

Kansas City's Shame

Issued by the Public Morals Committee of the Church Federation of Greater Kansas City. Additional copies may be obtained from the Federation office, 402 Scarritt Arcade, Kansas City, Missouri.

THE FACTS.

According to the last enumeration there were 554 public prostitutes in Kansas City. The Board of Public Welfare reports that the average number of visitors to prostitutes per day is four and seven tenths. The amount expended with public prostitutes in Kansas City in one year is nearly a million and a half dollars, or considerably more than the salaries of all the public school teachers in the city. "If each frequenter should spend \$50 (annually) on these open places of corruption it would take an army of 28,511 to supply the funds devoted to this debauchery." Recent startling exposures of immorality among boys and girls on the South Side are fresh in memory. Chief of Police W. H. Hammil concurs with the Chief of Police of Boston in saying that more than half of the prostitution is with others than those who depend upon it for a livelihood and who live apart for the purpose.

Many of the inmates of Kansas City bawdy houses are married women, presumably respectable, who live in the better parts of the city. Among the patrons of prostitutes are many whom the public regards as respectable citizens. Our churches are not exempt from having members who patronize these places. The Board of Public Welfare reports that a list of the owners of buildings used for immoral purposes would startle the city.

The average life of a prostitute is five or six years. They may start in the better kept houses, but if they remain in the business they rapidly

descend to depths of degradation. To maintain this iniquitous [sic] traffic Kansas City now demands that 100 families must each sacrifice a daughter a year to a life worse than death. No citizen of Kansas City can escape his share of the responsibility for allowing these conditions to exist.

Venereal disease has an awful hold on the men and boys of Kansas City. It is the average estimate of 49 representative physicians of Kansas City that 61 per cent of our men have, or have had, a venereal disease. It is the average estimate of 45 representative Kansas City physicians that 20 per cent of Kansas City men over 21 years of age now have an infectious venereal disease. It is the average estimate of 40 representative Kansas City physicians that 17 per cent of the boys between 15 and 21 years of age now have a venereal disease. About one out of five daughters of Kansas City parents will marry a diseased man. A worker among the high school boys of Kansas City writes: "Loath though I am to say, my investigation, cursory and superficial as it had to be, led me to the belief that not more than one-tenth of the boys who go through the high school graduate with a clean straight record morally."

"There should be a night watchman in every office building in the city," said an observant business woman of many years' experience among Kansas City business offices. "The visits of society women and girls after office hours are for no moral purpose."

The waste of such an enormous amount of money, the spread of loathsome disease, which if unchecked will destroy our civilization, and the moral degeneracy into which we have fallen demand the immediate consideration of every Christian man and patriotic citizen of Kansas City.

SEGREGATION.

Many claim that the social evil always has been with us and always will be; that it is a necessary evil; that the best way to handle it is to confine it to certain quarters; and that we must recognize it as an institution which cannot be eliminated.

Among the many valid objections against the policy of segregation are the following:

1st. Segregation is an admission that the divine law of chastity does not apply in Kansas City; and that while we accept the divine decrees against murder, theft and falsehood, we propose to disregard the prohibition against licentiousness.

2nd. Segregation assumes that prostitution is a necessary evil. "If it is necessary, it is not an evil; and if it is an evil it is not necessary."

3rd. Segregation does not segregate. The Kansas City police arrest prostitutes south of Seventh street and make many raids, but admit there is no section of our city free from the encroachments of the social evil.

4th. Segregation cannot check the spread of venereal disease. It is conceded that street-walking, assignation houses and prostitution outside of restricted areas are the cause of vastly more and worse cases of disease than that which comes from segregated districts.

5th. Segregation is an advertisement of a location where crime may be committed under the protection of the city government. It locates a section of the city where boys may go out of curiosity and are lured to evil by persistent solicitation from doors and windows. Thousands of men and boys from the country want to "see the town" while in Kansas City. This frequently means a visit to the red light district. If there were no such district men and boys would not look for it and would be spared some of the pitfalls of the city. The segregated district is a constant invitation to go wrong and we have no right to allow such sources of temptation in our city.

6th. A segregated district is a standing invitation to owners of buildings to favor prostitution because of enormous rents which this business affords. Many of Kansas City's respected citizens have not been able to withstand the temptation of sharing with the prostitute her ill-gotten gains.

7th. Segregation confiscates the property of honorable men who have residence buildings for rent in the segregated district. No honorable man will sell or rent his building for vice and the city has no right to destroy the rental value of property by permitting nuisances in the neighborhood.

