

merchandise, and to protect the consumer. The consumer, however, in the first place, is able to protect himself in the most efficacious fashion possible; that is to say by not consuming. And again, why not restrain this consumer by certain obligations and measures which will in turn guarantee the merchandise? Will you ever do it? Never. This feeling of the just partition of responsibility in this matter has never inspired any of those who have discussed this great and grave subject.

"How many abject creatures among men are more dangerous than women! It is hardly believed how much there is of baseness, perversity, and absence of all principle existing among certain beings, who constitute a social calamity more degrading and repulsive than the worst of women prostitutes. And yet you respect these persons! No one dares to limit their freedom, nor to persuade them to remain a single day, more than they wish in a hospital, still less to detain them by force. But all this comes quite naturally in the case of women, and these measures in their case (so powerful is the prejudice against them), are considered as very mitigated measures.

"Why are not decrees and coercive measures enacted against all the *Knights of venereal industry*?—procureurs and *souteneurs*, who form such a dangerous army, exploiters of women under every name, the *combinatori* who are so numerous in Italy, and all that indecent masculine personality of prostitution?

"The word provocation (solicitation) holds a prominent place in the Code amongst contraventions and offences in the matter of prostitution. What is meant by this word? There is an infinite scale in the manœuvres which women employ to attract men. Some are subtle and charming, others vulgar and gross. They do their best to succeed in their aim, and they easily attain it, since men ask nothing better than to be tempted by such solicitation. But do these men confine themselves to this passive rôle? You do them a great injustice in supposing it. They also attack; they also solicit in every fashion, even the most ignoble; and they

glory in it. Now, is it not inexplicable that the advocates of prophylaxy have never even dreamed of incriminating men as persons who solicit? On the contrary they are pitied, they are regarded as innocents, always the victims of feminine wiles. It is very humiliating for them.

"A man who accosts a woman in any fashion, no matter where, you say nothing of him. Yet is not this a provocation to debauchery? And if the woman yields this man is allowed to infect her with impunity. There are no administrative measures against him. But if a woman smiles, turns her head, puts a certain charm into her manner, it is at once considered guilty provocation to vice. The morals-police agent can apprehend her bodily, lock her up, and inflict upon her the gravest and the most cowardly of all humiliations. And yet you do not revolt against such regulations, and you laugh at those who invoke respect for equality and for individual liberty.

"There is nothing more difficult than to define solicitation. Beauty is one of the most dangerous weapons; a smile, a look, a head-dress, an elegant toilet, &c. (I am speaking now only of the solicitations of women). But women alone can instruct us on the subject of the solicitations practised by men. It is probable they would have more to say on this subject than we have from our side, and that they might more justly fulminate maledictions against men's solicitations than we against theirs. But they would waste their time: nobody would listen to them! . . . It has been demanded that solicitation shall be punished as a legal offence, and not as a simple contravention of rules; and that the inscription as a prostitute of a woman guilty of that offence must only be pronounced in a law court after legal discussion. Thus understood, the proceeding would be less arbitrary, and would offer more guarantees than the present method; but why not include men in such a measure? You reply that it is impossible. This is a bad reason. Confess rather that you dare not do it. If women had as much to do as men in the framing of regulations and laws, and if they had some share in the executive force, you would see how many men would be