

HOW THEY DO IN WASHINGTON.

[From the Washington Chronicle.]

Recently some well-known ladies in Washington, who are accustomed to meet once a week and take counsel together concerning the wants, the sufferings, and the evils of our time, and to devise practical measures for relieving them, decided upon a campaign which required more fearlessness to plan and nerve to execute than men have ever dared to show upon this great moral question.

They determined to visit, personally, the leading mistresses of the houses of ill-fame in Washington, and ask for their advice and co-operation in regard to the best manner of protecting their interests, legally, financially, socially and morally.

Fully convinced that justice never had been done to these women, and that the only way to ascertain their real condition, or to reclaim them, was to recognize them as sisters, women to be visited, to be conversed with, to be treated with consideration and respect, they started out on their tour early on Friday morning.

They visited first a fashionable establishment of this kind on Thirteenth street, and asked by name for the lady of the house. She soon appeared, bright, charming, with a face and manner so sweet and womanly, that one well might grieve that such a woman is not an honored wife and mother in a happy home.

Mrs. X. We have wanted to see you a long time, and have only delayed calling from over-work in other directions. There is a matter under discussion in which you more than most women must be deeply interested. What shall be done with the social evil? You have a right to be heard on this matter. We think we also, as wives and mothers, have a right to be heard. Perhaps you may agree with us, when we have talked the matter over. Your patrons are always heard. Their voice is potent. We have an impression that perhaps they don't represent you any better than they do us. What would you personally like? Would you like to have your house licensed?

Nina (We will call her). I certainly should. The restaurants are licensed all over the city, and we all know that gentlemen take respectable girls and women to those places every night, and after drinking a glass or two of wine, it is discovered that the restaurant furnishes other accommodations. Now we don't do that kind of business. Our house is respectable. Of course we ought to be licensed.

Mrs. X. But how will that protect you? I can see clearly how it will protect your name, but is it for the sake of the wives and mothers, as well as our own. You know men must have such places to visit. Every young woman in the country would be seduced if such houses were closed, and who would take care of poor, unfortunate girls as we do? If any of our girls are sick, or in trouble, we take care of them, and defend them, as their own fathers and mothers never did. Besides, what would the world give us to do if our houses were closed? We should be driven to the streets, and how much better for society would that be? My boarders have no one to support them, and nearly all of them have families to provide for. Most of them were brought up ladies, unaccustomed to labor, and taught to depend upon men from their childhood. There is very little that they know how to do, and that little the world would not give to them.

Mrs. X. I know that labor for women is scarce, even if they have been trained to work; but would not gentlemen, generous kind-hearted gentlemen, pay these poor women as much for a whole day's work, even if it were not well done, as they pay for an hour's entertainment here?

Nina (Indignantly). Not not not! There is nothing else under heaven they are so willing to pay for. A lady who came here a few days ago traveled the city over, day after day, until her feet were blistered and her clothes worn out, asking only for work. When there was nothing else left to do except to starve with her children, she came to me. You can't know anything about how desperate such a woman is until you have been there. But gentlemen are generous enough to her here, I assure you. How glad she would be to do anything else!

Mrs. X. How do you feel about it personally? Is it a love for the business, or a desire for profit that induces you to follow it?

Nina. A desire to earn money; nothing else on earth. I don't believe there is a woman living who loves the business. Think what it is, never to be free from fear; never to know at what hour of the day or night we may be dragged to the police court, followed by the rabble, hooting at us or calling us vile names, betrayed, insulted, tried, judged and convicted by the very men who have made us what we are. How can any woman love the business?

Mrs. X. How is it with your girls? You have given one case. What is it that generally induces them to come here?

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To be continued.

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