8th. Segregation perpetuates the brothel. It is a remedy that has no hope of curing the evil. It is an acknowledgment that society has fallen so low that it cannot recover.

9th. Segregation means a continual violation of law. When a city agrees not to enforce any law the moral effect is inevitably bad for the enforcement of all law.

10th. It is said that segregation is necessary to the protection of our wives and daughters; that unless vicious men have some outlet for their passions no woman would be safe. If this is true ought we not have the protection as near as possible to those whom it is designed to protect? We have police stations near supposed seats of crime; fire stations near where many buildings may be burned, and similarly ought we not have bawdy houses as near as possible to our own homes? If prostitution is a benevolent enterprise it ought to be operated as a public charity and not run as a commercial enterprise.

11th. Segregation stimulates the white slave trade. It furnishes a constant demand for this iniquitous traffic. The white slave trade cannot be subdued as long as segregation exists.

12th. There are hopes for the reformation of a wayward girl in the early stages of her career. If she is driven to a segregated district there is little prospect for her restoration to virtue.

13th. The policy of segregation has utterly failed to meet the demands of civilized communities for handling this evil. Jane Addams says that when "police regulation takes the place of law enforcement a species of municipal blackmail inevitably becomes entrenched."

A NEW PUBLIC CONSCIENCE.

Within the last few years, there has arisen a new public conscience on the problem of the social evil. Various cities have made thorough investigations. The alarming prevalence of sexual immorality and its attendant diseases have become more widely known and there is a stronger demand for the adoption of repressive measures. There is a remarkable unanimity of opinion among vice commissions that segregation should no longer be tolerated and that suppression is the only reasonable attitude that can be adopted.

The Chicago Vice Commission recommends "constant and persistent repression of prostitution as the immediate method; absolute annihilation the ultimate ideal."

The Minneapolis Commission also recommends suppression and admits that the "conclusions * * * reached * * * are, in the case of a majority * * * of the commission, entirely different from those with which we started."

Des Moines, Iowa, has closed its red light district. The Chief of Police, J. W. Jenney, said in regard to Kansas City: "Don't tolerate a red light district, wipe it out. We have now less prostitution in our residence districts than we had before the red light district was abolished."

Mayor Love of Lincoln, Nebraska, writes that "we do not have as much trouble with vice in blocks and rooming houses as we had when we tolerated a segregated area."

The Philadelphia Vice Commission recommends "that all effort to confine prostitution to a given district be abandoned and that the statutes be persistently enforced uniformly throughout the city."

The Syracuse, N. Y. Committee on the social evil recommends "that the (segregated) districts be abolished by the vigorous enforcement of the laws."

The Boston Chief of Police, Stephen O'Meara, is carrying out a policy of suppression. He writes that "Restraint by license is a surrender to vice under the authority of law; restraint by segregation is a compromise with vice illegally made, a nullification of laws by public officers appointed to enforce them."

Under date of Aug. 15, 1913, C. G. Bannick, Chief of Police of Seattle, writes: "I do not favor a segregated district. When we tolerated a restricted district we had some three thousand undesirables. We have been able to reduce the undesirables to less than five hundred. There has not been a scattering of undesirables to the residence districts to any great extent."

Other chiefs of police, discouraged by attempts at controlling tolerated vice have become pronounced suppressionists. Among these are the chiefs of police of Charleston, S. C.; Hoboken, N. J.; Portland, Me.; Springfield, Mass.; Troy and Yonkers, N. Y.; and Atlanta, Ga.

What is being done in Des Moines, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Boston and Seattle can be done in Kansas City.

SUPPRESSION THE ONLY POLICY.

In advocating a vigorous policy of suppression of the social evil, the Church Federation of Greater Kansas City is not treading on new ground. IT DEMANDS THAT THE LAWS AGAINST PROSTITUTION BE

ENFORCED. It insists that we should have an adequate police force both in numbers and in quality to suppress prostitution and guard the city from other crimes.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

But we must not stop with suppression of crime. We must do all in our power to prevent the desire to go astray. To this end we recommend the following constructive agencies of social purity:

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ in possession of the hearts of men and women is the greatest incentive to right living.

2. A knowledge of the human body and all its functions will encourage its proper care and use. To this end we favor instruction in sex hygiene by the parents at home and by placing suitable literature in the hands of the adolescent boys and girls. The Federation office will gladly furnish information as to where such literature may be obtained.

“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

3. Better housing conditions in Kansas City. The passage of the proposed housing code will be of inestimable help in this regard.

4. Close supervision of commercial recreation and public parks.

5. The enforcement of the severest penalties against the white slave traffic.

6. A living wage as the minimum in every industry.