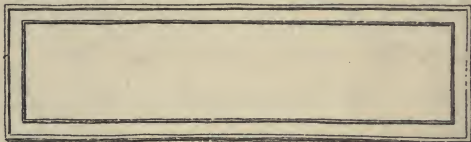
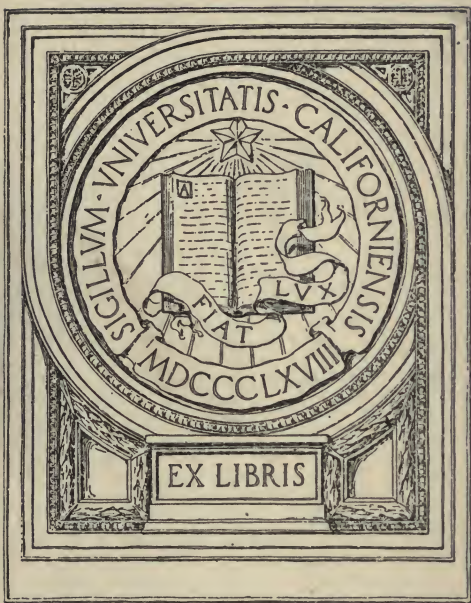


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# THE GIRL THAT DISAPPEARS

*The Real Facts About  
The White Slave Traffic*

BY

GEN. THEODORE A. BINGHAM

*Former Police Commissioner for Greater New York*



BOSTON

RICHARD G. BADGER

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THE GIRL THAT DISAPPEARS



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# THE GIRL THAT DISAPPEARS

## I

### NAMELESS AND UNKNOWN

**D**URING my three and a half years as Commissioner of Police of Greater New York, no experience affected me more than an incident which in itself was considered worth no more than a paragraph in the newspapers. Identically the same incident has happened in a dozen cities, allowing, of course, for variation in details.

It was at the hour when the city was on its way home from work. Crowds of men and girls filled the sidewalks and overflowed the streets. The trolley cars clanged their way slowly, drivers of drays and wagons

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kept up a chorus of warning shouts as they threaded their horses in and out the procession. Even with all the care that drivers and motormen can exert, accidents happen. On this particular day a girl darted in front of a trolley car. She was ground under the wheels. Muscular arms lifted the heavy trucks. Some one sent in a call for an ambulance, but before its gong was heard in the distance the girl was dead.

As a rule it is not impossible to identify almost at once, even an obscure girl thus suddenly cut off, but in this case search of the girl's body revealed not one single clue to her identity. She was literally nameless and unknown.

The body was removed to the morgue and an appeal sent to the newspapers in the hope of identification. And the most terribly sad feature of the tragedy was the number of men and women who flocked to the morgue—fathers and mothers and relatives of girls

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who had "disappeared." They had read in the newspapers of the accident, and despite disparities in the printed description and the appearance of their own lost one, they came to the morgue in the fearful hope of finding her.

## II

### WHERE DO THE "LOST" GIRLS GO?

**T**HIS story is one of many that could be told to illustrate the sinister fact that every year thousands of young girls disappear from their homes in the cities or go from the small towns to the cities and drop out forever from all knowledge of their families. What becomes of them? Where do they go? Why do they go? Into whose hands do they fall?

Some of them go down to nameless graves, but more go to a fate infinitely worse. What that fate is we all know, in a vague way at least; but, unfortunately, few of us are willing to realize that the thing is of any real concern to us personally. Not because we are heartless or cold or selfish do we Americans ignore the fact that we have a terrible

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social problem at our doors. No; our unwillingness to look the facts squarely in the face is due solely to inherited Puritanism. We have allowed ourselves to become convinced that we are morally superior to the people of Europe. Our belief in our superior purity is founded on ignorance or hypocrisy. We have made laws saying that the social evil shall not exist. Then we thoroughly blindfold ourselves and raise our hands in horror at any mention of the subject.

The plain, shocking facts are that this American attitude encourages the growth and spread of vice. It makes it possible for a girl to disappear from your town, from your own neighborhood, and be drawn into the net of the underworld. And until we overcome our timidity—and hypocrisy—and go after the situation frankly, vigorously, and openly, the social evil will continue to grow. It thrives on secrecy and hypocrisy.

It is time to discuss the whole question of

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our social demoralization without sensationalism or prejudice. It is time to take stock of the situation. We should get all the available data on the subject, consider it dispassionately, just as we would any other problem that affects our national life, see just what can be done in the way of a remedy, and then set about putting this remedy into effect.

I am willing to do my part by showing you the under-world as it is revealed to a chief of a police department in a great city. You must do your part by resolving to abandon timidity and hypocrisy. Do not hesitate to talk openly and frankly of the social evil in your town. Drive the facts out into the open, where every one must see them. If any considerable proportion of our citizens would do this for a year or two we would soon have this horrible problem under control at least.

So far as "white slavery" is concerned, if



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our people could know the facts, and could become convinced that such a thing exists they would rise up in fearful indignation and wipe it clean away from civilization.

### III

#### “WHITE SLAVERY” IS ONLY A PART

**W**ITHIN the last two years the world has heard a great deal of of what is called the white slave traffic, so much, indeed that the average reader probably believes that the white slave traffic is all there is to our social problem. As a matter of fact, it is only a part of it. The trouble is the public does not know the facts. What it has been given is a mass of unrelated and, for the most part, misunderstood or misinterpreted statements.

On the one hand the public has been told that there exists a regularly organized and incorporated body of men who live by enslaving women, that this body exists on an international scale, and that women are shipped like cattle from one side of the ocean

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to the other. On the other hand the public is assured that no such organization is in existence.

In the minds of one part of the public every woman of the under-world is a "white slave." Another half of the population scouts the idea that any woman is a white slave, and there we are.

The fact is that the social problem is a great deal wider and deeper than the published statements about the white slave traffic give any indication. But first let us take up and dispose of this particular phase of the social evil.

There is absolutely no question of the existence to an appalling extent of women who are veritable white slaves. At least 2,000 of them are brought into the country every year; brought in like cattle, used far worse than cattle, and disposed of for money like cattle. They are enticed from their homes by deceit, by promises of big pay for easy

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work in the United States, the land of gold. Generally the picture of what they are to find in this country is painted by one of their own countrymen, a man who has been in the United States and has returned for the fixed purpose of finding girls to take back with him. They do not know his real purpose until they are far from home. My observation and the police records convince me that fully ninety-five per cent. of all the so-called white slaves are foreigners, principally girls from France, Italy, Germany and Hungary. Very few of them understand English at all. This is necessarily so. It is part of the system to keep them ignorant of the language, ignorant of American customs, ignorant of their rights under American law. Otherwise, their masters would have difficulty in keeping them under subjection.

