on grounds which seem sufficient, that, to the majority of women, the state of prostitution proves a grave, and not a chrysalis-shell. His words are:—"The

average duration of life among these women does not exceed four years from the beginning of their career. There are, as in all cases, exceptions to this rule; but it is a tolerably well established fact, that one-fourth of the total number of abandoned women in this city die every year." This is strong language. We do not intend to make simple transference of it from New York to London, and elsewhere; but we are surely entitled to infer that the state of things so described, cannot be diametrically opposed to what obtains in London and elsewhere—the more especially, when the opposite conclusion, as already stated, is consonant with general observation and belief.

Furthermore, even supposing Mr Acton's statement to be true, we deny the legitimacy of his conclusions from it. His argument is, that seeing the condition of prostitution is transitory, and many, if not most of the women emerge to married life, bearing families mayhap, and, at all events, mingling in society, it is the interest of society to assist them in their transitional state, so that they may emerge, with as little permanent hurt as possible, in both their mental and corporeal condition, and become, not a curse, and pest, and loss, but if not an ornamental, at least a safe integral portion of the community. Accordingly, his proposal is, that prostitution be "*recognised*;" first, as an inevitable evil; and secondly, as a thing which, being inevitable, ought to be taken by the hand, to be regulated and controlled, so as to do as little harm as possible, both to the parties directly implicated, and to the community at large. "I will now glance at its organisation," says he, "and the possibility of regulating it by law, or mitigating its attendant evils;" and so he launches into various plans and proposals which we shall have to consider by and by. The hot water of prostitution into which the woman falls, he would have so cooled down, as to let her out again, after even a lengthened immersion, with scarce a blister of the cuticle; making things comfortable, as it were, during the plunge; consequently tending to prolong the stay of those already in; or, at least, by no means hastening their exit; and tempting others, through its supposed harmlessness, to risk a similar experience. On the contrary, we would keep the water of its normal temperature—hot, very hot—so that those in may snatch themselves out as speedily as possible, and those out may beware of falling in; satisfied of its being better for all concerned that the immersed should come quickly out, with the healthy if not happy experience of a severe

scald, rather than that they and others should remain in till sodden into utter looseness and depravity. We will "recognise" prostitution as a vice and crime to be reformed, not as an inevitable necessity to be mollified and endured. We refuse to recognise the thief legally, and so to minister to him in his thieving that he shall practise that calling with as little personal injury to himself as possible; and, on the same principle, we decline the like proposal affecting the prostitute. No doubt her calling may be so conducted, under "regulation," as to damage the physical condition of the harlot less than would otherwise be the case; and statistics may seem to show this;—in Paris, for example, where regulation exists, "6 $\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. had survived the horrors of courtesan life for fourteen years, while in New York (where regulation does not exist), only 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. have reached the same period;"—but that is no argument for regulation as a *preventive* means: on the contrary, it holds out a positive premium to entrance upon the terrible career.

We will seek out the causes, and meet them. We do not dream of arresting the evil by a high hand, at once, through legal repression—we will not talk of "putting down prostitution," as a London Lord Mayor talked of "putting down suicide." But we refuse to "recognise" it as an institution of society—we denounce it not only as a sin, but as a crime—we would give the law the same hold of it as over other offences against morality and the state—and we would have one and all of us, not strangers to patriotism and principle, earnestly engaged in the complex but continuous process of gradual, yet sure removal, by drying up the sources from which it springs.

1. We would continue and greatly increase the efforts made for elevating the masses. Education must be sown far more broadcast than it is; and with it religion, as the true fertilising and fructifying power. Secular and religious teaching must go hand in hand. Let these run to and fro together over all our borders; then true knowledge shall be increased; and then, too, as already stated, we may look for prevalence of self-respect and self-control.

2. Better houses must be provided for the working-men and women, in both town and country, but specially in the former. Oh, that some magic power were given to the monied and respectable classes, so that they might have but one brief comprehensive glimpse of all the frightful orgies that are transacted, night after night, in the squalid lairs of the sunken and depraved! If generosity and patriotism would not stir them up to avert such things, or afford the

means of their avoidance, surely self-interest would tell them to be busy in some such work ; for it needs no prophet to warn that living in such neighbourhood is not safe.

3. Let every means be used to restore vicious and idle parents to habits of industry, and virtue, and honesty. And into the children let us ingraft right principles, so that they may grow up, at least in the knowledge of right and wrong, and with a consciousness on the part of the female, that she carries a priceless jewel in her honour—however plain her person—however humble her rank may be—which, without deepest shame and detriment, she dare not give away. Thus let us strive to meet the early prostitution, so sadly prevalent, due to congenital and absolute ignorance of even the barest morality, as well as to the force of vicious parental example searing the conscience which had barely begun to live.

4. The masses will not be elevated, unless along with many other changes intemperance be put away ; and this demands special opposition, as we have seen. Were the disuse of alcoholic drinks, except under medical requirement, to become general, in six months we should be rid of prostitution by at least a half. Other things being equal, the more temperate a people, the more chaste, for very obvious reasons. Give them room to live in, something to live on, as well as something to live for—give them also moral and religious training, with habits of sobriety—and the result will be in all respects satisfactory. “The frugal thrift of the great bulk of the Swiss population, their distribution over the country in small numbers, the absence of large masses of human beings pent up in the reeking atmosphere of cities, their constant and intimate association with their pastors, and the hope which every individual cherishes of purchasing with his savings a small patch of his beloved native soil as a patrimony, seem to discourage prostitution as a trade. The influence of climate, also, must not be forgotten ; and Mr Chambers, in accounting for the general good conduct of the Swiss peasantry, lays much stress on their temperate habits, the use of intoxicating liquor among them being very rare indeed.”

5. In this country, the whole question of female labour and wages stands urgently in need of revision. It is a shame that in these enlightened days, honest, industrious, able-bodied women, labouring with painful industry from morning to night, or oft-times far into night, cannot make a living ; and may, from this cause alone, be driven into vice and self-debasement. Where the blame rests we

are not prepared to say. At first sight, one is apt to think harshly of the man who employs these poor needlewomen to turn out his goods, and pays them the insufficient pittance of a few, very few, shillings a week. But further consideration lays the responsibility, at all events in some measure, on those public patrons on whom the trader depends, who run determinedly after "great bargains," buying only where cheapness is to be found, and consequently favouring or forcing the iniquitous system of insufficient wage. And this unwholesome state of things is not confined to our own country. "Dr Sanger tells us that on the other side of the Atlantic, the public sanction a system which enforces starvation or crime; and, for the sake of saving a few cents, add their influence to swell the ranks of prostitution, and condemn many a poor woman to eternal ruin." "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven,"—that is a solemn command of the Great Lawgiver, which may not be transgressed with impunity. "Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." The cry of the starving, overwrought, sorely tempted needlewomen is great in the land: and one of the curses which their neglect and oppression bring, is the social evil of prostitution. We do not presume to dictate here the remedial means; but we earnestly call attention to the sorrowful facts, and entreat that steps in the right direction be taken actively and without delay. The buyer and the seller are both involved. Let both see to it. Follow a poor young widow from the workshop, where till late at night she has stitched and stitched—how wearily! In a comfortless home see her weeping over a wailing child, or paralytic mother, as in cold and hunger they share their wretched pittance of food. See her struggling day by day to remain virtuous and chaste, eking out their little all by harder and harder labour; but driven at length, in terrible desperation, to rush upon the streets, there to seek the hire which her lawful calling has cruelly denied, and which she can only purchase by the most loathsome of all vocations, and the sacrifice of all which she personally holds dear. Somebody must be to blame for this. Who is it? Let conscience answer the question and act out the remedy.

6. Another great and general reform, as it seems to us urgently required, is as regards the arrangement and construction of female

attire. Both in this country and elsewhere, recent attention has been directed to this matter; the scandal having become great, through pecuniary extravagance. And some have gone the length of connecting great commercial disaster, and national distress, with this evil, if not as the main cause, at least as largely contributing. Whether this be true or not, we do not presume to say; but we unhesitatingly repeat our assertion, that a large amount of prostitution is thus to be accounted for. And on that ground alone, surely there is a strong case made out for a thorough and speedy reform of the whole matter of female costume; all the more, as its present abnormal and injurious state is quite as great a blunder as an offence, wholly at variance with good taste and right principles. Bring the matter to the arbitration of Art. Apply the test of Photography, for example: and it will be found that the best picture is not of her bedecked with flounces and furbelows, gumflowers and ribbons, of vast and varied colours, but of her who is modestly and simply attired, in some plain garb of simple material and modest hue. Or go to oil paintings, and see in this year's Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy, the most attractive female portrait on the walls—that of a young lady, not in silks and satins, low-dressed in one sense, high-dressed in another, for the ball or drawing-room—but walking out of the picture frame, on a snowy ground, clad in plain and homely garb as might become a village maiden. At the risk of being thought rude and ungallant, we must say that the present female fashions call for wholesome revolution, rather than reform—on various grounds: 1, For the wearers' own sakes, that their true charms may not be put to disadvantage; 2, For the sake of parents and husbands, that their means may not suffer unnecessary waste; 3, For the sake of a better remuneration to female labour painfully bestowed on worsteds, linens, and cottons;—the money saved from silks and satins being wisely diverted to this; 4, And last, not least, for the sake of those young persons in the position of servants and operatives, who, so long as the present state of things remains unchanged, will be tempted to its imitation. Their innate love of dress will continue to be fanned into a passion; and, in the case of many, will reach its gratification at whatever cost—perhaps through dishonest dealings with the property of others, but more probably through the nefarious, degrading barter, of personal prostitution. Terrible paradox. They will have fine

dress to bedeck the body ; and they sacrifice the body—aye and the soul too—to obtain that dress !

If ladies will not use the pruning-hook for their own sakes, surely they will not refuse to take it up and wield it heartily for the sake of those beneath them, who through the sinister force of their example may be perishing in thousands !

But we have hinted that reform may be needed in the *arrangement* as well as in the construction of female attire. Plainness and sobriety of dress are not enough ; carefulness of wearing is expedient also. May we not venture to say that fashion and custom are to blame in sanctioning such exposure of the person, in evening costume, as is otherwise inconsistent with the fine sense of true delicacy innate to the virtuous female, and may be fitted to have an unsafe influence, unless met by high principle and perfect self-control ? If not so met, may not the result be towards the evil we now deprecate ? And is it not greatly to be desired, therefore, that this source of danger be removed, by more careful and becoming arrangement of the apparel—enhancing, as it will, the gracefulness of the form, as well as conserving the characteristic modesty, of the wearer ?

7. There is need of sounder views of physiology in the popular mind, as bearing upon our subject. There must be plain speaking in reference to this ; and we do not flinch from it ; believing that the time for such plainness of speech is fully come. We have good reason to know that a popular delusion as to the physiological bearings of sexual indulgence, on the part of the male sex, widely prevails among high and low, young and old—fraught with the most pernicious consequences. It is supposed that occasional sexual indulgence, after the age of puberty, is essential to health, and not only may but ought to be transacted on purely physiological requirement. Young men are told this ; and, jumping as it does with their natural desires, they readily believe it. Wives, temporarily laid aside from marital reciprocity, have been told it, and have in consequence become parties to a vicarious supply. Parents, believing it, wink at the unchastity of sons. And so concubinage, seduction, and prostitution, necessarily thrive.

To show the folly of this physiological heresy, a short statement will suffice. God made man's body—perfect. The organs in their working, and with their appetites, are from His hand. Among others, He lodged those which minister to reproduction ; their function and their appetite are from Him. The latter, obviously,

is meant to be indulged under certain restrictions, and these restrictions are specified: they are those of lawful wedlock. *You say* that it must be indulged, to maintain the health of the creature, in fulfilling the requirements of Nature, at all hazards—with or without wedlock, *per fas aut nefas*. Sexual indulgence, you say, irrespective of marriage, is needful, by the stern demand of a physiological law. But God, who makes and upholds all physiological laws, says that this is fornication, a flagrant infraction of His moral law; that the soul who so sinneth shall die; and that fornicators, by express command, are excluded from the kingdom of heaven. According to *you*, therefore, the matter would stand thus: The great and good God—all-merciful as all-wise and almighty—has made man with a certain bodily appetite and function, which in obedience to God's physical laws, which regulate its working, requires occasional indulgence, even irrespective of that special limitation which God in His moral law has appointed; and, yet, such infringement of His moral law, though necessarily arising out of His own physical law, God punishes with the highest penalty. Or, in brief, according to this popular and pernicious fallacy, God turns men into hell for yielding to a physical necessity which He had Himself ordained! This, we need not say, implies a moral impossibility.

