

COMMERCIALIZED VICE.

The Economic Aspect.

Addressing a meeting of women yesterday in the Union Church Hall, under the auspices of the Shanghai Women's Christian Temperance Union, Miss Laura White dealt with "The Economic Aspect of Commercialized Vice."

Mrs. W. L. Merriman presided over a large attendance.

The authorities of the speaker were the various reports of different Vice Commissions, notably the Rockefeller Commissions.

She quoted the assertion of the Commission on European vice to the effect that the colossal vice business was deliberately cultivated for the sake of its own commercial profit. A very large constituent of what has been called the irresistible demands of human nature are nothing, but deliberate suggestion and stimulation by alcohol, late hours and sensuous amusements, all sedulously worked up by the business entrepreneurs of vice. An artificial supply of prostitutes is deliberately and resourcefully forced on the world market, and then an artificial demand worked up to consume it. Creating the artificial demand are the cabaret and suggestive moving picture shows; the low theatre amusement halls, etc. The main agencies being the community dance house affiliated with the disorderly saloon. Profits on Vice: the millions spent in the different classes of Brothels, Parlour Houses, etc. Profits of the Street Walker. Profits by the sale of liquor. Profits by the sale of drugs. Profits by the owners of property, and vested interests. The law and the profits. Machinery of the business. The Entrepreneur or proprietors, The Commercial Agents, Procurers. The Cadet, The Madame, and Procureess. The Runners, Lookouts, Light Houses etc. Prostitutes.

In summing up the speaker remarked that although she had confined her paper to a discussion of the unbelievable sums paid out by the society for the upkeep of the prostitute, the account is not so simple as that; for we must not overlook the loss involved in the economic unproductiveness of this army of women now up in the millions, whose one function seems to be to poison the world. Calculate and add to this sum, the service fees of prostitution; the millions for alcohol, gifts, demoralizing amusements. Also to these many millions, add the long score chargeable to venereal disease, the loss of earnings, outlay for treatment. Of the total cost only the roughest guesses can be made, but it would be noted that every estimate given that afternoon quickly ran up into the millions.

Loesch, for example, reckons the cost of prostitution to Germany as between three hundred and five hundred million marks. This outlay may be contrasted with the entire cost of the Prussian school system, elementary, technical and professional. The entire system shows a budget of less than 200,000,000 marks.

In Chicago vice is capitalized at \$300,000,000, admitted to be a conservative estimate. But the reckoning is incomplete even if we know the actual money cost, the actual volume of diseases for these still remains the remote effects: paralysis, sterility, miscarriage, deformity, degeneracy, insanity, curses that stretch into the third and fourth generations. From the effort to translate such losses into dollars and cents, the boldest calculator may well shrink, yet they, are a part, a certain inevitable part of the cost of prostitution.