

JANE ADDAMS

A NEW CONSCIENCE
AND AN ANCIENT EVIL

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A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil / J. Addams — «Public Domain»,

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PREFACE

The following material, much of which has been published in *McClure's Magazine*, was written, not from the point of view of the expert, but because of my own need for a counter-knowledge to a bewildering mass of information which came to me through the Juvenile Protective Association of Chicago. The reports which its twenty field officers daily brought to its main office adjoining Hull House became to me a revelation of the dangers implicit in city conditions and of the allurements which are designedly placed around many young girls in order to draw them into an evil life.

As head of the Publication Committee, I read the original documents in a series of special investigations made by the Association on dance halls, theatres, amusement parks, lake excursion boats, petty gambling, the home surroundings of one hundred Juvenile Court children and the records of four thousand parents who clearly contributed to the delinquency of their own families. The Association also collected the personal histories of two hundred department-store girls, of two hundred factory girls, of two hundred immigrant girls, of two hundred office girls, and of girls employed in one hundred hotels and restaurants.

While this experience was most distressing, I was, on the other hand, much impressed and at times fairly startled by the large and diversified number of people to whom the very existence of the white slave traffic had become unendurable and who promptly responded to any appeal made on behalf of its victims. City officials, policemen, judges, attorneys, employers, trades unionists, physicians, teachers, newly arrived immigrants, clergymen, railway officials, and newspaper men, as under a profound sense of compunction, were unsparing of time and effort when given an opportunity to assist an individual girl, to promote legislation designed for her protection, or to establish institutions for her rescue.

I therefore venture to hope that in serving my own need I may also serve the need of a rapidly growing public when I set down for rational consideration the temptations surrounding multitudes of young people and when I assemble, as best I may, the many indications of a new conscience, which in various directions is slowly gathering strength and which we may soberly hope will at last successfully array itself against this incredible social wrong, ancient though it may be.

*Hull House,
Chicago.*

CHAPTER I AN ANALOGY

In every large city throughout the world thousands of women are so set aside as outcasts from decent society that it is considered an impropriety to speak the very word which designates them. Lecky calls this type of woman “the most mournful and the most awful figure in history”: he says that “she remains, while creeds and civilizations rise and fall, the eternal sacrifice of humanity, blasted for the sins of the people.” But evils so old that they are imbedded in man’s earliest history have been known to sway before an enlightened public opinion and in the end to give way to a growing conscience, which regards them first as a moral affront and at length as an utter impossibility. Thus the generation just before us, our own fathers, uprooted the enormous upas of slavery, “the tree that was literally as old as the race of man,” although slavery doubtless had its beginnings in the captives of man’s earliest warfare, even as this existing evil thus originated.

Those of us who think we discern the beginnings of a new conscience in regard to this twin of slavery, as old and outrageous as slavery itself and even more persistent, find a possible analogy between certain civic, philanthropic and educational efforts directed against the very existence of this social evil and similar organized efforts which preceded the overthrow of slavery in America. Thus, long before slavery was finally declared illegal, there were international regulations of its traffic, state and federal legislation concerning its extension, and many extra legal attempts to control its abuses; quite as we have the international regulations concerning the white slave traffic, the state and interstate legislation for its repression, and an extra legal power in connection with it so universally given to the municipal police that the possession of this power has become one of the great sources of corruption in every American city.

Before society was ready to proceed against the institution of slavery as such, groups of men and women by means of the underground railroad cherished and educated individual slaves; it is scarcely necessary to point out the similarity to the rescue homes and preventive associations which every great city contains.

It is always easy to overwork an analogy, and yet the economist who for years insisted that slave labor continually and arbitrarily limited the wages of free labor and was therefore a detriment to national wealth was a forerunner of the economist of to-day who points out the economic basis of the social evil, the connection between low wages and despair, between over-fatigue and the demand for reckless pleasure.

Before the American nation agreed to regard slavery as unjustifiable from the standpoint of public morality, an army of reformers, lecturers, and writers set forth its enormity in a never-ceasing flow of invective, of appeal, and of portrayal concerning the human cruelty to which the system lent itself. We can discern the scouts and outposts of a similar army advancing against this existing evil: the physicians and sanitarians who are committed to the task of ridding the race from contagious diseases, the teachers and lecturers who are appealing to the higher morality of thousands of young people; the growing literature, not only biological and didactic, but of a popular type more closely approaching “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

Throughout the agitation for the abolition of slavery in America, there were statesmen who gradually became convinced of the political and moral necessity of giving to the freedman the protection of the ballot. In this current agitation there are at least a few men and women who would extend a greater social and political freedom to all women if only because domestic control has proved so ineffectual.