In man, the sexual appetite is not as in the mere animal—of the body only, but of mind and body both. In the forcible language of a writer in the *Westminster Review*, already alluded to, "Fornication is a sin *against nature*. Its peculiarity and heinousness consist in its divorcing from all feeling of love that which was meant by nature as the last and intensest expression of passionate love; in its putting asunder that which God has joined; in its reducing the deepest gratification of unreserved affection to a mere momentary and brutal indulgence; in its making that *only* one of our appetites, which is redeemed from mere *animality* by the hallowing influence of the better and tenderer feelings with which nature has connected it, *as* animal as all the rest. It is a voluntary exchange of the passionate love of a spiritual and intellectual being, for the mere hunger and thirst of the beast. It is a profanation of that which the higher organization of man enables him to elevate and refine. It is the introduction of filth into the pure sanctuary of the affections."

The sexual appetite, in man, is stronger than in woman, as formerly stated, but perfectly under control of the rightly balanced, duly principled, and well exercised mind; and it is the will and in-

tention of the Creator that it should be kept in subjection by exercise of the will, until circumstances arise favourable for entering into the married state. Then its indulgence becomes normal, and *according to nature*; not the gratification of mere animal desire, but an accompaniment and fulfilment of love, and with a view to the reproduction of the species. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Up to the time of marriage, continence is useful as discipline, and is ordained as such. In marriage, discharge of the sexual function is according to God's own appointment. "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." The marriage tie has obviously the double object,—providing for legitimate procreation, so as to "replenish the earth;" and providing also for those cases in which—from original idiosyncrasy or other cause—the sexual passion is with difficulty controlled. "If they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn."

This is the true state of the physiological question. The sexual appetite and function are implanted within us, not for immediate and indiscriminate gratification; but, first, for restraint, as a proper exercise and discipline of the mind; afterwards, for indulgence, lawfully and usefully, under the sanction of that holy domestic tie which God made synchronous with man himself. Let this view be acted on; let the unlawful aggressiveness of man against woman cease: obviously prostitution will thus suffer amputation of one of its strongest roots; and yet no man will suffer from unfulfilled "physical requirements."

What about teaching this to the young, at least of the male sex? Will such teaching, carefully conducted, tend to evil, by exciting pruriency? or will it tend to good, by convincing both the understanding and the conscience, of what is right and true? The question is not without its difficulties. Much may be said on both sides. But for ourselves, we do not hesitate to state our conviction that this truth ought to be taught. Educated youth have a right to a knowledge of the elementary principles of physiology, in whatever profession they may hope to be; and we would take special care that *this* part of that science, so needful for their own and the common weal, should not be withheld. Let youth be trained to continence far more faithfully and systematically than they are; and do not fail to carry the intelligent conviction of their under-

standings along with the moral quickening of the conscience and the purifying of the heart.

One other consideration before leaving this part of the subject. In medical ethics let it be clearly understood, that the practitioner who *prescribes* fornication to any patient, under any circumstances whatever, commits a heinous offence, not only against morals, but also against both the science and the character of his profession. His advice is not more flagrantly immoral than it is disgracefully unscientific and unsound.

It has been gravely said that prostitution, under certain restrictions, is of use, in averting Onanism. The evils of this miserable vice are painted in ghastly colours—its ruinous effects on both body and mind are set strongly before us; and then we are asked,—Is not moderate and well-regulated prostitution better than this? is not sexual better than solitary indulgence? To this the answer is simple;—to prevent a great crime we do not sanction and encourage what may seem to be a minor one. In lieu of murder we do not patronise theft or forgery. We refuse to save a man from cutting his own throat by setting him to cut the throats of others. We may not keep arson from our own home, by practising incendiarism on our neighbour. Onanism and prostitution are both wrong. Both are to be averted in ourselves, and discountenanced in others. And the remedy is, as already stated, that training to continence, in thought and deed, which is too much neglected in the young. Let the mind be enlightened as to the true physiological relations of the generative organs; let the moral nature be impressed with the disgusting and degrading nature of both offences; let the conscience hate them as sin; let manliness and self-respect be brought ever to plead against their baseness; let healthful air and exercise be amply enjoyed; let all prurient reading and all lustful thoughts be eschewed; let the body be kept up in health—and under in desire; let the mind be taught, the affections elevated, the conscience quickened; let “pure religion and undefiled” shed its holy and hallowing influences over all:—let such training, incumbent on every youth, be faithfully carried out in all, and we shall hear no more of any evil being held “expedient” to neutralise other vice of a grosser and graver kind.

The way of virtue will ever be found the way of health, and honour, and happiness; while the sad results of the converse, more especially on “the better part” of man—affecting not only the in-

dividual but the community at large, and causing injury which may never be recovered from—cannot be more faithfully told to youth than in these stirring words from the manly page of Thomas Carlyle. “To burn away, in mad waste, the divine aromas and plainly celestial elements from our existence; to change our holy-of-holies into a place of riot; to make the soul itself hard, impious, barren! Surely a day is coming, when it will be known again what virtue is in purity and continence of life; how divine is the blush of young human cheeks; how high, beneficent, sternly inexorable if forgotten, is the duty laid, not on women only, but on every creature, in regard to these particulars? Well, if such a day never come again, then I perceive much else will never come. Magnanimity and depth of insight will never come; heroic purity of heart and of eye; noble pious valour, to amend us and the age of bronze and lacker, how can they ever come? The scandalous bronze-lacker age, of hungry animalisms, spiritual impotencies and mendacities, will have to run its course till the Pit swallow it.”¹

8. Now as to the question of marriage. We have spoken of two evils appertaining to this: let both be reformed. 1. In the better ranks, if two young loving hearts can see their way to, honourable and competent maintenance, let them marry; luxury may be absent from their lot—let them learn to despise it; fashion may frown upon them, or gay, giddy, summer friends look wintry cold—let these be estimated at their true value. Marriage is God’s institution, as already stated, coeval with man himself. God’s blessing is on it: “male and female created He them, and blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” Marriage is the normal state of the healthy adult man. Let that be the rule—singleness of life the exception. As a consequence, domestic and social virtue will flourish, and one part, at least, of prostitution, will wither and decay. “The recognition of this principle would do much to check some of our most deadly social evils. It would make many a girl whom the tyranny of the world now dooms to a joyless celibacy, a happy wife and mother. It would raise the tone of character of our young men, bringing out into healthful exercise the home affections, which are now denied them, at the very time of life when their influence is most beneficial. It would draw away all frivolity and effeminacy before the realities

