

get along tolerably well. I have had none for some time ; now I must beg, or my children starve." Her husband had been a mechanic. He had come to New York from the country. The family lived in comfort till sickness stopped their resources, and death struck the father down. The mother attempted to keep her little family together, and support them by her own labor. Five years she had toiled, planned, and suffered. Her earnings were small, and from time to time she sold articles of furniture to give her children bread. Over-exertion, long walks in rain and cold to obtain work, insufficient clothing, want of nutritious food, with anxiety for her children, prostrated her. She was obliged to call for aid on some of our benevolent institutions. She is a specimen of hundreds of noble suffering women in New York.

## XLIII.

## SOCIAL EVIL IN NEW YORK.

EXTENT OF PUBLIC PROSTITUTION. — AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM HON. JOHN A. KENNEDY, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE. — HOUSES OF THE FIRST CLASS. — HOW THEY ARE FILLED. — AGENTS AND RUNNERS. — STARTLING FACTS. — VICTIMS FROM NEW ENGLAND. — A NIGHT ENCOUNTER. — A MAYOR'S EXPERIENCE. — HOPELESS CLASSES.

## EXTENT OF PUBLIC PROSTITUTION.

PUBLIC vice is not as general as is commonly supposed. It is one of the things that can be easily estimated. It is not like gambling, done in a corner. People who keep houses of ill-repute have no motive to keep their trade and houses a secret. The police do not meddle with such, unless they are noisy, disturb the peace, or become a public nuisance. The keepers of such resorts seek custom, and take all possible pains to make their establishments known. All the public houses of prostitution are known to the authorities.

In January, 1864, there were, in the city of New York, five hundred and ninety-nine houses of prostitution, of all grades, two thousand one hundred and twenty-three prostitutes, and seventy-two concert saloons of bad repute. In January, 1866, there were six hundred and fifteen houses of prostitution, ninety-

nine houses of assignation, seventy-five concert saloons of bad repute, two thousand six hundred and ninety prostitutes, six hundred and twenty waiter girls of the same bad character, and one hundred and twenty-seven bar-maids, also vile girls. The increase of 1866 over 1864 is accounted for in the difference between war and peace. The followers of the camp were with the army in 1864. In 1866 the soldier was at home, and the prostitutes were thrown on the town. In January, 1867, there were five hundred and sixty-eight houses of prostitution, two thousand five hundred and sixty-one prostitutes, thirty-eight concert saloons of ill repute, three hundred and thirty-six waiter girls, and the average will be about the same for the entire year. New York has an estimated population of from nine hundred thousand to one million, and such is the extent of public prostitution in comparison to the population!

MR. KENNEDY'S STATEMENT.

A most extraordinary statement was made public of the terrible ravages and extent of prostitution in New York. Bishop Simpson, of the Methodist Church, stated in Cooper Institute, that the number of public prostitutes in the city equalled in number the membership of the Methodist Church. The attention of Superintendent Kennedy was called to these statements, and he was requested to say whether they were true. In answer, he writes as follows, which I take, by permission, from the private files of the Superintendent's department:—

“OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF METROPOLITAN POLICE,  
300 MULBERRY STREET,  
NEW YORK, January 22, 1866. } ”

“MY DEAR SIR: Your note of to-day is before me, with the printed sheet of the ‘Great Metropolis Condensed,’ inquiring whether the figures in the paragraph marked ‘Licentiousness’ can be verified. I have to say that I have nothing in my possession to sustain such monstrous statements. During the past fall I had a careful examination made of the concert saloons in this city, for the purpose of using the result in our annual report; which you will find in the leading dailies of Friday, January 5, instant. At that time we found eleven hundred and ninety-one waiter girls employed in two hundred and twenty-three concert and drinking saloons. Although much the greater part of these girls are already prostitutes, yet we have evidence they are not all such; but continuation at the employment is sure to make them all alike. Previous to that I had not made any census of persons of that character since January 24, 1864, when the footing was as follows:—

“Houses of prostitution, five hundred and ninety-nine. Public prostitutes, two thousand one hundred and twenty-three. Concert saloons of ill repute, seventy-two. The number of waiting girls was not then taken.