We may certainly take courage from the fact that our contemporaries are fired by social compassions and enthusiasms, to which even our immediate predecessors were indifferent. Such

compunctions have ever manifested themselves in varying degrees of ardor through different groups in the same community. Thus among those who are newly aroused to action in regard to the social evil are many who would endeavor to regulate it and believe they can minimize its dangers, still larger numbers who would eliminate all trafficking of unwilling victims in connection with it, and yet others who believe that as a quasi-legal institution it may be absolutely abolished. Perhaps the analogy to the abolition of slavery is most striking in that these groups, in their varying points of view, are like those earlier associations which differed widely in regard to chattel slavery. Only the so-called extremists, in the first instance, stood for abolition and they were continually told that what they proposed was clearly impossible. The legal and commercial obstacles, bulked large, were placed before them and it was confidently asserted that the blame for the historic existence of slavery lay deep within human nature itself. Yet gradually all of these associations reached the point of view of the abolitionist and before the war was over even the most lukewarm unionist saw no other solution of the nation's difficulty. Some such gradual conversion to the point of view of abolition is the experience of every society or group of people who seriously face the difficulties and complications of the social evil. Certainly all the national organizations—the National Vigilance Committee, the American Purity Federation, the Alliance for the Suppression and Prevention of the White Slave Traffic and many others—stand for the final abolition of commercialized vice. Local vice commissions, such as the able one recently appointed in Chicago, although composed of members of varying beliefs in regard to the possibility of control and regulation, united in the end in recommending a law enforcement looking towards final abolition. Even the most sceptical of Chicago citizens, after reading the fearless document, shared the hope of the commission that “the city, when aroused to the truth, would instantly rebel against the social evil in all its phases.” A similar recommendation of ultimate abolition was recently made unanimous by the Minneapolis vice commission after the conversion of many of its members. Doubtless all of the national societies have before them a task only less gigantic than that faced by those earlier associations in America for the suppression of slavery, although it may be legitimate to remind them that the best-known anti-slavery society in America was organized by the New England abolitionists in 1836, and only thirty-six years later, in 1872, was formally disbanded because its object had been accomplished. The long struggle ahead of these newer associations will doubtless claim its martyrs and its heroes, has indeed already claimed them during the last thirty years. Few righteous causes have escaped baptism with blood; nevertheless, to paraphrase Lincoln's speech, if blood were exacted drop by drop in measure to the tears of anguished mothers and enslaved girls, the nation would still be obliged to go into the struggle.

Throughout this volume the phrase “social evil” is used to designate the sexual commerce permitted to exist in every large city, usually in a segregated district, wherein the chastity of women is bought and sold. Modifications of legal codes regarding marriage and divorce, moral judgments concerning the entire group of questions centring about illicit affection between men and women, are quite other questions which are not considered here. Such problems must always remain distinct from those of commercialized vice, as must the treatment of an irreducible minimum of prostitution, which will doubtless long exist, quite as society still retains an irreducible minimum of murders. This volume does not deal with the probable future of prostitution, and gives only such historical background as is necessary to understand the present situation. It endeavors to present the contributory causes, as they have become registered in my consciousness through a long residence in a crowded city quarter, and to state the indications, as I have seen them, of a new conscience with its many and varied manifestations.

Nothing is gained by making the situation better or worse than it is, nor in anywise different from what it is. This ancient evil is indeed social in the sense of community responsibility and can only be understood and at length remedied when we face the fact and measure the resources which may at length be massed against it. Perhaps the most striking indication that our generation has become the bearer of a new moral consciousness in regard to the existence of commercialized vice is the fact that the mere contemplation of it throws the more sensitive men and women among our contemporaries

into a state of indignant revolt. It is doubtless an instinctive shrinking from this emotion and an unconscious dread that this modern sensitiveness will be outraged, which justifies to themselves so many moral men and women in their persistent ignorance of the subject. Yet one of the most obvious resources at our command, which might well be utilized at once, if it is to be utilized at all, is the overwhelming pity and sense of protection which the recent revelations in the white slave traffic have aroused for the thousands of young girls, many of them still children, who are yearly sacrificed to the “sins of the people.” All of this emotion ought to be made of value, for quite as a state of emotion is invariably the organic preparation for action, so it is certainly true that no profound spiritual transformation can take place without it.

After all, human progress is deeply indebted to a study of imperfections, and the counsels of despair, if not full of seasoned wisdom, are at least fertile in suggestion and a desperate spur to action. Sympathetic knowledge is the only way of approach to any human problem, and the line of least resistance into the jungle of human wretchedness must always be through that region which is most thoroughly explored, not only by the information of the statistician, but by sympathetic understanding. We are daily attaining the latter through such authors as Sudermann and Elsa Gerusalem, who have enabled their readers to comprehend the so-called “fallen” woman through a skilful portrayal of the reaction of experience upon personality. Their realism has rescued her from the sentimentality surrounding an impossible Camille quite as their fellow-craftsmen in realism have replaced the weeping Amelias of the Victorian period by reasonable women transcribed from actual life.

The treatment of this subject in American literature is at present in the pamphleteering stage, although an ever-increasing number of short stories and novels deal with it. On the other hand, the plays through which Bernard Shaw constantly places the truth before the public in England as Brieux is doing for the public in France, produce in the spectators a disquieting sense that society is involved in commercialized vice and must speedily find a way out. Such writing is like the roll of the drum which announces the approach of the troops ready for action.

Some of the writers who are performing this valiant service are related to those great artists who in every age enter into a long struggle with existing social conditions, until after many years they change the outlook upon life for at least a handful of their contemporaries. Their readers find themselves no longer mere bewildered spectators of a given social wrong, but have become conscious of their own hypocrisy in regard to it, and they realize that a veritable horror, simply because it was hidden, had come to seem to them inevitable and almost normal.