¹ Life of Frederick the Great, vol. ii., p. 29.

of steady work, which early marriage would oblige them to face. It would purify our streets, and check many a bitter pang of conscience, and save many a soul. We are experiencing the bitter fruits of man's law; let us see whether God's law will not work better."¹ "Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger!" "For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honey-comb, and her mouth is smother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell."² 2. Let the operative class avoid the hasty premature unions to which we formerly alluded, as fraught with little else than evil to themselves and others; but when they have arrived at the marriageable age—say 20 to 25—when reproduction of the species may be normally performed; when they meet with a loving partner in life in all respects "equal;" and when, by honest industry, they can secure a home for themselves and family—humble, it may be, but sufficient for that maintenance of both body and mind to which their station entitles them—let them marry too, expecting, not in vain, like blessings with their betters. To look forward to such a happy lot, nerves the young man's heart to stem the world's tide; and the fire of this pure love will burn too hotly, to brook beside it another flame of mere animal lust. Let young men learn, in sober industry, to fit themselves to be good husbands; and let the community at large help the young women to become good wives, by teaching them, somehow, something of those household duties,—of which a vast majority are deplorably ignorant, but which are quite essential to happiness and security in the married state. Before marriage, let both sexes learn to be industrious and chaste; afterwards they will choose honest labour still, while loathing personal defilement and dishonour.³

But, say the political economists, perhaps—By such early mar-

¹ *The Times*, 7th May 1857.

² Solomon. Proverbs v.

³ . . . "Exhorting the married men to temperance, and the bachelors to matrimony; so that, in a few years, it was a common saying, that there were three strange wants at Wakefield—a parson wanting pride, young men wanting wives, and alehouses wanting customers."—*Vicar of Wakefield*.

riages you will flood the labour market, and drown the population. Indeed, some wiseacres blame early marriage for prostitution, poverty, intemperance, and all the many evils with which the lower classes are so sore beset. Our answer is:—Let the marriage be “early” under the limitations here specified, and we will answer for the consequences. “Redundant population!” Fudge! No fear of that. Man’s mission is to “multiply and replenish the earth.” Our colonies are calling for men and women—our “redundancies”—faster than we can meet the supply. It will take many a hiving off yet, to meet the demands already existing in the ordinary currents of colonisation; and even should these be satisfied soon, Livingstone and his gallant compeers will be fain to welcome a whole myriad in Central Africa.

And this reminds us of another request we have to make, namely, that our philanthropists bestir themselves yet more and more in favouring emigration—more especially of young respectable females.

9. The moral tone of general society must be raised, in two points specially affecting our subject. First, as to the harlot. It is commonly said that females, especially of the better class, are too bitter against their fallen sisters. In some sense and degree this may be true; but in the main it is otherwise. The public mind has become habituated to the presence and sight, and almost to the touch of prostitution; and—what seems to us most perilous, a sad omen as to progress and stability in any State—the sense of modest delicacy in the female mind appears to have lost something of its fine edge in this respect. We blame theatricals greatly for this. Of late years the stage has lost much of its tone—never very high in our day. The modern play-wright uses seduction and gallantry as favourite seasoning to his else dull and dreary drama; the ballet throws decency, as to personal exposure, very much overboard; and the mixed audience brings living harlotry—actively plying its preliminary trade—to rub shoulders with the fairest and most virtuous there. We blame modern works of fiction also. Not a few of these are tainted with impurity; borrowing largely, in this, from the French school; and yet they are read by old and young with a growing avidity. The mind thus becomes familiarised with things and thoughts which, if not absolute strangers to it, ought at least to be banished and shut out as often as they appear; and we know the consequence:—

“ Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
 As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;
 Yet, seen too oft, familiar with her face,
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

We shall venture on an illustration of our meaning by reference to recent experience in a city once noted for the high caste of its society—intelligence in the men, purity in the women. Let it be as follows :—Playgoing is not checked by the impurity of the stage. Vaudevilles may be as prurient as they may ; they do not lack for the dress circle. The ballet, too, however nude or otherwise immodest, has its applauding lookers on ; and operatic performers, though openly of less than doubtful virtue, are patronised and garlanded. By and by “ *La Traviata* ” is spoken of. The highest lady in the land, with womanly, matronly, queenly modesty, refuses to sanction *that* by *her* presence ; but crowds of the faultless fair attend notwithstanding. True, the heroine is a harlot, and the scene, and business of the scene, are all of harlotry ; but then the acting is good, and the music beautiful. These gild the pill, else foul and nauseous, and the pill, so gilt, is swallowed accordingly. *La Traviata* draws houses, crowded to the door ; and husbands and wives, parents and daughters, brothers and sisters, lovers and sweet-hearts, are all there. So the march, sinister, goes on. But the culmination is not yet. Whoredom in the abstract, dramatised, is bad enough ; but the living impersonation of it—brazen and unblushing—will this be borne too ? We shall see. One who is notorious by her frailty, who is nothing, and known as nothing, unless as such, appears upon the platform, not as an actress but as a lecturer—telling, forsooth, some of *her* experiences ! Will she be patronised ? In shame and sorrow we have to answer, Yes. The crowded audiences which attend on her pert performances are not all of one sex, as well they might have been. *Ladies* are there, not now patronising vice in the abstract, but patronising its living embodiment ; and those who would shrink in horror from a *name*, voluntarily come in contact with the thing itself. We speak plainly, roughly, rudely. Is it not time ? We hope and trust that others, better entitled and better qualified to speak, will bestir themselves in this matter. Meanwhile, let every one do what he may. For, unless this tendency downward and onward in the public tone of morals be checked, it is sad to contemplate the landing place, which may be very near at hand. The *thoughtful* and the pure

were not there : but the *thoughtless were*. And they must be made to think—for

“ Evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as want of heart.”

Secondly, we desire elevation of the moral tone of general society as to the whoremonger. A woman falls but once, and society turns cold upon her so soon as her offence is known. A man falls many times, habitually, confessedly ; yet society changes her countenance on him but little if at all. This ought not to be. Let there be some consistency here ; and let the known libertine find no favour from female society, at all events ; if not banished irrevocably, let him enjoy the experiences of Coventry, at least for a season ; and even with his own sex let there be a healthier tone of companionship. To quote from a powerful writer in the *Times*—“ The time may (should) come when a man may shrink from presenting himself in the sacred circle of his mother, his sisters, and his other female relatives, reeking from secret immorality. . . . Let it be understood that even among a man’s fellows and associates immorality is a thing to be ashamed of ; and at least we should get rid of the contagion of vice.” Says Milton, in his apology for Smectymnuus, “ Having had the doctrine of Holy Scriptures unfolding these high and chaste mysteries, with timeliest care infused, that ‘ the body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body,’ thus also I argued it to myself—that, if unchastity in a woman, whom St Paul terms the glory of man, be such a scandal and dishonour, then certainly in man, who is both the image and glory of God, it must, though commonly not so thought, be much more deflowering and dishonourable.”

As regards the seducer, the case is still more urgent. The man who steals or swindles money, goods, or property of any sort, is *ipso facto* an outcast from society, an in-cast to the law. The man who steals—swindles—what is dearer and more precious far than all that gold can purchase—what of him ? Surely a far sterner fate than what he generally receives is richly his due. And were society true to itself in this matter, seduction and prostitution were less plentiful in our midst.

What of the seducer, and deserter of the seduced ? Let the writer of the *Westminster Review* answer :—“ Let him be branded with the same kind and degree of reprobation with which society now visits the coward and the cheat. The man who submits to in-

sult rather than fight; the gambler who packs the cards or loads the dice, or refuses to pay his debts of honour, is hunted from among even his unscrupulous associates as a stained and tarnished character. Let the same measure of retributive justice be dealt to the seducer who deserts the woman who has trusted him, and allows her to come upon the town. . . . The man who, when his caprice is satisfied, casts off his victim as a worn out garment, or a damaged toy; who allows the woman who trusted his protestations, reciprocated his caresses, shared his joys, lay in his bosom, resigned herself to him, in short, "in all the trusting helplessness of love," to sink from the position of his mistress to the loathsome life of prostitution, because his seduction and desertion has left no other course open to her—who is not ready to make every sacrifice of peace, of fortune, of reputation even, in order to save one whom he has once loved, from such an abyss of wretched infamy—must surely be more stained, soiled, and hardened in soul, more utterly unfitted for the company or the sympathies of gentlemen or men of honour, than *any* coward, *any* gambler, *any* cheat." Thus much on the part of society. But ought not common law to take cognizance of this man? Would it not be well that our Justiciary Courts laid hold of him, with a view of imparting some at least of that punitive reward he so richly deserves?

In connection with the subject of public morals, we have here to state a grievance which urgently claims reform; namely, the frequent and conspicuous insertion, even in newspapers otherwise respectable, of obscene advertisements, emanating from a horde of miscreants that prey upon the public most disastrously. Partly by pandering to the morbid pruriency too common among the young, and partly by knavishly working upon the fears of those who have fallen from virtue, they drive a large trade in the sale of impure books and pamphlets, as well as of nostrums for the alleged cure or prevention of disease. The injury done thus to their unhappy victims, in both body and mind, and the poisonous taint imparted to the moral atmosphere at large, are absolutely inconceivable. Our best periodicals and newspapers, it is true, sternly exclude all such filth; and no pecuniary temptation avails to move them from their honest and honourable determination. But in the publications of an inferior class, these noxious weeds are permitted to show themselves in rank luxuriance of growth; while, as already stated, in not a few papers of which better things might have been

expected, pollution of the page is at least occasional. The remedy is simple. Discountenance by all means every print that admits such advertisements, under whatever guise or plea; and, specially, let no family table receive any paper or periodical whose page but once contains any such indecency. Shut off from their power of respectable publicity, these loathsome vampires of humanity will find their food grow scant: driven from the newspaper, they will take to the wall, in placards; and thither let the power of the magistrate follow them—more actively than it now does—in dragging down their vile indecencies.

10. We desiderate the active influence of the civic power—to *repress* prostitution, not to *regulate* it. Here we differ *toto cælo* from the authors to whom we have made special allusion. The object of both is to induce the State to take prostitution, at least partially, under its surveillance, with the view of mitigating its evils, as regards both the directly and the indirectly concerned. The only shadow of an excuse for this public patronage of, if not identification with, immorality is—that thus the ravages of syphilis may be restrained. And to that point let us, therefore, first address ourselves.

Syphilis, doubtless, is the product of prostitution; yet the things are essentially distinct, and can be treated separately. At all events, it is not necessary, in alleviating the one, to patronise the other. Throwing the cause out of sight for a little, can anything be done to meet the effect? Much. There is a lamentable remissness, on the part of public sympathy and intelligence, on behalf of this public scourge. Blind prejudice and custom would seek to scowl it down, and, hiding it in the dark, hope that it may pass away and be forgotten, while all the more it festers and corrupts loathsomely. Bring it to the light rather, that it may be seen and cared for. We must cease to discourage syphilitics from frequenting the hospital and dispensary. The victim of drunkenness, raging in delirium tremens, is cared for with as much tenderness as if his malady had come by no vicious indulgence. And so with this:—let the dispensary freely supply aid to those who may be treated well enough as out patients; and let our hospitals receive the more sorely stricken victims, till they are healed; for the female patients separate wards being of course provided, with such peculiarity of administration as is suited to their circumstances. It is an unwise and uncharitable economy that admits but the select few who can pay a board; and true wisdom and true charity require our hygienic institutions to

fling their doors wide open for the free reception of all and sundry of the diseased poor. Let their disease be the only needed warrant for their admission—the more grave the more urgent—as in the case of other maladies, especially when contagious. It is but prudence, at the best, that would counsel otherwise. And we are free to say, that we deem much blame attachable to the management of our public charities heretofore, because so little has been done thus to meet so pressing a part of “the social evil.” The present hospital accommodation, in this country, for syphilitic cases, is disgracefully inadequate; and the time is more than come for its being greatly and liberally enlarged.

