

it is interesting and quite curious to read the reports of the discussions which took place at these meetings of physicians, political men and philanthropists. The impression left in my mind, after perusal of these reports, is that the regulationists are on the point of surrendering, that their cause is hopeless, and that their system, false in morals, absurd in law and null in results, will fall into discredit and finally disappear.

And it is high time that this should come about. What will greatly surprise future generations, is that, although public opinion is now unanimously in favor of prohibiting gambling houses and even, in certain countries, places where liquor is sold, such a resistance should be met with, in our time, whenever an attempt is made to abolish houses of prostitution. Professor Gide has perhaps found the real reason of this anomaly when he says :

" It is simply because the number of men who desire to practise these customs themselves, is much larger than that of gamblers and drinkers. All other reasons are worthless. Particularly false appears to be the argument from venereal diseases. I am satisfied that a thorough enquiry would prove that it is the houses of prostitution which have introduced into the world this hideous disease and that it is they also which maintain it."

All agree that prostitution, in itself, is immoral. The law, no doubt, cannot always reach it, because there is the private domicile the inviolability of which must be respected. But as soon as this evil, moral and social, takes, so to speak, a concrete form, a public aspect, a scandalous appearance, it becomes accessible to the law, which must repress it without weakness and without compromise, prevent it from exhibiting itself, arrest the guilty parties and close the houses where this evil is indulged in openly and cynically.

As to simple tolerance, without regulation, it is pure nonsense. The authorities cannot tolerate a vice which displays itself in broad daylight, they have not the right to allow the existence of a public nuisance, exhibiting itself unveiled and shamelessly, and prohibited by the laws. This utopy of official tolerance rests on the alleged fear that clandestine prostitution, in case the public houses should be closed, might further develop.

Experience is contrary to this view. The countries where the most repressive measures have been adopted, where prostitution has been fought to the utmost and pursued to its last entrenchment, are those where morals have become the purest. Take, for instance, Sweden and Norway.

Experience also shows that public prostitutes do not long resist a merciless crusade. These creatures are not adapted to carry on their trade clandestinely and do not practice vice in its more hidden form. They leave a city where life is made impossible for them and they go in search of a modern Babylon, where legislation is more indulgent and the police more compliant and more accommodating.

You fear clandestine prostitution, you say, and for this reason, you open the door wide to the worst of prostitutions, to that which keeps open house, tempts and solicits youth and all passers by and carries on the infamous industry under official authorization. Secret prostitution ! But you can never prevent it ! Will you diminish its ravages by legalizing vice in your tolerated houses ? But vice is the oil stain which threatens to soil the whole social body. It is not by pouring still more oil that you will prevent the stain from spreading out. It is not by further corrupting the moral sense of the people, by the administrative sanction which you give to vice, that you will succeed in extirpating this vice from the secret vitals of your constituents.

Crime always tries, no doubt, to conceal itself. Do you generally allow the commission of a crime in public for fear of its being secretly perpetrated ? Prostitution is