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A STUDY OF VOLUNTARY JUVENILE PROSTITUTION AND WHITE
SLAVERY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITAIN AND AN
ACCOUNT OF THE EFFORTS AND ATTEMPTS MADE
TO ERADICATE SUCH ACTIVITIES

A Thesis 556

Presented to the
Department of History
and the
Faculty of The Graduate College
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Gayle Johnson
August 1968

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Accepted for the faculty of The Graduate College of
the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

Stanley Trumbull - History
Chairman Department

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Paul L. Beck - History
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Raym. Robbins - History

William L. Lane - English

I don't like coarse subjects, or the coarse treatment of any subject. But I am deeply convinced that the corruption of our society requires not shut doors and windows, but light and air; and that is exactly because pure and prosperous women choose to ignore vice, that miserable women suffer wrong by it everywhere.*

To our infinite disgust and horror, the names of certain of the greatest in the land are at this hour openly mentioned in connection with the filthiest debauchery.**

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning in a letter to W. M. Thackeray, April 21, 1861. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Letters, ed. by Frederick G. Kenyon (New York: Macmillan Company, 1897), II, 445.

**W. T. Stead in his "Suppressed Defense," Pall Mall Gazette (London), September 28, 1885, p. 11.

PREFACE

In terms of comparison with the rest of the world, Great Britain was a highly favored nation in the nineteenth century. Below the facade of Victorian life, however, there existed many horrors. It is the purpose of this writer to deal with one such area where miseries of the "lurid swarming low life" are exhibited.¹ Beneath the Victorian veneer was a good deal of voluntary juvenile prostitution and white slavery. The object of the paper is to depict this tragic aspect of the Victorian social scene and to consider the efforts of various individuals and groups to obliterate it.

By the word "voluntary," this writer means not forced physically against one's will into a life of prostitution or entrapped or decoyed. Rather, it was the "choice" of the girl concerned, although it will be seen that there were many factors beyond her control, such as poverty and environment, that tended to affect or influence her choice. "White slavery" would imply forced prostitution whereby fraud, misrepresentation, or

¹John L. Bradley, ed., Rogue's Progress (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. viii.

abduction had been employed. It was (and is) the illegal activity of ". . . organizing the prostitution of others for gain."²

This paper is not an attempt, then, to evaluate the whole scope of Victorian morality. And it should be noted and remembered that it is also not a study of all types or ages of prostitutes--only young girls. That juvenile prostitution and white slavery existed to a substantial extent in Victorian London is usually rather surprising at first glance. After the social and moral aspects have been thoroughly examined, the problem becomes more credible, however.

This study is concerned generally with the area of London because of the nature of most of the available material and literature on the subject and the investigations and parliamentary hearings. Some of the known literature on the subject was printed and circulated privately and thus was impossible to obtain. Other sources and works were unavailable in this country, or if in the country, not permitted to be copied or loaned. The British Sessional Papers, I feel, made the whole study possible. They were invaluable. Whereas in some instances I could not obtain a pamphlet or paper on the

²J. C. Mancini, Prostitutes and Their Parasites, trans. by D. G. Thomas (London: Elek Books, 1963), p. 72.

subject, I had the original documents at my disposal. Without them this topic would not have been attempted. Although there were many Victorian journals and newspapers, almost all were "in a conspiracy of silence," thus conscientiously avoiding any mention of these vices³ and, hence, were virtually valueless as sources for this study. "Editors, like members of Parliament, knew everything and did nothing."⁴ It took the Fall Mall Gazette to break the thing wide open.

There are two individuals whom I would like to acknowledge. Dr. A. Stanley Trickett, Head of the Department of History at the University of Omaha, provided all the inspiration, encouragement, and direction. The idea for this thesis was conceived over two years ago in one of his graduate seminars. Miss Ella Jane Dougherty, Assistant Librarian of the University, was the other person without whom the study would never have gotten off the ground. She spent months, and in one case, well over a year, tracing and tracking down certain needed materials. She has worked closely with me for over two years. I would like to thank both of these people for their willingness to help and their patience and understanding throughout.

³From W. T. Stead's "Suppressed Defense," as published in the Fall Mall Gazette (London), September 28, 1885, p. 11.

⁴Ibid.

It is felt that this study has been worthwhile from the standpoint of moral and social history of nineteenth century England. Little is generally known of the conditions and circumstances of this segment of Victorian youth and of the few who cared enough about them to initiate a movement for their protection. The Victorians, themselves, had ignored the situation. Indeed, they had even denied its existence. They had been, for the most part, more concerned about stiff collars and elaborate sitting rooms than with this dark side of London life.

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INTRODUCTION

Prostitution is as old as mankind itself. England, like the rest of the world has always had its share of wanton females. Each age, in condoning or repressing it, has attempted to cope with the problem in its own way.

During medieval times, there were licensed brothels at Southwark operating right in the Bishop's gardens, fully supported by legislation. These existed down to Henry VIII who condemned them. A little later the Puritans lashed out against "the detestable sins of incest, adultery, and fornication" in an act dating to 1650. In 1752, 1755, and 1763 repressive statutes against the keeping or frequenting of bawdy-houses were enacted. During the reign of Queen Victoria, vice became licensed again, however.¹ Even worse, there was a tremendous increase in prostitution, particularly among the very young.

The problem of juveniles entering or being forced into the profession of prostitution became acute as the nineteenth century had gotten underway. Although juvenile

¹Benjamin Scott, A State Iniquity: Its Rise, Extension and Overthrow (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1890), pp. 5-11.

prostitution and white slavery had existed for centuries, both began to increase noticeably after the Napoleonic Wars. Some have attributed these circumstances to the general demoralization that had spread over Western Civilization following this upheaval.² During these early years of the century, many countries had passed legislation protecting girls under the age of twenty-one.³ England had not. In Her Majesty's great realm, the age of consent had remained at twelve.

After Napoleon had made the procurement of young French girls a criminal offense, a demand for English girls had developed abroad. The result was that the unprotected English girl soon became the most fashionable as well as the most easily procurable inmate of the continental brothel.

There were other factors that must have influenced the growth of juvenile prostitution and white slavery. Notably, the Industrial Revolution must be considered.⁴

²Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor (London: Charles Griffin & Co., 1861), p. 211. Hereafter cited as London Labour. See also Charles Terrot, The Maiden Tribute (London: Frederick Muller, 1959), p. 13.

³Terrot, p. 13.

⁴William Booth, In Darkest England and the Way Out (Hapeville, Georgia: Tyler & Company, 1942), p. 72. Cf. E. Royston Pike, ed., Hard Times: Human Documents of the Industrial Revolution (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), pp. 279-303.

The English population had doubled between the years of 1801 and 1850.⁵ The influx of these people to urban centers, already gorged with masses of humanity, caused a total change in the way of life of simple folk. Those whose fathers and grandfathers had tilled a small plot of soil now found themselves in crowded, dirty, miserable dwellings. There was no honest escape from such conditions in many cases. The home, the domestic unity, was disrupted--often broken up from the effects of this changing way of life. Mothers, as well as fathers, worked in the factories scandalously long hours, almost never seeing their children, let alone supervising them. One can imagine their scrounging, rampant offspring. Exposed to vice and degrading experiences of all sorts, these neglected youngsters could not have helped suffer greatly, morally as well as physically.

There have always been poorer and less fortunate classes of people such as these, but the development of the Industrial Revolution acted as a catalyst in their growth. The poverty and despair that resulted was enough to drive many young girls into the streets. But more than this, moral training was sadly lacking in these classes, and a girl's parents were too often among her worst

⁵Terrot, p. 22.

associates.⁶ Unfortunately many girls had the consent of their parents, or at least their tacit encouragement, to make a living on the streets or in the brothels. There was no law to protect these girls if they were over twelve.⁷ The result was that London was the only town in Europe with such young girls as prostitutes.⁸

The Victorian girl's education--that is, in those classes above the lower working groups--may have also been a factor in the increase of prostitution. These girls were largely taught such things as music and singing and to give the impression of total innocence.⁹ This often resulted in ". . . such a strictly prudish character that, in their sympathy and ignorance of the world, they [young English girls] offer[ed] themselves the easiest prey imaginable."¹⁰ If they were seduced,

⁶Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3d. ser., Vol. CCXCX (1885), p. 854. Hereafter cited as Hansard.

⁷It was not until 1875 that the age of consent was raised to thirteen, and not until 1885 that it was sixteen. Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Lords), 1881, Vol. IX "Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords of 1881-1882," edited by Edgar L. Erickson, pp. 422, 433. Cf. Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1884-1885, Vol. I "Criminal Law Amendment Bill," p. 284. Hereafter cited as BSP.

⁸BSP, 1881, IX, pp. 422, 433.

⁹Sir Charles Petrie, The Victorians (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1960), pp. 204-206.

¹⁰Terrot, p. 25.

the girls were too terrified to return home and willingly let themselves be shipped to the continent as white slaves.¹¹

There was still another reason for the growth of juvenile prostitution and white slavery in the nineteenth century. It was, ironically, prudery. Simple, snobbish Victorian prudery. Because one could no longer keep mistresses in that age, brothels grew.¹² Immorality thus sought cover. But, paradoxically, there were not enough girls to fill the brothels--to meet the supply and demand.¹³ Thus the rapid development of the white slave trade was enhanced by procurers who were always on the watch for a "fresh" girl.

All of this had the makings of a social and moral crisis. During the Victorian Age, fortunately, men had begun to feel a moral concern for the conditions of human life. With the beginnings of social work and the rising status of women had come a "revolution in sentiment" that had helped to prepare the way for Josephine Butler, the Salvation Army, and W. T. Stead in their crusade against iniquity.

¹¹ibid., p. 26.

¹²Vern R. Bullough, The History of Prostitution (New York: University Books, 1964), p. 178.

¹³Clifford G. Roe, Panders and Their White Slaves (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1910), p. 95.

The battle these individuals waged was made long and difficult by the fact that virtually no work had been done to remedy social ills of this sort. Girls between twelve and sixteen were always on the London streets at night.¹⁴ It was estimated in the years between 1850 and 1880 that there were approximately 60,000 to 80,000 prostitutes in London.¹⁵ Many, certainly, were old, hardened, habitual prostitutes, but the number of juveniles was increasing rapidly.¹⁶ Large numbers of these young girls had been debauched or entrapped by the age of thirteen, though others had already begun a life of immorality at the age of seven, eight, or nine.¹⁷

These girls could see easily that in one long week's worth of wages from an honest occupation they would have less than their prostitute friends made in a few minutes. The temptations were often just too difficult to overcome. What William Booth had to say about it was true:

¹⁴Hansard, CCLXXXVIII (1884), p. 401. Especially frequented were such areas as Haymarket, Piccadilly, Whitechapel, Wapping, Rateliff Highway, Lambeth, Waterloo Road, Shadwell, Spitalfields, Newport Market, Bedfordbury, and Seven Dials.

¹⁵Mayhew, London Labour, pp. 211, 213; Booth, p. 64. Cf. Richard Collier, The General Next to God (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1965), p. 128.

¹⁶Hansard, CCXCVIII (1885), p. 1175 and CCXCVII (1885), p. 1093.

¹⁷Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 720. Cf. BSP, 1882, XIII, p. 541.

"The profession of a prostitute is the only career in which the maximum income is paid to the newest apprentice."¹⁸
What the juvenile prostitute and prospective white slave did not realize until it was too late was that ". . . all the prizes are at the commencement"¹⁹ and that degradation or even death was at its end.

¹⁸William Booth, p. 59.

¹⁹ibid.

CHAPTER I

VOLUNTARY JUVENILE PROSTITUTION

In Victorian England, young girls often worked in factories, or at other means of employment, under conditions which often contributed to their becoming prostitutes.¹ Generally speaking, girls who "voluntarily chose" prostitution as a way of life came from the working classes.² Young servant girls, for example, were frequently led into a life of immorality as a result of flirtations which often began "innocently" enough with their masters or others in the household.³ Former sempstresses and milliners were commonly found among the ranks, too.⁴ Here again, many a downfall was brought about by the desire to earn a little on the side from

¹Terrot, p. 23. Paradoxically, legislative acts against child labor sometimes also rendered very young girls more accessible to the influences of the streets.

²But some girls did come from the upper classes. See Maud B. Booth, Beneath Two Flags (4th ed.; New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1894), p. 73.

³Hansard, CCLXXXVIII (1884), p. 407; Mayhew, London Labour, p. 257.

⁴Mayhew, London Labour, p. 250.

acquaintances until the situation developed into a tragic life of full-blown prostitution.⁵ Then too, a large number of juvenile prostitutes were factory children. It has been asserted that only one factory girl in fifty retained her virginity.⁶ Frederick Engels wrote of their situation:

. . . the factory owner wields complete power over the persons and charms of the girls working for him. Nine times out of ten . . . the threat of dismissal is sufficient to breakdown the resistance of girls⁷

A glance at some facts of the financial condition of the working girl provides real insight into the whole problem. Dr. Acton, a contemporary and a Contagious Disease Act advocate, believed that extreme poverty and poor working conditions virtually caused much prostitution.⁸ Other evidence would tend to bear out this opinion. In some areas women and girls attempted to support themselves by making matches and sewing skirts for a mere few pence per dozen.⁹ Similarly, one third of the girls under eighteen

⁵Ibid.

⁶Petrie, p. 210. This is not to say all who were not virgins were prostitutes. Cf. Pike, pp. 286, 296.

⁷Frederick Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England, trans. by W. O. Henderson and W. H. Chaloner (New York: Macmillan Company, 1958), pp. 167-168.

⁸Steven Marcus, The Other Victorians (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1964), p. 7. Cf. Mancini, p. 48.

⁹Hansard, CCLXXX (1883), p. 771.

in dressmaking were paid nothing and only half of the young girls in millinery received wages.¹⁰ One young girl answered an advertisement in a local newspaper to become an apprentice to a milliner and asked what the wages would be. When she had been given the figure she realized she could not possibly live on that amount and said so. She was told that she could make up the difference on the side: ". . . you will have a room to yourself; no one will ask questions. . . ."¹¹ Those who had plenty of work to do faced shockingly long hours. Apprentices were known to have worked from five or six in the morning until after midnight with no breaks, often eating their scanty meals on the job.¹²

Factory girls found working conditions no more conducive to morality. Again there were very long hours and exhausting tasks. Obscene language was very prevalent. Usually there were no dressing rooms for them to change into their working clothes, and there were likely to be no separate toilet facilities for men and women. Sometimes the heat was so intense that they wore very little

¹⁰Ibid. Cf. W. N. Willis, The White Slaves of London (Boston: Gorham Press, n.d.), p. 147. Girls over eighteen in millinery averaged 13 s 7d per week.

¹¹Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 608.

¹²Pike, pp. 227-228. Cf. Petrie, p. 213.

clothing. Closing hours were late, so they were out on the streets alone every night.¹³

Compounding the temptations that these girls may have felt as a result of their economic problems was the general attitude of their social class towards morals. "To be unchaste amongst the lower classes is not always a subject of reproach,"¹⁴ wrote Henry Mayhew. Engels believed that the workers' hard life

. . . left them only the two pleasures of drink and sexual intercourse. The result is that the workers . . . are passionately devoted to these two pleasures and indulge in them to excess and in the grossest fashion.¹⁵

The fourteen thousand "drink shops"¹⁶ in London would not have contributed to good behavior. General William Booth of the Salvation Army wrote:

There are thousands who are begotten when both parents are besotted with drink, whose mothers' saturated themselves with alcohol every day of their pregnancy, who may be said to have sucked in a taste for strong drink with their mothers' milk, and who are surrounded from childhood with opportunities and incitements to drink.¹⁷

¹³Pike, pp. 225-226, 290-291. Cf. Petrie, p. 211.

¹⁴Mayhew, London Labour, p. 221.

¹⁵Engels, p. 144.

¹⁶William Booth, p. 57.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 55.

During the early seventies Booth had observed

' . . . multitudes of my fellow-creatures . . . sunk in the most desperate forms of wickedness and misery that can be conceived. I went out and looked on the wretched sons and daughters of debauchery and vice and crime who were all about me. The drunkenness, the harlotry, and pauperism, the slumden, and blasphemy and infidelity of these crowds'¹⁸

Needless to say many unchaste girls of this segment of society never had any moral training whatever. They were left in complete ignorance, and often their seduction took place before they really knew anything about it at all.¹⁹ Those who did know what was occurring were seldom aware that they were doing anything wrong.

The circumstances of the home life of the lower classes--horrible, nearly beyond belief--further contributed to juvenile prostitution. It was often not entirely a choice of their own, for at home they had been very crowded. Usually families lived in one room and the children were understandably introduced to sexuality very early; unfortunately, even incest was all too common.²⁰

¹⁸As cited by Harold Begbie, William Booth: Founder of the Salvation Army (New York: Macmillan Company, 1920), I, 342.

¹⁹BSP, 1882, XIII, pp. 860, 871-872.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 865, 867; BSP, 1881, IX, p. 452; Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 1475. One grandfather sexually molested his granddaughter who was also her father by his older daughter. Cf. Pike, p. 293.

Alfred Eaton told of one child who

. . . slept in the same bed with her father, who was a widower; a girl of sixteen, who was a visitor, and a boy of twelve or thirteen; and I think another girl as well . . . that is not at all an uncommon instance; it is very common, and the result of that is, that such a girl, without having the slightest intention or wish to become a prostitute, unless she is taken care of, becomes a prostitute.²¹

Sometimes the whole family, as in the case of Eliza Perrymen, went without any clothing. In this home situation, prostitution was simply a part of daily life. The mother and children slept huddled in a corner with only a very thin partition between them and some prostitutes who were with their clients.²²

Even if a child could withstand the horrors of his home life, there was still the problem of very little parental care and guidance. Many were treated unjustly, even brutally by their mothers and fathers.²³ But more often the parents just did not care what their daughters did. One mother, asked about her twelve year old daughter of the streets, replied, "I cannot help it; I have to go out to work; what am I to do?" She added, ". . . she is beyond my control; she can do as she likes. I had

²¹BSP, 1882, XIII, p. 858.

