

cannot readily cure it usually forbids utterance on pain of its scorn; this scorn being only a sort of tinsel cloak to its deformed weakness."*

Starting out then with the premise that the endeavor to solve the problem of the social evil must not be hampered either by the opinions or prejudices of the classes for whom the work is undertaken, or by the neutrality of other classes whom we might have expected to have been ardent workers with us, it is yet pardonable to say without the slightest feeling of bitterness, and almost without a sentiment of disappointment, that there is an additional reason why the profession should not shun this particular labor of mercy, for is it not one of its daily functions to minister to the despised, the wretched and the unclean in every shape? Bearing in mind the story related by a Physician who in his day had seen "pass by on the other side" the priest and the Levite, we need not wonder that the "cry of those who have wounds without cause" should still insult their sanctified ears; that it should still be left to less fastidious hands to pour in the wine and the oil—to less worthy brains to work out the poor enigmas of our lot! In the case of the man of Samaria we may comfort ourselves with the reflection that his charity probably did not seriously diminish *his* income, and that there was no contumely connected with *his* act of mercy!

Three queries, it appears to the writer, cover the whole ground included in the heading of this article. Side issues, important from other standpoints, force themselves on one's notice and, while it is impossible always to avoid or ignore them, because they are so intimately bound up with the causes and effects of every social disturbance, they can receive but a passing mention in the space so necessarily limited as the pages of a journal devoted to medical science. (1) Is it possible to repress *in toto* houses of ill-fame and assignation? (2) If it were possible to suppress *les maisons des dames*, would it be wise to make the attempt? (3) In the event of prohibition failing to accomplish its object, what measures are most likely to limit the evil of prostitution and to curtail the misery and disease it engenders?

It is difficult to separate the first two questions, and they may be answered together. The history of every nation that has reached a high state of civilization furnishes us with stories of endeavors

made by the State to wipe out the immediate sources of prostitution, and these attempts are both interesting and instructive.

In the early history of the Greeks we find that one of their laws, incorporated in the code of Draco, imposed the death penalty on adultery. If severity could have accomplished the desired end it ought to have done so in this instance, but so powerless did it prove that Solon, seeing the futility of the measure, established by law houses of prostitution at Athens, and filled them with slaves bought by the public money. These *Dictera*, as they were called, being in a sense public servants, handed over their miserable earnings to the State, and naturally assisted in increasing its revenue. The Romans, wiser in their generation, and profiting, in all probability, by the experience of their Grecian neighbors, seem never to have attempted to wipe out the calling of the harlot. Tacitus tells us that long before his time the prostitute was obliged to register herself at the *ædile's* office, where she received a license—*stupri licentia*—in a similar manner and almost upon the same terms as those imposed by existing French laws regulating brothels and their inmates. It must be observed, also, that the Romans exacted in their code the penalty that modern society imposes by its unwritten law upon the unfortunate erring one; it closed every avenue to reform. "Once a prostitute, always a prostitute," is a Roman proverb.

Passing to more modern times an instructive lesson may be learned from early attempts to suppress prostitution in France. Sanger, in his admirable work on the subject, tells us that Louis IX. made the first serious endeavor to stem the rising tide of evil in his dominions.

"His edict, which dates from 1254, directed that all prostitutes, and persons making a living indirectly out of prostitution, such as brothel-keepers and procurers, should be forthwith exiled out of the kingdom. It was partially put in force: a large number of unfortunate females were seized and imprisoned or sent across the frontier; severe punishments were inflicted on those who returned to the city of Paris after their expulsion. A panic seized the customers of brothels, and for a few months public decency was restored. But the inevitable consequences of the arbitrary decree of the King soon began to be felt.

"Though the officers of justice had forcibly confined in establishments resembling Magdalen hospitals a large proportion of the most notorious pros-

* "Shirley."