

absence of any sentiment of *justice* (which becomes so easily obliterated when there is no idea of the denial of any personal interest), those who invoke this safeguarding of Society had sought in their own hearts for some sentiment of *pity*, of *mercy*, of *generosity*, would they ever have fulminated anathemas against the woman alone in this matter of prostitution?

“Is it she or is it man who has created this state of things? Have they not, at least, taken an equal part in it? Or is it not rather the work of the stronger sex who, since the beginning of the world, has made of the other sex an instrument of his pleasures and caprices? Is it not because he has constantly re-imposed it, sustained it, sometimes glorified it, and too often exploited it, that prostitution has been perpetuated throughout the ages, in spite of religion, philosophy, and all temporal and spiritual forces, and that it has braved all laws and resisted all persecutions?”

“Though man has in a general way wished to shake off this yoke, yet his passions have always re-imposed it. Conscious of his miserable moral weakness, he has endeavoured to absolve himself, and to revenge himself, by means of his physical strength, against these poor prostitutes, of whom he cannot rid himself. In the inevitable conflict of the sexes the man becomes more violent when resisted. Can the woman resist in the same way? No. Does she use violence with man? The latter is always free to accept or refuse favours offered him. So much the worse for him if he suffers.

“That prostitution is a most unwholesome and dangerous industry is of course evident to all; but whose is the fault? You exact from these miserable women guarantees for your health, but what guarantees do you give to them—you, personally? What guarantees does Society give them? None whatever. You infect, and you do not wish to be infected. You always pose as victims, and you elude all responsibility in the matter, in defiance of the most elementary principles of equity. . . . Does anyone believe that it is in virtue of a superior moral character that a man does

not spread infection so much as a woman? If he multiplies less than she these maladies it is simply because, to his regret, he is more limited in the means of doing so.

“Let hygienists and doctors organize against the ills produced by prostitution every curative treatment which can possibly be suggested; let them in the application of these measures make an appeal to the public authorities to render them more efficacious. But let all coercive measures against *women alone* be given up. And if it is still thought that these administrative and police measures are indispensable for regulating, repressing, circumscribing, or making healthy an immoral traffic, let men subject themselves to it equally with women, and not try to escape from this police surveillance, which in even its most moderate and limited phase will always remain suspected and hated so long as woman alone is its object and victim.

“Those who declare that they have only practical prophylaxy in view will no doubt reply, ‘Of what use to philosophize on such a subject? Why do you continually bring up the idea of respect for individual liberty and equality between the sexes? Why sacrifice the general interest to speculative argument, which must exclude all measures of preservation against venereal maladies?’ Very well; but do not let us be deceived. Systems of medicine and hygiene which make a clean sweep of these great principles which they despise, will never succeed in elaborating any work of prophylaxy able to resist the progress of ideas and the improvement of morals of these days. If you imagine that the public health is the supreme law, and that it is necessary to employ every means to safeguard it, then strike at the man and the woman; but as shown above, the latter is at present doomed to be continually the scape-goat of all these evils. In this matter we are continuing to work on a basis of odious prejudices and practices, inept and preposterous as those of the middle ages. The prostitute is always spoken of, but the prostitute-maker is one whose presence seems not even to be suspected.

“It is monstrous that every woman who makes a commerce of her person should be submitted to a species of slavery, to certain measures which pretend to control the quality of the