+ This does not mean, by any means, that girls from our own country—especially girls from small towns—are not drawn into the

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underworld by processes of deception practically identical to those used in Europe. Far from it. Time after time I have found where some scoundrel has lured a girl from home by promises or even by mock marriage and sold her or left her to the underworld. But she does not become a white slave. This distinction is rather difficult to grasp, but there is a distinction. The white slave, as we use the term in the police business, is a woman whose earnings are collected by a man. Why, you ask, would any woman permit that; why would not she appeal to the nearest policeman rather than live the life she lives and get in return the pittance her master allows her? A girl used to the ways of the United States will not submit for long; but a girl in a strange land, among strange people, can be cowed into doing so. Appeal to the police? Why, she has been terrorized into believing they would send her to prison if it were not for her mas-

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ter. That is why it is easier for a white slaver, when his victim dies—and the average life of a woman in the underworld scarcely exceeds five years—to go to Europe and bring a new victim from there. Easier and cheaper, he figures, in the long run.

As far back as 1902 the governments of Europe were well aware that there was such a thing as an international traffic in women. In July, 1902, delegates from various powers met in Paris and completed a project of arrangement for the suppression of white slave traffic. Within two years the stipulations of this project were signed by the governments of every European state. The Government of the United States was the last to sign, and was the last to bring itself to take any action. By an act of Congress of the United States in February, 1907, there was created a Congressional Immigration Commission to inquire into the traffic. Unfortunately the appropriation made was not

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large enough to enable the work of the commission to be especially valuable.

The white slave agitation reached a high point in 1908 and 1909. Various organizations and individuals became interested in investigations; newspapers and magazines took up the subject, and during the New York municipal campaign in the fall of 1909, one of the chief arguments used against Tammany Hall was the charge that white slavery had flourished in New York City under Tammany administrations.

Tammany, consequently, suffered severely in the 1909 election. The white slave charges got beneath the skin of the men who rule this powerful political organization. Before long the newspapers announced that a special grand jury would be appointed to investigate white slavery. It was obvious that something had to be done to "cleanse the fair name of our city," and incidentally to put Tammany back into some kind of dignity.

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The powers, which had persistently and consistently fought every moment, every piece of legislation which looked to the protection of women and girls, now announced, through a Tammany judge, a special grand jury to make a thorough inquiry into the white slave traffic in New York City.

The grand jury began its labors January 3, 1910. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., at first reluctant to assume the duties of foreman of the jury, finally accepted his responsibilities with earnestness and sincerity. Learning that the District Attorney's office was short of funds, Mr. Rockefeller offered the sum of \$20,000 for purposes of investigation. This offer was declined by the Mayor, and the Board of Estimates made a special appropriation of \$20,000 for the use of the District Attorney.

Of course none of these things was accomplished in silence. In fact, had the inquiry been instituted by friends and near relatives



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of the traffickers in women's shame, these men could not have been more effectually placed upon their guard. They were fairly megaphoned that they were in immediate danger of apprehension. Every edition of the daily papers shouted threats and warnings of what the special grand jury was about to do.

Charles S. Whitman, who had been elected District Attorney on an anti-Tammany ticket, and his assistants manifestly were working under extremely difficult conditions. White slavers carry on their business so quietly and shrewdly that detection and conviction is almost impossible even under the most favorable conditions. With all the newspapers trumpeting the danger, the white slave forces made themselves most inconspicuous and careful.

## IV

### WHY THE GRAND JURY'S INVESTIGATION WAS APPARENTLY A FAILURE

**T**HE work of the Rockefeller grand jury was in charge of Judge T. C. O'Sullivan, of the General Sessions Court. Judge O'Sullivan was elected to his position in 1905 on a Tammany ticket. Before that time he had been in turn counsel for the contracting company of Charles F. Murphy, leader of Tammany Hall, a State Senator, a Tammany Assemblyman and an active Tammany worker for years.

The grand jury's work dragged on through the winter and spring. Throughout Judge O'Sullivan insisted that the only point at issue was whether there existed a *formal organized corporate body* of men who were associated in the business of traf-

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ficking in women. It had to be a *formal* organization, not an *informal* one; the kind that could be got at with indictments, or Judge O'Sullivan would have none of it.

Eventually an effort was made to offer a presentment of the jury's findings so that the jury might be dismissed. Judge O'Sullivan refused to receive the presentment and relieve the jury of its responsibilities. "I will receive nothing but indictments," was his answer to Mr. Rockefeller.

Some weeks later he did receive the presentment, read it, and dismissed the jury with these words:

"Your answer to the main question submitted to you is a merited rebuke to the slanderers of the cleanest and greatest city in the world."

Grand jury presentments are given to the press only after they have been filed. This particular presentment was not filed until the time for publishing it in the evening papers

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was past. However, rather than disappoint the reporters, Judge O'Sullivan offered to tell them what the presentment contained. And it was the judge's interpretation, or his summary of the contents of the presentment and not the presentment itself, which was published in the newspapers.

The newspapers blazoned forth to the world the statement that the "Rockefeller Jury Reports No White Slavery," and the news articles read thus:

The presentment exonerated the city of being a clearing-house for organized traffic in leading young women into lives of shame and trafficking in them; it exonerated the New York Independent Benevolent Association by name from any share in such enterprise; it found a surprisingly large number of individuals engaged in leading young women astray and disposing of them to keepers of disorderly houses; a number of recommendations were made for the suppression of vice in the city.

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What the presentment really said was this:

It appears, from indictments found by us and from the testimony of witnesses, that trafficking in the bodies of women does exist and is carried on by individuals acting for their own individual benefit, and that these persons are known to each other and are more or less informally associated.

We have also found that associations and clubs, composed mainly or wholly of those profiting from vice, have existed, and that one such association still exists. These associations and clubs are analogous to commercial bodies in other fields, which, while not directly engaged in commerce as a body, are all as individuals so engaged.

This is how the grand jury "exonerated" The New York Independent Benevolent Association:

After an exhausted investigation into the activities of the association and of its members, we find no evidence that the association,

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as such, does now or has never trafficked in women, but that such traffic is being, or has been, carried on by various members as individuals.