The apartments for syphilitic females, we say, should be separate, in their position and administration, from the ordinary wards; in order, on the one hand, that the vicious may not communicate their moral contagion to the unfallen; and, on the other, that due appliances may be used, by moral treatment accompanying the medical, to cure the fallen of their spiritual disease. By kindness, judgment, and patient care, many a one might be thus reclaimed from their vicious course, and restored both “safe and sound” to their friends and to society; seeing that no opportunity could be found more favourable to repentance and reform, than when, stricken by disease and suffering, they are driven from their “refuges of lies,” and forced to face the reality of their terrible fate, in bitter memories of the past with dread forebodings of the future. And all the more shall we succeed in this, if there be—as there ought to be—means for transplanting the repentant Magdalenes, when cured, to scenes and situations of honest industry and virtuous life, instead of casting them forth, uncared and unprovided for, to walk the streets once more, or—starve. We would be kind—most kind—to the fallen one, and help her by every possible means *out* of her fearful calling; but to that we will show no favour; we will hate it with a perfect hatred, and will neither sanction nor adopt any measures calculated to keep her in it, by a miserable and temporary alleviation of her lot.

But, it may be said, “thus, at the best, you seek to mitigate syphilis, when contracted; while we, regulating prostitution, and having wholesome sanitary surveillance of its practitioners, seek to *prevent* it.” Our answer here is—putting morality aside for a time—the true prevention, the only true prevention of syphilis, is chastity. Train your youth to that; remove temptations to incontinence, predisposing and exciting, in both sexes and in all ranks;

refuse to acknowledge the vice in any form or way; restrain it, on the contrary, by every lawful means; and meanwhile meet and mitigate its evils, as wisdom, charity, and rectitude, may sanction and direct. To recognise prostitution as "inevitable," a "necessary evil," and to regulate its practice, is, disguise it as you may, a fostering of that vice. So acting, you will never diminish, but must rather increase it; and, in consequence, with a sustained and enhanced *amount* of prostitution, however modified it may seem in *kind*, you must lay your account with a maintaining, if not enhancing, of syphilis too. Wherever you have prostitution on a large scale, you must have syphilis more or less proportionate; and, therefore, your proposed attempt at prevention of the latter would not only be a public scandal, but a practical blunder to boot—"a mockery, a delusion, and a snare."

Furthermore, need we remind our readers that it is another fallacy, in no slight degree dangerous, to regard syphilis as the main evil of prostitution, and to argue that, if that product were successfully met, the vice itself would prove comparatively harmless. Strip prostitution to-morrow of all corporeal consequences, and its pernicious moral effects would still leave it a blasting and a blighting curse upon the land.

Instead, then, of asking the State to recognise, license, and regulate prostitution, we would call upon the State to put it down. It is not a sin merely affecting the parties directly implicated; it is a crime: in a moral sense, a sin to the offenders; in a political sense, an offence most injurious to the community at large. In this respect it is analogous to theft. What would we think of a proposal to license thieves and regulate their practice! the law tenderly caring for those lapsed ones, and ministering to them, *as* thieves, with a view to their scathless continuance of their unlawful calling! Is it not a better method as it is, to punish and repress the overt acts of theft, while all the while we are busy with our ragged schools and other suitable means, seeking to effect their true prevention? Or, if you allege theft to be too strong an analogue, take another sensual indulgence—drunkenness, a sin to the individual, an offence against the State—bringing on this, as it does, such a terrible train of disease, misery, poverty, crime, and disgrace. We do not recognise drunkenness as "inevitable," and regulate its practice; we do not license the drunkard, and seek to mitigate his condition *as such*. On the contrary, the object of the law is to repress drunkenness; and

the drunkard caught in his offence is punished therefor by the police magistrate, in order that he as well as others may be so far discouraged from repetition, while more thoroughgoing prevention is sought for by other means. True it is—and the more is the pity—that the law licenses, and so sanctions, houses for *drinking*; but under the express proviso that *drunkenness* shall not be transacted there. The law is herein unwise in its reasoning, as we think, and unsuccessful in its working; but it is honest enough in its purpose. Consequently, there is no precedent in the licensing of the public-house for licensing of the brothel. Nay, there is no analogy between the two. The public-house is *intended* for legitimate drinking, with special provision against *drunkenness*; the brothel is *not* intended for legitimate sexual indulgence, but for that which is vicious only. And, furthermore, if the licensing and regulating of public-houses fail—as certainly is the case—to avert or mitigate the evils of intemperance, *how much more* must not the licensing and regulating of brothels fail to mitigate (avert it cannot) the evils direct and indirect of prostitution?

We would have the law to restrain all prostitutes from exhibition of themselves, *as such*, in the streets, theatres, or other places of public resort. In Paris this compliment to public decency is paid very efficiently through the agency of the police; and so much of their “regulating” system we would gladly adopt. Indeed, in this country we are not wholly without precedent for this. The mere vagrant is taken up, as such; so is the mendicant, importuning the passer-by; why not the prostitute? Or, if it be thought too harsh to have her taken *up*, at least in the first instance, let her at all events be taken *off* the street at once; and if, after repeated warnings, her offensive publication of herself be persisted in, let her then be apprehended, and dealt with accordingly.¹ We deem it to be a duty urgently incumbent on the magistrate, to purge our streets of these obscene and dangerous perambulators. And brothels we would put down with a strong hand, wherever situated; giving to the police the same power over them as over gambling-houses. “*Il faut vivre?*”

¹ The great Napoleon took active measures in this direction to purge his army in Italy: “All women who have not the permission of the Commissariat are required to leave the division in twenty-four hours; in default of doing so, they will be arrested, smeared over with black, and exposed for two hours in the public square.” Something less stringent, though quite as summary, might suffice for our civic necessities.

We demur to that. "These poor creatures must be somewhere?" Yes; *but not as prostitutes*. "You merely change the habitat; driving from a comparatively safe to a worse locality?" Nay, we would have the law follow them wherever they go, till these rebels against society are finally dispersed and utterly discomfited. In a strongly-fortified city Lord Clyde had full fifty thousand rebels in front of him. Is he to restrain his attacking force lest perchance the enemy, driven from this position, scatter themselves in smaller groups and ravage the surrounding country? Nay, the onslaught is made; and the routed foe is in due time "followed up," till in the end all are made once more submissive to law and loyalty. Such work, no doubt, takes time, tries skill, and taxes patience; but, with these duly exercised, we need not despair of success in the end.