Many traces of this first uneasy consciousness regarding the social evil are found in contemporary literature, for while the business of literature is revelation and not reformation, it may yet perform for the men and women now living that purification of the imagination and intellect which the Greeks believed to come through pity and terror.

Secure in the knowledge of evolutionary processes, we have learned to talk glibly of the obligations of race progress and of the possibility of racial degeneration. In this respect certainly we have a wider outlook than that possessed by our fathers, who so valiantly grappled with chattel slavery and secured its overthrow. May the new conscience gather force until men and women, acting under its sway, shall be constrained to eradicate this ancient evil!

CHAPTER II

RECENT LEGAL ENACTMENTS

At the present moment even the least conscientious citizens agree that, first and foremost, the organized traffic in what has come to be called white slaves must be suppressed and that those traffickers who procure their victims for purely commercial purposes must be arrested and prosecuted. As it is impossible to rescue girls fraudulently and illegally detained, save through governmental agencies, it is naturally through the line of legal action that the most striking revelations of the white slave traffic have come. For the sake of convenience, we may divide this legal action into those cases dealing with the international trade, those with the state and interstate traffic, and the regulations with which the municipality alone is concerned.

First in value to the white slave commerce is the girl imported from abroad who from the nature of the case is most completely in the power of the trader. She is literally friendless and unable to speak the language and at last discouraged she makes no effort to escape. Many cases of the international traffic were recently tried in Chicago and the offenders convicted by the federal authorities. One of these cases, which attracted much attention throughout the country, was of Marie, a French girl, the daughter of a Breton stone mason, so old and poor that he was obliged to take her from her convent school at the age of twelve years. He sent her to Paris, where she became a little household drudge and nurse-maid, working from six in the morning until eight at night, and for three years sending her wages, which were about a franc a day, directly to her parents in the Breton village. One afternoon, as she was buying a bottle of milk at a tiny shop, she was engaged in conversation by a young man who invited her into a little patisserie where, after giving her some sweets, he introduced her to his friend, Monsieur Paret, who was gathering together a theatrical troupe to go to America. Paret showed her pictures of several young girls gorgeously arrayed and announcements of their coming tour, and Marie felt much flattered when it was intimated that she might join this brilliant company. After several clandestine meetings to perfect the plan, she left the city with Paret and a pretty French girl to sail for America with the rest of the so-called actors. Paret escaped detection by the immigration authorities in New York, through his ruse of the "Kinsella troupe," and took the girls directly to Chicago. Here they were placed in a disreputable house belonging to a man named Lair, who had advanced the money for their importation. The two French girls remained in this house for several months until it was raided by the police, when they were sent to separate houses. The records which were later brought into court show that at this time Marie was earning two hundred and fifty dollars a week, all of which she gave to her employers. In spite of this large monetary return she was often cruelly beaten, was made to do the household scrubbing, and was, of course, never allowed to leave the house. Furthermore, as one of the methods of retaining a reluctant girl is to put her hopelessly in debt and always to charge against her the expenses incurred in securing her, Marie as an imported girl had begun at once with the huge debt of the ocean journey for Paret and herself. In addition to this large sum she was charged, according to universal custom, with exorbitant prices for all the clothing she received and with any money which Paret chose to draw against her account. Later, when Marie contracted typhoid fever, she was sent for treatment to a public hospital and it was during her illness there, when a general investigation was made of the white slave traffic, that a federal officer visited her. Marie, who thought she was going to die, freely gave her testimony, which proved to be most valuable.

The federal authorities following up her statements at last located Paret in the city prison at Atlanta, Georgia, where he had been convicted on a similar charge. He was brought to Chicago and on his testimony Lair was also convicted and imprisoned.

Marie has since married a man who wishes to protect her from the influence of her old life, but although not yet twenty years old and making an honest effort, what she has undergone has apparently so far warped and weakened her will that she is only partially successful in keeping her resolutions, and she sends each month to her parents in France ten or twelve dollars, which she confesses to have earned illicitly. It is as if the shameful experiences to which this little convent-bred Breton girl was forcibly subjected, had finally become registered in every fibre of her being until the forced demoralization has become genuine. She is as powerless now to save herself from her subjective temptations as she was helpless five years ago to save herself from her captors.

Such demoralization is, of course, most valuable to the white slave trader, for when a girl has become thoroughly accustomed to the life and testifies that she is in it of her own free will, she puts herself beyond the protection of the law. She belongs to a legally degraded class, without redress in courts of justice for personal outrages.

Marie, herself, at the end of her third year in America, wrote to the police appealing for help, but the lieutenant who in response to her letter visited the house, was convinced by Lair that she was there of her own volition and that therefore he could do nothing for her. It is easy to see why it thus becomes part of the business to break down a girl's moral nature by all those horrible devices which are constantly used by the owner of a white slave. Because life is so often shortened for these wretched girls, their owners degrade them morally as quickly as possible, lest death release them before their full profit has been secured. In addition to the quantity of sacrificed virtue, to the bulk of impotent suffering, which these white slaves represent, our civilization becomes permanently tainted with the vicious practices designed to accelerate the demoralization of unwilling victims in order to make them commercially valuable. Moreover, a girl thus rendered more useful to her owner, will thereafter fail to touch either the chivalry of men or the tenderness of women because good men and women have become convinced of her innate degeneracy, a word we have learned to use with the unction formerly placed upon original sin. The very revolt of society against such girls is used by their owners as a protection to the business.