This much was allowed to get into the papers, but the rest of the paragraph was discreetly omitted. Here it is:

We find that the members of this association are scattered in many cities throughout the United States. From the testimony adduced it appears probable that the social relation of the members and the opportunity thereby afforded of communicating with one another in various cities have facilitated the conduct of their individual business.

After citing a trenchant example of the closeness of relationship between the members of this exonerated band of worthies, the presentment goes on to state that by their own confession practically every member of the association is now, or has been in the not remote past, engaged in the operation of dis-

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orderly houses or in living upon the proceeds of women's shame. The document continues:

They claim, however, that all members who have been convicted of a crime are expelled from the organization when the proof of that fact has been submitted, the offense apparently being not the commission of a crime, but conviction. It would appear that this procedure is for the purpose of protecting the individual if possible, and failing in that, of freeing the association from criticism.

In reading the newspaper's reports of the Rockefeller findings, and comparing them with the original document, I am reminded of the old patent medicine man's system of preparing testimonials. He would receive a letter:

For years I have suffered from rheumatism, stomach troubles, and near-sightedness. I have used four bottles of your Elixir of

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Life. I followed directions carefully and the stuff is no good. I want my money back.

JOHN JONES.

P. S. I poured half of the last bottle down a wood chuck's hole. It worked a perfect cure. The wood chuck never came back.

When the letter appeared among his testimonials it read as follows:

For years I have suffered from rheumatism, stomach trouble, and near-sightedness. I have used four bottles of your Elixir of Life. . . . It worked a perfect cure.

JOHN JONES.



## V

### GIRLS AT \$60 AND \$75 EACH

**A**LTHOUGH the grand jury conscientiously admitted that they could not find the *organized* and *incorporated* traffic insisted upon by Judge O'Sullivan as the only game they were pursuing, the presentment recorded fifty-four indictments as a part of the work of the District Attorney's office. It also reported five self-declared dealers in women who had agreed to supply human flesh and blood to the grand jury's agents, but because of the fear aroused by the newspaper accounts of the grand jury's activities only two of these sales actually were effected. Two of these girls in one sale brought \$75 a piece, the other two in the other sale, \$60 each.

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All of these dealers boasted to the investigators of the extensive local and inter-state operations they had been able to carry on without fear of interference before the convening of the grand jury. They specifically named cities to which they had forwarded women regularly, and described their operations in the recent past as free from danger.

Of course the white slave dealers have no international *formal* or *incorporated* business organization. There could be none in the very nature of things; but, as the grand jury said, there is international traffic carried on by individuals. This was established beyond a reasonable doubt by the investigation started by the congressional commission. This congressional investigation showed that there was a connected chain of men and women trafficking in girls brought into this country to be used and sold as prostitutes. The chain has its largest center in New York and in Chicago, and branch connections in many other

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cities. It operates most freely in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Nome, Alaska, Omaha, Denver and New Orleans.

## VI

### HOW WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC IS CARRIED ON

**F**AIRLY well established prices are maintained for women, and they are referred to in letters that have been found as "stock." Few of these women are ruined or clubbed into submission after they reach the United States. London is known throughout the under-world as "the great breaking-in ground" for white slaves.

The majority of the men engaged in the traffic also are foreigners. One of the principal members was a Frenchman, Alphonse Dufaur, living in Chicago. His books of account showed that his earnings as an importer exceeded \$100,000 a year. After he and his wife were arrested they fled and forfeited bonds in the sum of \$25,000.

Another man, high in the ranks of the

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chain was Henry Lair, who ran a flourishing establishment in Chicago and San Francisco. One of the chief New York members was Louis Paint, both of these men were apprehended and are now serving penitentiary sentences.

In Chicago, where the most dramatic revelations were made, United States District Attorney Sims appointed one of his assistants, Harry Parkin, to make a detailed report on conditions in the so-called Levee district of the town. In the worst quarters of the town Mr. Parkin found houses where women were kept veritable prisoners. The windows were stoutly barred in these houses, the doors were padlocked, and the miserable inmates of the place were practically without clothing. Parkin found plenty of proof not only of the sale and barter of girls, natives as well as foreign, but he found evidence that the sales were carried on under the protection of the police.

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The agitation resulting from this report was so great as to shake up the entire police force and to destroy for the time being at least an organized system of graft which reached pretty high up in police and political circles. The notorious Gingles case was given the widest publicity of all these graft cases.

The Gingles girl was an Irish lace-maker. In Chicago she fell into the hands of a notorious group of women procurers, and, according to her story, was tricked into going to a Wabash Avenue hotel. By her sworn statement she was horribly mistreated by certain politicians. She was found gagged and bound in a bath room of the hotel. After she made her charges against the women and the politicians, one of the women, a dealer in lace, had the girl arrested on a charge of stealing lace from her.

The young lace-maker was warmly defended, and the money for her maintenance and her legal expenses was provided by club-

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women of Chicago. Perhaps this is the first instance in which a woman of the underworld was defended by an organization of women of high social standing. Members of the Chicago Club and a number of outside club women, led by Mrs. Ellen M. Henrotin, a society woman, raised money for the girl's defense, insisted upon a fair and impartial trial, even attended the hearings, in order to give moral support to the case.

But the case was simply a mass of contradictions of every kind, and one couldn't get head or tail of the thing. Everybody was found "not guilty," including the girl. It was simply hushed up, and the only thing that anybody seemed to want to prove was that no politicians were involved. The girl was sent back to Ireland after it was all over.

I could go on endlessly detailing the breadth of the white slave traffic. I would stake my reputation on my ability to take

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half a dozen conscientious investigators, and within a year to show five hundred specific cases of women lured from their homes in France, Hungary, or some other European country; taken first to London and there subjected to terrible forms of cruelty; and then brought to this country as slaves in every sense of the world.

Even with all this, white slavery is only a small part of the great social problem. The most important thing about white slavery is that it demonstrates the vast network of energy and skill spent in forcing and artificially stimulating the hideous evil of prostitution.



## VII

### NOW MAN'S BUSINESS, NOT WOMAN'S

**T**HIS brings us to a vital, shameful fact, too little known to the general public, but a fact policemen have impressed on them more and more every day; *prostitution as it exists as an international traffic and as a part of the life of every one of our big American cities, is no longer a WOMAN'S trade; it is a MAN'S trade.* There are women procurers, women importers, and women proprietors, it is true, but taken in the main the business is carried on by men, stimulated far beyond its natural proportions by men, and much of the profits are collected by men.

