

ister against the Acts, and at their annual unions carried unanimously resolutions condemning them.

The Methodist New Connexion, the Primitive Methodists, the English Presbyterians, and the Baptists repeatedly memorialised and petitioned for complete repeal.

The Free Church General Assembly in Scotland petitioned for the same thing year after year. The United Presbyterian Synod did the same, and passed resolutions recommending office-bearers and members throughout the Church to use all constitutional means to secure repeal. The other churches and religious bodies in Scotland acted in a similar manner; while in Ireland the Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Society of Friends, the Primitive Methodists, and other religious bodies passed similar resolutions, and adopted similar modes of action in support of repeal. Yet with all that volume of public opinion on their side, the party of repeal were not successful till the year 1885, when at a general election 257 members definitely pledged to vote for repeal, were elected.

On April 2nd, 1886, the Repeal Bill passed the House of Commons, was read a third time in the House of Lords on April 13th, and received the Royal Assent on April 15th. The victory was complete after 17 years of incessant and self-sacrificing work, and it was on the side of virtue. Thus fell in Great Britain the giant iniquity of State recognition, regulation and unsuccessfully attempted sanitation of a great vice.

Now let us give a few moments to the consideration of what has been done in other countries. Legislators and social reformers confront few more perplexing problems than that of prostitution. It is so universal that many regard it as a necessary adjunct of civilisation, though they also regard it as an evil and a danger to public order and to public health. The regulation of this vice by the State, always involving compulsory examination and detention, has been the measure most favoured for minimising its dangers. In past years this view was almost universally held and acted on throughout Europe. The medical profession believed that by systematic medical control of all known prostitutes an effective check could be given to the spread of those diseases which accompany prostitu-

tion, and which by their after effects cause wide-spread disease and degeneration. International Medical Congresses in 1867, 1873, and 1875 were engaged in drawing up schemes of international co-operation, for the purpose of perfecting the protection which was then believed to be conferred by the organisation and control of prostitution.

Attention is specially drawn to the medical views at this time, because of the touching faith some people have in the medical men of to-day who advocate similar measures, the only excuse for the followers of such blind leaders being that the nature of the subject has prevented its free discussion in the press, and consequently the public at large do not realise the change that has taken place in the opinions of medical experts and scientists, and the correlative change that is taking place in law and administration. Forty years ago the regulation system prevailed throughout the whole of Europe. To-day Europe presents a very different picture. The Northern nations, England, Denmark, Holland, and Norway, have all definitely abandoned the regulation system. In Sweden a Royal Commission has just reported against it, thus following the example of France, where the Extra-Parliamentary Commission, appointed by the Government, has, after exhaustive enquiry, condemned the existing system, and recommended fundamentally different methods. In Switzerland, where each canton enacts its own laws, Geneva is the only place where regulation persists. Italy has swept away the whole machinery of regulation, and has substituted a system of gratuitous treatment for all venereal patients, to the great benefit of the public health. Among the leading syphilologists in Europe there is a remarkable consensus of opinion that the regulation of prostitution by the State has been unsuccessful from the standpoint of public health.

In the Medical Conference at Brussels on this subject, held in 1902, the following resolutions were carried unanimously:—

"That all persons suffering from venereal maladies should have easy access to gratuitous treatment, with no unnecessary publicity."

"The most important and the most effectual means for combating the diffusion of venereal maladies consists

in widespread information as to the importance of these diseases, and the very grave dangers attending them. It is especially necessary to teach young men not only that chastity and continence are not injurious, but that these virtues are highly recommended from the medical point of view."

On one point reformers in all nations are agreed, that venereal disease must not be punished, but healed. The result of doing so has been to increase the number of cases under treatment. In Denmark and Norway, where statistics are most carefully kept, this was especially so, and this is the very point aimed at, to try and induce all sufferers to come for healing.

We turn now to our own country. The C.D. Acts were introduced into New Zealand on the lines of the English Act, and were in operation in Auckland in 1883, and in Christchurch before that date. There was continuous agitation against them in both cities, and the law became a dead letter. The continued demands for their repeal from the women's societies secured their removal from the Statute Book in 1910.

Now we are faced by their re-introduction under a subtle name and an alluring aspect. The medical proposals, already referred to, entitled "The Public Health Amendment Bill," contain the most objectionable features of the C.D. Acts, and their embodiment in legislation would mean the re-introduction of those Acts again. The three compulsory provisions are—

- (1) Compulsory notification.
- (2) Compulsory examination on suspicion only.
- (3) Compulsory detention.
- (4) Partial application of the law.

The point of difference lies in the fact that in these proposals, men as well as women are apparently included, but this inclusion of men is merely a device, and a very clever and subtle one, to hoodwink the public and disarm criticism and opposition.

The compulsory provisions can not, and will not, be enforced against men.

Venereal disease differs from all other contagious disease, in that it is not apparent. It is easily concealed; the persons affected can pursue their daily occupations without any suspicion being created. It is not acutely infectious like smallpox or diphtheria. It is felt to be a disgrace to be af-