The case against the captors of Marie, as well as twenty-four other cases, was ably and vigorously conducted by Edwin W. Sims, United States District Attorney in Chicago. He prosecuted under a clause of the immigration act of 1908, which was unfortunately declared unconstitutional early the next year, when for the moment federal authorities found themselves unable to proceed directly against this international traffic. They could not act under the international white slave treaty signed by the contracting powers in Paris in 1904, and proclaimed by the President of the United States in 1908, because it was found impossible to carry out its provisions without federal police. The long consideration of this treaty by Congress made clear to the nation that it is in matters of this sort that navies are powerless and that as our international problems become more social, other agencies must be provided, a point which arbitration committees have long urged. The discussion of the international treaty brought the subject before the entire country as a matter for immediate legislation and for executive action, and the White Slave Traffic Act was finally passed by Congress in 1910, under which all later prosecutions have since been conducted. When the decision on the immigration clause rendered in 1909 threw the burden of prosecution back upon the states, Mr. Clifford Roe, then assistant State's Attorney, within one year investigated 348 such cases, domestic and foreign, and successfully prosecuted 91, carrying on the vigorous policy inaugurated by United States Attorney Sims. In 1908 Illinois passed the first pandering law in this country, changing the offence from disorderly conduct to a misdemeanor, and greatly increasing the penalty. In many states pandering is still so little defined as to make the crime merely a breach of manners and to put it in the same class of offences as selling a street-car transfer.

As a result of this vigorous action, Chicago became the first city to look the situation squarely in the face, and to make a determined business-like fight against the procuring of girls. An office was established by public-spirited citizens where Mr. Roe was placed in charge and empowered to follow

up the clues of the traffic wherever found and to bring the traffickers to justice; in consequence the white slave traders have become so frightened that the foreign importation of girls to Chicago has markedly declined. It is estimated by Mr. Roe that since 1909 about one thousand white slave traders, of whom thirty or forty were importers of foreign girls, have been driven away from the city.

Throughout the Congressional discussions of the white slave traffic, beginning with the Howell-Bennett Act in 1907, it was evident that the subject was closely allied to immigration, and when the immigration commission made a partial report to Congress in December, 1909, upon "the importation and harboring of women for immoral purposes," their finding only emphasized the report of the Commissioner General of Immigration made earlier in the year. His report had traced the international traffic directly to New York, Chicago, Boston, Buffalo, New Orleans, Denver, Seattle, Portland, Salt Lake City, Ogden, and Butte. As the list of cities was comparatively small, it seemed not unreasonable to hope that the international traffic might be rigorously prosecuted, with the prospect of finally doing away with it in spite of its subtle methods, its multiplied ramifications, and its financial resources. Only officials of vigorous conscience can deal with this traffic; but certainly there can be no nobler service for federal and state officers to undertake than this protection of immigrant girls.

It is obvious that a foreign girl who speaks no English, who has not the remotest idea in what part of the city her fellow-countrymen live, who does not know the police station or any agency to which she may apply, is almost as valuable to a white slave trafficker as a girl imported directly for the trade. The trafficker makes every effort to intercept such a girl before she can communicate with her relations. Although great care is taken at Ellis Island, the girl's destination carefully indicated upon her ticket and her friends communicated with, after she boards the train the governmental protection is withdrawn and many untoward experiences may befall a girl between New York and her final destination. Only this year a Polish mother of the Hull House neighborhood failed to find her daughter on a New York train upon which she had been notified to expect her, because the girl had been induced to leave the New York train at South Chicago, where she was met by two young men, one of them well known to the police, and the other a young Pole, purporting to have been sent by the girl's mother.

The immigrant girl also encounters dangers upon the very moment of her arrival. The cab-men and expressmen are often unscrupulous. One of the latter was recently indicted in Chicago upon the charge of regularly procuring immigrant girls for a disreputable hotel. The non-English speaking girl handing her written address to a cabman has no means of knowing whither he will drive her, but is obliged to place herself implicitly in his hands. The Immigrants' Protective League has brought about many changes in this respect, but has upon its records some piteous tales of girls who were thus easily deceived.

An immigrant girl is occasionally exploited by her own lover whom she has come to America to marry. I recall the case of a Russian girl thus decoyed into a disreputable life by a man deceiving her through a fake marriage ceremony. Although not found until a year later, the girl had never ceased to be distressed and rebellious. Many Slovak and Polish girls, coming to America without their relatives, board in houses already filled with their countrymen who have also preceded their own families to the land of promise, hoping to earn money enough to send for them later. The immigrant girl is thus exposed to dangers at the very moment when she is least able to defend herself. Such a girl, already bewildered by the change from an old world village to an American city, is unfortunately sometimes convinced that the new country freedom does away with the necessity for a marriage ceremony. Many others are told that judgment for a moral lapse is less severe in America than in the old country. The last month's records of the Municipal Court in Chicago, set aside to hear domestic relation cases, show sixteen unfortunate girls, of whom eight were immigrant girls representing eight different nationalities. These discouraged and deserted girls become an easy prey for the procurers who have sometimes been in league with their lovers.

Even those girls who immigrate with their families and sustain an affectionate relation with them are yet often curiously free from chaperonage. The immigrant mothers do not know where their daughters work, save that it is in a vague “over there” or “down town.” They themselves were guarded by careful mothers and they would gladly give the same oversight to their daughters, but the entire situation is so unlike that of their own peasant girlhoods that, discouraged by their inability to judge it, they make no attempt to understand their daughters’ lives. The girls, realizing this inability on the part of their mothers, elated by that sense of independence which the first taste of self-support always brings, sheltered from observation during certain hours, are almost as free from social control as is the traditional young man who comes up from the country to take care of himself in a great city. These immigrant parents are, of course, quite unable to foresee that while a girl feels a certain restraint of public opinion from the tenement house neighbors among whom she lives, and while she also responds to the public opinion of her associates in a factory where she works, there is no public opinion at all operating as a restraint upon her in the hours which lie between the two, occupied in the coming and going to work through the streets of a city large enough to offer every opportunity for concealment. So much of the recreation which is provided by commercial agencies, even in its advertisements, deliberately plays upon the interest of sex because it is under such excitement and that of alcohol that money is most recklessly spent. The great human dynamic, which it has been the long effort of centuries to limit to family life, is deliberately utilized for advertising purposes, and it is inevitable that many girls yield to such allurements.

On the other hand, one is filled with admiration for the many immigrant girls who in the midst of insuperable difficulties resist all temptations. Such admiration was certainly due Olga, a tall, handsome girl, a little passive and slow, yet with that touch of dignity which a continued mood of introspection so often lends to the young. Olga had been in Chicago for a year living with an aunt who, when she returned to Sweden, placed her niece in a boarding-house which she knew to be thoroughly respectable. But a friendless girl of such striking beauty could not escape the machinations of those who profit by the sale of girls. Almost immediately Olga found herself beset by two young men who continually forced themselves upon her attention, although she refused all their invitations to shows and dances. In six months the frightened girl had changed her boarding-place four times, hoping that the men would not be able to follow her. She was also obliged constantly to look for a cheaper place, because the dull season in the cloak-making trade came early that year. In the fifth boarding-house she finally found herself so hopelessly in arrears that the landlady, tired of waiting for the “new cloak making to begin,” at length fulfilled a long-promised threat, and one summer evening at nine o’clock literally put Olga into the street, retaining her trunk in payment of the debt. The girl walked the street for hours, until she fancied that she saw one of her persecutors in the distance, when she hastily took refuge in a sheltered doorway, crouching in terror. Although no one approached her, she sat there late into the night, apparently too apathetic to move. With the curious inconsequence of moody youth, she was not aroused to action by the situation in which she found herself. The incident epitomized to her the everlasting riddle of the universe to which she could see no solution and she drearly decided to throw herself into the lake. As she left the doorway at daybreak for this pitiful purpose, she attracted the attention of a passing policeman. In response to his questions, kindly at first but becoming exasperated as he was convinced that she was either “touched in her wits” or “guying” him, he obtained a confused story of the persecutions of the two young men, and in sheer bewilderment he finally took her to the station on the very charge against the thought of which she had so long contended.

The girl was doubtless sullen in court the next morning; she was resentful of the policeman’s talk, she was oppressed and discouraged and therefore taciturn. She herself said afterwards that she “often got still that way.” She so sharply felt the disgrace of arrest, after her long struggle for respectability, that she gave a false name and became involved in a story to which she could devote

but half her attention, being still absorbed in an undercurrent of speculative thought which continually broke through the flimsy tale she was fabricating.

With the evidence before him, the judge felt obliged to sustain the policeman's charge, and as Olga could not pay the fine imposed, he sentenced her to the city prison. The girl, however, had appeared so strangely that the judge was uncomfortable and gave her in charge of a representative of the Juvenile Protective Association in the hope that she could discover the whole situation, meantime suspending the sentence. It took hours of patient conversation with the girl and the kindly services of a well-known alienist to break into her dangerous state of mind and to gain her confidence. Prolonged medical treatment averted the threatened melancholia and she was at last rescued from the meaningless despondency so hostile to life itself, which has claimed many young victims.

It is strange that we are so slow to learn that no one can safely live without companionship and affection, that the individual who tries the hazardous experiment of going without at least one of them is prone to be swamped by a black mood from within. It is as if we had to build little islands of affection in the vast sea of impersonal forces lest we be overwhelmed by them. Yet we know that in every large city there are hundreds of men whose business it is to discover girls thus hard pressed by loneliness and despair, to urge upon them the old excuse that "no one cares what you do," to fill them with cheap cynicism concerning the value of virtue, all to the end that a business profit may be secured.

Had Olga yielded to the solicitations of bad men and had the immigration authorities in the federal building of Chicago discovered her in the disreputable hotel in which her captors wanted to place her, she would have been deported to Sweden, sent home in disgrace from the country which had failed to protect her. Certainly the immigration laws might do better than to send a girl back to her parents, diseased and disgraced because America has failed to safeguard her virtue from the machinations of well-known but unrestrained criminals. The possibility of deportation on the charge of prostitution is sometimes utilized by jealous husbands or rejected lovers. Only last year a Russian girl came to Chicago to meet her lover and was deceived by a fake marriage. Although the man basely deserted her within a few weeks he became very jealous a year later when he discovered that she was about to be married to a prosperous fellow-countryman, and made charges against her to the federal authorities concerning her life in Russia. It was with the greatest difficulty that the girl was saved from deportation to Russia under circumstances which would have compelled her to take out a red ticket in Odessa, and to live forevermore the life with which her lover had wantonly charged her.

May we not hope that in time the nation's policy in regard to immigrants will become less negative and that a measure of protection will be extended to them during the three years when they are so liable to prompt deportation if they become criminals or paupers?

While it may be difficult for the federal authorities to accomplish this protection and will doubtless require an extension of the powers of the Department of Immigration, certainly no one will doubt that it is the business of the city itself to extend much more protection to young girls who so thoughtlessly walk upon its streets. Yet, in spite of the grave consequences which lack of proper supervision implies, the municipal treatment of commercialized vice not only differs in each city but varies greatly in the same city under changing administrations.

The situation is enormously complicated by the pharisaic attitude of the public which wishes to have the comfort of declaring the social evil to be illegal, while at the same time it expects the police department to regulate it and to make it as little obvious as possible. In reality the police, as they themselves know, are not expected to serve the public in this matter but to consult the desires of the politicians; for, next to the fast and loose police control of gambling, nothing affords better political material than the regulation of commercialized vice. First in line is the ward politician who keeps a disorderly saloon which serves both as a meeting-place for the vicious young men engaged in the traffic and as a market for their wares. Back of this the politician higher up receives his share of the toll which this business pays that it may remain undisturbed. The very existence of a segregated

district under police regulation means, of course, that the existing law must be nullified or at least rendered totally inoperative. When police regulation takes the place of law enforcement a species of municipal blackmail inevitably becomes entrenched. The police are forced to regulate an illicit trade, but because the men engaged in an unlawful business expect to pay money for its protection, the corruption of the police department is firmly established and, as the Chicago vice commission report points out, is merely called "protection to the business." The practice of grafting thereafter becomes almost official. On the other hand, any man who attempts to show mercy to the victims of that business, or to regulate it from the victim's point of view, is considered a traitor to the cause. Quite recently a former inspector of police in Chicago established a requirement that every young girl who came to live in a disreputable house within a prescribed district must be reported to him within an hour after her arrival. Each one was closely questioned as to her reasons for entering into the life. If she was very young, she was warned of its inevitable consequences and urged to abandon her project. Every assistance was offered her to return to work and to live a normal life. Occasionally a girl was desperate and it was sometimes necessary that she be forcibly detained in the police station until her friends could be communicated with. More often she was glad to avail herself of the chance of escape; practically always, unless she had already become romantically entangled with a disreputable young man, whom she firmly believed to be her genuine lover and protector.

One day a telephone message came to Hull House from the inspector asking us to take charge of a young girl who had been brought into the station by an older woman for registration. The girl's youth and the innocence of her replies to the usual questions convinced the inspector that she was ignorant of the life she was about to enter and that she probably believed she was simply registering her choice of a boarding-house. Her story which she told at Hull House was as follows: She was a Milwaukee factory girl, the daughter of a Bohemian carpenter. Ten days before she had met a Chicago young man at a Milwaukee dance hall and after a brief courtship had promised to marry him, arranging to meet him in Chicago the following week. Fearing that her Bohemian mother would not approve of this plan, which she called "the American way of getting married," the girl had risen one morning even earlier than factory work necessitated and had taken the first train to Chicago. The young man met her at the station, took her to a saloon where he introduced her to a friend, an older woman, who, he said, would take good care of her. After the young man disappeared, ostensibly for the marriage license, the woman professed to be much shocked that the little bride had brought no luggage, and persuaded her that she must work a few weeks in order to earn money for her trousseau, and that she, an older woman who knew the city, would find a boarding-house and a place in a factory for her. She further induced her to write postal cards to six of her girl friends in Milwaukee, telling them of the kind lady in Chicago, of the good chances for work, and urging them to come down to the address which she sent. The woman told the unsuspecting girl that, first of all, a newcomer must register her place of residence with the police, as that was the law in Chicago. It was, of course, when the woman took her to the police station that the situation was disclosed. It needed but little investigation to make clear that the girl had narrowly escaped a well-organized plot and that the young man to whom she was engaged was an agent for a disreputable house. Mr. Clifford Roe took up the case with vigor, and although all efforts failed to find the young man, the woman who was his accomplice was fined one hundred and fifty dollars and costs.

The one impression which the trial left upon our minds was that all the men concerned in the prosecution felt a keen sense of outrage against the method employed to secure the girl, but took for granted that the life she was about to lead was in the established order of things, if she had chosen it voluntarily. In other words, if the efforts of the agent had gone far enough to involve her moral nature, the girl, who although unsophisticated, was twenty-one years old, could have remained, quite unchallenged, in the hideous life. The woman who was prosecuted was well known to the police and was fined, not for her daily occupation, but because she had become involved in interstate white slave traffic. One touch of nature redeemed the trial, for the girl suffered much more from the sense that

she had been deserted by her lover than from horror over the fate she had escaped, and she was never wholly convinced that he had not been genuine. She asserted constantly, in order to account for his absence, that some accident must have befallen him. She felt that he was her natural protector in this strange Chicago to which she had come at his behest and continually resented any imputation of his motives. The betrayal of her confidence, the playing upon her natural desire for a home of her own, was a ghastly revelation that even when this hideous trade is managed upon the most carefully calculated commercial principles, it must still resort to the use of the oldest of the social instincts as its basis of procedure.

This Chicago police inspector, whose desire to protect young girls was so genuine and so successful, was afterward indicted by the grand jury and sent to the penitentiary on the charge of accepting “graft” from saloon-keepers and proprietors of the disreputable houses in his district. His experience was a dramatic and tragic portrayal of the position into which every city forces its police. When a girl who has been secured for the life is dissuaded from it, her rescue represents a definite monetary loss to the agency which has secured her and incurs the enmity of those who expected to profit by her. When this enmity has sufficiently accumulated, the active official is either “called down” by higher political authority, or brought to trial for those illegal practices which he shares with his fellow-officials. It is, therefore, easy to make such an inspector as ours suffer for his virtues, which are individual, by bringing charges against his grafting, which is general and almost official. So long as the customary prices for protection are adhered to, no one feels aggrieved; but the sentiment which prompts an inspector “to side with the girls” and to destroy thousands of dollars’ worth of business is unjustifiable. He has not stuck to the rules of the game and the pack of enraged gamblers, under full cry of “morality,” can very easily run him to ground, the public meantime being gratified that police corruption has been exposed and the offender punished. Yet hundreds of girls, who could have been discovered in no other way, were rescued by this man in his capacity of police inspector. On the other hand, he did little to bring to justice those responsible for securing the girls, and while he rescued the victim, he did not interfere with the source of supply. Had he been brought to trial for this indifference, it would have been impossible to find a grand jury to sustain the indictment. He was really brought to trial because he had broken the implied contract with the politicians; he had devised illicit and damaging methods to express that instinct for protecting youth and innocence, which every man on the police force doubtless possesses. Were this instinct freed from all political and extra legal control, it would in and of itself be a tremendous force against commercialized vice which is so dependent upon the exploitation of young girls. Yet the fortunes of the police are so tied up to those who profit by this trade and to their friends, the politicians, that the most well-meaning man upon the force is constantly handicapped. Several illustrations of this occur to me. Two years ago, when very untoward conditions were discovered in connection with a certain five-cent theatre, a young policeman arrested the proprietor, who was later brought before the grand jury, indicted and released upon bail for nine thousand dollars. The crime was a heinous one, involving the ruin of fourteen little girls; but so much political influence had been exerted on behalf of the proprietor, who was a relative of the republican committeeman of his ward, that although the license of the theatre was immediately revoked, it was reissued to his wife within a very few days and the man continued to be a menace to the community. When the young policeman who had made the arrest saw him in the neighborhood of the theatre talking to little girls and reported him, the officer was taken severely to task by the highest republican authority in the city. He was reprimanded for his activity and ordered transferred to the stockyards, eleven miles away. The policeman well understood that this was but the first step in the process called “breaking;” that after he had moved his family to the stockyards, in a few weeks he would be transferred elsewhere, and that this change of beat would be continued until he should at last be obliged to resign from the force. His offence, as he was plainly told, had been his ignorance of the fact that the theatre was under political protection. In short, the young officer had naïvely undertaken to serve the public without waiting for his instructions from the political bosses.

A flagrant example of the collusion of the police with vice is instanced by United States District Attorney Sims, who recently called upon the Chicago police to make twenty-four arrests on behalf of the United States government for violations of the white slave law, when all of the men liable to arrest left town two hours after the warrants were issued. To quote Mr. Sims: "We sent the secret service men who had been working in conjunction with the police back to Washington and brought in a fresh supply. These men did not work with the police, and within two weeks after the first set of secret service men had left Chicago, the men we wanted were back in town, and without the aid of the city police we arrested all of them."

When the legal control of commercialized vice is thus tied up with city politics the functions of the police become legislative, executive and judicial in regard to street solicitation: in a sense they also have power of license, for it lies with them to determine the number of women who are allowed to ply their trade upon the street. Some of these women are young earthlings, as it were, hoping to earn money for much-desired clothing or pleasure. Others are desperate creatures making one last effort before they enter a public hospital to face a miserable end; but by far the larger number are sent out under the protection of the men who profit by their earnings, or they are utilized to secure patronage for disreputable houses. The police regard the latter "as regular," and while no authoritative order is ever given, the patrolman understands that they are protected. On the other hand, "the straggler" is liable to be arrested by any officer who chooses, and she is subjected to a fine upon his unsupported word. In either case the police regard all such women as literally "abandoned," deprived of ordinary rights, obliged to live in specified residences, and liable to have their personal liberties invaded in a way that no other class of citizens would tolerate.

The recent establishment of the Night Court in New York registers an advance in regard to the treatment of these wretched women. Not only does the public gradually become cognizant of the treatment accorded them, but some attempt at discrimination is made between the first offenders and those hardened by long practice in that most hideous of occupations. Furthermore, an adult probation system is gradually being substituted for the system of fines which at present are levied in such wise as to virtually constitute a license and a partnership with the police department.

While American cities cannot be said to have adopted a policy either of suppression or one of regulation, because the police consider the former impracticable and the latter intolerable to public opinion, we may perhaps claim for America a little more humanity in its dealing with this class of women, a little less ruthlessness than that exhibited by the continental cities where regimentation is relentlessly assumed.

The suggestive presence of such women on the streets is perhaps one of the most demoralizing influences to be found in a large city, and such vigorous efforts as were recently made by a former chief of police in Chicago when he successfully cleared the streets of their presence, demonstrates that legal suppression is possible. At least this obvious temptation to young men and boys who are idly walking the streets might be avoided, for in an old formula one such woman "has cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her." Were the streets kept clear, many young girls would be spared familiar knowledge that such a method of earning money is open to them. I have personally known several instances in which young girls have begun street solicitation through sheer imitation. A young Polish woman found herself in dire straits after the death of her mother. Her only friends in America had moved to New York, she was in debt for her mother's funeral, and as it was the slack season of the miserable sweat-shop sewing she had been doing, she was unable to find work. One evening when she was quite desperate with hunger, she stopped several men upon the street, as she had seen other girls do, and in her broken English asked them for something to eat. Only after a young man had given her a good meal at a restaurant did she realize the price she was expected to pay and the horrible things which the other girls were doing. Even in her shocked revolt she could not understand, of course, that she herself epitomized that hideous choice between starvation and vice which is perhaps the crowning disgrace of civilization.

The legal suppression of street solicitation would not only protect girls but would enormously minimize the risk and temptation to boys. The entire system of recruiting for commercialized vice is largely dependent upon boys who are scarcely less the victims of the system than are the girls themselves. Certainly this aspect of the situation must be seriously considered.

In 1908, when Mr. Clifford Roe conducted successful prosecutions against one hundred and fifty of these disreputable young men in Chicago, nearly all of them were local boys who had used their personal acquaintance to secure their victims. The accident of a long acquaintance with one of these boys, born in the Hull-House neighborhood, filled me with questionings as to how far society may be responsible for these wretched lads, many of them beginning a vicious career when they are but fifteen or sixteen years of age. Because the trade constantly demands very young girls, the procurers require the assistance of immature boys, for in this game above all others “youth calls to youth.” Such a boy is often incited by the professional procurer to ruin a young girl, because the latter’s position is much safer if the character of the girl is blackened before he sells her, and if he himself cannot be implicated in her downfall. He thus keeps himself within the letter of the law, and when he is even more cautious, he induces the boy to go through the ceremony of a legal marriage by promising him a percentage of his wife’s first earnings.

Only yesterday I received a letter from a young man whom I had known from his early boyhood, written in the state penitentiary, where he is serving a life sentence. His father was a drunkard, but his mother was a fine woman, devoted to her children, and she had patiently supported her son Jim far beyond his school age. At the time of his trial, she pawned all her personal possessions and mortgaged her furniture in order to get three hundred dollars for his lawyer. Although Jim usually led the life of a loafer and had never supported his mother, he was affectionately devoted to her and always kindly and good-natured. Perhaps it was because he had been so long dependent upon a self-sacrificing woman that it became easy for him to be dependent upon his wife, a girl whom he met when he was temporarily acting as porter in a disreputable hotel. Through his long familiarity with vice, and the fact that many of his companions habitually lived upon the earnings of “their girls,” he easily consented that his wife should continue her life, and he constantly accepted the money which she willingly gave him. After his marriage he still lived in his mother’s house and refused to take more money from her, but she had no idea of the source of his income. One day he called at the hotel, as usual, to ask for his wife’s earnings, and in a quarrel over the amount with the landlady of the house, he drew a revolver and killed her. Although the plea of self-defense was urged in the trial, his abominable manner of life so outraged both judge and jury that he received the maximum sentence. His mother still insists that he sincerely loved the girl, whom he so impulsively married and that he constantly tried to dissuade her from her evil life. Certain it is that Jim’s wife and mother are both filled with genuine sorrow for his fate and that in some wise the educational and social resources in the city of his birth failed to protect him from his own lower impulses and from the evil companionship whose influence he could not withstand. He is but one of thousands of weak boys, who are constantly utilized to supply the white slave trafficker with young girls, for it has been estimated that at any given moment the majority of the girls utilized by the trade are under twenty years of age and that most of them were procured when younger. We cannot assume that the youths who are hired to entice and entrap these girls are all young fiends, degenerate from birth; the majority of them are merely out-of-work boys, idle upon the streets, who readily lend themselves to these base demands because nothing else is presented to them.

All the recent investigations have certainly made clear that the bulk of the entire traffic is conducted with the youth of the community, and that the social evil, ancient though it may be, must be renewed in our generation through its younger members. The knowledge of the youth of its victims doubtless in a measure accounts for the new sense of compunction which fills the community.

CHAPTER III AMELIORATION OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

It may be possible to extract some small degree of comfort from the recent revelations of the white slave traffic when we reflect that at the present moment, in the midst of a freedom such as has never been accorded to young women in the history of the world, under an economic pressure grinding down upon the working girl at the very age when she most wistfully desires to be taken care of, it is necessary to organize a widespread commercial enterprise in order to procure a sufficient number of girls for the white slave market.

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