The girl who disappears lives on somewhere in the under-world for the money profit of men. These men who profit di-

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rectly from the shame of women fall into two classes—procurers and protectors. The classes overlap one another, and the men are often engaged in both ends of the business. The procurer, or the “cadet” as he is usually known, keeps up the supply of women, which, except for his industrious labors, would fall far below its present volume. For while it is undoubtedly true that women do adopt voluntarily a life of immorality, it is easy to prove that a large proportion of them must be forced or enticed into the life. If women in large numbers were willing to become prostitutes it would not be necessary to have such enormous machinery in order to recruit the ranks. The “cadet” himself would be unnecessary. But so unwilling are women to debase themselves that the “cadet,” the dance hall, the Raines Law hotel, false marriages, drink, and even physical force are necessary to keep the hideous thing alive.

## VIII

### A TYPICAL "CADET" HISTORY

**T**HE American born cadet, of Irish, Italian, or Jewish extraction, as a rule, is a graduate of the street gang. Usually he is familiar with the whole business of prostitution from his early childhood, and became immoral himself before he was fifteen.

Consider a typical history, a youth whose childhood was spent in an Irish-American neighborhood in the vicinity of Cherry Hill in New York. As the boy played around the front door of his tenement or climbed the stairs to his home he was often accosted by showily dressed women and girls who paid him liberally, according to his standards, to run errands to grocery or corner saloon. While still pathetically young the boy learned

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the nature of the trade of these women. He earned many quarters by standing on a saloon corner after school and handing their business cards to men passersby.

At twelve a loyal member of a neighborhood gang, the boy was thoroughly sophisticated, entirely cynical in his moral point of view. He had a social ideal which demanded as many of the material comforts and pleasures of life as came within his knowledge without the necessity of purchasing these things with his own labor.

## IX

### BOY AND GIRL MEMBERS OF GANGS

**P**RACTICALLY always these street gangs sooner or later add girls to their membership. These girls, when they are not too young to be employed, are factory operatives, cash girls or packers in department stores, or workers in other unskilled low-waged trades. To them the gang members are heroes, and they are proud to be taken into the gang's confidence and to share the proceeds of its petty thievery.

Sometimes each member of the gang has his girl, sometimes two or three girls are given the honor of quasi-membership in the gang and are the sweethearts of the gang's leaders. In either case immorality develops. Occasionally seduction is accomplished through the medium of the dance hall and

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its attendant drink evil, but in cases of this sort that is seldom necessary.

In any event the girl who falls, rarely attempts to reform. To her simple mind the one evil act has completely changed her life and character. She has acted the part of an immoral woman, and she believes that she has thereby joined the ranks of the permanently immoral.

In the history of this particular boy the girl was a sixteen-year-old telephone operator. The boy was seventeen, and he was already acquainted with the ways of vice. Although he professed, not insincerely, a sort of an affection for the girl, he began very soon to use her as a means of profit. He did it only occasionally and at periods of financial distress.

This went on for several months, when one day the young girl, with a girl companion of her own age, were arrested on the street, and taken to the night court. Fright-

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ened half out of his life the boy and the fellow gangster who was responsible for the second girl's delinquency, fled to Jersey City, where they waited in fear and trembling the result of the girl's examination. They might have spared themselves both the terror and the flight, for with the loyalty which girls of this class often possess, they resisted the questionings of the judge and the persuasion of the women probation officers. No amount of cajolery, reasoning or threats were able to induce them to reveal the names of their seducers.

That settled the matter as far as the boy of the incident was concerned. His career once started continued in consistent fashion. As time went on he graduated from the street gang into a district political club. The politicians in command of the district learned to know him as a faithful henchman, and at election times a conscientious repeater and strong arm man. They paid him for his

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services by protecting him and his "business interests" with the police.

He was now a full fledged "cadet." In the seven or eight years since he met and ruined the little telephone girl he has acted as a procurer of nearly fifty girls. For in this particular case the "cadet" found it more profitable and more temperamentally congenial to sell his victims to others for a stated price, rather than to hang on to them himself and share their earnings.



## X

### OTHER INSTANCES OF CADETS' WORK

**I**T may be a matter of profound mystery how these girls are led into a life so terrible. Policemen and women probation officers of the New York night court often come across unbelievable instances of ruin through innocence and ignorance. Not long ago a woman in probation work had brought to the door of her home a child scarcely sixteen years of age. The girl had been brought from a neighboring state by a male procurer. How he made the acquaintance of the girl, a factory worker, is not clear. It is only certain that he offered her easy work in New York City and that when she left her native town she had no idea of the life in store for her. Before she reached New York, however, she knew, but in such

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manner had her conductor described the life of the tenderloin to her, and so deep was the girl's ignorance of the physical facts of life, that she readily consented to the man's proposal.

The house to which he took her and from which he collected a commission is one of the most degraded resorts in the Borough of Manhattan. Any description of the place would be unprintable. It is sufficient to say that the little factory girl's mind became almost unbalanced. She could not comprehend the meaning of the scenes into which she was plunged. She could not take part in the riot and orgies of the place. After two or three days one of the women residents of the resort whose heart was not altogether corrupt, took pity on the child, and seizing the first opportunity led her to the home of the probation officer.

"There are some things even our kind cannot stand for," said the woman. Then

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she slipped back into the darkness.

The department store, especially in those divisions of it where wages are very low, is a regular stamping ground for the cadet. He picks out the attractive girl, scrapes up an acquaintance with her, and if he finds that she is without protection, so much the easier for him. He offers her opportunities for social enjoyment. He takes her to the theatre, to Central Park, to Coney Island. He commiserates her poor circumstances, and he points out to her handsome women dressed in costly gowns, riding in their motor cars. He tells her these were all wage earning women who discovered an easier way of life. Gradually the poison sinks into her mind, and soon there is another moth singeing its wings.

The strange part of it is that in a great measure he is pointing out to her the truth, for among the most beautiful gowns you will see in Central Park or on Fifth Avenue, many of them are worn by fallen women.

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For in the thirty thousand—these figures are not exaggeration, they are too conservative if anything—women engaged in the social evil in New York City there are many classes of women. There are some who live in the most magnificent luxury, whose incomes run far into the thousands. They, in most cases, are not the sort of women one generally puts under the heading of prostitutes. They have developed the business to a science and have a select and limited clientele. These women are held up to the girl who toils as glowing examples of success in life, but to the police eye they are one of the biggest factors in the social evil. They never place themselves in a position where arrest would be even remotely possible, and often are accounted persons of eminent respectability by their immediate neighbors.

Another level in the social scale of the half-world is occupied by the chorus girl, who had come to be an indispensable figure in the

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dramatic world. Most of these girls come to New York with the honest intention of earning a respectable living in the dramatic profession. Many of them do remain honest, but if they do the chances are strong that they advance little in their work, and their purity is retained only by overcoming numerous temptations. For so great a prize does the show girl become that there are in New York regular brokers who maintain in the theater districts secret agents to help them gain for any rich client the acquaintance of a girl whose face or figure has struck his fancy. Often the agent is some member of a chorus, and generally she is one who has been a previous victim. To these girls is held the lure of money, elegant clothing, wine dinners. Sometimes the basis is the offer of influence in gaining advancement on the stage.

## XI

### SYSTEM EMPLOYED TO MAKE WOMEN IMMORAL

**T**HAT, however, is only one of the many methods by which men persuade hitherto innocent and respectable girls to forget their homes and the teachings of their parents. They manage by very subtle ways. Remember that the average victim is of slight education. She belongs to a more or less helpless class. The procurer's task is rendered the easier on account of the victim's lack of intellectual resources. Let one of these unfortunates tell her own story.

She was a clerk in a Brooklyn department store, earning \$5.00 a week. The girl had no friends or relatives in the city, and how she managed to exist on such small wages

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I shall not venture to explain. She yielded to the solicitations of a chance acquaintance, a man who, on one pretense or another, haunted the scene of the girl's daily toil. He was a man of good address and apparent sincerity. When after a very short acquaintance he professed affection and offered marriage, the girl accepted. Any marriage seemed better to her than the ill-paid drudgery in which she had lived. The man represented to this young girl that he was the owner of a prosperous manicuring and hair-dressing establishment, and he proposed to her that she learn the trade and help him to carry on the business, a proposal to which she gladly acceded.

There was no misrepresentation as far as the manicuring establishment was concerned. It did in fact exist but it had immoral features connected with it.

Very soon after her marriage the young woman was introduced to a group of men

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who dropped in almost every evening to play cards and gossip with the proprietor of the establishment. It was strange talk that the former shop girl listened to. Tale after tale of girls who to show their faithfulness to their husbands in time of financial distress descended into the depths of degradation. These girls were always spoken of in terms of deepest admiration. Their deeds were extolled as examples of heroic self-sacrifice. Other tales more gruesome were unfolded. Tales of terrible retribution that followed attempts of the girls to free themselves. How one girl had wearied of her life and "selfishly" determined to escape from her master. How she slipped away one night, as she believed, without the knowledge of a living soul. Yet as she passed by an unlighted alley a mysterious figure darted out of the darkness and struck the girl fairly in the face with a razor. She arose, dazed and bleeding, her face slashed, her beauty ruined for



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life.

These tales multiplied until the mind of the young woman became saturated with terror. Yet when her husband made his first dreadful proposals to her she still retained strength of character to refuse to play the part he assigned her. He did not try to force her into a life of immorality but his treatment of her became cruel in the extreme.

This lasted for perhaps a fortnight, at the end of which time she was in a state of desperate fear. Then the man's cruelty ceased and he became kind and attentive once more. He begged her forgiveness for past harshness and suggested to her that they live on terms of mutual kindness and forbearance. The nature of the forbearance, as far as the girl was concerned, was apparent to her, but rather than face again the period of cruelty and abuse she consented to the immorality he had proposed for her in the beginning. Anything seemed to her better than the misery in

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which she had lived during those few terrible weeks.

Once having entered the life she saw no possible means of escape. Whenever the impulse to run away occurred to her she remembered the tales of slashing and murder related by her husband's associates. She became a veritable white slave. From that time on she was a pliant tool of the system.

It is by means of this kind, by an infernal knowledge of the psychology of woman's mind that the white slaver is able to manage his victims.

## XII

### SOME RECRUITED THROUGH ALLEGED EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

**I** CANNOT take the space here to discuss every means employed to ruin girls. I can only touch on the broader, more typical aspects of the situation. Among these must be mentioned evilly conducted employment agencies, which are now receiving merited attention by women's clubs and various reform organizations in all parts of the country. Here is a typical story, illustrative of this phase of the evil:

One day a man in Chicago received a note reading as follows:

"DEAR MR. BLANK: Please come down and see me at once. I am in trouble. Would like very much to see you. Come to Bob

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Grey Cafe, Twenty-first street and Armour Avenue. You will be surprised to find me there, but I could not help this.

“DOLLY J.”

According to the man's story, the girl who signed the note had been a waitress in a country hotel sometimes visited by him. The girl had been lured to Chicago under promise of more remunerative work and by a man who posed as an employment agent. He placed her in a house, which was to all intents and purposes, a prison. The girl had been kept there and most terribly abused for a period of some months. Believing her to be thoroughly broken in, her jailors were now permitting her the liberty of seeking customers in the saloons and cafes of the Levee district. Finding in the telephone book the address of the one man she knew in Chicago, she secretly wrote her pathetic appeal. She was rescued and sent back to her parents.

## XIII

### WORKING AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

**O**NE side of the wretched business of procuring has been too generally overlooked. I refer to the groups of men and half-grown boys who work in the vicinity of schools and throughout the tenement districts of the large cities. Their business is the debauching of little girls, children often too young to realize the nature of the degradation offered them. Yet after a short time the minds as well as the bodies of these poor children are so corrupted that they are literally ruined for any life except one of immorality.

These gangs and their victims are one of the principal recruiting systems of the evil. Constantly active, the gangs overlook no opportunity for plying their traffic. They hang

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around the evening schools to such an extent that many girls fear to go to school unattended. Recreation centers, play-grounds, and parks furnish fertile fields for their activities.

## XIV

### DANGEROUS DARKNESS IN MOVING PICTURE SHOWS

**M**UCH has been said of the participation of the moving picture show in the whole question of the social evil. Now the moving picture show and the nickelodeon are not in themselves bad things. The shows are rarely vicious, and within the last two years fully 90 per cent. of the motion picture films have been voluntarily subjected to censorship.

