

CANCERS ON THE COMMUNITY.

NO. I.—THE SOCIAL EVIL.

(Communicated.)

It is altogether impossible to give those who have not made themselves acquainted with this subject, any idea of the baneful effects of the Social Evil. Enough to say that a recent high medical authority, states that where cholera carries off its thousands, the effects of the Social Evil kills its tens of thousands, and more, that there is not one family in ten, whose blood is not tainted with its effects. If these statements are correct, and from our own observation we have no cause to doubt them, we need offer no apology for placing this question before our Fellow Workmen. We do not pretend that the evil can be eradicated; but we believe it may be mitigated. As far back as we have history, it existed, and as society is at present constituted it will be continued. But were it placed under proper surveillance and control, its effects might be reduced, if not altogether extirpated.

We have read the Contagious Diseases Act, and heard much that has been said about it by old ladies, male and female, and our only fault with the Act is that it stops short of its usefulness. We could wish to see it enacted that every properly qualified medical practitioner, and none other, should be compelled to give in a report of every case that came under his care to a Board of Health, and the afflicted not to be allowed to mix in society or with their fellow workmen, until such time as they received a clean bill of health from the competent authorities. We often read of unfortunate females being sent to the jail for loitering on the streets. This appears to us to be absurd, and extremely cruel. "Where is their place?" we would ask. Are we yet as far advanced in civilization as the ancient Pagans or the Jews were at a distant period? We read of a Jew woman dressing herself as a harlot to entrap her father-in-law; and from that we would suppose that the Jew women of that class, had a uniform to distinguish them from other females. From the same authority we learn that the Jew spies who went to seek out the land in Jericho, and that they abode in the house of a harlot. From this we would infer that this class had a locality, and that on the outskirts of the city, by their being lowered from a window over the wall. It is no use for us working men to take up this question in the white kid glove style, and use such terms as "Fast Young Men," "Ladies of Pleasure," and so forth. Even the lowest gutter drabs among them are our sisters, and we cannot get quit of the relationship. The voice that called upon Cain, where is thy brother, is enquiring as distinctly of us where is thy sister. It is for us to consider what is to be our reply.

One great cause of immorality is our absurd and unnatural marriage laws. Any scoundrel, rich or poor, may seduce a trusting female, and if she becomes a mother, and the seducer in a position to pay his victim six or seven shillings per week, he is free to marry or seduce any other woman that may suit his roving fancy.

We say that nature creates no bastards. It is the law that bastardizes children, and declares them to be illegitimate. Abolish bastardy. Let the children succeed to the father's name and wealth, whether the father be a peer or a peasant. This we hold to be the simplest and surest method of dealing with the seducer, and of lessening the number of that class of the community known as unfortunate females.

Fellow workmen, this is a subject that affects us much. Theologians, and would-be moralists, have pattered at it, but with what result? They must stand aside, and allow the thinking working class to better this social condition of things for themselves. We will not here say one word on the theological side of the subject. We would rather appeal to the common sense that God has given us, and try to mitigate, and if possible, to put from among us the fearful evil with which we are afflicted; and if we succeed only in part, we will have done some good work which is urgently called for.