

police had appeared in a Colombo paper. But almost immediately removals began, and by February 7th every foreign house of ill-fame in Reclamation Road was closed and in darkness. One brothel remained open a few days longer, kept by a notorious Sinhalese and his female consort, who have been established in this road as procurers for over 20 years. But this house also, after its long and terrible career of villainy, was emptied, closed, and padlocked by February 9th."

All this has been done without any prosecutions. The keepers and inmates were simply advised to leave by the police, and did so; no ebullition of feeling such as was feared, no disturbance from anyone. These were all Government-licensed brothels. Some of the foreign women have left the island; others have moved to other houses, but the contrast is striking. "Instead of a street full of well-built European houses, brightly lit, with piano-playing, dancing, drinking, and much vivacity of a sort . . . a few fugitive places . . . one-storey huts . . . dark, dismal . . . an occasional lamp . . . vice is made loathsome instead of alluring."

This has not been done in a year. In 1889 the Ceylon Government enacted an ordinance for the suppression of brothels. It is not clear if it was ever enforced, but of late years it has been entirely ignored.

For over four years the Colombo Vigilance Society has been drawing the attention of the Governor and Government to the existence of these houses. Letters and memorials were sent to all concerned. "In 1910 the Governor replied to a memorial, saying that he was satisfied, from the report of the Inspector of Police, that the system adopted in Ceylon was the best possible."

Attempts had been made to secure the abolition of these places by quiet silent methods, but these failing, it was found necessary to turn the light of publicity upon the cesspools. A weekly periodical, the "Christian Watchman," was started, in which the names of the keepers of the houses, as well as the owners, were openly referred to, and their character clearly indicated, so that there was no room for uncertainty in the matter.

"One of the most effective methods was the picketing of the street by

volunteer workers, who endeavoured to dissuade customers, and sometimes held open-air Gospel services in the street. As a result it was reported that 75 per cent. of the visitors went away without entering the houses. As evidence of the result of this picketing, the "Watchman" published from time to time extracts from the diary of one of the pickets, detailing exactly what happened, with the precise time, including such points as who came into the street, what the police were doing, what transpired at the houses, or at the doors.

Mrs Human, an English lady resident in Ceylon, who is one of the honorary secretaries of the Vigilance Society, conceived the courageous and humane idea of taking up her residence in Reclamation Road, the street. After much difficulty she secured a house, which had at one time been used as a brothel . . . in order to exclude competition."

To many these may seem strong measures, and likely to rouse a good deal of feeling, but they were undertaken by earnest Christians, who took as their motto, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

Latest advices say that there is evidently a complete reversal of the old toleration of brothels. The Colonial Secretary has written to the Secretary of the Ceylon Vigilance Society that any place that is known to be an organised brothel will or has been closed.

Later a similar clearance has taken place in Kandy, largely through the influence of Mr Cowen, one of those responsible for the work in Ceylon.

In China, in 1856, brothel slavery was the subject of official action by the British Government. The report said of Hong Kong: "Young girls of 13 or 14 are brought from Canton or elsewhere as a regular matter of business for large sums of money. . . . The unfortunate creatures obviously form subjects of speculation to regular traders. . . . In most of the houses the inmates are more or less in debt to the keepers. . . . The brothel keepers are supported by capitalists. . . . The fact of licensing gives the keepers a sort of official authority. . . . They boast of the protection of the inspectors,"

In 1878 a memorial was presented by Chinese merchants in Hong Kong, praying to be allowed to form an association for suppressing kidnapping and traffic in human beings. A "Chinese Society for the Protection of Women and Children" was shortly afterwards founded, and was formally sanctioned by Lord Kimberley in 1880. This Society deserves commemoration as one of the earliest organisations for suppressing the traffic. Its objects were in some important matters an anticipation of the International Agreement for the same purpose, which was prepared at the official conference held in Paris in 1902. Those objects were:—

1. The restoration to their homes of all women or children decoyed or kidnapped into the colony for the purposes of prostitution;
2. The maintenance of women and children pending investigation;
3. The establishment of a Refuge;
4. The propagation among the Chinese of a knowledge of English law on kidnapping and slavery; and
5. The boarding of vessels for the discovery of traffickers and their victims.

We have dealt first with what has been done in India, because the information concerning that country is of an earlier date than any the writer has been able to secure about England and Europe.

(To be Continued.)

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## ANNUAL CONVENTION.

Gisborne sends a special request that names of delegates to the coming Convention requiring hospitality be forwarded as soon as possible to the Secretary (Mrs Walker), Upper Fox Street, Gisborne; also that she may be notified at once when the date is fixed for Convention.

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER.

Will all the Unions that have taken up "Thrift" during the year, and have not been notified, kindly send in their reports before December 31st, so as to enable me to complete mine for convention.—Yours in the work,

(Mrs) M. FLANAGAN,

4, Cole Street, Masterton.

N.Z. Supt. of Thrift,