²²Ibid., p. 880.

²³Dr. Drysdale, Prostitution Medically Considered with Some of Its Social Aspects (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1866), p. 7.

to look after myself when I was her age, and she must do the same."²⁴ Because they could add to the household budget, some girls were even encouraged by their parents to earn a living by selling their bodies.²⁵

In other cases, when the parents did care about their children, especially in those classes slightly above the poorest ones, their "careful" methods of child rearing sometimes had the opposite effect of turning their poor girl to the streets. A girl returning home late, for example, was sometimes locked out of her house and then had nowhere to go.²⁶ Many household maids and servants had their first downfall when their mistresses did the same thing to them for returning late or for breaking something.²⁷ Other parents drilled their daughters in the ethics of puritanism from infancy. The result was that if the girl made one little slip, she sometimes

²⁴BSP, 1881, IX, p. 436.

²⁵Hansard, CCXCX (1885), pp. 897-898. Worse yet, some parents literally sold their children to brothels. See BSP, 1881, IX, p. 426.

²⁶Edward O. Janney, The White Slave Traffic in America (New York: National Vigilance Committee, 1911), p. 84.

²⁷The Times (London), August 8, 1885, p. 6. See also Mary Jeune, "Saving the Innocents," Fortnightly Review, XXXVIII (July-December, 1885), 347-349. Cf. Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, In Darkest London (New York: Macmillan Company, n.d.), p. 79.

gave up in despair and ". . . render[ed] prostitution the only recourse."²⁸

Another group of mothers who failed to provide proper guidance for their children were the prostitutes, themselves. Bishop South wrote of their unfortunate babies: ". . . 'not so much born into this world as damned into it.'²⁹ A child born in a brothel knew nothing else but that type of life from its very beginning. Many of these mothers persuaded their children into following their footsteps before they became twelve years old.³⁰

Too many girls lacked any parental guidance of any kind, however--even of a harmful sort. These were the orphans or children left when parents died, remarried, or deserted them. Usually they had to resort to lodging-houses or "padding kens" for shelter. In many cases these were about as bad as brothels if they were not

²⁸Drysdale, p. 7.

²⁹As cited by William Booth, p. 55.

³⁰Ibid. Some prostitutes purposefully became pregnant because they looked upon the situation as a long term investment, possibly worth £ 40 if handled properly. Collier, p. 128. In 1880 the Industrial Schools Amendment Act provided that children in the company of prostitutes must be sent to an industrial school. See W. Clarke Hall, The Queen's Reign for Children (London: T. Fisher Urwin, MDCCCXCVII), pp. 108, 110. See also BSP, 1882, XIII, pp. 838-839, 879. However, reports revealed that in many cases this act was ignored and the little girls who should have been in the schools were instead on the streets.

that in fact.³¹ Mayhew stated that they were sometimes actual "brothels for children."³² Ten and twelve-year-old girls and boys slept together regularly, or as Mayhew put it, ". . . herd~~ed~~ together promiscuously."³³ Sometimes three to six children piled into a single bed or even on the floor, stark naked.³⁴

But besides such indecencies, these girls went into the streets as prostitutes to pay for their lodgings. Moreover, their infantile boyfriends wanted a cut of their earnings, and if the girls returned empty handed, they promptly beat them. A sixteen year old female veteran of this group stated, "I have seen them beaten . . . until they were blind from bloodshot, and their teeth ~~were~~ knocked out with kicks from boots as the girl lays on the ground."³⁵

The streets of London of this period were almost cause enough for corruption. All the filth, smells, dead rats, rotten garbage, not to mention the hordes of filthy people

³¹Often they were run by a procurer or a prostitute. See Terrot, p. 24.

³²Mayhew's London, ed. by Peter Quennell (London: Spring Books, n.d.), p. 147.

³³Ibid., p. 149.

³⁴Terrot, p. 24; Engels, p. 46.

³⁵Henry Mayhew, Selections from the London Labour and the London Poor, ed. and with an introduction by John L. Bradley (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 65-66.

were positively dreadful. Booth aptly described a street scene at night:

Every house is alight; the narrow sidewalks and filthy streets are full of people. Miserable little children, with sin-stamped faces, dart about like rats; little ones who ought to be in their cribs shift for themselves, and sleep on cellar doors and areas, and under carts; a few vendors are abroad with their wares Along Water Street are women conspicuously dressed in gaudy colors. Their heavily painted faces are bloated or pinched; they shiver in the raw night air.³⁶

Maud B. Booth wrote of her first visit to a notorious street:

Never shall I forget the sight that met my eye. The moon was shining brilliantly, and, with the flaring gas lamps and electric light, produced a glare which lighted up every face and made the awful scene painfully vivid and distinct. Hundreds of girls, dressed in the highest fashions; many in delicate silks and satins, decked with flowers, lace, and jewels, painted and powdered, walked to and fro, some hurrying past us as if they had not a moment to lose; others loitering slowly along or standing still beneath the gas lamps.³⁷

At the Strand, Villiers Street, and Charing Cross Station prostitutes solicited openly as early as three o'clock in the afternoon.³⁸ And through these areas very young girls,

³⁶William Booth, p. 169.

³⁷Maud Booth, pp. 75-76.

³⁸bsp, 1881, IX, p. 424. Open solicitation was supposedly against the law but the police were often powerless to act. There was more solicitation on London streets than in any other major city of Europe. See Hansard, CCXCVII (1885), p. 952.

street traders or basket girls, walked--a high percentage of whom would soon become prostitutes as well.³⁹

Even if a girl wanted to attempt to earn a decent living in these areas, she had more than the corruptions of the streets to contend with. She was pressed from all sides by the pressures and incentives of prostitution, the worst of which were bad companions. She could see for herself that her friends were "finery" while she went about in rags.⁴⁰ Frequently girls were paid to bring in friends of their own age.⁴¹ Not all bad companions were female; many young men deliberately led a girl eventually into prostitution by first promising marriage when they really had no such intentions.⁴²

Dr. Drysdale of the period believed that there were other causes of juvenile prostitution. He claimed that the "sex-appetite" and the decrease of marriages in the nineteenth century were factors not to be ignored.⁴³

³⁹BSP, 1882, XIII, pp. 847, 849-850.

⁴⁰BSP, 1881, IX, pp. 438, 840. The desire for better clothes has actually been named as a cause of juvenile prostitution.

⁴¹BSP, 1882, XIII, p. 874.

⁴²Ibid., p. 840.

⁴³Drysdale, pp. 6, 10. The Registrar General's figures show that between 1796 and 1805 there had been 1,716 marriages to 10,000 women. During the years 1836 to 1845 there were 1,533 marriages to the same number.

Mayhew considered the thoroughly plausible reasons causing that kind of life, but he added one that others did not mention. He wrote that "the ruin of many girls is commenced by reading the low trashy wishy-washy cheap publications that the news-shops are now gorged with" ⁴⁴

The places where juvenile prostitution was carried out varied in Victorian London. Many juveniles lived with their families or in the lodging-houses as described above instead of in brothels. Frequently, however, they brought their customers to a brothel just for business. ⁴⁵ In the cases of the very young girls, they took their clients to a coffeehouse where beds were easily acquired. ⁴⁶ The

⁴⁴ Mayhew, London Labour, p. 250.

⁴⁵ These girls were not detained against their will in the brothels, however. BSP, 1881, IX, p. 444. Sometimes brothels appeared to be respectable dwellings from the outside. Others were covered by fronts; they were legitimate places of business on the ground floor. Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 607. It has been estimated that there were 6,000 to 10,000 such establishments in London. Ibid., p. 797. When brothel-keepers in one area were prosecuted they just sprang up in another. BSP, 1881, IX, p. 437. The brothel-keeper was likely to be any type of person, perhaps a worn out prostitute, but surprisingly one occasionally found a "respectable" individual in the business. One such case was that of an Alderman and Justice of the Peace who employed an agent to do the dirty work. Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 1496.

⁴⁶ BSP, 1881, IX, p. 424. Sometimes quite young girls were not accepted in the brothel, although it was not against any law. Brothel-keepers were afraid of public indignation.

keeper would allow these children to take as many as six to ten men up to it in one evening.⁴⁷

As late as the 1880's the police were still quite powerless legally concerning this type of vice.⁴⁸ But even worse, they were kept at the brothels' feet by the sums paid to them in bribes.⁴⁹ One house had been known to pay as much as £ 500 a year with free services for detectives and constables.⁵⁰ However, when an order was issued for some police action, the police would round up the girls, but the next night could probably be found talking to them in entirely different circumstances.⁵¹

Physical and mental suffering to a great extent was the usual result of prostitution. Many young girls took a drink just to put them in the frame of mind or to lower their inhibitions to let them face what they were going to do.⁵² This was at the beginning of their careers, however. Soon drunkenness became a way of escape, and

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 449.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 424.

⁴⁹Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 806.

⁵⁰Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 10, 1885, pp. 1-2; Collier, p. 124.

⁵¹Hansard, CCXCX (1885), pp. 806-807.

⁵²William Booth, p. 62.

the words of one prostitute may have been fairly typical:
 "You've no idea how I look forward to my drop of gin."⁵³

Alcoholism was not their only sickness. Venereal diseases of all kinds were very prevalent. Booth wrote that "we have found girls in the Piccadilly at midnight who are continually prostrated by hemorrhage, yet who have no other way of life. . . ."⁵⁴ He recorded that many of these girls were actually mistreated in the hospitals or released before they were well because they were objects of disgust:

Scorned by their relations, and ashamed to make their case known even to those who help them, unable longer to struggle out on the streets to earn the bread of shame, there are girls lying in many a dark hole in this big city positively rotting away. . . .⁵⁵

Many girls were subjected to brutal treatment from customers, owners of brothels or coffeehouses, or their boyfriends who were frequently pimps.⁵⁶

Almost as horrible was the hopelessness of the prostitutes' situation. Booth believed many of them simply committed suicide.⁵⁷ Many became so desperate

⁵³ Mayhew, London Labour, p. 24.

⁵⁴ William Booth, p. 62.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 64.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 62-63.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

that they sold ". . . themselves literally for a base crust of bread and [slept] in the streets."⁵⁸ Their despair is described in the words of a young girl: "I can never be better than I am. From the first hour I found myself blighted, I knew there was no hope but to go on. What position could I take in life; who would ever trust me?"⁵⁹ Usually the young prostitute frankly accepted her situation and ruin. If she did not die on the streets as so many did, she usually had only one prospect in life when her career was over--the workhouse.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 64.

⁵⁹Maud Booth, p. 74.

⁶⁰Mary Jeune, "Helping the Fallen," Portnightly Review, XXXVIII (July-December, 1885), 669.

CHAPTER II

WHITE SLAVERY

On July 10, 1885 the Fall Mall Gazette contained the following statement: "London . . . is the greatest market of human flesh in the whole world."¹ Besides "voluntary" juvenile prostitution in Victorian London, there was another type of prostitution involving juveniles, but it was decidedly quite involuntary. It came to be known as the white slave traffic, the revolting method of forcing innocent girls into prostitution and the exploitation of them.²

This traffic was a market of international proportion which became more deadly and sophisticated with every decade. By 1830 most major cities in England had at least one procurer³ who transported young children across the channel to be "broken-in." By 1850 the trade had grown and the agents' target became the middle or even

¹"A Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon," Fall Mall Gazette (London), July 10, 1885, p. 4.

²Maude E. Miner, Slavery of Prostitution (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 68.

³Terrot, p. 31.

upper class girl.⁴ The seventies and eighties were no exception. Children as young as eleven through fourteen were being entrapped and decoyed.⁵ To make matters more dreadful, the London of these days was ". . . one of the worst cities in the world for prostitution."⁶ It was known then as "the great breaking in ground" for white slaves,⁷ where agents readily and easily procured, sold, and bought young girls, exporting or importing a volume of literally thousands "as regularly as cattle."⁸

Transported from London all over the world, some English girls ended up in the particularly vile brothels

⁴Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁵E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler: Flame of Fire (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1902), p. 153. Hereafter cited as Josephine Butler. Cf. Ann Stafford /Anne Pedler/, The Age of Consent (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), p. 94; St. John Ervine, God's Soldier: General William Booth (New York: Macmillan Company, 1935), II, 635-639.

⁶Edwin R. A. Seligman, The Social Evil (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 9.

⁷Theodore A. Bingham, The Girl that Disappears: The Real Facts about the White Slave Traffic (Boston: Gorham Press, 1911), p. 32.

⁸Ibid., pp. 14-15. Cf. Terrot, pp. 30, 41-44; Collier, p. 126. Cf. Hansard, CCXCIX (1885), p. 211. Sometimes girls who had been decoyed traveled openly on steamships either in the company of the placeur or a "governess," or by themselves. Less lucky ones were forced to spend the duration of the trip in the dark and almost airless hold of the vessel. In such cases there was usually an advance arrangement made with the crew. There is some evidence that other girls were ". . . drugged and put into coffins for shipment . . ." sometimes awakening and dying of fright. See Collier, p. 126; Terrot, pp. 43, 154-155.

of South America.⁹ Others were sent to the United States. It was reported at one time that East End girls were being taken to America, allegedly by Negroes.¹⁰ Actually, the trade in English girls was spread over the face of the world: Egypt, South Africa, the Far East, Australia,¹¹ as well as Europe. France and Belgium¹² were the most likely destinations, however. Besides the fact that there was a great demand for English slaves in these countries, these were the natural European outlets.¹³

That there was a systematic trade in young English girls for purposes of prostitution, has been proven by the existence of letters written by the procurers. One letter read:

⁹W. N. Willis, The White Slaves of London (Boston: Gorham Press, n.d.), p. 281.

¹⁰BSP, 1882, XIII, p. 875.

¹¹Terrot, pp. 50-54.

¹²Belgium was, perhaps, the most notorious area. It was considered the "center of the European market." See Bullough, p. 177. Its corrupt police were easily bribed, and its more than corrupt king spent £ 1,800 a year buying and defiling unfortunate English girls. See Collier, p. 111. Moreover, brothels in Belgium were taxed as brothels. Thus they were a profitable and considerable source of national revenue. See BSP, 1881, IX, p. 378.

¹³But there was also an incoming market to London. The traffic went two ways. There were German, Belgium, and French girls--also many other European nationalities--all imported for use either in London or to be reexported from London to other parts of the world. See BSP, 1881, IX, pp. 388, 507; Mayhew, London Labour, p. 269; Willis, pp. 28-29; Bingham, p. 36; Fall Mall Gazette (London), July 10, 1885, p. 4.

London, 19 May 1876

'My dear Xavier,

'I have had a visit from your friend Louis, who asked me if I could find two English girls for you. I told him yes. If you can come on Monday next I shall have all ready'

'P.S. I have two very pretty packages who will suit you very well: two good girls; you know that I have always served you well, and I wish always to serve you well.'

Another letter dated July 26 of the same year addressed to a man named Quoilin described a victim: "'I have a fine tall, dark girl (brune), beautiful teeth, fine bust'" Other letters revealed intrigue and money talk: "'. . . come direct to me, nobody will know that you have come to London. It is quite understood. Three hundred francs, everything included and the papers ready.'" The letters also attempted to encourage and entice the keepers: "'You will be glad of such an acquisition'" and "'I wish you to have the handsomest woman at the Hague and even in Holland.'"¹⁴

¹⁴BSP, 1881, IX, pp. 478-479. Three hundred francs was the usual price of a "parcel" or colis. Actually, in English money, it varied from £ 20 to £ 500 per girl depending on her beauty, refinement, and social class. All of the parts of letters quoted above were written in the summer of 1876 by a certain Kiyberg who had operated freely as a placeur for a good many years. Until 1877 he was a major procurer. See Stafford, p. 98. That year he was arrested and the traffic supposedly fell off somewhat until another procurer, a man named Sellicartes, came on the scene. See BSP, 1881, IX, p. 367. After Kiyberg's release two years later, he quickly made his way back into the market, but he was soon in trouble with the law again; this time he got two years of hard labor in Rotterdam, but by late 1880 a letter to his old associate, Quoilin, reveals he was back at his old trade. Ibid., p. 40. Actually, it was fairly simple for traffickers to avoid legal responsibility since the crime was often not wholly

There was also another correspondence which left no question as to the existence of white slavery. These were the letters written by the white slaves themselves. A letter to Mr. Dyer from a girl named Adeline Tanner is illustrative: "When I left London six months ago I was as innocent as a child . . . and through compulsion was obliged to take a part in deceit and other things worse." She went on to write:

'I cannot express my feelings on this slavery; it cannot be given any other name; in my idea it is the cruellest thing that ever existed that innocent girls should be brought over here under false pretenses, by men that get their living by it, and sold to the highest bidders of the keepers of houses.¹⁵

To the procurer's mind, obviously, a young English girl was just ". . . a form of merchandise to be acquired by industry and disposed of at a market price per parcel or 'package.'" He thought of his victims as ". . . stock on a farm, [to be] kept in good condition . . . and [to be] prevented from . . . escaping."¹⁶

committed in one country; it was begun in one country, continued in another, and perhaps finished in still another. See Alexander Coote, A Vision and Its Fulfilment (London: The National Vigilance Association, 1910), p. 21.

¹⁵ESP, 1881, IX, p. 464. Mr. Dyer, London printer and publisher of the time, was one of the fairly early organizers and reformers against the traffic.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 490.

The procurers usually obtained their "ware" through gross false pretenses or misrepresentations of all sorts. Adeline Tanner, in the letter which is quoted above in part, implied that innocent girls, herself included, were misled as to the purposes of the trip abroad. Indeed, it was found that all English girls found in foreign brothels were deceived by false pretenses--at least to a certain extent.¹⁷ Some of the victims may have been partially willing, but none knew what their decision really entailed. All had been tricked by the procurers' clever methods.

