

In view of the facts brought out in the course of the inquiry, the Committee are strongly of opinion that it would be criminal neglect to allow the evil to go on without taking energetic steps to check its ravages. They believe that the legislative and other measures which they recommend for the medical prevention and treatment of venereal disease will, if given effect to with the loyal co-operation of the medical profession, have a very beneficial result in reducing the prevalence of disease, and will save an incalculable amount of sorrow and suffering which in too many cases falls upon the innocent. In what is proposed in this report there is nothing approaching a revival of the old Contagious Diseases Acts. To use the words of Dr. Emily Seideberg, the principle of the legislation now proposed is "To improve the health of the community, and not, as in the old Contagious Diseases Acts, to make sexual immorality safe for men of low morals."

The Committee are of opinion that, far from conditional notification and compulsory treatment on the lines proposed being prejudicial to woman in any way, it is they who will reap the greatest benefit from these measures. In fact, sufferers from venereal disease, as a whole, have everything to gain and nothing to lose so long as they will continue under treatment, and to enable them to do this the best medical skill is placed at their disposal free of cost. The only persons in the community who will be penalized by the proposed legislation are those who, having contracted venereal disease, are so reckless and unprincipled that they will take no pains to avoid communicating it to others.

The Committee, it will be seen, regard the legislative and medical measures which they propose as of great importance, but with all the earnestness at their command they desire in conclusion to emphasize the moral and social aspects of the question. With the changing social conditions, especially in the larger towns, we are losing the home influence and home training which are the best safeguards to preserve the young against the temptations and dangers which beset their path in life. The Committee would impress upon parents the paramount duty they owe to their children in this matter. There is also a duty cast upon all leaders of public opinion, and upon the community at large, to do what is possible to bring about better living-conditions, especially for girls in the towns, to encourage all forms of healthy sport and amusement, and to cultivate a higher moral standard. Whatever sanitary laws may be passed, and whatever success may be attained in dealing with bodily disease, there can be no true health if the soul of the nation remains corrupt. If this inquiry should serve to remove some of the popular ignorance regarding venereal disease, and to quicken the public conscience so that appropriate steps may be taken to deal with this dreadful scourge, the Committee feel that their labours will not have been in vain.

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