But this reminds us of the great checkmate to our proposal. "You convert prostitution from a regulated traffic into private and concealed licentiousness, tenfold worse." The same argument applies to the laws of excise and customs. By these it may be said that you favour smuggling and dishonesty; but, on that allegation, the law does not relax its hold. In like manner, we would have you put the highest duty on prostitution—that is, the discipline of the law; that is *our* tax of "recognition;" and we are ready to take our chance of "smuggling"—the secret and illicit traffic that may ensue. What a blunder it is, to say the least, for men to talk, as Mr Acton does, of "regarding casinos with satisfaction," and looking upon "accommodation-brothels" as being, "to a certain extent, the defence of our hearths, and the use of them indicating a superior condition of morality, which their forcible suppression might very possibly tend to shake." All this wretched reasoning and policy, both nugatory and nefarious, arises out of the "wrong figure" taken in at the commencement of the calculation—erroneously assuming prostitution to be inevitable, and being then driven to the impotent and delusive shift of merely palliating, in some sort, what you ought radically to cure. "Well done," said the would-be moralist to a youth entering a house of ill fame, "so shalt thou spare matrons and maidens." That were a sentiment suitable enough to a philosopher of ancient Rome; though, had he taken the trouble to look around him, even he would have found facts plentifully belying his reasoning. In the present day we will have no such paganism.

Perhaps we are again met with what seems a crushing reply. "Your reasoning may be very specious; *but turn to facts*; and we

allege that legal repression of prostitution has uniformly failed, the attempt always ending in aggravation of the evil, by wide-spread secret immorality." Our answer is this: We do not pretend to cure prostitution by legal repression *alone*. That is only *a* means, and a minor one too; it deals with the branches; we strike also, and mainly, at the stem of the tree—nay, at its very roots. We desiderate this, not instead of, or irrespective of, but *along with all the other means*. We would do the one, and not leave the others undone. You point to Naples and Rome, where legal suppression has been tried, and signally failed. No wonder. Who would expect social reforms there? The man that but breathes of them may look for little better recompense than the dungeon. The failures in Rome, Naples, Berlin, Hamburgh, have no weight whatever against our argument. There is no parallel. Legal suppression is of no use *per se*; nay, so far we agree with you, it will prove worse than useless. But let it be fairly, fully, patiently, and perseveringly carried out, *along with* all those other still more important means of which we have spoken, as striking at the exciting and maintaining causes of the evil, and we need have no fears of the result; "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

One consideration in connection with this subject cannot escape us here. The system of legal recognition and surveillance is, as we have already said, defensible only on the plea of sanitary advantage, in reference to syphilis. And to this end the services of the medical profession are necessarily called into play. The medical man must be conjoined with the policeman in this dirty and degrading work. With speculum in hand, he must go from brothel to brothel, and from door to door, examining patient by patient systematically, and entering an official report of each; like a railway porter, with hammer in hand, examining axle by axle in a newly arrived train, to see whether any be heated or no. Is this work for an educated gentleman? for a member of a liberal and enlightened profession? We have often felt thankful that from such indignity our brethren in this country are spared. And on this account—even were there no other and higher ground to take—we would protest loudly against the introduction of the continental system. But Mr Acton is of a different opinion. If he do not advocate the adoption of that system "*pur et simple*," he at least expresses himself favourable to the medical part of the process (to us the most objectionable), with the view of expiscating cases of syphilis—though not, indeed, "on

compulsion." And then he takes a step, or rather stride, in advance, to originate and announce a most notable scheme of his own. A "Friendly Society, or Benefit Club," it is called, for the woman of the town, "so that, when suffering from any affection whatsoever, incidental or not incidental to her vocation, she may, in virtue and right of her own payments during health, ensure the attendance and remuneration of any qualified practitioner resident in the district, whom she might select, as well as an allowance while under treatment." Funds are to be derived from the prostitutes' entrance fees and weekly payments, aided by subscriptions and donations from the general public. Medical men are to superintend and work the system; and medical men are to have "imposed upon them, in addition to attendance upon, and the supply of medicine to, the sick, the labour of syphilis discovery, distribution of sanitary rules, collection of returns, and correspondence with the medical committee." There is to be *canvassing* for members, too; and, though that is not added to the specified duties of the medical man, it is left to be inferred as among them! "One of his most important duties," at all events, we are informed, would "be the inculcation of proper tactics upon women in health!!" Nay, he is to be a clinical teacher in the brothel, as to the best mode of conducting the practical details of the business, with a view to immunity from injury or disease!!! We refuse either to quote or to reason upon this disgusting proposal. We simply protest, in the name of an outraged profession, against the insult and affront therein deliberately conveyed, and which every right thinking man must meet with indignation and scorn.

The cool tabling of such a scheme, in the present day, cannot be excused; and is only to be accounted for, as already stated, by the fact that a wrong principle has been adopted by the author at his outset, rendering his reasoning cumulatively fallacious all the way through. While we regret deeply to find a member of the medical profession occupying so false a position, we cannot flinch from our duty of at once exposing the originating fallacy, and spurning the scandalous proposal in which it culminates.

11. But, to continue our own postulates, which we conceive to be sound alike in a moral, social, and scientific sense, we desiderate an increase of reformatory means and institutions. 1. Let missionary enterprise do its aggressive work—far more abundantly than hitherto. The London City Mission deserves much praise for their labours of

love—not unsuccessful—in this way ; but the field is fearfully vast as well as ripe, and many more labourers are needed for the harvest. The prostitute's heart is hard as a whole ; but there are soft points in it. Let these be found and acted on. Her lot is hard, too, and uninviting to the moral pioneer ; but let intelligence, discretion, love, zeal, compass the work, and the *mollia tempora fandi*, even in her case, will not be sought in vain—all the more, if such missionary enterprise, as it ever ought, be not confined to professional agency, but adopted and carried on by all and sundry qualified for the task by the needful conditions of head and heart. 2. While we show no mercy or kindness to the *system* and *trade* of prostitution, we would evince no harshness, even, to the poor prostitutes. It is not by the force of terror and intimidation that they are to be weeded out of their miserable state, but by the force of sympathy and love. And while we would be kind to all, we would be specially so to the newly fallen—to the victims of seduction. Scowl on these, and drive them from you ; you sink them deeper and deeper into the miry clay. Beckon them back, rather ; and give them a helping hand, as well as a friendly look, to lift them up again. Much may be done in this way, for example, through domestic employment as wet nurses. The normal state of things, no doubt, is that every woman, of whatever rank or condition, should suckle her own child ; or, if peculiar circumstances forbid this, that a married substitute be sought for. Failing in such search, however, we do not see that the field of selection is closed. We would not *prefer* an unmarried wet nurse ; for that might seem to confer a *bonus* on, if it did not hold out an inducement to immorality. But, at the same time, let us not shut our door on the fallen. We would not have a confirmed prostitute, accidentally pregnant, to suckle our child ; that were objectionable on physiological grounds alone. But we discover no such drawback in the case of the simply “unfortunate ;” and, in the circumstances we have mentioned, we do not feel ourselves called on to refuse the services of such on moral grounds only. The woman may be in all respects suitable as a nurse, both as to health of body and amenity of disposition ; she will do the child no harm physically ; and if you and your family discharge your duties towards her as you ought, you may be the means of reclaiming that lapsed one—more sinned against than sinning—lapsed, not lost, but ultimately restored to both society and herself. So you transact a true charity—“saving a soul from death,” and “hiding a multitude