One of the procurers' most common means of deceiving girls involved a promise of profitable employment on the continent.¹⁸ A certain woman, Madame Paradis, and her associate, Sellecarter, told Louisa Hennessey and many other girls who were in the domestic services, that they (the procurers) could get them much better domestic situations on the continent. Sellecarter got other victims who were "respectable" barmaids in London by telling them that he could get them higher paying jobs doing the same in Paris.¹⁹ A woman approached a girl named Hannah and asked her to work in a restaurant in

¹⁷Hansard, CCXCVII (1885), p. 940.

¹⁸The Times (London), April 14, 1881, p. 10.

¹⁹HSP, 1881, IX, p. 374.

France ". . . where some English girls were needed."²⁰ Klyberg had also used the restaurant approach, but he added other incentives. He told girls they would be placed in hotels to speak to English customers or told them they would become dancers or actresses.²¹ Still other girls were sent abroad or entrapped in their own country by phony registry offices or placement bureaus.²²

Procurers, either male or female, invariably attempted to obtain victims by appearing to be friendly and sympathetic, affecting a manner which quickly enabled them to gain the confidence of naive girls.²³ Women in the business promised to buy these children sweets or new clothes.²⁴ Their male counterparts went so far as to court them, propose marriage, and whisk them abroad.²⁵

²⁰Ibid., p. 496.

²¹Ibid., p. 485.

²²Ibid., p. 484. Cf. Bingham, p. 55; Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 10, 1885, p. 4. An unsuspecting girl would apply for a position and if she did not suit would be placed in some sort of legitimate work, but if she were young and pretty, she might never be heard from again.

²³Edward O. Jannay, The White Slave Traffic in America (New York: National Vigilance Committee, 1911), p. 13.

²⁴Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 8, 1885, p. 4.

²⁵Roe, p. 79; Bingham, p. 17. Adeline Tanner and Ellen Newland were both decoyed by such proposals. See BSP, 1881, IX, p. 464.

Mock marriage ceremonies were also utilized.²⁶ Chance acquaintances, begun on a girl's afternoon off in the park, for example, brought about many another abduction.²⁷ There were other cases where a family would hire a seemingly respectable governess who would live with the family for a number of months, who would then abscond with all the daughters when the opportunity arose.²⁸

Other procurers simply ". . . lurked at ports and stations, and . . . corners of the streets, in order to entrap the ill-protected daughters" ²⁹ Girls returning from places of employment late at night were especially vulnerable to advances.³⁰ False "deconesses" or "Sisters of Mercy" met girls at the railway stations and offered their "kind" help, only to turn the youngster over to a brothel or clearing house.³¹ Charwomen were often part-time procuresses, bringing about the ruin of girls in their neighborhoods.³² Procurers also entered reform homes

²⁶ Willis, p. 43. Cf. Bingham, p. 17; Mayhew, London Labour, p. 243.

²⁷ Terrot, p. 32.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁹ Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 591.

³⁰ Hansard, CCXCVII (1884), p. 410.

³¹ Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 8, 1885, p. 4.

³² Ibid., July 7, 1885, p. 3.

and prisons, looking for girls detained for their first offenses.³³

Another method of procuring entailed placing an advertisement in a local newspaper. This was an easy means of decoying middle-class girls. The following were typical:

'Wealthy American couple would like to adopt beautiful girl between 12 and 15. Will educate and give every benefit of wealth. Must be extremely beautiful and refined, and of honest origin.'

'Fine position for young lady. Independent. Must be under 21, as companion to refined French lady to teach English, and travel on the continent. Address with photo.'

'Professor, 40 years old, with money, wishes to make the acquaintance of a Christian young lady, who may be poor, with a view to marriage.'³⁴

One of the most deceitfully and abominable ways that a girl was sold into slavery was through her own parents or guardians. Very young girls of the working classes could be purchased from their parents or relatives for a mere pound.³⁵ The theory was that the child would lose its virginity anyway, so a profit may as well be made before it was too late.³⁶ Some individuals in the baby

³³*Ibid.*, July 6, 1885, p. 6.

³⁴Terrot, pp. 32-33.

³⁵Ervine, II, 639. Cf. Fall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 6.

³⁶Marcus, p. 157.

farm business "groomed" infant girls and sold them to the market before they reached the age of six.³⁷

After the false persuasions or abduction had taken place and upon arrival in a foreign country, it was usually not long before the girl guessed her horrible fate. Sometimes she was brutally informed by the procurer himself. Klyberg told a group of his "packages" upon arriving in Holland: "Now, girls we mean business. I suppose you know what you came over for?" Fanny Gower, one of the victims, answered, "Yes, actresses," to which Klyberg snorted, "No, you're not; you are to be prostitutes."³⁸

Before becoming imprisoned in a brothel, the white slave was given a physical examination by a certified medical doctor.³⁹ Because prostitution in many European countries was state controlled, this was a requirement by law. The purpose was to determine whether or not there was any evidence of venereal disease.⁴⁰ If disease were found, the girl would be confined in a hospital for sometimes months.⁴¹ Therefore, any sensible brothel-keeper

³⁷Terrot, p. 40.

³⁸BSP, 1881, IX, p. 492.

³⁹Ibid., p. 485.

⁴⁰Drysdale, p. 22.

⁴¹BSP, 1881, IX, p. 485.

would not buy such a girl. The loser in the transaction would be the procurer. Consequently, it was to his advantage to procure decent girls--at least girls who were not common prostitutes. Some of them, at any rate, were positively certified as being virgin.⁴²

After the medical examination, the girls were promptly registered with the police. They were forced to sign an admittance which "allowed" them to become public prostitutes. Most of the girls did not speak the language, so they had no idea of what was going on, let alone realize that they were, in fact, signing their life away. One of the legal requirements of registering was that a certificate of birth must be shown. Because most of the girls were well under twenty-one, they usually had to have false certificates. It had not been difficult for the supplier to obtain such documents for the girls. Some certificates were forged; for example, a birth date of 1860 would be changed to 1856. But in most cases the procurer usually went to Somerset House, told the clerk that he needed the certificate of a certain person, for

⁴²Ibid., p. 377. Louisa Hennessey was such a one. In fact, after being in a brothel for several weeks, she was still incapable of having relationships, so her keeper threw her into one of the notorious venereal hospitals, claiming that she was diseased, but where for many months she underwent a series of terrifyingly torturous operations to correct her situation. Some of her letters tell how medical students held her down bodily while a fiendish physician cut away at her "living flesh."

example, an Ann Williams born in 1858--for it was likely that there should be a person with such a common name born in any given year. The certificate was then merely torn from the book, and the procurer paid a fee of only 3s 7d. This trouble was taken because there were severe penalties in foreign countries if the girls were under age. But these risks did not keep the brothel-keeper from accepting mere children with these false certificates.⁴³

The life of the English white slave living in either a maison de debauche or in a London brothel was one of utter misery. The first obvious atrocity was that these girls were kept in virtual imprisonment.⁴⁴ Once in a while, perhaps every six months, some were allowed to go out for a brief walk, but then only in the company of the brothel-keeper or his trusted servant.⁴⁵ Girls were prevented from simply walking out because the doors were locked.⁴⁶ Most brothels had doors which could not be opened from within except by a special key,⁴⁷ although they opened from the outside by a simple handle.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 372, 376, 486, 506.

⁴⁴Hansard, CCLXXX (1883), p. 767 and CCXCX (1885), p. 606; The Times (London), April 14, 1881, p. 10.

⁴⁵Ernest A. Bell, ed., Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls (n.p.: G. S. Hall, 1910), pp. 36-37. Cf. BSP, 1881, IX, p. 488.

⁴⁶The Times (London), April 14, 1881, p. 10.

⁴⁷BSP, 1881, IX, p. 488.

Clear evidence of detention against ones will may be seen in the letter one girl managed to send to her father. The slave, Hannah, wrote from St. Omer, France, on September 25, 1876:

'My dear father. I would not have mother know, for I know how she would fret about me, but I shall not be able to come home at Christmas, and from all appearances I shall not be able to return for years. When I think of the way in which I have been deceived. . . . I feel as though I should go out of my mind.'

Ordinarily white slaves were not allowed to write letters, nor did their keepers permit them to receive any, thus preventing them from having contact with family and friends who might come to the rescue.⁴⁸

There were several other ways in which the captivity of the white slave was further enforced. Their personal clothes were taken away from them and locked up so that they had nothing proper for street wear.⁴⁹ These clothes were replaced with negligees⁵⁰ or other flimsy but often fashionable attire.

Another thing that kept the girls in a state of subjection in the maisons des debauches was a fear of the law. When these girls were trapped into brothel

⁴⁸BSP, 1881, XCVIII, pp. 193, 196-199.

⁴⁹BSP, 1881, IX, p. 489. Cf. The Times (London), April 14, 1881, p. 10.

⁵⁰Ernest Bell, pp. 36-37.

life, many, because of their youth, were forced by the procurer and keeper to take a false or forged certificate as already described. This usually meant going under a false name, which was an offense against the law.⁵¹ Fear of imprisonment for this offense literally prevented these girls from trying to escape.⁵²

The keepers had further retained the slaves in their power by keeping them in a constant state of debt.⁵³ The girls were charged exorbitant rates for their room and board, wine, clothing, and for the price of their own bodies; that is, they were required to pay back to the keeper the amount of money he had paid to the procurer for her.⁵⁴ Moreover, these girls were told the police would arrest them if they tried to run away without paying these debts⁵⁵ and that the keeper would confiscate their personal possessions.

White slaves who did not conform to the demands made on them in the brothels were kept in line by the threat of

⁵¹BSP, 1881, IX, p. 388.

⁵²Stafford, p. 95.

⁵³BSP, 1881, IX, p. 425.

⁵⁴Ernest Bell, p. 36. Eliza Bond, for example, made 400 to 600 francs per month, but she was constantly in debt to the mistress of the brothel. See BSP, 1881, IX, p. 471.

⁵⁵Ernest Bell, pp. 36-37. Cf. Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 8, 1885, p. 5.

violence. Strong-willed girls were sometimes beaten and taken to a padded underground room to keep their screams from being heard.⁵⁶ Frequently girls were strapped to the bedposts, locked up, or starved.⁵⁷ An assortment of rough-necks or bullies were always present to prevent escapes and to settle other matters that could arise from time to time. Alfred Dyer and George Gillet, two English "men of highest character," attempted to help some girls escape from such a house,⁵⁸ but a bully approached them with the warning that he would ". . . break [their] heads if [they] ever came back again."⁵⁹

Besides houses of prostitution that held young girls as virtual prisoners, there were others that were more specialized. Some were flogging and torture houses.⁶⁰ Others specialized in extremely young girls, and were

⁵⁶Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁷Ibid. cf. BSP, 1881, IX, p. 466.

⁵⁸Josephine Butler, Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade (London: Marshall & Son, 1896), pp. 358-359.

⁵⁹BSP, 1881, IX, p. 467. These bullies were the ones who often "broke-in" or raped the novice white slave. Some refined girls took as long as ten days even with severe treatment to reduce them to utter subjection. See Terrot, p. 41. Mayhew, London Labour, pp. 254-255, wrote that "The bullies are the lowest ruffians going, and will not mind doing any act of iniquity. . . ."

⁶⁰Some had rings in the ceiling from which the children were hung by their wrists. See Terrot, p. 54.

called "infant schools,"⁶¹ Another London establishment's specialty was that of certifying virgins for patrons or procurers, and also "in patching them up after violation."⁶²

In theory the white slaves were free to leave the brothels--at least in the foreign ones. Signs were posted in several languages within the maisons des debauches which stated that they were. But for the reasons already discussed this was not so. Furthermore, the foreign police did not even follow their own regulations. Alfred Dyer had asked them to help him to evict Eliza Bond from a house; they refused. They told one English philanthropist who wanted them to help several English girls that "we cannot injure establishments legally authorized, and in which so much capital is invested." Yet police regularly made the rounds of the brothels to determine ". . . if the girls were there of their own accord" as they were supposed to do by law. But the slaves were forced by the keepers and advised by the police to say that they did not wish to leave.⁶³

⁶¹Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 8, 1885, p. 3. Parents could not get the police to search these houses for their children, but they could if there were a stolen object in question. In these houses of perversion, old men often took more than one child to bed with them at a time. Of. BSP, 1881, IX, pp. 388-389; Hansard, CCKCVII (1885), p. 947, and CCKCIX (1885), p. 210, and CCLXXX (1883), p. 773.

⁶²Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 5. After this they were frequently resold as virgins.

⁶³BSP, 1881, IX, pp. 382, 462, 489, 510.

Understandably, this kind of life was very hard on its victims. The average life of a young white slave has been estimated at three to six years.⁶⁴ The usual cause of death was disease contracted from vile clients. But there were sometimes other factors. Often these girls so hated their existence that they lost any will to live. If they succeeded in living to age twenty-five, they were usually thrust out on the streets, replaced by more attractive and younger girls.⁶⁵ No doubt some girls were done away with by panicked brothel-keepers, once the latter suspected that he was about to be apprehended for keeping a minor.⁶⁶ In other similar cases the victims could be quickly and easily sold to other brothel-keepers in their own or other cities.⁶⁷ Sometimes larger brothels auctioned off as many as twenty pathetic, naked girls at a time.⁶⁸

The real tragedy of the international and London white slave trade in English girls was, of course, the absolute spiritual and physical degradation that these young girls

⁶⁴Bingham, p. 18; Terrot, p. 48; Willis, p. 46.

⁶⁵Janney, p. 105.

⁶⁶BSP, 1881, IX, p. 381.

⁶⁷BSP, 1881, XCVIII, p. 216.

⁶⁸Terrot, pp. 19-20, 46-48. Human merchandise was easily passed along by underground tunnels in some cities-- as Brussels and Antwerp. Some keepers kept a system of telegraphy between each other that aided them during the precarious moments of their careers.

experienced. Their lives became ". . . a gradual descent from one grade of misery to another."⁶⁹ W. T. Stead aptly summed up the lot of these tragic figures: "They move from stage to stage, from town to town--bought, exchanged, sold--driven on and ever on like restless ghosts of the damned, until at last they too sleep"70

⁶⁹BSP, 1881, IX, p. 374.

⁷⁰Prill Mall Gazette (London), July 10, 1885, p. 5.

CHAPTER III

A CRUSADE GETS UNDERWAY

Appalling as the international and domestic trade in English girls was, even more so was the fact that it was ignored for so many decades. For years nothing legally was done about such young girls becoming prostitutes, whether voluntarily or as white slaves.¹ The problem was not to be remedied until later in the century. But there were a few individuals who were earlier interested in and aware of the situation. The fight they began did not bear results until well into the decade of the eighties. Nevertheless, their work amounted to a real crusade with all the struggle, emotion, excitement, and near martyrdom such a movement can arouse.

That it took so long for these evils to be recognized and remedied was largely the result of the Victorian's attitude towards propriety. The average Victorian simply chose to deny or ignore that the problem even existed.² He took an almost ostrich-like attitude that whatever was unpleasant would cease to exist and threaten if only it

¹Hansard, CXCIX (1885), pp. 207-209.

²Ferrot, pp. 29-30; Marcus, p. 4.

were ignored. Unfortunately, what almost none realized was that it was virtually this same Victorian hypocrisy that acted as a catalyst to the growth of the slave trade.

The late Victorians also had a false pride in their nation's moral superiority.³ Perhaps it was partly due to this that when the facts admitted no denial, they simply decided that it was all very nauseous and best left alone. Meanwhile, some of the very men who were the most frequent and wealthy patrons of the brothels sat in the House of Commons and would not pass the needed legislation on the matter.

Then, too, there was also the factor of English jealousy of the liberty of the subject, and fear of government infringement. Thus it was that Parliament, . . . by refusing to interfere, had tacitly declared the existence of prostitutes to be a necessary evil⁴

In spite of all this, a few actions, however feeble, had been taken during the earlier portion of the nineteenth century, and a few societies had been formed. The earliest group, with Mr. Wilberforce as secretary, was called "The Society for the Suppression of Vice." In 1835 "The London Society for the Protection of Young females and Prevention

³Madge Unsworth, Maiden Tribute (London: Salvationist Publishing & Supplies, Ltd., 1949), p. 17.

⁴Mayhew, London Labour, p. 212.

of Juvenile Prostitution" was formed. It acknowledged the existence of much juvenile prostitution and white slavery.⁵

In the forties William E. Gladstone and his wife had begun a personal crusade to aid fallen women and girls.⁶ They helped found associations and establish homes to which they personally donated quite substantially. Once a week, late at night, Gladstone used to walk the beat of the prostitute in his rescue efforts; this was to be his life-long charitable interest.⁷

For the problem at hand, however, these efforts could not even be compared to a drop in the ocean. Not until the late sixties did the work for rescuing and protecting girls develop into the full crusade mentioned above. Its leadership fell under that of a woman and a statesman: Josephine Butler and James Stansfeld. They and a few others began a campaign that stretched over seventeen full years of struggle.

Circumstances and coincidences created the right climate that brought forth the tireless and devoted efforts of Mrs. Butler. Intellectually, emotionally, and personally, she had felt a need to become involved, to make this her purpose in life. She had been the

⁵Ibid., p. 211.

⁶E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, pp. 94-95.

⁷Philip Magnus, Gladstone: A Biography (London: John Murray, 1954), pp. 47, 105-106.

happy wife of a schoolmaster and mother of four children until 1864 when her only daughter and youngest child fell over a banister in the home and died. Her sorrow was profound and her life held little meaning until she found that she could give her mother love and care to others' daughters--girls who had fallen into the depths of immorality. Her selflessness in these actions is revealed in W. T. Stead's appraisal; he wrote that she was ". . . able to love the fallen . . . not with the distant devotion of an angel, but with . . . intense passionate sympathy"8

This personal campaign had begun when an understanding old Quakeress sympathetically had told Mrs. Butler where to go to help others in order to help her to ease her grief over her lost child.⁹ This therapy was what she needed; she took over an early rescue home for girls and went to Brownlow Hill workhouse in Liverpool where she made friends with two hundred human derelicts by helping

⁸W. T. Stead, Josephine Butler: A Life Sketch (London: Morgan and Scott, 1888), p. 13.

