

a social crime. The woman who indulges in it is a prostitute ; the man who makes himself the accomplice of that woman is also a *prostitute*, let us not forget that. Do not allow either of them to commit this social crime. If they commit it clandestinely, you are powerless. But, let them not commit it publicly, with your permission, for you will thereby dishonor society, which you are supposed to represent, and corrupt it to the core.

I have referred to the congresses or conferences of Brussels, London and Lyons. At the previous Geneva Congress, held in 1877, the Right Honorable Sir James Stansfeld, an ex-minister of Great Britain, spoke in the following energetic terms :

" You invent a project by which you—the State—propose to set aside a certain number of women destined to be the slaves and the instruments of men's lust ; you propose, by your system of examination, to keep them in good condition ; you find that you cannot, with all your care, keep them in good condition. Why ? Because your whole conception is profoundly immoral, and against nature ; you have no respect for the human body ; you forget the soul within it ; you think only of making these women serve men ; you acknowledge not the humanity, the life, the individuality of these poor instruments, and you fail because physical human nature refuses to lend itself to your plans."

Jules Favre, the eminent statesman, said :

" I consider that the system of legalized prostitution such as we have in France is the source of the most frightful evils and the most absolute impediment to the improvement or reform of our morals."

Alexandre Dumas, fils, concluded by these words, a scathing allocution aimed at the framers of the system and at France, who had adopted it :

" When a nation reaches this point it deserves that prostitution should devour it entirely, and that is just about where we have now come."

I could multiply the quotations, but I must stop here. The limits of this report do not allow me to go any further. Volumes have been written on this question. I could but indicate the salient features of the discussion, and I had to confine myself to the enunciation of principles which appear to me to be unimpeachable, whether the question be considered from a moral or religious standpoint or in the light of social and political economy, and which, I believe, have come out more triumphant than ever from the ardent struggles of the past few years.

I will, however, add a few remarks, concerning the action taken recently, in this connection, by the authorities of New York, the great metropolis of the New World. A special committee composed of 15 distinguished citizens, was appointed in 1900, with instructions to inquire into the causes and ravages of the great social evil in the vast city and to suggest the means of remedying the same. This committee (called the *Committee of Fifteen*) held a long and elaborate investigation and submitted a voluminous report, which was published in 1902. I have this report before me. The doctrine of tolerance and that of official regulation are both condemned therein. The commissioners recommend, not the repression of clandestine prostitution, which they admit, is surrounded with almost insuperable difficulties, but the *vigorous suppression* of public prostitution in all its open and cynical manifestation, " all such manifestations of it as belong under the head of public nuisance." This is precisely the policy which has prevailed in England since the repeal of the laws of inscription, in 1886, and which has also inspired our own legislators, in Canada, as will be seen further on.