

The Sentinel, December, 1883

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"THE CORRUPTION OF GIBRALTAR"

In August last our attention was called to the moral state of Gibraltar, by a letter from a gentleman residing there, who wrote - "You need to come here to see the scenes which only Sodom could have witnessed." That letter led us to enquire further. After the revelations of the abominations of British rule in Hong Kong, we were not surprised to find by subsequent information that in Gibraltar also our British authorities have been fostering immorality and debauching the population by licensing vice. The whole paraphernalia of licensed vice appears to be in operation there.

Notwithstanding that no one is allowed to enter Gibraltar from Spain without a permit, and that great trouble, our correspondent informs us, has often to be gone through in obtaining a permit to introduce a Spanish domestic servant, the place swarms with Spanish women and female children, whose lives are devoted to immorality. Permits are not refused to them. Houses of ill-fame abound. Near the Governor's residence is a lane entirely given up to this vice, and there are three or four bad houses within twelve yards of the Presbyterian Church, while there are other such houses in the main thoroughfare leading to the civil hospital.

Of course the partizans of regulated debauchery will endeavour to excuse such a state of affairs by pointing out that the population of Gibraltar is largely composed of soldiers. Some persons appear to have peculiar ideas about soldiers. These persons reason and act as though enlistment changes Ta man's nature, and he thereafter loses all power of self-control. Henceforward it is the duty of the State to expect him to be immoral, and, in fact, to tempt him to be so, by elaborate, costly, brutalising arrangements designed (but fruitlessly so) to enable him to sin without the physical penalty of sin. In view of such conditions it is not a matter of astonishment that our correspondent writes - "Can we wonder at there being so few Christian men in the Army? Why, the daily atmosphere they breathe is enough to contaminate any man. The men themselves would tell you, as they have told me, that vice is not a necessity, but that the provision made for them, or allowed, is so great, that to resist is almost impossible."

We understand that the Rev. W. Haslam and Captain Graves are expected to arrive at Gibraltar in January to conduct a month's religious mission. We presume the Bishop of Gibraltar, with the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan Chaplains will rightly join in welcoming them. But will they allow the month's mission to pass over without uttering a strong protest against the permanent mission of impurity which is carried on there by the Government? The official position of some or all of them ought to cause their protest to be the more energetic. It is a ghastly and horrible thing that the Government should with one hand support the Church, and with the other hand should license the harlot, whose "house is the way to hell."

We shall not suppose that the teachers of religion in Gibraltar are going to be silent in face of this great iniquity, but that the January month's mission will be an occasion that will be seized upon to rebuke the sin that is perpetrated in their midst.

Example of a Cover Page

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THE SENTINEL:

ORGAN OF THE SOCIAL PURITY MOVEMENT.
A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED
TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF PUBLIC MORALITY; TO THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE,
AND TO THE ABOLITION OF ITS REGULATION BY THE STATE.

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"ON GUARD AT GIBRALTAR"

One of our friends at Gibraltar who is "On Guard" for the purity cause to protect men from temptation and, deliver women from evil, writes from there "We want the part of the Criminal Law Amendment Act passed for Gibraltar, that we may have the power to close certain houses of ill-fame, for the present law makes such action almost impossible. For instance, there is a whole lane, containing several houses, where 16 or 17 girls reside, every house being a house of ill-fame. This lane is almost facing the Governor's house in the same street which is the main and principal entrance to the garrison, about 6 doors from the Soldiers' Institute, and about 60 yards from His Excellency's house. This lane is a perfect trap to strangers, say sailors and soldiers entering the garrison. I have seen dozens of lads from H. M. Training Ships enter this lane on a Sunday afternoon, who have to pass up this street on their way to the town, and who would probably have gone back to their ships pure, so far as that day was concerned, had it not been for this same trap door. A deputation of residents last year was introduced before the police magistrate, complaining of the lane being a nuisance. The magistrate said: 'You have your remedy. Each one of you must be bound over in 40 pounds to prosecute before the Supreme Court at the approaching Sessions, and you must be sure to secure the proper names of all these girls lest you prosecute wrongfully. The consequence was that not one of these tradesmen dare go forward to prosecute. "No," they said, 'It is a public nuisance and the authorities themselves ought to suppress it; we dare not run the risk of a Supreme Court prosecution.' So the evil continues, and will continue unless the law is altered. I think it is scandalous that such things should exist. The law here evidently protects the wrong-doers, and they know it, and glory in their wrong doing. Are we not English here? Is this not an English colony? Then why should we not share the same advantages as those in England? -- The Chaplain certainly ought to come to the front in some aggressive purity work, but when some time ago the Archdeacon proposed a United Purity Mission, it was the Military Chaplains who were the first to object. "This is a grievance that ought to be remedied at once. Will Lord Knutsford, the Colonial Secretary, please note this? We should like to know the names of the Army Chaplains at the Rock, that we may arouse them to a sense of their duty. We invite them to move in the matter immediately, before we direct the glare of public opinion upon them. What is the Governor busy about?" Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.