⁹Terret, pp. 61-62. Mrs. Butler's interest in girls could be said to date back even further. In the fifties she took a girl into her home who was imprisoned in Newgate for murdering her baby. See Millicent G. Fawcett and E. M. Turner, Josephine Butler: Her Work and Principles and their Meaning for the Twentieth Century (London: The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, 1927), p. 23; E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, pp. 35-36.

them to pick oakum.¹⁰ She soon brought some of these sick girls, mostly prostitutes, home with her and nursed them until they died.¹¹ Before long she and her husband had opened an industrial school for girls.¹²

During the course of this early work, Josephine Butler had learned of the horrors of a prostitute's life and of the white slave traffic.¹³ At the same time, women were becoming somewhat better educated,¹⁴ and the feminine movement had just gotten underway. The timing for a fight for female rights was perfect. Mrs. Butler thus entered wholeheartedly the struggle for repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts,¹⁵ the government's means of regulating prostitution.

The sixties, then, saw the beginning of opposition to sanctioned, licensed vice. Harriet Martineau had spoken out against it in the Daily News earlier in the

¹⁰Margaret B. Simey, Charitable Efforts in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century (Liverpool: University Press, 1951), pp. 76-77.

¹¹G. W. Johnson and L. A. Johnson, eds., Josephine B. Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir, 3rd ed., (London: G. W. Arrowsmith, 1928), p. 48.

¹²Simey, pp. 77-78.

¹³Terrot, p. 62.

¹⁴Her husband was always behind her and was a great advocate of the higher education of women. See Stead, pp. 32-33; Johnson and Johnson, p. 55.

¹⁵Scott, pp. 100-101.

decade, though her protests had fallen on deaf ears.¹⁶ Her objection was that there was no real proof that the Acts lessened venereal disease, and that such legislation only showed that the government recognized vice as a necessity, the result being that the moral nature of the country could not help but be harmed.¹⁷

A few years later Mrs. Jacob Bright and Miss Wolstenhome grew interested.¹⁸ The latter was responsible for alerting Josephine Butler who, subsequently became the revolt's leader.¹⁹ Because she was most anxious for something constructive to be done for the prostitute, Mrs. Butler soon came to the conclusion that the fight against the Contagious Diseases Acts must be better organized and centralized.²⁰ ". . . That [any] woman should be regarded as an individual with needs and rights like any other human being. . . ." ²¹ was her conviction. Quickly she helped to form the "National Association" to fight the detested legislation.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁷E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, p. 71.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁹Scott, p. 89.

²⁰Johnson and Johnson, p. 61.

²¹E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, p. 12.

Before the beginning of the seventies, this opposition had become strong and aggressive.²² The object of their agitation was, of course, the state system of vice control created by the Contagious Disease Prevention Act of 1864. The Act's purpose was to protect garrison towns by subjecting prostitutes suspected of having venereal disease to a physical examination and by certifying hospitals for treatment.²³ The year of 1866 saw a second act passed which made periodical examinations mandatory for all prostitutes, extended its power to more garrisons, and was to be enforced by special police.²⁴ During 1868 and 1869 extensions of these acts were put into effect.²⁵

The Crusaders' struggle was not made any easier by the opinions of those who were in favor of the legislation. At this point in the Crusade, at least, the doctors were behind the system of periodic examinations.²⁶ Dr. William

²²Scott, pp. 97-98.

²³Ibid., p. 15.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 17-18. This Act formed a register of prostitutes which was reminiscent of the French system. If a prostitute refused to be examined, she was subjected to a prison term. See Stafford, p. 27. Areas under the Act included up to ten miles surrounding the town named. See Scott, p. 30.

²⁵Butler, p. 8.

²⁶Even the new women physicians largely supported the Acts. See E. Moberly Bell, Storming the Citadel (London: Constable and Co., 1953), p. 88.

Acton, for example, felt that prostitution was just "part of society" and, therefore, should be regulated.²⁷ Dr.

Drysdale concurred:

Nothing can be more unjust than to keep a body of men, like our troops, in a state of enforced celibacy, and yet to permit the poor fellows to become a prey to the diseases, which they are so certain to contract . . .²⁸

To his mind venereal disease was nothing more than an occupational hazard of the prostitute from which the "innocent" soldier or sailor should be protected. Others believed that the Acts had a good effect morally, that they were actually a deterrent to young girls from becoming prostitutes, and that whole towns were being "cleaned up."²⁹

Josephine Butler and her followers did not agree.

They believed that

. . . every town under the Acts had become a town where vice was considered necessary to the soldier, and where brothel-keepers and prostitutes, with government sanction and help, catered for it.³⁰

and that the legislation ". . . sowed broadcast the seeds

²⁷Marcus, p. 4.

²⁸Drysdale, pp. 23-24.

²⁹Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Lords), 1871, Vol. XIX "Royal Commission on the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1871," pp. 12, 22.

³⁰Stafford, p. 40.

of an immoral principle."³¹ Moreover, the Acts deprived women ". . . of the safeguards and personal security hitherto established by law" ³² In other words, the acts were opposed to the principles of the Constitution³³ because these women and girls were deprived of a jury trial.³⁴

There were also other reasons behind the Crusaders' opposition. The Morals Police created by the Acts could operate upon mere suspicion alone, ruining the lives of innocent young girls.³⁵ They ". . . watched at the doors of factories, and in broad daylight followed and spoke in the streets to girls employed there" and at night they masqueraded as gentlemen or sea captains in order to catch girls off their guard.³⁶ Occasionally, innocent girls running family errands or on their way to meet their boyfriends had been stopped and questioned. For this reason open courtship among the poor became almost hazardous.³⁷ In some cases a girl had been a prostitute

³¹Butler, pp. 79-80.

³²Pawcett and Turner, p. 42.

³³BSP, 1871, XIX, p. 13.

³⁴Johnson and Johnson, p. 88. Under these Acts the police could place a woman on trial as a common prostitute and condemn her in her absence.

³⁵BSP, 1871, XIX, p. 528.

³⁶Scott, p. 33.

³⁷Ibid., p. 31.

for a short while, and had then married respectably. But the Acts now branded her by putting her on a register, making her publicly unrespectable and thus ruining her chances for marriage.³⁸

Another main objection was that the disease did not decrease under the Acts--either among men or prostitutes. In fact, evidence would reveal the opposite effect.³⁹

In 1870 the first Repeal Bill against the Acts came up. In spite of violent opposition, Mrs. Butler carried her campaign from town to town. Mobs broke up meetings everywhere and brothel-keepers threatened to kill her.⁴⁰ A number of times she was turned out by hotels in the middle of the night and she had to go about disguised

³⁸Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1869, Vol. VII "Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1866," p. 33. Cf. Scott, p. 78; A. Gilbertson, "Immoral Ethics," Westminster Review, 144 (November, 1895), p. 572.

³⁹HSP, 1871, XIX, p. 9; Scott, pp. 57, 61. In Hospital, Ratios per 1,000 men, of primary, secondary Syphilis, and Gonorrhoea

1866	89.5
1869 (Gradual extension of Acts)	93.6
1879 (After ten years of operation)	117.8
1882 (After 13 years)	135.0

One reason for the failure of the Acts was that the system dealt in no way with controlling men--thus ignoring that males can also transmit disease not only to other prostitutes but to wives. Also syphilis can remain dormant for years and not be detectable by exam, yet it is still transmittable.

⁴⁰Stead, p. 52.

and under a false name.⁴¹ During one meeting ruffians spread cayenne pepper on the floor and lighted a basement full of straw underneath them, and she barely escaped with her life.⁴² But still the people came to hear her and were spell-bound by her quiet, yet forceful eloquence. She told them:

'It is as if we were passengers in a water-logged ship when all hands are called to the pumps. We are all called to labour for the salvation of our country. It is absolutely necessary to get rid of all unjust, partial, oppressive, and impure laws; for the laws may have little power to make men good, but they have very great power to increase wickedness.'⁴³

The Repeal Bill did not pass, but the fight was continued during the Royal Commission of 1870-1871. Mrs. Butler was the only woman called to testify,⁴⁴ but it cannot be said she did not make herself heard. She strongly denied that the Acts had any good moral effect, and asked for equal laws for men and women.⁴⁵ She claimed that the examinations hardened a girl morally.⁴⁶ She predicted that morals would be lowered even more if the

⁴¹Scott, p. 126.

⁴²Ibid., p. 159.

⁴³Address by Josephine Butler given at Croyden on July 3, 1871 as cited by Scott, p. 112.

⁴⁴Johnson and Johnson, p. 82.

⁴⁵BSP, 1871, XIX, p. 63.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 623.

Acts were left in effect.⁴⁷ She told the commissioners: "We shall never rest until this system is banished from our shores"⁴⁸ and that "they must combat the evils which drove women to the streets, poverty, ignorance, the dreadful overcrowded dwellings . . ."⁴⁹ Finally she reported the existence of the white slave trade and of juvenile prostitution.⁵⁰

There were others as well who were not enthusiastic about the Contagious Diseases Acts. A few members of the medical profession began to question their effectiveness.⁵¹ Ministers of various churches considered them immoral and unjust and even said that they "fostered fornication."⁵² John Stuart Mill, leading philosophical statesman of the day, also testified against them. Besides relating the familiar argument that they endangered the liberties of all women, he said that they may be responsible for the growth of prostitution.⁵³

⁴⁷E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, p. 90.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Stafford, p. 46.

⁵⁰BSP, 1871, XIX, p. 63.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 88. Dr. Drysdale's opinion of the Acts was somewhat lowered as compared to his previous view.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 60, 82.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 87-88.

In the end the commissioners were not convinced that the Acts were harmful or worthless. But they did agree, largely, to modify them. They recommended that the examination be discontinued, that diseased prostitutes should be hospitalized no longer than three months, and that girls found in brothels under the age of sixteen should be sent to industrial schools.⁵⁴

The proposed legislation that resulted from the Commission's deliberations was entitled "A Bill to Repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts and the Better Protection of Women." Oddly enough, at first glance, the main opposers of "Mr. Bruce's Bill" were some of the Repealers themselves. While the new Bill would repeal the Acts, government regulation would not be abolished because the police would be given greater powers of arresting women.⁵⁵ "Mr. Bruce's Bill" was also to be applied to the whole country (not just certain garrison towns and their vicinity), solicitation was to be made an offense, and the age of consent was to be raised to fourteen.⁵⁶ But its controversial clauses doomed it from the beginning and it never got off the ground.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 19-20.

⁵⁵Scott, p. 150.

⁵⁶J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, James Stansfeld: A Victorian Champion of Sex Equality (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1932), pp. 167-168.

During 1873 and 1874 opposition to government regulation continued to grow. The working classes put their full support behind Josephine Butler. Trade Councils passed resolutions, and local associations sprang up while she continued her traveling about the countryside.⁵⁷ Finally, in 1875 Parliament raised the age of consent from twelve to thirteen; however, this appeased the Crusaders very little.

That same year the struggle attained new proportions when Mrs. Percy was found dead in Basingstoke Canal. This widowed mother of three children had been a professional entertainer in a music hall until the police began dogging her every action as well as those of her teen-age daughter.⁵⁸ The events that followed after the police told both of them to report to Lock hospital brought Mrs. Percy to suicidal despair and to the banks of the canal. The death of this "fairly respectable" woman (at any rate she was not a prostitute nor was her daughter) was blamed on the Contagious Diseases Acts. The case was investigated and the circumstances claimed were found to be substantially true.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 149; E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, pp. 100-105; Butler, pp. 169-170.

⁵⁸Stafford, p. 72.

⁵⁹Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers (House of Commons), 1881, Vol. VIII "Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1879-1881," p. 539.

During these years a statesman had come to the aid of the Crusaders. James Stansfeld, an ardent liberal, became the leader of the Repealers in Parliament. In 1870 he had pledged to oppose the Acts "strenuously,"⁶⁰ and then the defeat of the liberal party in 1874 had freed him from his cabinet post,⁶¹ providing him with the opportunity to join the Repealers as vice-president of their "National Association." All of this amounted to the sacrificing of his political career to the cause of the Crusade.⁶² He was aware of this, but his courage and eloquence gave the Repealers new hope.⁶³

'I,' said he, 'will always speak from my conscience. No unnecessary statement of horrors shall escape my lips, but where it is necessary to speak plainly, I will speak plainly.'⁶⁴

He pointed out, like others, that the Acts were against the principles of English law and also showed (with the help of a Dr. Nevins) that the figures and statistics purporting the reductions of disease were worthless.⁶⁵ In 1883 his

⁶⁰Hammond and Hammond, p. 182.

⁶¹Butler, p. 117.

⁶²R. C. K. Ensor, England: 1870-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 171.

⁶³Hammond and Hammond, p. 190.

⁶⁴Scott, p. 180.

⁶⁵BSP, 1881, VIII, pp. 344-358.

influence was largely responsible for getting the Resolution for the Repeal of the Acts.⁶⁶

Because of his parliamentary knowledge and standing, James Stansfeld was a great gain to the cause. He was held in high regard by the public⁶⁷ as well as by his colleagues in the Crusade. Josephine Butler clearly admired him:

'I have seldom met with a man who had so much of the woman's heart in this matter. He had so deep a respect for womanhood, even at its worst, and so much tenderness for the fallen. . . .'⁶⁸

In his estimate of Stansfeld's contributions, Stead said:

'None of all those who joined the crusade was more chivalrously loyal, more absolutely devoted to the cause. A man with official experience, a wide knowledge of men and affairs, who knew his way about the dark places of administrative offices . . . was, till the last the most considerable man in the army of Repeal.'⁶⁹

Meanwhile, Mrs. Butler had been touring Europe to learn more about the conditions of prostitution. She had discovered that "poor girls are being brought from everywhere to be enslaved in this diabolic service, waggons full of them arrive by train from other countries, under the

⁶⁶Hammond and Hammond, p. 232. Immediately the government suspended the Acts as far as police enforcement went, but they were not completely off the books until the Repeal in 1886.

⁶⁷Fawcett and Turner, p. 89.

⁶⁸As cited by Johnson and Johnson, p. 184.

⁶⁹As cited by Hammond and Hammond, p. 64.

care of the police⁷⁰ In Paris she visited St. Lazare, a prison-hospital, where police often put potential or actual juvenile prostitutes;⁷¹ "what she saw there was so inexpressibly painful that she would never speak of it."⁷² The direct result of her tour was the formation of the "British and Continental Federation for Abolition of Government Regulation of Prostitution."⁷³

By 1880 Mrs. Butler decided it was time to be heard and declared that English girls, ages eleven through fifteen, were being held in Belgian and Holland brothels. The Belgian police were furious and English newspapers attacked her.⁷⁴ Her disclosures resulted in the formation of the "City of London Association for the Suppression of the Traffic in English Girls for the purpose of Continental Prostitution."⁷⁵ This society protested the need

⁷⁰E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, p. 134.

⁷¹Drysdale, p. 23.

⁷²E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, pp. 117-118.

⁷³Scott, p. 194.

⁷⁴E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, p. 155.

⁷⁵Alfred Dyer and Benjamin Scott, honorary Secretary of the City of London for Repeal and Chamberlain of the City of London were its organizers and leaders. Dyer had stumbled into knowledge of the traffic when a friend who had visited a brothel in Brussels told him of English girls being held there. He then made a personal tour of the brothels in that city and helped several girls escape. See Terrot, pp. 67-69.

for an inquiry--and got some action. The government sent Thomas W. Snagge, barrister at the English Bar, to Belgium to see whether English girls were, indeed, being transported as white slaves.⁷⁶ He reported that it was all too true,⁷⁷ but it was Mrs. Butler's petition that resulted in anything else being done.⁷⁸ Signed by one thousand women and presented to Earl Granville at the House of Lords, it asked for changes in the laws so that no English girls could be deprived of their freedoms by "force or fraud" and detained in a foreign city in virtual bondage.⁷⁹ Within a month a Select Committee of the House of Lords was appointed to investigate!

In July of 1882 the Report of this Select Committee recommended that it should be a misdemeanor for anyone to solicit a girl to leave her country to enter a foreign brothel, that it should raise the age of consent to sixteen, and that it should be a misdemeanor to receive a juvenile (under sixteen) into a brothel. The criminal

⁷⁶BSP, 1881, IX, p. 502.

⁷⁷What Snagge had attempted to discover in his investigation was whether the exportation of English girls was a systematic trade, whether English girls were induced by false pretenses to leave England, and whether these girls were forced against their will to become prostitutes and were held as prisoners in houses. See BSP, 1881, IX, p. 476. He found this to be the case "beyond all doubt."

⁷⁸Terrot, p. 117.

⁷⁹Unsworth, p. 16.

Law Amendment Bill, based on this Report, passed the Lords in 1883 but was dropped in the Commons; the same thing occurred in 1884, and again in the spring of 1885.⁸⁰ Apparently there were those in Parliament who did not agree with Lord Shaftesbury who said that "nothing more cruel, appalling or detestable can be found in the history of crime all over the world"⁸¹ or with Lord Dalhousie who declared that the traffic "surpasses in arrant villainy and rascality any other trade in human beings in any part of the world in ancient or modern times."⁸² But how were they to be convinced?

⁸⁰Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 1549. In the Bill of May 1885, the age of consent had been lowered to fifteen. See The Times (London), May 8, 1885, p. 11.

⁸¹As cited in the Fall Hall Gazette (London), September 28, 1885, p. 10.