There is only one objection to the moving picture theater, and that is that it is conducted in darkness. This applies to about two-thirds of the cheap theaters. There is absolutely no excuse for this state of affairs. It costs only about \$25.00 to properly equip for lighting one of these theaters, and the

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light does not interfere with the effectiveness of the pictures.

The cheap theaters, the nickleodeon, the motion picture places are to young children from fourteen to sixteen what the dance hall is to the older girls and boys. It is true that in most places there are regulations forbidding the admission of children unaccompanied by their elders, but the regulations are to a very large extent ignored. To these theaters with their atmosphere of darkness and obscurity flock the procurer. No one can tell with any degree of accuracy how great his harvest has been, but it is certain that the dark theaters have been and still continue to be a terrible menace to the morals of young girls.



## XV

### THE POSITION OF THE PROTECTOR

**W**HERE the work of the cadet leaves off, the labors of the "protector" begin. He is the immoral woman's man of business. He is her friend, even her lover sometimes, and he is her master at all times.

The police know of many men who have no other vocation, who live entirely from the earnings of their women. Naturally you wonder why they do not arrest them and send them to prison or drive them from the community. There are several reasons. First of all stands the fact that these men make it one of the principal parts of their trade to "stand in" with the political powers. I do not and never have believed that Tammany, as much as I hate Tammany, offi-

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cially recognizes these fellows. But if they pay their dues regularly and perform their part willingly at election time, Tammany does not ask questions, and when a faithful henchman runs afoul of the police, Tammany will "take care" of him. Policemen know this. Some of them take bribe money to keep hands off, but even the honest men hesitate to arrest a man who is "strong" with the organization. They know, too, that conviction is impossible without the woman's testimony, and in only one case out of a hundred will she testify against her master. The magistrates, either because they are too much impressed by the old rule of letting a score of guilty men escape rather than convict one innocent, seem always to give the prisoner, never the policeman, the benefit of the doubt.

The immoral woman needs a protector as a matter of business. For just as the supply of immoral women is artificially stimulated, so must the demand for their services be arti-

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fically stimulated. There is not enough depravity in human nature to keep alive a very large business of prostitution. The immorality of women and the brutishness of man has to be persuaded, coaxed and constantly stimulated, in order to keep the social evil its present state of prosperity. The protector finds patrons for his women or for the house in which she works if she be a house dweller. He stands between her and the proprietor of a house who charges her three prices for board and for finery.

If she runs afoul of the police he uses his political pull to secure her release, or failing that he secures a lawyer for her. He takes care of her interests in business and in police court. If she is sent to Blackwell's Island he meets her on her release and provides her with money.

This protector may be selected by a woman after she has entered her life of immorality. She is bound to him by ties of affection

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as well as interest. He represents to her a certain domesticity. He is the one human being with whom she is on a sincere basis. Living in a world of lies, hypocrisy, and pretense, she stands in need of some one man to whom she can reveal her true mind.

Often the protector is also the "cadet," and in many cases he is the legal husband. Case after case has come to the knowledge of investigators where perfectly respectable girls have married in love and good faith men whose deliberate intention it was to live on the proceeds of their shame.

The laws against procuring are very strict, but making laws and enforcing laws are two radically different propositions. In enforcing laws on this particular subject, the police confront that same psychological phenomenon that saves many a protector from prison—the women, from fear or fancied loyalty or shame, will not testify against them. Now and then they do turn on the cadet, but I

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have known magistrates in New York and elsewhere to deal light sentences even then on the theory that "a woman of that sort cannot be believed, anyway."

## XVI

### REMEDIES THAT ARE POSSIBLE

**I** HAVE told you some pretty revolting things, but I believe it is necessary to tell them. There is only one excuse for a discussion, public or private, of the social evil. There is only one motive we can have in dealing with it, and that motive is a desire to find a remedy. There must be a cure, or at least there must be alleviation.

When I was police commissioner I received more than one deputation of clergymen, more than one individual clergyman, who came to me and said: "General Bingham, the street-walkers are parading up and down in front of my church, plying their infamous trade right under the eyes of the boys and girls who go to my Sunday school. Now you *must* drive them away."

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“Certainly,” I would say, “and where would you have me drive them?”

“I don’t care where you drive them, but get them away from my church you must.”

“How would it do,” I have asked these men, “for me to drive the street-walkers over to Dr. So-and-So’s church?”

And that is the way such conversation always must end. It’s very well to say “drive prostitution out,” but out where? It exists. It is a fact. You can’t kill a fact, but you can do something with it. And friends, as long as we fail to do something with it, we each and every one of us are guilty of participation in the social evil, for I assure you, that if prostitution were properly handled—I will make that stronger and say, wherever prostitution has been properly handled—the white slave traffic has been killed, and prostitution itself has been reduced to the minimum.

## XVII

### MAYOR "GOLDEN RULE" JONES SOLVED THE PROBLEM BY SEGREGATION

I CAN illustrate this point no better than by relating Toledo's experience. During the administration of the late Mayor Jones, "Golden Rule Jones," a deputation of clergymen called on Mayor Jones and told him that the city of Toledo demanded the suppressing of the social evil. Respectable people could bear it no longer; they demanded that every woman of ill repute be compelled to leave Toledo.

"Gentlemen," said Mayor Jones seriously, "not one of you loathes the social evil more than I. Not one of you would more gladly put a stop to the whole wretched business. And if you can suggest any way on earth in which it can be done, I shall be only to thank-



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ful to work with you. You say 'send these women out'—where shall we send them? To Cleveland? To Akron? Would that be fair? And if they remain here are you willing to help them earn an honest living? They have to keep on living you know. Are you willing to befriend them, uplift them, protect them? I will take one of them into my home. Will each of you?"

Of course they were not willing, not a man of them. Then, after a lot of discussion and hot words that got nowhere, Mayor Jones said:

"Gentlemen, I cannot drive these women out of town, I cannot suppress the social evil in Toledo. But I'll tell you what I can do, I can segregate it, I can control it. That much I can do and will do. How does it suit you?"

It suited nobody, and the delegation went out denouncing the "Golden Rule" administration bitterly. The Golden Rule, accord-

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ing to most people, is all very well in its place, that place being the New Testament. To apply it to the social evil is beyond the comprehension of the average clergyman or citizen.

Nevertheless Mayor Jones did segregate the evil and it remains segregated to this day.

This is how segregation worked in an Ohio city of 200,000 population. They confine the business to a certain quarter of the town. They allow street-walkers on no other streets except those designated. They allow no pianos, no noise, no revelry. Nothing exists in Toledo's red-light district except the plain, unadorned business of prostitution. The police rules governing it are few and simple. Every person in the district knows them by heart, and they know they have to obey them; otherwise, their business is broken up.

There is no such thing in Toledo as a white slave. The police would not permit it. Any woman in the district knows that as long as she obeys the police rules she may

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claim police protection. There is no such thing as police graft in Toledo. This is possible only because they have a thoroughly efficient, honest, and intelligent Chief of Police, and his work is *backed up* by an absolutely honest, sincere and intelligent mayor, Brand Whitlock.

Cleveland is another Ohio city which has had a police chief brave enough to acknowledge the fact that there is such a thing as a social evil. Chief Koher has dealt with the matter precisely as Mayor Jones dealt with it, and as Mayor Whitlock in Toledo continues to deal with it. They have their red-light district in Cleveland, but they have it thoroughly under control, and they have no white slavery. They have no such thing as a country girl lured to a house of ill repute under pretense of obtaining honest employment, and afterwards kept in horrid bondage. They have no such thing as a young immigrant girl, ignorant of the language, in

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fear of her life, being beaten into subjection  
and infamy by a brutal master.

## XVIII

### SUPPORTING CITIES BY LEVYING TRIBUTE ON FALLEN WOMEN

**A**BOVE all, they have no such criminal system that exists in New York City and in almost every city and town in the country of exacting tribute from these unfortunate women. I refer to that variety of hold-up known as the fining system. Go into the night court in New York City, into the police courts of any other city, and see the system work. The women are arrested on the streets, or in the houses, loaded in patrol wagons and brought to the police station. If it is in New York they are taken to Jefferson Market court, in which the night court holds its session. Brought before the judge the painted travesty of womanhood is put through the farce

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of a trial lasting from two minutes to ten minutes. The policeman swears that he saw her ply her trade. She denies it. No one except the policeman appears in the matter. If the magistrate is one of the "easy" ones he gives perhaps two-thirds of the women the benefit of a doubt and discharges them. It is perfectly plain that they belong to the class, but unless the policeman has a pretty strong story to tell the woman gets off. Others less fortunate walk over to the clerk's desk, pay a fine and walk out.

Thus the farce goes on, and thus does the city share in the wages of women's shame. In some cities the schools are partially supported, the libraries and public parks are kept up on the proceeds of a trade so hideous that the good people who send their children to school and who patronize the libraries and parks will not permit mention of it. In order that the schools may be maintained and the children of the city receive an

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education, it is regarded as necessary that these raids and fines be made with systematic regularity. Can any good and respectable citizen explain the difference between regular and systematic fining and the license system?

It is true that if the fining system were given up a large masculine population would suffer severe financial loss. The fining system is the most prolific source of police graft in existence. Magistrates, be it known, are of two varieties, hard and easy. The police know, and the women know, that a hard magistrate is sitting, and the women are willing to pay a pretty heavy graft in order to avoid arrest. I firmly believe that fully eighty-five per cent. of the police of New York City are honest men, but the honest policeman, like other honest men, are more or less quiescent. The fifteen per cent. who are grafters, are active. They are always on the alert. The grafters are men powerful in politics and they are able to do a terrific amount

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of hold-up work among the unclassed. It is always easier and cheaper for the woman to pay bribe money than to go to court. So she, or her protector, sound out a new man on a beat or a new captain in a station. They may send him presents at first. If he shows a disposition to treat with them, they pay always in advance.

In point of numbers, much larger than grafting policemen, is another masculine population which flourishes under the fining system. The night court in New York was established for the definite purpose of abolishing these men, and it has been partially successful. In other cities, however, the tribe flourishes. I am speaking of the professional bondsman necessary to a woman to whom arrest means detention over night and a loss of a night's earnings. The system as it used to operate in New York, and still operates in some cities, is for each one to employ a "trailer," an individual who hires himself out



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to follow the unfortunate woman, and in case of her arrest to report by telephone to one of the professional bondsmen, often a saloon keeper, or the owner of property used for immoral purposes. Promptly he appears and gives bail for the woman's appearance the next day in court. For this service he receives \$5 or more from the woman, who is then able to go forth and earn the money which she must pay next morning in court.

## XIX

### LITTLE USE FOR THE ONE RATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR FALLEN WOMEN

**L**ESS than fifty miles from New York City there is an institution known as the Bedford Reformatory. It exists for the reformation of delinquent women, and once in a great while a city magistrate will send a woman there instead of to the workhouse. I think I saw it stated that in the year 1909 three thousand women were sent to the workhouse and eleven to Bedford. This does not argue malevolence on the part of the magistrates. The fact is they cannot get it out of their heads that sending a woman to a reformatory is a punishment. They can't imagine doing anything for an unfortunate woman except punishing her; and Bedford they consider a

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very severe punishment indeed. Why? Because women must be committed to Bedford on an indeterminate sentence, the limit being three years, and many a magistrate has been quoted as saying that a three years' sentence was too severe.

The falsity of this position is apparent to anybody who knows anything about the system in vogue at Bedford. Under the superintendency of Miss Katherine Bement Davis, Bedford presents a perfectly rational plan for the reformation of those women who have not sunk too low for the helping hand to grasp. It is operated on the cottage system, the women proceeding from a fairly severe degree of detention and discipline to the lightest possible. They are first taken to a reception cottage, carefully examined by a competent woman physician, and, if necessary, segregated in a hospital.

As soon as a woman is placed in a normal state of mind and body she is given work to

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do, household work of course, but other work as well according to her individual capacity. A great deal of gardening and outdoor work is done at Bedford, and the handsome concrete walk and long flight of steps across the grounds is entirely the work of women's hands. A group of unusually strong and muscular women did the work, and when it was finished the other women in their cottages rewarded them with a banquet.

Putting all prejudice, all hypocrisy aside, what system seems to you most sensible, most humane, most civilized, most Christian. The old system of closing our eyes to facts, denying the plain truth, and allowing a monstrous evil to exist unchanged; to allow countless thousands of its miserable victims to suffer infamy, pain and death; to permit that monstrous thing fitly termed "the black plague" to continue year after year, maiming and destroying innocent women and children; to acknowledge the truth, segregate and control

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it and establish institutions like Bedford for the rescue of those women and girls still capable of being rescued?

