

State towards unfortunate women in the minds of the whole feminine world.

"The regulation of prostitution and the protection of public houses of debauchery must therefore be regarded as demoralizing and unjust in the highest degree; and as a flagrant contradiction of the mission which the present defenders of social order attribute to the State.

"(Signed) A. BEBEL."

MEMORIAL TO POPE LEO XIII.

The address to Pope Leo XIII. alluded to, is as follows. It was signed by the whole Catholic Episcopate of Belgium, and others:—

"To His Holiness Pope Leo XIII.

"Most Holy Father,—The Belgian Society for Public Morality, the aim of which is to combat the hateful system of regulated prostitution, ventures, in the name of the great moral interests which it has undertaken to defend, most respectfully to beseech your Holiness to condemn, with the authority which is recognised by the whole world, this system so fatal to the well-being of souls, and so dangerous to the social order.

"The fact of the attempt to regulate vice implies a sanction given to the monstrous theory of a 'necessary evil'; it incites young men to immorality, and strikes a fatal blow to the dignity of humanity by compelling a multitude of women to endure the deepest of all insults.

"The Belgian Society for Public Morality therefore hopes that the august Pontiff, who has so constantly manifested so much interest in all the problems of our age, will deign now to lend a willing ear to a salutary suggestion respectfully presented upon a question of such high social importance; and that he will solemnly denounce this iniquity, this public outrage of the divine and human law. The Belgian Society hopes this all the more, knowing that the predecessor of your

Holiness, the august Pius IX., never would allow that this abomination should be introduced into the Roman State.

"Your Holiness has given proofs so numerous and so touching of your interest in the working classes, that the Belgian Society dares to await with confidence a formal condemnation by you of the regulations of which so many unhappy daughters of the people are the victims.

"It is a slave trade; it is a slavery more revolting than that of the negroes; for, as a celebrated philosopher has said, 'the African slave is condemned to enforced labour only, work being after all the universal law, whilst the woman who is inscribed on the registers of the *Police des Mœurs* is enslaved and enchained to an impure and hateful trade, fatal alike to the soul and the body.'

"As your Holiness has pointed out, and never ceases powerfully and eloquently to recall the fact in many admirable encyclicals, the world is now passing through a crisis the gravest perhaps in its history. At such a time, when the salvation of society requires that every possible effort should be made to awaken and elevate spirits and hearts, it would be incontestably a great danger to continue a system the result of which is, not only to imperil the public health under the pretence of guarantees which are a deceit, but also to obscure the most elementary principles of right and wrong by sacrificing these principles to the gross gratification of egotism.

"To make an end of patented prostitution would be to attack immorality in its beginnings.

"Already a powerful wave of public opinion is formed and rising against this abominable system, and this wave would become irresistible if your Holiness, the depository of the highest moral authority in the world, would deign to favour it.

"It is with the most profound respect that the members of the Belgian Society for Public Morality supplicate your Holiness to grant their request, and to receive the expression of their humble homage and veneration."