⁸²As cited by William Hamilton Nelson, Blood and Fire: General William Booth (London: Century Co., 1929), p. 192.

CHAPTER IV

SALVATION ARMY ACTION

Apparently there was only so much that leaders of organizations, city bodies, and government officials could do. They could attempt to get the legal action, yet they did not always have the means or the methods of hitting the problem at its own level. The Salvation Army did. What William Booth had done was simply to apply the Christian religion to social problems and he had taken it straight to "the lowest of the low."¹ The General's descriptive words, "We are moral scavengers, netting the very sewers,"² may give some idea of the extent to which the Army went and its sincerity in these matters.

From its beginning the Salvation Army was directed by its founder's mind, personality, and will.³ Although

¹Ervine, II, 624. Cf. Herman Ausubel, "General Booth's Scheme of Social Salvation," The American Historical Review, LVI (April, 1951), 519.

²Begbie, I, 434.

³William Booth's character and personality was shaped by the circumstances of his earlier life. The first influencing factor was poverty. Speculation combined with the effects of a trade depression had left his father bankrupt. See Bernard Watson, A Hundred Years' War: The Salvation

William Booth's first concern was for saving souls, he quickly discovered that a starving and homeless individual could not be expected to have the condition of his soul as his first concern.⁴ This realization and willingness to do something about it turned the Salvation Army into a full scale social movement.

Before the Army can justly be said to have become such an important social force, however, it was imperative that it create some kind of an effect on society.⁵ This they

Army: 1865-1965 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), p. 15. The second factor was a vow that he had made in 1844 at the age of fifteen. Upon his conversion, he had promised that "God should have 'all there is of William Booth.'" See Richard Armstrong, "An Army of Gentle Warriors," The Saturday Evening Post, CCXXV (December 15, 1965), p. 16. The third important factor was the profound influence Wesley had had over him. See Collier, p. 28. He was still a boy when he, following Wesley's example, began preaching in the streets of Nottingham, his home town; before he was out of his teens, he had become a revivalist minister. The final important circumstance was his inability to fit in with existing churches. Because of strong evangelistic tendencies, Booth more than once had become suspect by his superiors and was forced to leave a church. See Sallie Chesham, Born to Battle: The Salvation Army in America (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1965), p. 26. Invariably, he moved on to the next most radical sect.

⁴Begbie, I, 336; Begbie, II, 78; Ervine, II, 627.

⁵The Army's first effects on society were astonishing. In 1878 two young sisters called "Hallelujah Lasses," Rachael and Louise Agar, were sent to Tynside where they reclaimed "three hundred drunken reprobates" in only six weeks. See Robert Sandall, The History of the Salvation Army (London: Thomas Nelson, 1947-55), II, 7. In a particularly drunken area in South Wales, Rhondda Valley, 2,600 converts were gained in six weeks; in a week's time,

accomplished rather early, and the attention they aroused came from all classes. From some segments of the English population they obtained support, but they were very early a controversial group.⁶

In general, public opinion, when not in direct opposition, remained rather narrow-minded and looked, at least, mildly askance at the Army's actions. Groups in one class, however, reacted through becoming a degenerate and brutal mob. Part of another class made cold denunciations. But riots and criticism were probably inevitable. One perceptive observer of the Army's situation, John Bright

at one pub, only three pints of beer were drawn. Collier, p. 104. The alcohol business was hurt in other places too. See Watson, pp. 19-20. One gin dealer offered the Hallelujah Lassies £ 300 to get out of town on the next train. Collier, p. 104.

⁶See Harry Edward Neal, The Hallelujah Army (Philadelphia: Chilton Co., Book Division, 1961), p. 17. Opposition to the Army ranged all the way from Queen Victoria who was "angry" that the General had founded an "army" when there should have been none but her own in the realm to the "Skelston Armies" composed of traffickers, brewers and the lowest ruffians of the gutter. Terrot, p. 78. The Salvation Army was actually persecuted by these groups. Riots and virtual warfare resulted in varying degrees including death. Collier, p. 104; Eileen Douglas and Mildred Duff, Commissioner Railton (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies Ltd., 1920), p. 96; Begbie, II, 11. Booth, himself, was in danger of losing his life. See Nelson, p. 178. Even the police seemed to be against the Army. See Ervine, II, 624; Sandall, II, 191. The Army's gay and noisy marching bands appalled the clerics, while its founder was labeled "anti-Christ." Herbert A. Wishey, Jr., Soldiers Without Swords (New York: Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 17. See Collier, p. 110.

sensed this. From the House of Commons on May 3, 1882, he wrote to Mrs. Booth:

'I suspect your good work will not suffer materially from the ill treatment you are meeting with. The people who mob you would, doubtless, have mobbed the apostles. Your faith and patience will prevail.'⁷

By attacking the alcohol problem and converting men and women, the Salvation Army had at least stirred up the country. But even more important, it was soon helping to feed, clothe, and house the masses. By the early eighties the Salvation Army had become involved in social work of all kinds.⁸ But the rescuing and rehabilitating of young girls from a life of juvenile prostitution or white slavery was

⁷As cited by Begbie, II, 3.

⁸Salvation Army slum work began in the Spring of 1884. Members of the women's officer training corps passed out spring flowers with practical messages attached: "'Sin is horrid, chuck it up!" or "'Give the devil the slip.'" See Sandall, II, 96-97. Emma Booth suggested that Captain Hudson and several cadets take a room in Drury Lane where their uniforms were replaced with threadbare dresses and shawls. See Maud B. C. Booth, "Salvation Work in the Slums," Scribner's, XVII (January, 1895), p. 103. This group became known as the Cellar, Gutter, and Garret Brigade. Thus there was in the Salvation Army a movement to clean out the slums. See Albert Shaw, "A Year of General Booth's Work," Forum, XII (February, 1892), p. 765. Another group of Salvation Army social workers was the Prison Gate Brigade. In 1884 Booth established a home for ex-prisoners in London. See Sandall, III, 3-4. The program was based on the premise that if a convert sincerely wished to reform, he should be given a new environment. Discharged prisoners were met outside the gaol on the day of release and were persuaded to go to an army home where they could be fed, clothed, and put to work until a job on the outside could be found. Ervine, II, 629.

one of the most successful⁹ and interesting facets of their development into a social movement.

The beginnings of these efforts to help young girls date back to the Army's earliest years when it was still known as The Christian Mission. In 1868 the first shelter for traffic victims was set up, but for lack of funds it eventually was shut down.¹⁰ But all endeavors along these lines did not halt completely. Mrs. William Booth for years had been interested in the problem and had held meetings for prostitutes.¹¹ Other sympathetic soldiers frequently took these girls into their own homes.¹² Major Caroline Reynolds told how, in 1877, attempts were made to help the fallen: "'We used to go off at nights,' she said, 'two by two in search of lost sheep. We had many

⁹Perhaps one of the reasons they were successful was because many of the Salvation Army lasses who warned girls about the traffic were contemporaries and thus were listened to. See Terrot, pp. 76-77. Also there was the factor of social class. Many of these young soldiers were virtually born and bred in the slums and thus did not arouse any suspicion and their sincerity was accepted at face value. See Fred A. McKenzie, "The Salvation Army as a Social Force," Windsor Magazine, XII (November, 1900), p. 698.

¹⁰Gandall, I, 26, 30, 100.

¹¹Ervine, II, 639.

¹²Bramwell Booth, Echoes and Memories (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1925), p. 117.

interesting and promising cases, but having no home to which to take them, we lost sight of most of them."¹³

Rescue work that had lasting effects grew out of the personal efforts of Mrs. Cottrill, Converts Army Sergeant for the Whitechapel Corps and mother of a large family.¹⁴ While devoting her evenings to Army work in the early eighties, she had discovered the plight of many poor girls and took it upon herself to help them. One night a girl told her how she had come from the country, expecting to be employed in the domestic service, but was instead trapped in a nearby brothel.¹⁵

Mrs. Cottrill's solution was to take this girl and many like her into her own home, often giving up her own bed to them, while she slept in the kitchen.¹⁶ She fed them: "if a girl came at dinner time, a Cottrill child was expected to give up his place at the table,"¹⁷ and even gave them her own clothes to wear.¹⁸ "Sometimes

¹³As told in an 1896 interview with this officer. Cited by Sandall, III, 19.

¹⁴Stafford, p. 127, says there were five children while Sandall, III, 15, citing a 1921 interview with Mrs. Cottrill, relates that there were six.

¹⁵Stafford, p. 127.

¹⁶Unsworth, p. 5.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸Sandall, III, 14.

walking many miles a day," she spent her spare time helping them to find respectable employment.¹⁹ She gave other girls the job of embroidering Salvation Army jerseys.²⁰ Then late at night, the tireless woman slipped out onto Ratcliff Highway, one of London's most notorious places for brothels and procurers, to rescue young girls.²¹

Eventually, the two basement rooms allotted to the repentent prostitutes began to overflow, and the girls moved upstairs with the family.²² At this point Mr. Cottrill lost his patience and ordered them all out.²³ Poor Mrs. Cottrill, caught between love for her husband and pity for the girls, took her problem to Bramwell Booth, oldest son of the General and the Army's chief-of-staff, who gave her his permission to "look for some Rooms."²⁴

¹⁹Ibid. Her efforts were not in vain. The War Cry of August 9, 1884 stated that ". . . many of the girls she thus sheltered are today in superior situations gaining the respect of all around them. One after being two years in a situation, is now an officer in the Salvation Army."

²⁰Stafford, p. 128.

²¹Unsworth, p. 9. Police went only in couples along this road; it was also the scene of later "Jack the Ripper" murders.

²²Stafford, p. 128.

²³Sendall, III, 16.

²⁴Ibid.

But it was not so simple. Mrs. Cottrill spent days looking in vain because " . . . nobody would let rooms for that purpose."²⁵ Finally she found a house on Hanbury Street whose sympathetic landlord listened to her story and agreed to lease the property to the Army.²⁶

The home became known as the Hanbury Street shelter. It was quickly filled with secondhand furniture. The girls, themselves, cleaned it for occupancy and made their own mattresses and pillowcases out of old clothing. They supported themselves by securing more embroidery work and by doing laundry.²⁷

At last the Army had a rescue home and it was a success. Its purpose was to save young girls who had or were just entering a life of prostitution.²⁸ The following states the "official" purpose and principles of the home:

There is no attempt to prevent any of the inmates from escaping, all being free to come and go, as we rely entirely upon spiritual influence for leading them on in their desires and efforts to begin a new life. The foundation principle is love; the love that seeks to save Christ's lost

²⁵ Ibid. As told by Mrs. Cottrill when she was eighty-one in the 1921 interview.

²⁶ Ibid. The landlord was the Reverend William Tyler. He told Mrs. Cottrill that he wished there were others "who had a heart to help poor girls."

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 16-18.

²⁸ Terrot, p. 82.

ones. The one aim is salvation and the only ground of confidence is the power of God to change the most sinful heart and life.²⁹

To fill the home, Mrs. Cottrill went back out onto Rateliff Highway and shouted into the darkness: "If any girl is in need of shelter, go to Hanbury Street where you will be welcomed."³⁰

Before long the home was overflowing and girls were being turned away.³¹ Even the energetic Mrs. Cottrill could not manage it easily now, so it was turned over to Bramwell's young wife, Florence.³²

The younger Mrs. Booth, not long a wife--and a mother only a few months, found the situation in which she was placed to be rather painful:

'How acute the contrasts in my life at this time. Such bliss at home, the purest love of husband

²⁹Sandall, III, 18.

³⁰Stafford, p. 129. Also, prostitutes were being sent to Hanbury Street from all over England. See Unsworth, pp. 12-13.

³¹Sandall, III, 18.

³²The first year saw eighty-six girls go through the shelter. Sandall, III, 18. During the following three years, three hundred passed through. Collier, p. 122. From 1885 through 1889, 2,283 girls found shelter in this and other Army homes. By 1888 Army work with women and girls had expanded. Shelter homes accommodating 237 were opened in London for decent but poor girls who could not afford to pay regular room and board, thus preventing them from possible degradation. See Maud Booth, Beneath Two Flags, pp. 82-84.

and my darling baby . . . then suddenly these terrible revelations.³³

As a doctor's daughter, Florence had come from an upper class home and could hardly have been expected to have had any knowledge of the conditions with which she was now confronted. As a London school girl, she had heard Mrs. William Booth speak and had immediately decided that the Army was to be her way of life; shortly she had gone to France to pursue its international interests.³⁴ Although this experience with the Army had not prepared her for what she now saw, she quickly rose to the situation with determination.³⁵

The young matron spent the greater part of every day at the refuge listening to the girls, then went home at night and cried herself to sleep out of pity for them.³⁶ Through her discussions with them, Florence discovered the ". . . vicious network of carefully devised agencies"³⁷ that trapped young children. Appalled, she was

³³Florence Booth quoted in The Sunday Circle, March, 1933, as cited by Unsworth, p. 12.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 10-11. Meanwhile she had met Bramwell, the General's oldest son, and within a year they had been married.

³⁵Stafford, p. 130.

³⁶Unsworth, p. 13.

³⁷Bramwell Booth, p. 118.

the first to inform her husband of a regular slave traffic in girls both within England and to the continent.³⁸

Rebecca Jarrett--child prostitute, teen-age brothel-keeper, procuress not long thereafter, and now in 1884 a hopeless alcoholic at thirty-six--was probably one of Florence Booth's main sources of information. Unlike the other girls in the shelter (for she could hardly be called a "girl"), she was hardened by having spent two-thirds of her life up to that point in complete immorality and could well have been supposed to be "beyond reclaim."³⁹ Actually she was fortunate just to have been accepted at Hanbury Street; it was filled beyond capacity as it was.⁴⁰ This would not have been but for the determination of Captain "Hawker" Jones who had discovered her at a Salvation Army meeting in Northampton where Rebecca had gone for her health. This officer had taken Rebecca to a doctor and had nursed her in her own home.⁴¹

Up to this point Rebecca Jarrett's life experiences had been nearly a classic example of Victorian immorality.⁴²

³⁸Unsworth, p. 13.

³⁹Stafford, p. 132.

⁴⁰Unsworth, p. 20.

⁴¹ibid., p. 21. At this time Rebecca was very ill and not expected to live. Perhaps that is why she attended the revival meeting.

⁴²Rebecca Jarrett's life history illustrates exactly what was discussed in the first two chapters of this paper.

Her home life had been one of unhappiness and poverty. Her father had spent money on other women and finally had deserted his wife and thirteen children.⁴³ Her mother had drunk heavily.⁴⁴ And with her mother's knowledge and permission--for she had greedily taken her youngest child,⁴⁵ aged twelve, there herself--Rebecca had been seduced at the notorious Cremorne Gardens⁴⁶ where ". . . the gentlemen who were so attracted by this pretty child paid her mother very well indeed."⁴⁷ From then on Rebecca had kept her mother in funds until her brother had returned from sea when she was fifteen, had discovered her livelihood, and had locked her out of the house.⁴⁸ Rebecca then had turned to some of her old customers "who set her up in a house" of her own⁴⁹ ". . . where she let rooms to men and girls from the Cremorne Gardens and other similar haunts."⁵⁰ Later, while she was still young, she had become the mistress of

⁴³Unsworth, p. 22.

⁴⁴Stafford, p. 132.

⁴⁵Unsworth, p. 22 and Terrot, p. 97 as well as other sources available relate that Rebecca was the youngest of thirteen. Stafford, p. 132, says she was the oldest and is assumed by this writer to be in error.

⁴⁶Terrot, p. 96.

⁴⁷Stafford, p. 133.

⁴⁸Unsworth, p. 23.

⁴⁹ibid.

⁵⁰Stafford, p. 133.

a man in Derbyshire where they had had a little house and a baby. If the child had not died, perhaps she would not have left him.⁵¹ As it was she had reverted to her old way of life.

By the early eighties Rebecca had become ugly and sick. Her fortunes reversed, she had obtained laundry work at a London hotel but eventually had taken up with a certain "Sullivan" who had put her back into the "business." It was not long, however, before her drinking and the long-range effects of a previously broken leg had made her a physical wreck. Subsequently, in 1884, she had gone to Northampton for rest as described above. Once there, her companion, still "Sullivan," ". . . was only too thankful to shift his responsibility to Captain Jones" ⁵² who eventually had sent Rebecca on to London.

Rebecca Jarrett later said of her arrival at the Hanbury Street home: ". . . a lovely young mother with a red jersey on rushed up and kissed me and said, 'I have been waiting for you to come, dear.'"⁵³ Florence Booth's devotion and care, together with that of the other Army girls, eventually "won her over to a new life" although

⁵¹Unsworth, p. 23.

⁵²Stafford, pp. 133-134.

⁵³from Jarrett's own life story as cited by Unsworth, p. 25.

they did not try to force religion on her in any way.

"It was not the preaching, but the care they took of me"⁵⁴ that eventually changed her.

Though sincere, Rebecca proved to be only human. Once or twice she was tempted to return to the more exciting old life.⁵⁵ As a result, Florence and Mrs. William Booth sought aid in her behalf from Josephine Butler who helped Rebecca set up a small rescue home in Winchester for juvenile prostitutes and white slave victims with £ 30 she had saved from the earnings of her former way of life.⁵⁶ Of these efforts Mrs. Butler recorded:

'Rebecca's influence here was something extraordinary. She went straight into the worst dens of infamy . . . full of men and women of the lowest type, and would get them down on their knees, pray with them . . . when other persuasions failed. She related to them what she herself had been The reality struck home.'⁵⁷

The story of Rebecca Jarrett is an important one in the history of the Purity Crusade--not only for the sake of the Salvation Army, but also for the Crusade as a whole.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 21.

⁵⁵Stafford, p. 136.

⁵⁶Unsworth, p. 27. Josephine Butler had been sympathetic with and friends of the Army for some time. See E. Moberly Bell, Josephine Butler, pp. 170-172.