“The newspapers of last week, in reporting Bishop Simpson's speech delivered in St. Paul's Church, made him say that there are twenty thousand prostitutes in New York. I felt it to be about time to correct the impressions of such well-meaning men as he, and on Thursday last I sent out an order, instructing a new

census to be made. I have nearly all the returns in, and find a much less increase than I expected. A large number who have been following the army during the war, very naturally have gravitated to this city. Where else would they go? But with all that, the increase is below my estimate. On the 22d day of January, 1866, the report is as follows:—

“Houses of prostitution, six hundred and twenty-one. Houses of assignation, ninety-nine. Concert saloons of ill repute, seventy-five. Public prostitutes, two thousand six hundred and seventy. Waiter girls in concert and drinking saloons, seven hundred and forty-seven.

“You will see that houses of prostitution have increased twenty-two in two years, and houses of assignation have decreased thirteen. Concert saloons have increased four. Prostitutes have increased five hundred and forty-seven. The waiter girls will be increased by the figures to come in.

“As it regards ‘other women,’ we have no means of knowing anything of their number. That there are many of them cannot be disputed; the number of houses for their accommodation tells us that; but there is no such number as two thousand five hundred, you may depend on it, visit those places; and of those who do, the waiter girls furnish the larger portion.

“So that, taking all the public prostitutes, and all the waiter girls in music saloons (and these we have to a unit), there are but three thousand three hundred.

“Medical estimates are humbugs, from Dr. D. M. Reeves down to Dr. Sanger. According to Dr. Reeves, every female in the city over thirteen years of age

was required, to fill up his estimate of lewd women, and Sanger is but little more reasonable.

“Very respectfully, yours,

“JOHN A. KENNEDY.”

#### HOUSES OF THE FIRST CLASS.

These are few. No hotel is more elegantly furnished. Quiet, order, and taste abound. The lady boarders in these houses never walk the streets nor solicit company. They are selected for their beauty, grace, and accomplishments. They dress in great elegance, and quite as decorously as females generally do at balls, parties, or at concerts. Meet them in the streets, or at picture galleries, or at a fashionable soirée, and there is nothing about them to attract attention. No person who knows them or their character can in any way recognize them in public. These women have their pew in a fashionable church; some attend Sunday school, and have their own religious homes. Everything about the house is elegant. The door swings on well-oiled hinges. The bell is answered by a colored servant, and nearly all the servants are colored. They are quiet, mind their own business, and are known to be servants. All that grace and attraction can do to secure visits is employed. None but men who can afford to pay a first-class price visit a first-class house. The woman who is at the head of the establishment is one that has passed middle life, and is usually well preserved. She bears some foreign name, and has a person about the house that is called her husband. It is not uncommon for some so-called Count, Baron, or Consul, from some foreign power, to be, or pretend to

be, the lawful guardian of the woman. If a gentleman calls, he is at once ushered into the parlor. If two gentlemen enter together, both are presented to the parlor. But no other gentleman can enter while they remain. If any one leaves the house from up stairs, the parlor door is shut and guarded. No one looks out, and no one looks in. Such are the inexorable rules of the house. The visitor is received by the madam in whose name the mansion is kept. One by one the lady boarders drop in. Conversation becomes general and spirited. Some remarks are rather broad. There is little to dispel the illusion that one is on a call at a first-class boarding-school or seminary. As the evening wanes, and wine flows, the talk becomes bolder. Home, early days, childhood, mother, the school of girlish hours, the Sabbath, the Sunday school, the home pastor, their style of life, what the world thinks of them, how absolutely they are cut off from society, and barred out as if lepers,—are themes of conversation. Some are girls of superior mind. Some have had fortunes lavished on their education. Some can sing and play exquisitely. Operas, songs, ballads, snatches of hymns, are trolled off with great skill. Many support their parents in fine style. Some have children that were borne to them when they were happy wives. These children have usually no knowledge of their mother's shame. They are at fashionable boarding-schools, and are brought up at great expense, and are told that their mother is in a foreign land, or is married to a man of wealth. Some mothers who are supported by the infamy of children know, and some do not know, of the great degradation of their dear ones.

## THE KEEPER.

The woman who keeps the house keeps also a strict watch on all her boarders. She knows who comes and goes, the sum that is paid, and exacts of all her tribute. What with board, and dues paid for the privilege of the house, the costliness of the dress and ornaments that must be worn, the services of a hair-dresser, and cosmetics, coach hire, and the dash and display for which many of these girls have left pleasant homes, and bade adieu to a virtuous life, and all its honors and comforts, they have but little left. They lay up generally nothing. Their hold on gay life is very short, seldom continuing more than three years, and some breaking down in six months. They then commence the downward path of the road in which they have entered. The next step follows,—poorer houses, meaner dresses, coarser fare, rougher company, and stronger drinks. Then comes street-walking, low brothels, concert saloons, dance cellars, disease, Blackwell's Island, a few months of misery, and then death. The petted and giddy creatures, to whom the flowery path and seductive way is for a month or two so fascinating, cannot believe that rough winds can ever blow upon them, or that a rough word can ever be spoken, or want and sorrow can roll their black surges over them. While in their beauty and prime no creatures can be more tenderly cared for. The woman who is their mistress has every motive to treat them tenderly. Their health and beauty are her capital. She makes merchandise of their flesh and blood. She employs the best of masters for music and dances. The table is loaded

with luxuries. Nothing is too elegant or costly. The health of the girls is closely and anxiously watched. Their exercise and airings are carefully attended to. They are kept cheerful and buoyant. The deceived and infatuated creatures fancy that this will always last. But when sickness comes, and charms fade; when new comers are introduced, and the wan and faded women are put in contrast, the arrow enters into their soul; when they cease to be attractive, and call visitors to the house no more, the door is opened and they are told to go. No tears, no pleas, avail. Women that are moved by tears do not dwell under such roofs. Out these poor girls go, without a penny. Almost always they are brought in debt, and so much of their finery as will do for the new comers is retained. For the expelled there is no redress. The pavement is her home. The glare of the druggist's window suggests poison. The ripple of the black Hudson suggests suicide. Some one picks her up on the pave at night, and her low walk with the low women of her class commences.

#### HOW THEY ARE FILLED.

The short life and brief career of women who fill what are known as first-class boarding-houses for young ladies is one of the facts of which there is no dispute. Officers whose duties take them occasionally to these places say that once in about two or three months the company wholly changes; and when they ask for persons whom they saw on their last visit, an indefinite answer is given, and an unwillingness manifested to tell what has become of their associates. Some feign reform, many die of sickness, by the hand of criminal

practitioner, by suicide; many begin the dark tramp down that path that ends in death. We know from what source comes the supply for low stews, vile brothels, concert saloons, and dance houses; for where the beastly and drunken resort, multitudes can be found. But from whence comes this unceasing supply of brilliant, well-educated, accomplished, attractive, and beautiful young girls? They are found, as they are wanted, for the houses of fashionable infamy. They come, many of them, from the best homes in the land; from careful parentage and pious families; from fashionable boarding-schools; from seminaries of learning; from Sunday schools; from the rural cottages of Maine and Vermont; from Chicago, Richmond, and California; from all parts of the civilized world.

#### AGENTS AND RUNNERS.

Men and women are employed in this nefarious work as really as persons are round the country to hunt up likely horses; and when the victim is uncommonly attractive the pay is large. No system is better arranged with bankers, express-men, runners, and agents. No place is so distant, no town so obscure, that these panderers do not enter it. They are at concerts, on the railroad, at theatres, at church, at fashionable resorts in the summer, and at seminary graduations. They hang about hotels, under pretence of being strangers to New York; they get acquainted with young lady visitors, invite them to church, to a walk, to the opera, and, when confidence is gained, they are invited to call at the house of an acquaintance; and, after a pleasant evening, they wake up in the morning