

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

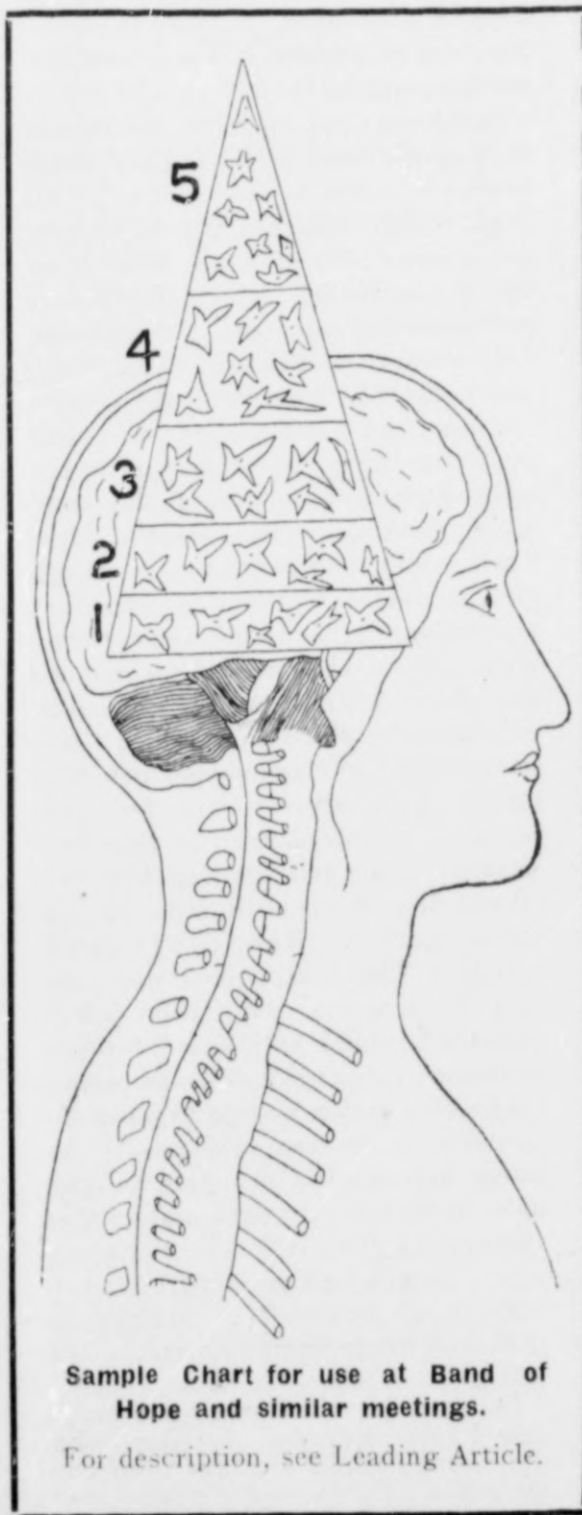
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THE WHITE SLAVE TRAFFIC.

In a previous paper we dealt with the White Slave Traffic—what it is. Before attempting to give any idea of what has been done to suppress the traffic, it will be necessary first to give some account of different methods that have been tried to suppress or regulate prostitution. They may practically all be summed up under the following headings:—Lock Hospitals, Cantonments Acts (India), Contagious Diseases Acts (C.D. Acts), Regulation, and Segregation. One or more of these methods has been tried by practically every civilised nation in the world, but only by the civilised; for prostitution and venereal diseases belong only to civilisation. They have been tried, but each in turn has not only failed, but almost invariably increased the evil it was designed to reduce or prevent; and the countries now under "regulation," or segregation, are the chief destinations of the victims of the White Slave Traffic. Lock Hospitals, the Cantonment Acts, C.D. Acts, and Regulation, appear to aim at, as far as possible, preventing disease; segregation at limiting the area in which prostitution may be practised, and so keeping the rest of a city free from the evidences of the vice. But the result of each is to make vice legal, and so of necessity it can claim legal protection—vested interests, and so it flourishes.

No doubt the question of prostitution is one of the most difficult problems that those interested in the social and moral welfare of a nation have to face. In the past legislation seems



Sample Chart for use at Band of Hope and similar meetings.

For description, see Leading Article.

to have aimed more at minimising the physical effects than preventing vice. Appalled at the terrible ravages of venereal disease, they sought by laws and regulations to lessen virulence. For more than 100 years we have some accounts of the different efforts that have been made, both in England and in connection with our Army in India. The earliest record we have come across is in 1805, when Lock Hospitals were set on foot in the Madras Presidency. These appear to have been established for the compulsory detention of any women found to be suffering from disease, but men similarly affected were left at liberty to infect others. Three years later an official report states that, with two exceptions, cases of venereal disease had increased since the Lock Hospitals were opened." The following year nine out of seventeen hospitals were closed. In 1810 a report states that one soldier in seven in Bangalore was diseased, and Lock Hospitals were again established in the stations in the Madras Presidency, where there were British troops.

In 1832 the Directors of the East India Company reconsidered the propriety of abolishing Lock Hospitals. Lord Bentinck stated his opinion that "a more useless plan was never devised for preventing the diffusion of venereal, and that they had actually failed." The following year they were again closed, only to be opened again a few years later, and for a good many years this seems to have been their history.

"In 1859, Sir Ronald Martin, C.B., F.R.S., physician to the Council of India, at a Royal Commission, said: