in the matter, we would place the appointment of the Committee in the Government for the time being, holding it responsible for the fitness of those appointed. The utter absurdity of the old system of making Ministers members of such boards, already busy enough as they must be, is obvious.

 Carlyle says, "The true university of these days is a library!" true anyhow, true ten thousand times over in a youthful democratic country like ours, whose young men who will govern the land and make the laws ten years hence are, perhaps, serving behind the counter to-day. Let those now entrusted with the affairs of the country and the interests of society look to this. Let them give those young men the only practical means of qualifying themselves for great and solemn trust—fraught either with benefit or danger, according to the discharge of them, to the community at large. Let them place the appetites ready for those whose circumstances and fortune in life debar them from the privileges of a university, murmur at hand, in more senses than one, than the big toy in carved stone that, as in mockery and derision of its lofty object, is perched away at Goree Farm, away from everybody but those who, like Thumil's "respectable man," can drive thinner in "a pig," or can spare the hours snatched from earning daily bread to trudge backwards and forwards from the main quarter of the city to the embouchure of the Parramatta Road.

**The Social Evils (1859).**

A PUBLIC meeting was some time since held in the metropolis for the purpose of considering the best means of dealing with that most wretched and hopeless of all questions, the name of which in the peripheries of the publics, stands at the head of this column.

A great deal was said on the occasion, a good deal of sympathy, and much spasmodic speculating. But nothing pertinent was suggested, and nothing practical was done. A great many of the gentlemen present were very admirable in their way, very admirable indeed; but scarcely, we suspect, the sort of men to grapple with this question. It was a matter of pitch, and they had gloves on, very white ones, too.

It may do excellently well for a number of revered ministers of the Gospel to appear upon a platform and pronounce on the horrors and the woes, the curse and the corruption, of body and soul in this lowestmost abyss of human misery. But that affair of preaching has been going on for centuries; and on this peculiar question, in the hearts of those most concerned, there lurks a grim satiric sense of difference between the world's talk upon the subject and the world's practice. And there is no use barking or shirking the matter. There are terrible psychologic difficulties surrounding the question which none other, not even drunkenness itself,precedented, and which homilies and advices by themselves, even from the lips of angels, will not affect. All the preaching since the days of Him who dealt mercy to the woman taken in adultery never brought back an erring female to the forsaken path.

Preaching on the subject is simply preaching, whether the thing be worked up in the best infernal patterns and coloured with brimstone, or full of sympathies and sentiment and graceful meanderings for what is holy and loveliest in woman. Very few of the preachers know the pathology of the frightful disease they pretend to treat. They do not, and for obvious reasons they ought not. Their prescriptions for the evil are, therefore, in the main, practically idle. Whoever attempts to deal with it must know something about it practically and thoroughly, dark though the price which was paid for the knowledge, bitter as the curriculum of the bohunkly study may have been.

There are two points of view from which the question is to be regarded,—as it concerns the individual, and as it affects society at large. The latter point, the only one upon which legislation and the exercise of statesmanship is demanded, because the only one upon which they can be practically effective, has been pushed out of sight and persistently ignored in British communities. Unfashionable and immeasurable in some directions is the cam and hypocrisy of English social opinion and practice. Horrors such as the cities of antiquity
and the vastest abodes of barbarians presented scarcely a shadow of, are allowed to foster and rot in English society under the pure eyes of cherished and guarded English maidenhood, simply because English masculine ears must not hear, even to the service of God and God's most forlorn creatures, to anything that savours of what is "naughty." And then, of a surry, honourable members of the legislature, virtuous husbands and fathers, keep no "mistraces," and only sneak under cover of night into the verandahs of a brothel.

This goes on in this eminently practical nineteenth century, in supremely practical British communities, where practical men look upon the economies of public health, sanitary legislation, as the most practical of things. Ventilators in public lodging houses must be provided for by special Acts of Parliament, and any other matters which range themselves round the salubritics of streets and sewers. But on matters that far more deeply and insistently affect the health of the people, there the national Mr. Peelhall, and the national Mrs. Grundy, and the Decencies of Society, all dinandine and in white necklets, meet one inscrutable and impracticable, "a melancholy train." God help us; and the father with eyes too and in their hopeless woe for a tear to wet the cheeks, paces on his son dropping deceminal before him, a mass of hideous syphilitic carriers, the victims of some error in the cliasmatic of youthful passions which the Decencies of Society never committed in the calendas of their youthful adolescent.

On the pavement beside, the horse, walks with those fresh cheeks and the full eyes of childhood, which Jeremy Taylor so touchingly speaks of, offspring cursed with the curse which will bask and warm its blessed life in the blood of the unborn, the children of those doomed little ones. The pretty little maiden but three months ago in honest service is "in the town" tonight, where she never would have been had she not seen Betsy Tha, or Nelly Tha, flourishing in King Street, in hat and mantle, satin flowers, and lavender boots, doing what the law seemed to take no notice of, and everybody looked at as a matter of course.

Law, this, which with all the disgrace of police-office inquisition, and the heavy checks of large pecuniary penalties, and goal confinement in default, meanerwise puts down the slightest approach to irregularity in the sale of spirituous liquors. British, and, therefore, Colonial law has, by the way, a logic of its own on this head. The wretched woman shall expose herself an ware for sale in the streets, may, call attention by some horrible process of devices akin to those of the hawkers and the chapman, and the law does nothing, and has power to do nothing the while. But when the interests of public decency and the open scandal of the thing cease, and the abomination of it is about to be completed in secret, then the constabulary imprisonment of the law dives into "houses of ill fame," then the majesty of Quarter Sessions is invoked, and the culprit punished much in a Spartan fashion, not for anything done, but for being found in places which the law regards as objectionable. How the creatures who ply their wicked trade on the streets try to reconcile this obvious contradiction in the regulation of things, if they do at all, we know not. Their opinion upon legislation and legislators, roughly and readily in their own simple and unthinking way arrived at, gives a practical result perhaps not very different from that of persons who have set themselves the task of watching parliamentary men and parliamentary proceedings.

"Hideous disorders," says one deeply learned in the dismal statistics of this province of human shame. Dr. McCormack, "attend the unhealthful commerce of the sexes, heightening the infant unborne, inducing inevitable pain and decay. The skin, throat, bones even do not escape. The beautiful structure of the eye is doubly implicated, first in syphilitic ulcers, and then in gonorrhoeal ophthalmia, that wretched malady which, as I conceive, has housed itself in Egypt, and infects our race. These diseases are at once acute and chronic, nor does one attack yield exemption from another. The evil is urgent, the very remedy is dire. Medical writings are rife with details only to be surpassed by the yet more horrible reality. Very children even are found in the lock hospital of great cities, while millions, it may be affirmed, are lashed on the wages
of debauchery. In Edinburgh, he counts one-fourth of the annual mortality as amongst the female victims to prostitution, this so brutal vice and utter violation of the loftier duties of our kind. Brothels, and low lodging-houses, if possible worse, subsist in all our larger towns, and there prostitution and syphilis, the sin and the soil, go hand-in-hand. Forty thousand illegitimate children, according to the Registrar, are yearly born in England, besides those who perish, sometimes mother and child together, through the execrable arts of hired abductors. In London alone, two thousand women, it is said, annually replace those who die in their sin and misery."

Something more must be done, then, than preaching and making speeches. Upon this matter, as on all others which prejudice or are likely to prejudice its interests, society has a right to legislate on the grounds of self-protection. The affair from this point of view is simply one of police coroners. As things in this world just now are, and are long likely to be, it makes one's heart ache to think how long, or put down prostitution is impossible. But it is not impossible to keep it in check, and impose upon it those regulations which will protect the morally untainted from the terrible scandals and temptations hourly paraded in public places before the eye, which will to some extent guard public decency, and while doing this, act as a discouragement to the wretched trade itself, by denying it the open facilities that at present obtain for pursuing it with success. One step, simple, summary, and easily taken, would, we think, in the course of a year revolutionize the abomination, in some of its most public and, therefore, most dangerous characteristics. Remove by law from the thoroughfares and highways all women of abandoned character, or whose demeanour or habit of loitering in the streets makes it fair to believe them abroad for improper purposes, and you will do it is impossible to say how much in the right direction.

Without mentioning that portion of King Street adjoining the Prince of Wales's Theatre, or the neighbourhood of the Victoria Hall, there is one spot in this city which for everything that can disgust and demoralize and be a disgrace to a civilized community, is unparalleled by any locality in the world used as a public promenade,—the walk in Hyde Park. And often as we hear and have heard pretty lavish praise given to our police authorities, we have marvelled, as they were so admirable, with whom the blame of this crying evil lay.

We presume we ought not to be above taking some hints here and there from what French statesmen have thought and done upon this subject, especially as the results are very satisfactory evidences of the wisdom and the benefits involved. An immense amount of vulgar and rashly prefixed is talked in English society upon French police administration in this matter. But all honour, say we, to the brave and enlightened legislation that has dared to cope, for the benefit of society, with this darkest and wildest of all the evils that encompass it. Here are the regulations of the French authorities, and we put it to every sensible and reflecting reader, how much, by even a partial adoption of them, might be checked and diminished the present abominations left to waver and riot in open carnival of debauchery amongst ourselves, with a monachism on the part of one few makers that cares neither for the prostitute nor the victim.

"Brothels are suffered, by license, to exist in certain quarters; but at and from the period of their establishment, they are placed under the entire management of a secréte yoke of a portion of the police, whose office is to guard attentats aux mœurs. What a check this of itself would be on visits to a certain class, is sufficiently obvious. Such places are not permitted in the vicinity of a public school or a church, or, indeed, of any public institution whatever. The keeper of the brothel is bound within twenty-four hours to forward to the Prefecture of the Police the name, for the purpose of registra-

"tions, of every young woman who may seek to reside in the house. Immediately after this formality, it is necessary that the woman should appear before the authorities; she is then cautioned and warned that if she enter on that course of life, she is under the surveillance of the police, and told her name, once entered as une fille inscrite, that name must always remain..."
as a lasting record of her degradation. If her youth be
remarkable, she is sent to the Hospital of St. Lazar, where she
is employed in needlework; and if she be from the provinces,
her parents or the mayor of her locality are written to for the
purpose of interfering to induce her to return home. If she
be friendless, she is received into the Hospital of St. Lazar.
If this fail, she is then suffered to place her name upon the roll,
and her residence is numbered in the books of the prefecture.
She is forced to carry with her, and to produce to any person
when required, a ticket showing the weekly medical report of
her health made by the physician appointed to inspect houses
inhabited by persons of her class, and those who dwell with
them. Women of the kind are prohibited from wearing showy
dresses, and (at Paris) from appearing in the Gardens of the
Luxembourg, of the Palais Imperial, or the Tuileries, or other
public promenades, and they are not allowed, upon any occasion,
to appear at the windows of the houses they inhabit. For a
breach of any one of these regulations, the penalty is two
months' imprisonment. Those who live quietly in a similar
course of life have also the eyes of the law upon them; even
the fille côte is tracked through her course of sin; and, in fine,
upon the French prostitute every indignity that woman can
suffer is inflicted by an active and vigilant police." Whether
the best interests of society and those of the wretched women
themselves are most consulted by English non-legislation or
French law, we leave the intelligent reader to judge for
himself.

How far some system, which for the female herself would
render the walk of infamy an intolerable and odious road, shorn
of the glaring riot and excitement which make its fascination
and its reckless license, would drive her to some other calling,
may not be unworthy of attention. People who, with the very
best intentions in the world, talk of voluntary reform in Maga-
dens and asylums, forget the terrible physical change: a course
of prostitution makes in women; and of whatever worth this may
be in the individual, it is too fragile and too precarious a
matter, as far as society's own interests are concerned, for it to
trust to.