of sins." 3. Besides the practice of every method of private charity thus, we would greatly multiply the number of public reformatory institutions for the general class of prostitutes. A Magdalene asylum here and there, of most limited range, and struggling annually for bare existence, is a mockery. If society will be true to itself in this matter, it must learn wisdom in these things, and be a little more liberal, lest, by a parsimonious saving in such real charities, they too truly illustrate the proverbial folly of being "penny-wise and pounds-foolish." Give the poor victims but an opportunity for escape—gladly and gratefully large numbers will avail themselves of it. The result cannot but prove successful—in proportion to the extent of the means used, and the energy and wisdom of the working; all the more if these means do not stop at mere reformation for the time, but seek to confirm that, so far as may be, by providing means for suitable employment and maintenance afterwards. There is, of course, the same necessity for such arrangements in the case of the inmates of reformatory institutions, as in regard to those whose better feelings may have been successfully worked upon in hospitals during treatment there for disease. We are glad to know that an effort is being made, of this kind, in Edinburgh, in addition to the Magdalene Asylum and Female Shelter already existing there. For some years past a few benevolent ladies have nobly exerted themselves to reclaim their fallen sisters, so far as limited pecuniary means would allow, in maintaining, on a limited scale, a Female Industrial Home. Success attend them! We have heard that some of their friends and neighbours have looked on with averted eye, and in silly prudery (or at least most mistaken prudence) have denounced such handling of the "unclean thing" as derogatory to womanly modesty, lady-like propriety, and Christian duty. What a woeful blunder! Had we their ear, we would take leave to tell them, that shame—black-burning shame—lies all the other way: *theirs* is the scandal, in holding back from such self-denying, loving, true philanthropy. All honour to the few who persevere, notwithstanding such discouragements! They already have the reward of approving consciences, under a sense of duty *manfully* performed; may they enjoy, besides, and that soon, such abundant success as shall command respect, disarm prejudice, and secure ample co-operation!

12. We must conclude, and yet we cannot leave this imperfect enumeration of remedial means without at least naming the greatest

of them all, that which bears down all vice and immorality, of every form and degree—the faithful preaching of the Gospel—the promulgation of that faith which alone, of all creeds under the sun, inculcates chastity purely on moral and religious grounds. As that power is brought more and more to bear upon the masses, they will obtain their true power of elevation. Other things may raise, but this raises higher than all; and, moreover, this alone—personal religion in the individual heart—has the power of *keeping up* the elevation.

While the pulpit both thunders forth the terrors of the law, and soothes and seeks the lost with gentlest whispering of the glad and glorious tidings of the Gospel, we would venture to bespeak a little more of special “preaching to the times” in reference to the subject now in hand. As in secular education of our youth, so in religious training of our people, it has been too much the custom hitherto to slur over the sin of uncleanness, under a mistaken sense of delicacy. The pulpit, as well as the platform, has been fairly roused against the crying sin of intemperance, and many a powerful sermon is being preached against that debasing vice. We would not have one fewer of these; but, while that good work is both continued and enlarged, we would ask the clergy to consider whether the sin of uncleanness, with all its manifold evils, concomitant and resulting, be not quite as frequent and flagrant in our midst, and as urgently waiting for the Gospel’s remedy. Such consideration, we cannot doubt, would lead many to bewail past remissness in this, and add them as zealous fellow-labourers with those who “have not shunned to declare *all* the counsel of God,” and who are therefore “pure from the blood of all men.”

And now we have done. Our main object has been to place, according to our ability and belief, the “social evil” on the right platform of treatment; exposing specially the fatal fallacy of assuming it to be inevitable and ineradicable—temporary and transitory, too, to the female victims—and therefore to be palliated and “recognised.” The recent authors to whom we have specially referred, regard this social disease as incurable, and content themselves, accordingly, with mere palliation of the symptoms; a mode of treatment, unfortunately, which, while fulfilling but imperfectly even that minor indication, tends to strengthen and fix the radical evil all the more securely in the system. We, on the contrary, believe the disease to be curable—chronic and obstinate, and all

the more obstinate because chronic—but *curable nevertheless*, in due time and under right treatment; and the indications of that treatment we hold to be, not mere palliation of the symptoms, but, *along with this*, such radical and constitutional appliances as shall even now *weaken* the evil's constitutional hold, and ultimately *shake it off altogether*. Or, to take the similitude these authors themselves employ, we find a foul and swollen river rushing through the land. We do not seek to *dam that up at once*, knowing that such foolish effort would but entail, ere long, a greater inundation. Neither do we dream of providing suitable "*channels*" for the stream, as they would have us do; fearing, not without reason, that such a system of *irrigation* would but ensure a more fatal saturation of all our fields. We would protect these by *embanking*, so as to keep the troubled and troubling waters in their own contracted and contracting bed, *while, at the same time, we deal with the rills and risings at the source, so as to diminish the strength and volume of the stream even now, not without hope of at length reducing it to the shrunk and scanty level of a summer's drought*.

Are we told that our scheme is utopian? We answer that it might be liable to such a stigma, were our expectations instant. To contemplate an immediate cure, by such or any appliances, were indeed foolish. But to use the means which science, reason, and religion recommend, and to await the due results of such working, in faith, hope, and patience, is no utopianism.

"Let us then be up and doing,
[Battling bravely for our fate;]
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait."

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