⁵⁷Unsworth, p. 27.

She proved to be the "essential link"⁵⁸ between the Salvation Army, Mrs. Butler, and W. T. Stead--the major participants in the Crusade. Although perhaps the most important, Rebecca was not the only person to plunge the machinery of the Army into the struggle. A girl wearing a red dress literally shocked Bramwell Booth into action. Until this incident, he had never fully believed his wife's stories.⁵⁹

Annie Swan, a wholesome Essex country lass of seventeen, had, like countless before and after her, come to London in answer to a newspaper advertisement for a general servant and found herself trapped in a brothel.⁶⁰ She had done nothing but go to the address listed. Once inside she refused to comply with the keepers demands, and after being assaulted by a customer she fled to the kitchen and locked the door.⁶¹ Clutching an Army hymn book that she had brought with her to London and wearing an expensive red gown, she escaped at four o'clock in the morning and found her way to the Salvation Army Headquarters on Queen Victoria Street.⁶²

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁹Sandall, III, 27.

⁶⁰Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 7, 1885, p. 2.

⁶¹Stafford, p. 138.

⁶²Collier, pp. 121-122.

Bramwell Booth, the first to hear her story, had the veracity of the tale investigated.⁶³ Finding it to be true, he agreed to listen to the experiences of the young girls at the Hanbury refuge. One girl told how she had been drugged by the friend of a friend and had awakened to find herself in a brothel; overhearing that she was to be shipped abroad, she jumped out a window and escaped.⁶⁴ Another girl, fourteen and pregnant, told the story of her abduction: a "nice" lady had taken her to a music-hall and later ". . . dragged [her] into virtual imprisonment and the last outrage."⁶⁵ Immediately, the chief-of-staff vowed something would--no must--be done!⁶⁶

During this spring of 1885 other events related to the Crusade were taking place. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill that was to raise the age of consent was to be "talked out" in the House of Commons.⁶⁷ More appalling yet, a notorious brothel-keeper had been brought to trial--but was released!

No more hardened and fantastic creature could ever have been imagined than Mrs. Mary Jeffries of Chelsea.

⁶³Stafford, p. 139.

⁶⁴Sandall, III, 28.

⁶⁵Bramwell Booth, p. 120.

⁶⁶Stafford, p. 139.

⁶⁷Pall Mall Gazette (London), September 10, 1885, p. 10.

She ". . . was the most evil woman of the nineteenth century, who within ten years was responsible for the ruin of literally hundreds of girls. She procured little children for sexual butchery"⁶⁸ This vampire had an assortment of various houses. In Church Street, Chelsea she had several brothels, in Hampstead she ran a flogging-house called Rose Cottage, in Holborn near Grey's Inn Road she had a house of assorted perversions, and on the river near Kew Gardens she maintained a white slave clearinghouse.⁶⁹ European royalty, English aristocracy, Judges, important Civil Servants, and members of Parliament comprised her clientele.⁷⁰ She even circulated notices announcing her "new attractions" to many of the immoral members of the Commons.⁷¹

Mrs. Jeffries existence was, of course, no secret and it was suspected that the House of Commons would refuse to act on the pending legislation. Mr. Scott, Mr. Dyer, and Mrs. Butler knew that something must be done. They decided to bring a case against her under the Offenses against the Person Act of 1861--the only act that gave the police any

⁶⁸Terrot, p. 90.

⁶⁹ibid., p. 91; Collier, p. 125.

⁷⁰Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 1426; Stafford, p. 145; Collier, p. 111.

⁷¹Terrot, p. 147.

power to proceed against procurers, and that was for the keeping of a "disorderly house."⁷²

Private detective Minahan investigated Mrs. Jeffries activities thoroughly and two ratepayers gave evidence.⁷³ The Madam tried to pay off Minahan, telling him that she was connected with too many influential people who would not let her get into trouble. The detective refused the bribe, and she was committed to trial on April 16, 1885.⁷⁴ But Mrs. Jeffries had been right; too many of her wealthy patrons did not wish to be exposed, and a plea of guilt was consequently prearranged.⁷⁵ Before leaving the court, she paid the £ 200 fine in cash,⁷⁶ a sum ". . . no more . . . than a quarter of what one wealthy client alone paid her in a year for catering for his pleasures"⁷⁷ and her houses remained conspicuously open.⁷⁸

⁷²Sandall, III, 28.

⁷³Terrot, p. 93. It was sometimes very difficult to get people to commit themselves to prosecute a brothel. BSP, 1882, XIII, p. 863; BSP, 1881, IX, p. 427.

⁷⁴Terrot, p. 94.

⁷⁵Bullough, pp. 179-180. This meant that no evidence or disclosures were necessary.

⁷⁶Terrot, p. 95.

⁷⁷Stafford, p. 145.

⁷⁸Hansard, CCXCX (1885), p. 1427. cf. Bullough, p. 180.

The whole matter was virtually ignored by the newspapers, but the Reverend Charles Spurgeon declared in his sermon on June 7, 1885:

'Deep is our shame when we know that our judges are not clear in this matter, but social purity has been put to the blush by magistrates of no mean degree; yes, it is said that the courts of justice have lent themselves to the covering and hushing up of the iniquities of the great!'⁷⁹

The Jeffries incident, to say the least, was a big discouragement to the Crusaders. The Salvation Army futilely protested that it was a "miscarriage of justice."⁸⁰ The case, at any rate, made Josephine Butler, Benjamin Scott, and Bramwell Booth all aware that they had only one last hope--and that lay in the person of W. T. Stead and the Pall Mall Gazette.

⁷⁹Sandall, III, 128.

⁸⁰Ervine, II, 651.

CHAPTER V

W. T. STEAD FINDS A MODERN BABYLON

"Oh my God, are we come to this?"¹ stormed Catherine Booth, when she heard the news that the Criminal Law Amendment Bill had been thrown out of the Commons for the third time on May 22, 1885. Because it was the night before the Whitsun recess, there had been barely enough members present to do anything about it. Any many of those who had attended were, as Mr. Cavendish Bentinck, hostile to the amendment anyway.² One member had even made the suggestion that instead of raising the age of consent, that they should lower it to ten!³ These events followed only days the Jeffries episode.

W. T. Stead, passionately emotional, though not in a sensational way, was also genuinely concerned. He well

¹Collier, p. 125. Catherine was the wife of William Booth.

²Mr. Bentinck was largely responsible for the Bill being "talked out." Pall Mall Gazette (London), September 28, 1885, p. 10.

³Collier, p. 125. It was not, again, a matter of the M.P.'s being uninformed or unaware of the traffic. There had been the Lord's investigation in 1881-1882 and trials for English traffickers in Brussels of which they had been informed. Rather, they ostensibly objected to the reform in principle. See Stafford, p. 149.

understood what the immediate effects and the later ramifications of all this would be. With the avid encouragement of others, he decided that it was time to "raise hell."⁴ Although he did not act rashly, for there had been careful deliberation and probing, Stead whirled into the Purity Campaign. By the end of that May his Secret Commission was ready to uncover the Victorian scandal.

Perhaps, or so it seemed, Stead was destined for such an undertaking. "By instinct and upbringing a reformer," he had long ". . . used his pen as a weapon against iniquity."⁵ He was just in his early twenties when he became editor of the provincial paper, Northern Echo, in 1871.⁶ Before that decade had expired he had made two vital contacts: Josephine Butler and the Salvation Army.

In 1874 Stead had written articles commending Stansfeld's entry into the Crusade,⁷ and two years later he had published notices praising Mrs. Butler's work.⁸

⁴Collier, p. 126.

⁵Stafford, p. 53. As a young boy, he had written an article for a local paper about some slums behind his father's manse, with the result that it was soon cleaned up.

⁶Frederick Whyte, The Life of W. T. Stead (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company; London: Jonathan Cape Limited, [1925]), I, 32.

⁷Stafford, p. 80.

⁸Butler, p. 180.

Three years later, after attending an Army revivalist meeting, he had been so impressed he wrote that the Army, ". . . in seeking and saving those who are lost . . . has been signally successful where other agencies have signally failed."⁹

Although Stead was becoming famous in English journalistic circles at this time, a voice struck up in the provinces would not generally be heard by the average public. The move that placed Stead into a position of becoming a force in shaping public opinion was made in 1880. That year he came to London and joined the Pall Mall Gazette as assistant editor.¹⁰ By 1883 he was writing articles that resulted in a Royal Commission and legislation.¹¹ The next year he had become editor of the daily¹² and was ". . . practically moulding the England of his day to a larger degree than any man in it."¹³ Viscount Morely, formerly editor of the Pall Mall Gazette, similarly reflected:

⁹Stafford, pp. 83-84.

¹⁰Whyte, I, 71-74.

¹¹Stafford, pp. 126-127. "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London" articles concerned the very poor.

¹²Estelle W. Stead, My Father (London: William Heinemann, 1913), p. 118.

¹³Ibid., p. 106.

'Stead was invaluable, abounding in journalistic resource, eager in convictions, infinitely bold, candid, laborious in sure-footed mastery of all the facts . . . His extraordinary vigour and spirit made other people seem wet blankets, sluggish creatures . . . '14

Harold Frederic, American journalist, said that Stead made "the paper . . . one which everybody had to read--which nobody could afford to miss."¹⁵ Stead always chose his subjects ". . . with skill and a sense of patriotism, and he became a power."¹⁶

In reference to Parliament's negligence in the spring of 1885 in providing legislation to protect young girls, Lord Shaftesbury observed: "No government has ever undertaken a great social reform until it felt the force of public opinion persistently brought to bear upon it"¹⁷ The Crusaders knew this. One by one, they realized that W. T. Stead was probably the only man in England who could create the necessary public opinion on the matter. Since 1884 he had been publishing Mrs. Butler's writings in his paper, and in recent weeks he

¹⁴Kennedy Jones, Fleet Street and Downing Street (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1919), p. 108. As quoted from Morley's "Recollections."

¹⁵Terrot, p. 141.

¹⁶Jones, p. 116.

¹⁷Terrot, p. 22.

had given space to the advocacy of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill.¹⁸ Then too, had not Stead long been a friend and defender of the Salvation Army?¹⁹ Thus, it was no coincidence that the Crusaders all turned to Stead in this moment of crisis.

May 23, the day after the Criminal Law Amendment Bill had been discarded, was an important day in the history of the Crusade. Benjamin Scott called upon the editor that morning and told him bluntly that he alone could save the Bill.²⁰ "All our work," said the Chamberlain, "will be wasted unless you can rouse up public opinion and compel the new government to take up the Bill and pass it into law."²¹ The next person to implore Stead to act was Mrs. Butler; she encouraged him to get going before the general elections since there was very little time left.²²

Because he personally knew few details of the deplorable conditions, Stead went to see Mr. Howard Vincent, former Head of the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard, who told him that young virgins were being

¹⁸Stafford, pp. 148-149.

¹⁹Begbie, II, 3.

²⁰Whyte, I, 160.

²¹Estelle Stead, p. 124.

²²Unsworth, p. 28.

violated by old debauchees all the time and against their will. Stead replied that ". . . the very thought is enough to raise hell," to which Vincent could only answer, "it doesn't even raise the neighbors."²³

Benjamin Waugh, campaigner for the protection of children and Honorary Secretary of the "London Institution for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children," also came to Stead with stories of little girls who had been kidnapped and raped. Through personal investigation Waugh had discovered many such abuses.²⁴ He took Stead to shelters and showed him the victims--mere four-to-seven-year-olds!²⁵ Waugh was currently engaged in a struggle to get evidence of children under eight years to be allowed in court, something that was refused under the existing legislation. Hoping that this would stiffen the law against abduction, Waugh wanted it to be incorporated in the Criminal Law Amendment.²⁶

At the end of the day (still May 23) Stead went to see Bramwell Booth who brought in three to four girls, all under sixteen to tell their stories.²⁷ Rebecca Jarrett

²³Full Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 3.

²⁴Rosa Waugh, The Life of Benjamin Waugh (London: T. Fisher Urwin, 1913), p. 15.

²⁵Terrot, pp. 149-150.

²⁶Estelle Stead, pp. 124-125.

²⁷Bramwell Booth, p. 121.

was also questioned by the editor.²⁸ After these interviews had been completed, Stead, in a rage, violently banged the table with his fist and shouted, "'Damn!'" He was appalled, shocked, convinced, and ready to set out upon the most "outstanding episode in his career."²⁹

Plans for a "Secret Commission" were hastily made. The primary objective was an investigation on a firsthand basis to bring the facts of juvenile prostitution and white slavery up to date.³⁰ The cost of the six weeks in the "inferno" was to be about £ 300, ". . . less than a rich man will spend in procuring the corruption of a single shop girl of the better class, say the daughter of a clergyman or a doctor."³¹

The Commission was to act swiftly and penetrate deeply. Its members, made up largely of the staff of the Pall Mall Gazette and Salvation Army workers, were to collaborate in an effort to prove that a young girl

²⁸Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 4. The converted prostitute told him how easy it was to procure these "orphans, daughters of drunken parents, children of prostitutes, [and] girls whose friends were far away."

²⁹Whyte, I, 159. Stead, himself later felt that this affair was his "best title to fame."

³⁰Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 2. It had now been several years since the Lords' Committee investigations of 1881-1882.

³¹Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 9, 1885, p. 2. Mrs. Butler, Scott, Bramwell Booth, and Stead shared the expenses. See Stafford, p. 154.

could be procured and whisked abroad for a few pounds--all with the consent of her parents. Stead, himself, would play the major role--the "dissolute man-about-town."³²

However, the journalist was concerned that some of his actions might later be misinterpreted, resulting in the smear of his name or even a law suit. Therefore, he consulted his lawyer, Mr. Shaen, who was interested in the rights of women also; he assured Stead that ". . . there could be no crime without criminal intent."³³ Next Stead went to the churches for advice, for sympathy, and to establish the purity of his motives.³⁴ Cardinal Manning and Dr. Temple, the Bishop of London, approved and were quite convinced by Stead's narrative, while the Archbishop of Canterbury "shuddered at the plan."³⁵ Manning, particularly, was interested ". . . beyond anything that he [Stead] dared to expect."³⁶

Next Stead went to a member of the new cabinet and asked if there was a chance for the Bill. He was told that

'The new Ministry will not attempt any legislation whatever. It is utterly impossible to make an

³²Stafford, pp. 154-155, 159.

³³Pall Mall Gazette (London), September 28, 1885, p. 12.

³⁴Ervine, II, 644.

³⁵Whyte, I, 162.

³⁶Stafford, p. 161.

exception in favor of this Bill. We are very sorry, but nothing can be done this session.³⁷

With that, Stead called for Rebecca Jarrett and told her that she must go back into the depths of hell!

The ex-procuress was horrified at the suggestion that she should be a major participant in the scheme and pleaded that she would do anything but go back into her old haunts. Stead countered:

'You have told me that you procured and ruined scores of innocent girls. Make amends by procuring one not for ruin, but for rescue, whose purchase will save more girls from being sold in the future.'³⁸

This left Rebecca Jarrett no choice but to comply. So she set out to renew her old contacts.

Others in the private inquiry force had to assume a totally new characterization and all did it well. A Salvation Army girl, Jenny Turner, got herself procured and placed in a brothel for nearly two weeks. She informed Stead, who visited her nightly, of the vile things that were happening to little thirteen-year-olds entrapped in the same brothel.³⁹ When it became apparent that she would be shipped to the other side of the channel, she attempted to escape by jumping from a window, but fell

³⁷Estelle Stead, pp. 125-126.

³⁸Unsworth, p. 29.

³⁹Ervine, II, 639; Collier, pp. 126-127.

unconscious into the garden.⁴⁰ Another girl working for the commission purposefully allowed herself to be decoyed into one of Mrs. Jeffries clearinghouses and found small girls doped and nailed in coffins, ready for export.⁴¹

Stead himself went into the brothels, often disguised as an old debauchee. He saw children dying from the tortures inflicted upon them in the perversion chambers. He witnessed chloroform being administered to three-to-five-year-olds who were to be subsequently raped by old men.⁴²

Stead was so affected by his discoveries concerning this traffic that captured eight million pounds a year that his closest associates were extremely afraid that he would literally lose his mind.⁴³ His eyes "like burning coals," he told Mrs. Butler ". . . in broken sentences of the little tender girls he had . . . taken on his knee, and to whom he had spoken of his own little girl."⁴⁴ Another time, at midnight he fell on his desk and cried, "'Oh, Mrs. Butler, let me weep, let me weep, or my heart will break."⁴⁵ Stead, himself, admitted

⁴⁰Luckily she was rescued by Salvation Army officers who were making a "raid" on the brothel. See Collier, p. 127.

⁴¹Terrot, pp. 154-155.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 155-157.

⁴³Collier, pp. 127-128.

⁴⁴Bramwell Booth, p. 124.

⁴⁵Collier, p. 128.

that there was a "fire" in his brain "which seemed to consume him."⁴⁶ During the all night sessions of dictations for the articles he sometimes had to have wet towels wrapped around his head.⁴⁷ Just before his articles entitled "A Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon" were due to appear in the Pall Mall Gazette he ran to the window screaming, "'Babylon! Babylon! Mother of Harlots!"⁴⁸

The depravity and dissolution discovered during the episode was, to say the least, profoundly staggering to the "pious" editor of the Pall Mall Gazette. He in turn, deliberately chose to shock Parliament, his countrymen, and even the entire world. On July 6, 1885, the first installment of the series of five hit the newstands. England had never before seen anything like it. Ultimately, Stead's articles were to leave no doubt that there was "more immorality in London" than anyone had ever suspected.⁴⁹

The story of "Lily" (in real life Eliza Armstrong) had the most arousing effect on the reading public of any of the exposures. Stead, in order to prove that a child could be purchased from her parents for a few

⁴⁶Stafford, p. 180.

⁴⁷Whyte, I, 173.

⁴⁸Jones, p. 115.

⁴⁹Bramwell Booth, p. 123.

pounds, sent Rebecca Jarrett out to procure a child of just barely thirteen. She contacted a Mrs. Broughton, with whom she had previously worked, who would know of the type of child desired. The old crony made a deal with Rebecca, but after the bargain did not work out, she sent for Eliza Armstrong, the daughter of a neighbor in Charles Street, Marylebone whom Rebecca had met the day before. The mother was willing to let the child go, and Rebecca was certain that she had made it quite clear what use would be made of her daughter, although the poor child believed herself to be going to work for Rebecca in Wimbledon as a servant. That afternoon Rebecca washed the chimney sweep's daughter and took her shopping for new clothes.⁵⁰

After receiving one sovereign for her daughter (the balance of the £ 5 settled upon would come after virginity had been clearly established), Mrs. Armstrong asked no questions about the new clothes, nor even Mrs. Jarrett's name or address. She was not even around to tell her daughter good-bye. That night she spent her money getting drunk and ended up in jail.⁵¹

Meanwhile the child was taken to a French midwife, Madame Mourez to have her virginity certified. This

⁵⁰Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 6.

⁵¹Stafford, p. 161.

settled, the midwife told Sampson Jacques, one of Stead's best investigators, that the child would suffer, and sold him some chloroform for thirty times its worth. Next Eliza was taken to a brothel, where Rebecca put her to bed after giving her a whiff of the sedative. Carrying out the plan to the full, Stead, in his role, now entered "Lily's" room for a moment--but in no way came into contact with the girl.⁵²

Stead's case was thus proved to the hilt, for although "Lily" had not been harmed in any way, he showed it was possible to buy a child for money with parental consent, to certify her, to bring her into a house of ill fame, and to leave her with a man she had never seen before. But Stead did not stop here. He also wanted to prove that an English girl could be sent to a foreign brothel. So when Eliza awakened, she was taken to Dr. Heywood Smith of Lying-in Hospital and was again certified a virgin.⁵³ Next she was whisked to Charing Cross station and delivered to Bramwell Booth who turned her over to Madame Combe, supervisor of an Army Rescue Home in Nimes, who would take her to Paris.⁵⁴ It was all so easy the Crusaders could scarcely believe it.

⁵²Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 6.

⁵³Ervine, II, 647. This was no doubt, for Stead's own protection.

⁵⁴Bramwell Booth, p. 126.

But this was only a portion of what could occur in Modern Babylon. To find out more, Stead interviewed many active young prostitutes, experienced procurers, and brothel-keepers. One brothel-keeper, who even sold his daughter from his own establishment, told how he frequently went on "country errands" dressed as a preacher to procure fresh girls. In other instances he courted rural girls in order to get them to come to London. His clientele consisted of all kinds of men; one regular customer was a clergyman who came on the pretext of distributing tracts--but always wound up spending £ 20 on "good girls." This dealer in human flesh promised Stead he could provide him with many eleven-year-olds!⁵⁵

Stead found that in the West End of town girls sold for £ 20 instead of the usual £ 5, and that not all "innocent" girls had to be abducted. One little fourteen-year-old that Stead encountered willingly agreed to sell herself to Stead for £ 10 so that she could help her sick mother. Stead asked her if she would settle for £ 5 and not be seduced instead of the £ 10 and "the act." The child tearfully accepted his offer. The journalist found that, on the whole, very young girls were extremely naive, if not completely ignorant about the ways of sex.

⁵⁵Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 4.

One girl thought that the midwife's examination constituted her seduction.⁵⁶

It was clear from the beginning of the investigation that virgins were the most highly valued of the human commodity. Indeed, some procurers dealt in nothing else. The Mesdames X and Z provided a shocking story. Both were seemingly "respectable" ladies. One lived quietly in her father's home and the other was employed by a firm in Oxford Street. Some of their victims were apprentices of this business and others were nursemaids, shop girls, or governesses whom they encountered in such places as public parks. Their methods were not hasty. Sometimes they spent months becoming acquainted with them, stopping for a chat each morning and clucking over the girl's charge (if she were a nursemaid, for example). Stead found them very eager to do business. He ordered five virgins from them, but only three arrived at the specified time, though it was assured the others would soon follow. Two of these could not definitely be certified virgins, although the doctor said they could well be, and the girls themselves claimed that they were. One was given a certificate:

⁵⁶Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 7, 1885, pp. 2-3.

W.
June 27, 1885.

This is to certify that I have this day examined
D _____, aged 16 years, and have found her a
virgin.

_____, M.D.

Stead received nine more virgins from X and Z during the
next ten days.⁵⁷

The Crusaders had long been aware that the police were
not always on the side of morality in London. What the
Secret Commission discovered verified all they had known
or suspected--and more. Police commonly levied "black-
mail" and were generally "not to be trusted." The prosti-
tute would have to pay a constable either with money or
herself or would "get into trouble." Stead wrote that in
Modern Babylon, "a girl's livelihood is in a policeman's
hand and in too many cases he makes the most of his oppor-
tunity." Policemen also went beyond the individual prosti-
tute and made the brothels a "source of revenue." One
house paid £ 500 each year for their "protection."⁵⁸

These revelations literally "took London by storm,"
made journalistic history, and became world-wide news.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 4-6.

⁵⁸Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 10, 1885, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁹Sandall, III, 32; Bramwell Booth, p. 123.

Public opinion was what Stead set out to create. He did this and more, for he roused the conscience of a nation.⁶⁰ Various individuals and organizations reacted differently to the "Maiden Tribute" articles, however. The Home Secretary, Sir Richard Cross, actually begged Stead to quit publishing the series,⁶¹ whereas George Bernard Shaw wanted to go out, himself, to sell the papers on the streets.⁶² On July 8, W. H. Smith and Son banned the publication from their railway bookstalls on the grounds that it contained pornographic matter; some members of Parliament suggested that Stead was "circulating obscenity,"⁶³ that the Fall Mall Gazette was "livid on sensation," and that they did not believe a word of the "filthy fables."⁶⁴ But newsboys "hawked" the papers at half-a-crown each at Ludgate Circus (though some were arrested) and thousands avidly read Stead's writings.⁶⁵

⁶⁰Bramwell Booth, p. 116.

⁶¹Whyte, I, 103.

⁶²Hesketh Pearson, Bernard Shaw: His Life and Personality (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1942), p. 105. Stead had been the first to publish young Shaw's reviews. Ibid., p. 104.

⁶³Ervine, II, 648.

⁶⁴Hensard, CXCX (1885), pp. 586, 600.

⁶⁵Ervine, II, 647; Sandall, III, 32.

Feeling continued to run high. At one point

. . . an army of thugs, recruited by slave-traders ~~were~~ bent on storming the Fall Mall Gazette building. Stones and bricks came hurtling; the dusty windows rained long daggers of glass. Straining and heaving, Stead's reporters manhandled desks and cabinets against the outer doors, prepared for a seige⁶⁶

But Bramwell Booth urged Stead to go on: "Multitudes are filled with horror and . . . cry out with agonizing entreaty for the Bill."⁶⁷ At least these "multitudes" Booth spoke of were on Stead's side. Mrs. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, expressing her own thoughts and those of many English people, wrote to Stead: "I cannot find words to say how I honour and reverence you for what you have done for the weakest and most helpless among women."⁶⁸

But still the protests rained down, and Stead soon received many letters decrying his exposures.⁶⁹ Many thought the editor had published the articles just to "boom" his newspaper.⁷⁰ Other journalists were simply appalled at this method. The Weekly Times stated that "'a plague worse than any Egyptian plague has visited the homes of England,'" while another paper protested

⁶⁶ Collier, p. 137.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 138.

⁶⁸ Whyte, I, 159.

⁶⁹ Fall Mall Gazette (London), July 9, 1885, p. 5.

⁷⁰ Whyte, I, 171.

' . . . against the streets being turned into a market for literature which appeals to the lascivious curiosity of every casual passer-by and excites the latent pruriency of a half-educated crowd.'⁷¹

One of the few journals to give Stead any support was the Church Times. It published a letter from Canon Horsley, chaplain of Clerkenwell Prison, which stated that Stead wrote only what those who have worked with the lower classes have always known.⁷² There were also letters from Bishops, Peers, and members of Parliament commending Stead.⁷³ Canon Malcolm McColl wrote that "if but a tithe of what was recorded in the Pall Mall were true, it would 'demand an investigation as fierce as that against the Bulgarian horrors.'" Reginald Brett, later Lord Esher, wrote on July 15 that "'there are no particular expressions which appear to me offensive or even crude, when once the necessity for plain speaking is admitted.'⁷⁴ W. T. Stead had proven this necessity well, but the Purity Campaign was not yet won.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 167-168.

⁷²Ibid., p. 168.

⁷³Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 9, 1885, pp. 3-5.

⁷⁴Whyte, I, 175-177.

CHAPTER VI

THE AFTERMATH OF THE EXPOSURES

The well-organized and highly-disciplined Salvationists picked up the loose ends of Stead's campaign and immediately mobilized to consolidate the victory that appeared to be imminent. Mrs. William Booth had already written to Queen Victoria in June insisting that the Bill be reintroduced and that the age of consent be raised to sixteen.¹ On July 14, after the "Maiden Tribute" exposures, she wrote to the Queen again.² The "Army Mother" had also written to Prime Minister Gladstone and Lord Salisbury about the same matter.³

The whole country was the scene of Army efforts to keep "public indignation at a boiling point."⁴ General William Booth, himself, conducted mass meetings at

¹Sandall, III, 33. Cf. Ervine, II, 641-642.

²While the Queen was sympathetic, she replied that it would not be desirable for her to express an opinion upon a matter which was the subject of a measure before Parliament. The Times (London), July 29, 1885, p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 34. Salisbury succeeded Gladstone early in July.

⁴Collier, p. 138.

Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, and Newcastle-on-Tyne. He told the crowds:

'That for which God had peculiarly raised us up is to rid the poor of their miseries, to go to the drunkard, to the harlots, to the thieves and to the wretched people everywhere, wherever we can find them. Not only to those who are wretched and sinful, but to those who are the most wretched and the most sinful.'⁵

A huge Army rally in Hyde Park was one of the more exciting events. Stead was carried on a chariot through crowds where ". . . top-hatted merchants promenading with their own daughters were mobbed in the belief that they were abductors."⁶

A week after the Pall Mall exposures, Mrs. Booth, inspite of very bad health, addressed a meeting for "ladies only" in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly where she told people that

'Well may the higher classes take care of their little girls! Well may they be so careful never to let them go out without efficient protectors. But what is to become of the little girls of the poor? Of the little girls of the working classes?'⁷

She also proposed that the age of consent be raised to seventeen and announced that she would create a "body" which would march from midnight into the morning hours

⁵The Times (London), July 28, 1885, p. 8.

⁶Collier, p. 138. Cf. Whyte, I, 181.

⁷Unsworth, p. 31.

in the worst parts of town to ". . . tackle every one of the poor unfortunates between thirteen and sixteen years of age."⁸ The next day she and Mrs. Butler spoke before mixed audiences,⁹ but it was her address at Exeter Hall that "jolted thousands" when she told a "true story" from Salvation Army files. A certain merchant wanted a little girl for immoral purposes for the next Sunday and paid a procurer, who decoyed a child away from Sunday school, in advance. To the merchant's horror, it was his own child that he confronted in the brothel's padded room!¹⁰

The Army continued its campaign against "flagrant iniquity" with seventeen consecutive days of protest meetings in which 393,000 signatures were obtained for a giant petition asking for a raise in the age of consent. Its length was two-and-one-half miles and it was transported on July 30 from Clapton's Congress Hall (Mrs. Booth's Purity Campaign headquarters) to Trafalgar Square on a wagon drawn by several white horses. Over it was a wide canopy which was inscribed, ". . . The Salvation Army demands that this iniquity shall cease." Escorting it marched one hundred fifty cadets, three hundred Salvation

⁸The Times (London), July 16, 1885, p. 3.

⁹Ervine, II, 649.

¹⁰Collier, p. 138.

Army women in costume, and a fifty member brass band. Eight Life Guards carried it on their shoulders the remaining mile to the House of Commons and presented it to James Stuart, M.P. for Hackney, who formally presented it to Parliament.¹¹

At about the same time the General announced plans for a new rescue home for girls costing £ 20,000.¹²

During these days the Mansion House Committee consisting of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, Cardinal Manning, Mr. Morley, and Sir Robert Reid investigated the activities of the Secret Commission.¹³ When they found Stead's report to be "substantially true,"¹⁴ the excitement around Westminster mounted.

The debate on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill had resumed on July 9, before Stead had even completed his "Maiden Tribute" articles. The Bill had been ". . . suddenly resurrected before a wide-awake and excited House; it was also on every tongue throughout the kingdom."¹⁵ Sir Richard Cross, Home Secretary, said,

¹¹The Times (London), July 27, 1885, p. 6 and July 31, 1885, p. 11. CF. Ervine, II, 650; Sandall, III, 36.

¹²Begbie, II, 41.

¹³Estelle Stead, p. 126.

¹⁴The Times (London), July 30, 1885, p. 10.

¹⁵Unsworth, pp. 30-31.

as he reintroduced the Bill, that "the whole subject is thoroughly ripe for legislation."¹⁶ The exposures contained in the Pall Mall Gazette had succeeded in compelling legislative action. The Home Secretary admitted that public opinion would not permit them to do anything but pass the Amendment, which was, in the government's view, "absolutely necessary."¹⁷

Not all shared Sir Richard Cross' opinion. There were many still against the Bill,¹⁸ and as late as July 22 there appeared to be some chance that the Bill could be delayed.¹⁹ On this date Stead implored Parliament as well as the public: "The Bill cannot wait. It must be strengthened and passed in the next fortnight or it will not get passed at all. All hands, therefore, ought to be summoned to save and strengthen the Bill."²⁰

Sir Richard Webster and his advisors now worked around the clock to make the Bill a "masterpiece of social legislation."²¹ Stead and Bramwell Booth were allowed to make

¹⁶Hansard, CCXCIX (1885), p. 198.

¹⁷Stafford, p. 194.

¹⁸Hansard, CCXCIX (1885), pp. 199-211.

¹⁹Whyte, I, 160.

²⁰ibid.

²¹Collier, p. 139.

proposals to further strengthen it.²² The measure then went to Committee and after a vote of 179 to 71, it became law on August 14, 1885.²³

At last the main objective of the Crusaders had become a reality; the age of consent had been raised to sixteen. To their delight and full approval, the Bill did much more. The procurement of a girl under twenty-one for immoral purposes at home or to go abroad, as in the international traffic, became an offense, and it became an offense to attempt to decoy a girl by false pretenses or to use any kind of drugs to facilitate the abduction. The defilement of a girl under twelve was to be a felony, and a misdemeanor for a girl between twelve and fifteen. Also it was an offense for any owner to allow immorality on his premises if the girl were under fifteen. Then, too, if a girl escaped from a brothel wearing clothes provided by the keeper, no proceedings could be initiated against her. The Justice of the Peace could even search a brothel for a girl on the request of her parents without having to wait for a writ of habeas corpus. While it was now an

²²Ervine, II, 651. Their suggestions resulted in giving police powers to raid suspected brothels and also in measures to help control foreign traffic in English girls.

²³Stafford, p. 195 says the Bill was in Committee two weeks, while Sandall, III, 37 and Ervine, II, 651 reports it was one week.

offense to take for immoral purposes an eighteen year old out of the possession of her parents, a girl under sixteen, whose parents had encouraged her seduction (as had Rebecca Jarrett's), could be taken from them and placed in the care of proper authorities. Another major part of the Amendment was concerned with the suppression of the brothels.²⁴

The new law provided two other changes that remedied some of the ills of the past. Heretofore, if a child did not understand the meaning of an oath, her evidence was not allowed and the offender was acquitted. The Criminal Law Amendment Act now abolished the oath for children²⁵-- hence a child's evidence could be admitted in court. Also, for the first time in English law, accused persons could give evidence in their own behalf.²⁶

These articles became known as "Stead's Act,"²⁷ although The Times gave due credit to the Salvation Army, saying that they ". . . had been . . . instrumental in obtaining a much needed alteration in our law."²⁸ The

²⁴BSF, 1885, I, pp. 283-287. Cf. Joseph Bridges Matthews and Arthur Arrowsmith Maund, The Law Relating to Children and Young Persons (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1895), pp. 53-90.

²⁵Waugh, pp. 149-156.

²⁶Begbie, II, 43. Stead was the first to take advantage of this during his trials (as described below).

²⁷Coote, p. 3.

²⁸The Times (London), August 18, 1885, p. 10.

day after the victory in Parliament, the War Cry, the Army's publication, carried a message from William Booth: ". . . we thank God for the success he has given to the first effort of The Salvation Army to improve the laws of the nation" ²⁹ That night the Army held a "thanksgiving meeting" at Exeter Hall and the General announced that Eliza Armstrong was "safe and well." ³⁰ With this, it appeared the "Lily" story was closed.

The case was not forgotten in Charles Street, Marylebone, however. In July there had been neighborhood gossip that "Lily" was "Bash" Armstrong's girl, Eliza. ³¹ She had disappeared on Derby Day, the same day that Stead had reported that "Lily" had been "abducted." The taunts of their acquaintances put on the pressure, and even the Armstrongs themselves had to admit that the whole thing was plausible, especially when they had read a little verse that Stead had published in the "Lily" story:

As I lay upon my bed
Some little forths gave in my head,
I forth of one, I forth of two,
But most of all I forth of you. ³²

The mother had known this was one of Eliza's favorites.

²⁹Sandall, III, 37.

³⁰The Times (London), August 18, 1885, p. 10.

³¹Terrot, p. 207.

³²Pall Mall Gazette (London), July 6, 1885, p. 6.

