

in the decay of nations and the fall of civilization. It is literally a sin against the Holy Ghost, for it is the thwarting and denying of our deepest and holiest instinct by filthy huckster-like mammon worship, a veritable making of our "Father's house a house of merchandise." And like such sin "it shall not be forgiven." Every nation in which it had notably prevailed has either stagnated or decayed. The grand old eagle-eyed, bull-chested Roman breed was literally extinct from its ravages centuries before the Empire fell. The stinking stagnation of China and India is largely due to it in the form of infanticide.

And to-day we can study the process in the yet living subject, in our sister republic, renowned alike for the small size of her families, the brilliancy and healthfulness of her prostitutes, the commercialization of her women, both in marriage and harlotry, the strict economy and thriftiness of her lower classes even in respect to manhood and feminine honor, the filthy pessimism of her literature, and the excess of her death-rate over her birth-rate.

The latest and most extraordinary development from the theory of the sinfulness of sex is that which is in these latter days brayed into our ears from every "suffragist" platform. That child-bearing, instead of a factor in woman's development, is absolutely a hindrance to her higher education, a clog upon her freedom and a mortal enemy of "culchaw." In fact, as a "club-woman" tersely expressed it to a friend of mine a few months ago, "Only fools bear children." There is only one thing which need be said in regard to this delusion, and that is, it has its uses. It prevents the continuation of the breed. Neither the "emancipated" woman at one end of the scale, nor the prostitute at the other, propagate their kind, and society has reason to be thankful in both cases.

What then is the excuse for this attitude of hostility toward the sexual impulses? Their excesses only. Only one of these is now to be considered, but it is generally regarded as the most serious. It certainly is prevalent enough. It has existed from the beginning of history, nay, of society itself; it appears in every race above savagery, in every clime, under every religion and form of government. It has the universality of an institution of nature. It has formed for itself a distinct class

or caste in every society, it has its tutelar divinity in every temple, its patron saint in every hagiology. It can even boast of an odor of sanctity. It has formed part of the ritual of most religions and has been more or less directly recognized, if not endorsed, by all. And yet it is distinctly a product not of nature, but of civilization. It is not "*animal*" but essentially *human*, like most of our vices.

No trace of it is to be found in any animal community, and a very little among savages. It is one of the "flowers of civilization," and at bottom commercial, "*bourgeois*." Instead of a sin of instinct, it is a sin against instinct, directly on the part of the female, indirectly on the part of the male.

To a woman it is a filthy trade, "the horizontal trade," as Heine calls it, with even more truth than sarcasm, while the man has about as much right to urge his "appetite" as an excuse, as would one who turns from healthful food to glut himself upon garbage. That the exercise of the sexual function is necessary to the health of the male at any age is a pure delusion, while before full maturity it is highly injurious.

Prostitution is a crime against nature. The attitude of the anthropologist, the naturalist, towards it may be summed up in one sentence: "It needs must be that offences come, but *we* unto that man through whom they come." And yet it must perform some useful function, for it everywhere exists.

Another singular feature about it is its absolute irrepressibleness and unmanageableness. Ecclesiastical, civil and military authority have all in turn utterly proscribed it and repressed it with ferocious vigor, and at times all three have been united in one determined effort to root it out, as in the Papal dominions for nearly two centuries, but the utmost they could accomplish was to change its form and increase its extent. They simply learned, what we in Iowa have just been learning again in the costly school of experience, that "prohibition does not prohibit."

Nor does the attempt at "regulation" fare much better. From a careful study of all the authorities I could secure and observation of the actual condition of affairs in several of the European cities, I am driven to the conclusion that the results of regulation are about as follows: