

AN APPEAL TO WORKING MEN AND WOMEN.

DEAR FATHERS AND MOTHERS,

We want you to work with us heart and soul in an effort we are making to get the English law to protect your girls from being led into vice before they are old enough to know what they are about, or to have the instincts of a woman to guide them.

In France and Belgium and some other countries girls are protected by the law up to one-and-twenty; and when we found that some of our English girls, at the age of seventeen and nineteen, had been enticed away to Brussels for a bad purpose, we were able to put the Belgian law in force and rescue the girls, and got the wretched keepers of the houses and their agents heavily fined and imprisoned.

In England, on the contrary, an unruly girl at any age can go on the streets, and the person who harbours her is not guilty of a greater crime than if she were a woman of thirty or forty. The keeper of the house can shut the door against her own father, and the law gives him no power to take out a search-warrant and go into the house and forcibly claim his own child. Nor can the keeper be summoned and heavily fined and imprisoned as in Belgium for corrupting a girl under one-and-twenty.

Will you not help us heart and soul in getting our English girls,—your daughters, remember,—as carefully protected as Belgian and French Girls? Dear working men and women, we are quite sure you do not in the least realise the awful extent to which your girls are sold off, to gratify the vices of men who have money to spare for degrading young girls. It is computed that there are thousands of lost women, girls, and children on the streets of London alone.

Many of these have been led astray as mere children in years and judgment. Alas! alas! in some parts of London and Manchester children as young as twelve and thirteen may be seen plying their infamous trade; and unless you working folk will rouse up, England is in danger of becoming the land of child harlots. You know that the misery and degradation of the life is such that the common instinct of mankind has agreed to call those who are condemned to it "unfortunates." You know the fearful physical scourge that awaits them, and which has given to the Workhouse Ward, where they suffer and die, the name of the "foul ward." You know something of the awful consequences

to the innocent. Mr. Horsley states that no less than 27,000 children between eleven and sixteen years old, in eight years, came to three of our London Hospitals suffering from a foul disease inflicted on them by the sins of their parents.

Working fathers and mothers, will you not come forward and demand that the law shall protect your young girls, up, at any rate, to such an age when they may have the instincts of a woman to guard and guide themselves? You working men have accomplished great things by your Trades Unions: would to God we could hear of a great Union of working fathers and mothers against the great curse of prostitution,—against their girls being told off by hundreds and thousands for a fate below the beasts that perish.

To you, dear working mothers, we know we shall not appeal in vain. Sign this petition yourself, and get your husband to sign. And when you have an hour or two to spare, go round to the neighbours and get twenty-three more signatures, which you will find will fill up the paper. Be sure and ask each one before signing whether they have signed the petition before, as anyone signing twice over makes the whole petition worthless. And don't write any names on the back, but ask for a fresh petition form. There's nothing we women can't do if we only set to work quietly and prayerfully in the strength of our Redeemer. Only let it be a strong pull, a long pull, and a pull altogether, in the strength of our common womanhood and common motherhood, and we shall soon get our dear English girls protected by the law from all attempts to lead them into a vicious life, before they are old enough to know the full consequences of their actions.

And then take one step further,—ask your clergyman, or your district-visitor, or tract distributor to get you a little book called “Early Training of our Girls and Boys” (price twopence, Hatchards, Piccadilly), or order it yourself at a bookseller's. Read it with your husband, and it will tell you many other ways in which you can help us in the battle we are fighting to save your girls, and to work out God's high purposes with regard to our womanhood; what He has made it through the Incarnation of His own Son, sent forth into the world made of a woman, consecrating it in Him to be the fountain of life and love and purity.

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