In order to keep their heads up in Lisson Grove, the only thing the Armstrongs could do was demand their daughter back. Mrs. Armstrong had gone to the police; they agreed to look into the matter.

For the events that followed, this move had more significance than appears on the surface. First, the police were virtual enemies of the man who exposed their shortcomings in the "Maiden Tribute," and they recognized a good chance to get revenge.³³ Second, a reporter of Lloyd's Newspaper, a rival of the Pall Mall Gazette, happened to be at the Marylebone police court, and he quickly recognized what could be a fantastic scoop.³⁴

With the police and rival newspapers working together, the whole matter could scarcely have escaped being uncovered sooner or later. Ironically, Rebecca Jarrett, who had made the "Lily" "abduction" possible and had aided Stead in his secret investigations, now unknowingly had committed acts which had led to the exposure of them all.³⁵ After leaving Eliza in France, Rebecca had gone back to her rescue work in Winchester, but her conscience had bothered her about having taken a child away from her mother. So she had

³³Terrot, p. 188.

³⁴Stafford, pp. 200-201.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 177-178. Cf. Collier, p. 140.

written a letter to Mrs. Broughton saying Eliza was all right. This letter was traced to the Mrs. Jarrett of the Winchester cottage, Mrs. Butler, the Salvation Army, and all the rest involved.³⁶

Meanwhile Lloyd's Newspaper published an article entitled "A Mother and Her Lost Child,"³⁷ and Mr. Bentinck and others in Parliament began questioning the matter; the subject was soon directed to the Attorney General.³⁸ During these days, Stead had gone to Switzerland for a much needed rest, never dreaming that there would be any prosecutions, especially now that Eliza was to be returned home.³⁹

The government, however,

. . . could not afford to have it said that they were indifferent to the violation . . . of the poor man's home, when they had based their advocacy of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill upon the need for protecting the daughters of the poor.⁴⁰

Public opinion had forced Parliament to act upon the legislation and now they were going to use it (public opinion)

³⁶When a gang of bullies attacked the Winchester cottage, Mrs. Butler closed it and sent Rebecca away so that she could not be tracked down again. Stafford, p. 202.

³⁷Ibid., p. 208.

³⁸Sandall, III, 40.

³⁹Stafford, p. 213. Mrs. Butler had also gone abroad for a family vacation at this time.

⁴⁰Stafford, p. 215.

to backfire in Stead's face.⁴¹ Stead had exposed England to the rest of the world, and a trial would be beneficial for face-saving reasons. Moreover, "international prestige, trade and diplomatic relations--all were at stake . . . Stead must be thrown to the wolves."⁴² Consequently, in late August a warrant was issued for Rebecca's arrest; on September 8, Stead, Sampson Jacques, Bramwell Booth, and Mrs. Coombe, along with Rebecca Jarrett, were charged at Bow Street in connection with the alleged abduction of Eliza Armstrong from her parents.⁴³

As soon as proceedings were initiated, public feelings against the Crusaders became bitter. Throngs of miscreants went to Bow Street to gloat. Bramwell Booth was heckled, mauled, and pulled from his vehicle several times.⁴⁴ One of the more famous trouble makers was Mary Jeffries who appeared on the scene to throw rotten eggs.⁴⁵ As hysteria swept the city, "wax effigies of Rebecca Jarrett surged like banners through the streets"⁴⁶ Stead's

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Collier, p. 141.

⁴³Annual Register (1885), pp. 53, 56.

⁴⁴Bramwell Booth, p. 128.

⁴⁵Collier, p. 141.

⁴⁶Ibid.

private home in Wimbledon was even mobbed, and his wife could not shop without being jeered at for days.⁴⁷

The magistrate, Mr. Vaughan, said that though he believed that Stead's motives were probably pure, motive per se had nothing to do with the law.⁴⁸ This virtually negated Stead's defense, which was suppressed although he published it in the Pall Mall Gazette. He wrote, "What I did was to commit the mere semblance of a crime in order to render the perpetration of actual crime more difficult" He went on to say:

Those who have never stirred hand or foot during the long years through which English girls have been left the helpless prey of lust and crime, may now affect holy horror . . . but it was their gull apathy, their chill indifference, or their cruel scorn which drove me to resort to the only methods by which the law should be altered

Stead persisted, "I bought Eliza Armstrong to save Eliza Armstrong" and "I acted upon my conviction, and I am proud to take the responsibility for my acts" That is why Stead "made that desperate attempt," risking all:

That the Criminal Law Amendment Act is now on the Statute-book . . . is primarily due to the fact that I and those whom you are now asked to commit

⁴⁷Terrot, p. 192.

⁴⁸Sandall, III, 41.

for trial at the Old Bailey have ventured our substance, our reputation and liberty--aye, and even our lives⁴⁹

In trying to prove his contention, the court said Stead broke the law, and proceedings began at the Old Bailey on October 23, 1885. At the first of the two trials, Stead and the others were charged with abduction under the Offenses against the Person Act of 1861, section 55.⁵⁰ Madame Coombe was dismissed from the charge, while Bramwell Booth and Sampson Jacques were acquitted. Stead and Rebecca Jarrett were found guilty.

Justice Lopes was apparently biased and disdainful from the very outset,⁵¹ but another matter hurt their case a great deal more. By uncovering her past life, the prosecution, led by Sir Richard Webster, succeeded in bringing Rebecca Jarrett to and over the breaking point. Thus confused and reduced, with conflicting loyalties to her old associates and to her new friends, she told lie after lie.⁵² At one instance she told the court, "I have a doubt whether Lily really was Eliza

⁴⁹Pall Mall Gazette (London), September 28, 1885, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁰Section 55 of the Act of 1861 made it a misdemeanor to abduct an unmarried girl under sixteen and to take her away from her parents without their consent. Stafford, p. 222.

⁵¹Bramwell Booth, pp. 128-129.

⁵²Unsworth, p. 33.

Armstrong. I do not know it . . . Honestly I believe it is some other child."⁵³ This left her completely discredited before the law⁵⁴ even though Charles Russell later delivered a magnificent two-and-one-half hour appeal for her. After he had finished, "no eyes in the court were dry."⁵⁵

The whole case was lost, anyway, because Eliza's father had not given his consent to the transaction.⁵⁶ And now Mrs. Armstrong and Mrs. Broughton denied that they gave Eliza to Rebecca for any other reason than to be a servant girl.⁵⁷ The defense was hindered because it could not show written evidence of any payment to the ladies for the child.⁵⁸

During this trial, Stead again handled his own defense:

⁵³Stafford, p. 226.

⁵⁴Johnson and Johnson, pp. 141-142. Rebecca realized what she had done: "'O God, I have told a lie, I have perjured myself in the witness box; I have lied before the world. I have ruined this cause, and I have got all my friends into trouble.'" "

⁵⁵Unsworth, p. 34.

⁵⁶Rebecca Jarrett apparently did not realize or had forgotten that the father's consent was more important than the mother's. The fact of the matter was that Mr. Armstrong did not particularly care what she did, and he was not at home anyway. See Stafford, pp. 167-170.

⁵⁷Ervine, II, 645.

⁵⁸Estelle Stead, p. 127.

'All men are fallible. I only ask you not to judge me as a fellow-man. You know what it has cost me, and must have cost me--reared as I was, and trained as I've been--to go down there, and all for what?'⁵⁹

Many of his witnesses, as Cardinal Manning and Lord Dalhousie, had not been allowed to appear.⁶⁰ Yet the prosecution openly admitted that Stead almost single-handedly got the Bill through Parliament and also acknowledged the existence of much vice.⁶¹ Still it was bent on convicting him and Jarrett for taking a thirteen-year-old out of the possession of her parents and without the consent of the father.

The outcome of the second trial brought another charge. Stead, along with Jacques, Rebecca Jarrett, and Madame Mourez, was convicted for an "indecent assault" on the child.⁶² He was sentenced to three months imprisonment, Rebecca Jarrett to six months, and Jacques to one month, while Madame Mourez received six months with hard labor.⁶³

⁵⁹Terrot, p. 211.

⁶⁰Unsworth, pp. 3-4.

⁶¹Estelle Stead, p. 128.

⁶²Brvine, II, 655. The "assault" was Madame Mourez's certifying Eliza's virginity.

⁶³Annual Register (1885), p. 63.

Stead's prison term was to run from November of 1885 to January of 1886.⁶⁴ He was treated as an ordinary convict the first few days, with a plank bed and oakum to pick.⁶⁵ Fortunately the Home Secretary issued an order that Stead be treated as a first class misdemeanant and that he should be transferred to Holloway Gaol.⁶⁶

Immediately reaction set in. There were huge mass protest meetings and petitions all over England asking for Stead's freedom.⁶⁷ His daughter wrote later: "The news of his conviction and sentence struck like a match to gunpowder. The effect was instantaneous, explosive, seeming to liberate the pent-up horror that had gripped the whole country"⁶⁸

If it had been known at the time of the trial that Eliza was illegitimate, the whole case for the prosecution would have failed, and Stead would not have gone to the gaol.⁶⁹ The editor later wrote, however, that his

⁶⁴Whyte, I, 206.

⁶⁵Estelle Stead, p. 137.

⁶⁶Annual Register (1885), p. 64.

⁶⁷Terrot, p. 218; Cf. Estelle Stead, p. 136.

⁶⁸Estelle Stead, p. 136.

⁶⁹During the trial Stead had had a suspicion of this but did not go to Somerset House to check it. Ibid., p. 129.

"... experience in prison was one of the most valuable of my life."⁷⁰

There were other bright aspects of the results of the trial. Rebecca Jarrett came out of prison "an even much better person" and remained an ardent Salvationist until her death in 1928.⁷¹ Eliza Armstrong was "adopted" by the Army and never again saw her parents after the long days in court.⁷² Though it was believed by some that the trial would mean the end of the Salvation Army, Bramwell Booth later recorded that it

... did the Army a great deal of good. It made us known, and put us at one stroke in the very front rank of those who were contending for the better treatment of the lost and the poor; and while it roused some powerful enemies . . . the enmity lasted only for a time, while the sympathy which was generated remained and remains a permanent possession.⁷³

As for the Army's work with women and girls, Bramwell Booth believed that the ordeal had actually advanced it.⁷⁴ Soon afterwards General Booth announced a "New National Scheme for the Deliverance of Unprotected Girls and the

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 130.

⁷¹Unsworth, p. 36.

⁷²Terrot, p. 221.

⁷³Bramwell Booth, p. 131.

⁷⁴Ibid.

Rescue of the Fallen" which established a central office of "help and inquiry" in London and many more rescue homes.⁷⁵ The Army's increased prestige could also be noted in such actions as Samuel Morley's, who gave Catherine Booth £ 2,000 to continue working with girls.⁷⁶

It has been argued that the effects of the Criminal Law legislation were almost negligible until the trial.⁷⁷ The Times, however, reported several convictions on the Amendment before the end of August. In one case, the charge was for taking a girl under sixteen to a house of prostitution, and another was for criminal assault on little girls with a sentence of two years of hard labor.⁷⁸

After the trial, there was much more action resulting in an "almost immediate suppression" of the white slave traffic.⁷⁹ Under the new Amendment police could easily enter brothels, facilitating the rescue of girls trapped by fraud, and even procurement was checked to a large

⁷⁵The Times (London), August 8, 1885, p. 6. They began advertising for lost girls and quite a number were returned home. Detectives were even included in the new staff. See Sandall, III, 48-49. Cf. Unsworth, pp. 40-41.

⁷⁶Collier, p. 144.

⁷⁷Terrot, p. 187.

⁷⁸The Times (London), August 26, 1885, p. 5 and August 29, 1885, p. 10.

⁷⁹Terrot, p. 216.

degree.⁸⁰ Vice rings were smashed all over England, and the courts were "filled with traffickers."⁸¹

The new legislation and the trial did not overshadow Mrs. Butler's Contagious Diseases Act work. In 1886 Parliament repealed the detested laws, ". . . supported by the full weight of an informed public opinion."⁸²

Reactions were felt around the world as well. Many countries passed comparable laws and began rescue work of their own.⁸³

A new and active society was among the other results of the Pall Mall Gazette exposures and the Criminal Law Amendment Act. A "Protection of Girls' National Conference" was held in St. James's Hall which led to the establishment of a National Vigilance Association. Its purpose was to see that the new Amendment was enforced and also to get the cooperation of all other organizations helping immoral girls and women.⁸⁴ In Aldershot alone, the National Vigilance Association closed thirty-three brothels.⁸⁵ Mothers

⁸⁰Stafford, p. 237.

⁸¹Terrot, p. 216.

⁸²Pawcett and Turner, p. 105.

⁸³Sandall, III, 55.

⁸⁴The Times (London), August 22, 1885, p. 10.

⁸⁵Scott, p. 291.

were encouraged to report that their daughters were missing, and the society took pains to warn girls of immorality by printing literature and distributing broadcasts at home and abroad.⁸⁶ This organization greatly aided the work of the police. Most significant of all, it continued the efforts of the Crusaders.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Coots, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁷Scott, p. 290. Some of those instrumental in forming the Association were Samuel Morley, Cardinal Manning, Josephine Butler, Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D., and W. T. Stead. See Coots, p. 4.

CONCLUSION

The National Vigilance Society helped to carry the Purity Crusaders' ideals beyond their immediate theater-- in both time and space. As Secretary of the Association, W. A. Coote visited all the capitals of the world and helped to organize an international congress for the white slave traffic which was held in London in 1899.¹ This organization was instrumental in getting agitation for further amendments to the Criminal Law Amendment Act in 1910.²

A "new crusade" against white slavery had begun in 1898.³ Organizations of many kinds and of varied sponsorships worked to abolish the traffic.⁴ Although the mid-Victorians had been slow to do anything about juvenile

¹Seligman, p. 199. Other international conferences were held in succeeding years.

²Coote, p. 4.

³Ernest Bell, pp. 31-32.

⁴Some of the bodies involved were the Committee of the International Bureau for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, the British Committee for the Abolition of State Regulation of Vice (led by Henry Wilson, M.P.) and the London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality (with the Bishop of London as the Chairman). The Church Army of the Church of England did work in this area as did the Emigration Department and the Womens Social Department. Women's and girls' clubs were also active. See Ernest Bell, pp. 466-469.

prostitution and white slavery, the ". . . later Victorians, attached excessive importance to the moral aspect of any problem,"⁵ largely because of the efforts of the original Crusaders.

The growth and development of the Vigilance societies and committees, an outgrowth or result of the Purity Campaign, would indicate that the Crusaders did not succeed in stamping out white slavery completely. Houses of prostitution, with all their horrors, continued in existence. Brothel bullies still beat girls to bloody pulp and kept them in pathetic imprisonment when they would not otherwise submit to the demands of the operators of such houses.⁶ Therefore, in assessing the accomplishments of the Crusaders, it cannot be said that there was any complete or final triumph. That Parliament and the general public, after years of agitation, had been forced to recognize that such evils existed was, however, a major accomplishment, and it had required greater effort than that put forth in support of most nineteenth century social reforms. The real achievement of the group came when they were able to

⁵Petrie, p. 223.

⁶For a good description of the condition of London white slavery in the 1890's see a novel by Stuart Cloete, Rage of Glory (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963). His accounts of what happened are extremely vivid and are comparable to what Stead reported after the "secret" investigations.

break the reign of tolerated vice through the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885.

A large share of the credit due must be given to Josephine Butler who had acquired the knowledge and evidence necessary to attack juvenile prostitution and white slavery in her leadership of the struggle which led to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1886. In essence, she did the spade work and prepared the way for Bramwell Booth and W. T. Stead.

Although Mrs. Butler did more for the cause (indeed-- she was the very first to become involved in the subject), than any other woman, the Salvation Army ". . . 'did more to combat the menace of white slave traffic than any other single . . . organization in the world.'⁷ Besides its own actions, the Army aroused ". . . large and influential classes, who had not previously been identified with philanthropic objects"⁸ The Salvation Army must be acknowledged as the great force in the campaign to improve conditions of life for young girls.

The man who contributed more to the Crusade than any other single male, and did it largely with a pen, was W. T. Stead. The victory might well be termed a

⁷Bullough, pp. 177-178.

⁸A. Allardyce, "Problems of Slums," Blackwood's Magazine, CXXIX (January, 1891), p. 130.

"testimonial . . . to the power of the Press,"⁹ and it surely can be described as a testimonial to Stead's effectiveness as a reformer. He was one of the few fearless, unhypocritical Victorians willing to fight when he heard "the cry of women, crushed under the yoke of . . . vice" ¹⁰

The day after the Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed, General Booth wrote:

'The Bill is only an instalment of the true measure of justice due to women; still it is a very substantial one. And if worked wisely and perseveringly, it will prove the beginning of the end of a vast mountain of vile iniquity that now exalts its proud head to the heavens.'¹¹

The Act was the "beginning," as Booth said; but, the "end" has not even yet been fully achieved.¹² The legislation of August 14, 1885 did, however, in Ernest Bell's words, constitute "a winning battle . . . [that] has brought so much victory"¹³ that all the periodic attempts which have been

⁹Stafford, p. 198.

¹⁰Johnson and Johnson, p. 113.

¹¹Excerpt from an article by the General in the War Cry of August 15, 1885, as cited by Sandall, III, 37.

¹²Stuart Cloete, The Abductors (New York: Trident Press, 1966), pp. 411-429. In an Appendix, Cloete gives many extracts and newspaper articles relating to the world-wide traffic in girls during recent years, including the mid-1960's. Cf. Terrot, p. 222.

¹³Ernest Bell, p. 471.

made to reestablish London as the center of the white slave market have failed.¹⁴ For this reason, the Purity Crusade was an important social episode in nineteenth century Britain. Josephine Butler once reflected that it was "one of the most vital movements of Christian times."¹⁵

¹⁴Terrot, p. 222.

¹⁵Butler, p. 8.

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