## XX

### THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

**H**AD I remained at the head of the New York police six months longer I would have segregated the social evil there. I had my plans all worked out. I intended to divide the city into four districts, North, South, East and West. In each of these parts of New York there is now a portion given over to buildings that are used mostly for prostitution. If there are decent families among them it would be better for them to move. I would have had them moved, and there would have been border lines established beyond which the women of the under-world would have been prohibited to go. Eventually I would have instructed the policemen detailed to this district, to stop strangers entering it, and to tell them where they were going. Then, if

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the man wanted to continue on his way, he would be allowed to do so. But the thing would have been made as unattractive as possible. There would have been no bright lights, and none of the glamour that surrounds certain phases of the evil in New York City now.

This would not have stamped out the social evil, but it would have reduced it to a minimum.

It would have removed the low-priced prostitute from the tenement house. At the present time, in almost every large tenement house inhabited by from twenty to forty or more families, you will find at least one woman who follows the calling in her dwelling. In the same house you will find many young girls and boys to whom her presence is a menace, and frequently a contagion. Of the agencies which tend to break down among the poor the natural feeling against the evil, the presence of these flashily dressed women

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of the streets as neighbors is of terrible importance. The prostitute invariably is better dressed than her neighbors. In fact, she is, in the parlance of the slums, "a swell dresser." She can spend her days idly in her home. At night she is supposed to frequent public places of amusement and to have "a good time of it." Her life is one of ease, luxury, and enjoyment, in the eyes of her neighbors. Creature comforts count for much with most of us. To the very poor, especially the very poor shopgirls who work in the big stores with all their atmosphere of spending and pleasure, the urge of life is particularly keen. And it would have done away with white slavery, for where the protector cannot hold over a woman the fear that she is doing something that lays her liable to immediate arrest, he cannot keep her in his clutches. I would have been criticised, and I expected it. I will be criticised for this book, and I expect that; but I found



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that there were enough people really willing to think about a problem of this sort to make me feel that I would have the support of those brave enough not to be hypocrites.

I believe there is another thing we should do in this country, and, it, too, is a step immediately following clearing away the cobwebs of Puritanism. We should have in Europe a spy system modeled in a way after the customs spy service of the United States Government. It would not need to be so extensive as the customs service, and it could be maintained at an expense that is slight when compared with the cost in human misery of our present indifference; but a few alert men could discover and prevent many of the cases where girls are shipped from the London "breaking in ground." At least they could diminish the traffic by getting the evidence necessary to deport the girl when she arrives in the United States and send her back to her home. Of course, the societies

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that watch over the immigrant do a great deal of good along this line; but the procurers have become wise as time has passed. They no longer send their women in the steerage. They are dressed well and they travel second class. Often a woman ally of the procurer, fashionably gowned, meets them on the dock to give a look of regularity to the story that the girl has come to serve as maid or companion in a well-to-do family.

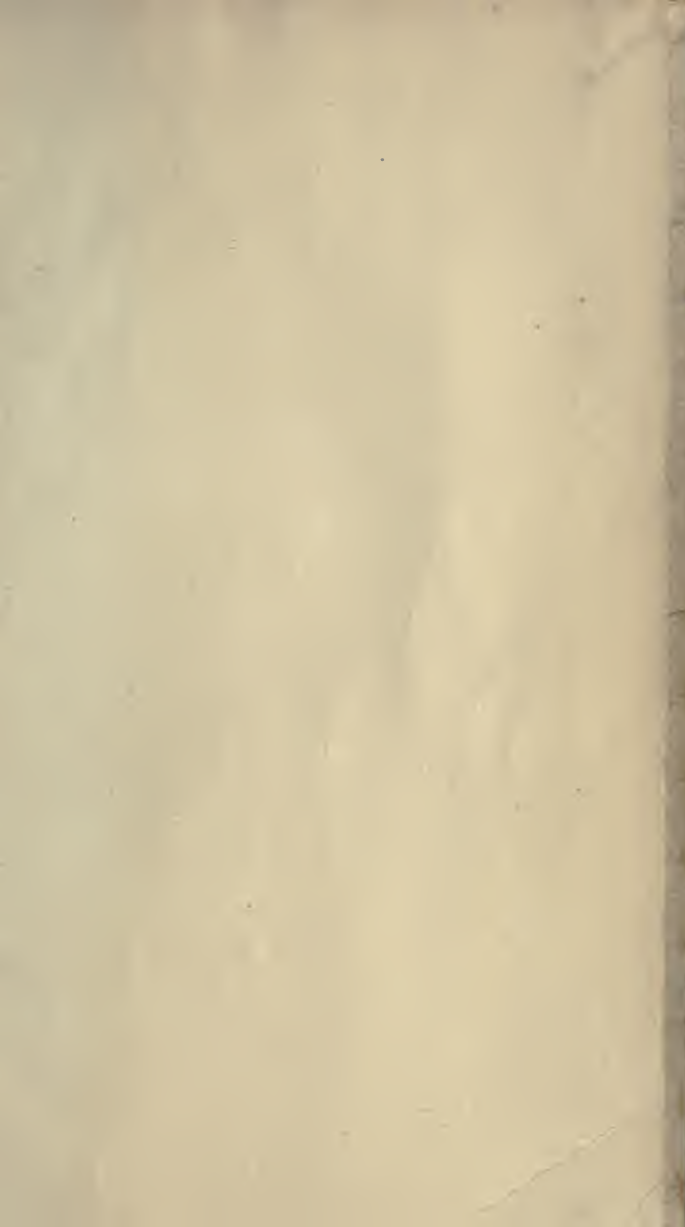
Then there should be more coöperation between immigration officials and the police. Time after time I found that when we in the police department in New York got on the trail of women being imported, and reported the facts to the officials at Ellis Island, the women would get into the country in some mysterious way despite our efforts. The hearing would be set for one day, and would be held sometime previous without the Police Department being notified, or some one of a dozen other ruses would be used.



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And don't you see, my reader, this all comes back to you. These things would not be possible if it were not for the hypocrisy that surrounds the social evil with secrecy. If you become alive in the situation mayors will have to support their chiefs of police, and I don't think there is a head of a police department in the United States who would not rejoice in an opportunity to do his share to crush the evil. When you look at it this way, when you see the thing as I do, it is not a problem. It is only a question: Do you want to face this phase of our life as a fact, see it handled as a fact, frankly and openly, and remedied as a fact?

ALPHABET



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