

A few remarks on the errors of the article in the Westminster Review on Prostitution, governmental experiments in controlling it, by John Chapman, M.D., reprinted from the January number of the Westminster Review, Trubner and Co., London, 1870.

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*A FEW REMARKS on the Errors of the Article
in the "Westminster Review" on Prostitution:
Governmental Experiments in Controlling it:
by JOHN CHAPMAN, M.D. Reprinted from the
January Number of the "Westminster Review."
TRUBNER and Co., London. 1870.*

No. 1.

ON p. 47, the Reviewer says: "In Paris the treatment
" of venereal diseases is mainly restricted to three hospitals.
" One forms part of the *Maison de Saint-Lazare*, which is under
" the administration of the prefecture of Police, and which
" contains about 1,300 prostitutes, divided into three sections:
" the first, prisoners; the second, patients; the third, young
" girls imprisoned in conformity with Articles 66 and 67 of the
" Penal Code, or by request of their parents. *It thus appears*
" *that something like a fourth part of all the registered women*
" *in Paris are confined in La Maison de Saint-Lazare!*
" Usually the number of venereal patients in the hospital of
" this establishment is about 200."

M. Lecour, Chef du Bureau des Mœurs, whom Dr. Chapman allows to be an "especially trustworthy authority," himself writes as follows in the paper from which Dr. Chapman professes to quote:—

Of 3,861 women on the Police Register of Paris on the 1st January, 1867,—

47	were detained awaiting trial
188	were undergoing punishment
90	were in the sick wards.
34	were in various general hospitals for non-
—	venereal complaints

Total . . 359 in St. Lazare.

Lecour, de la prostitution et des mesures dont elle est l'objet à Paris. Archives Générales de Médecine, 1867. Tom. ii, p. 725.

These 359, for the rest of the 3,861 were at liberty, have, by the Westminster Reviewer, been multiplied into 1,300, "or about one-fourth of the whole number of registered women in Paris."

On page 50, the Westminster Reviewer says: "Of all the women in the *maisons tolérées*, whether in Paris or its suburbs, there was an average of 2 in every 259 annually affected with syphilis during the five years in question," (1850-54). "*But since 1854, the last year named in this table, the amount of syphilis among the women of the maisons tolérées in Paris and its suburbs has so increased, that in 1867 there were 2 cases of syphilis in every 100 women.*" The Reviewer also states that the proportion of syphilis among the women in private lodgings had increased from 1 in 289, in 1854, to 1 in 200 in 1867.

M. Lecour is again the authority cited by the Reviewer for this statement.

What that gentleman really says, is on page 721 of the paper already cited—

"The report for the month of September, 1867, gives 2 cases of syphilis for every 100 women of the *maisons tolérées*, and 1 case in every 200 women in furnished lodgings." Moreover, M. Lecour gives on this same page 721, only four lines further down, a table of the number of registered women found syphilitic, who he says are without exception (*sans aucune exception*) treated at St. Lazare.

This table gives the numbers of syphilitic women annually sent to that establishment from 1857 to 1866, and these numbers steadily fell year by year from 982 in 1857, to 277 in 1866. And on page 722 M. Lecour gives another table for the same period of 1857 to 1866, showing that the number of the women living in private lodgings (*maisons garnies*) who are found annually syphilitic, has not increased (134 in 1857, 112 in 1866), but the number of women living in *maisons tolérées* found syphilitic has steadily decreased from 933 in 1857, to 229 in 1866.

Further, on page 727, is another table of the women arrested for clandestine prostitution, during the same period of 1857-1866, which shows that while the number of women arrested has increased from 1,405 in 1857, to 1,988 in 1866, the number found syphilitic has remained stationary—namely, 434 in 1857, and 432 in 1866.

All the preceding figures are given in the very paper quoted by the Westminster Reviewer.

No. 3.

On page 49 the Westminster Reviewer gives a series of figures of the admissions at the two venereal hospitals, Lourcine and Midi, during the years 1851–1855, these figures showing a steady increase, year by year, at both these hospitals:—

	1851	1855
Lourcine.. ..	1,102	1,384
Midi	3,019	3,632

M. Lecour has, within the last few weeks, published a larger work on the same subject (*“La Prostitution à Paris et à Londres.”* Paris. Asselin. 1870). On page 86 of this work he gives the number of venereal patients admitted in 1867 and 1868 to these two hospitals, Lourcine and Midi. They were:—

	1867	1868
Lourcine.. ..	1,030	1,024
Midi	3,226	3,185

Consequently, notwithstanding the growth of Paris, and the increased facilities of communication in seventeen years, the number of patients admitted to the first of these hospitals is actually lower than (according to the Westminster Reviewer) it was in 1851, and at the second, lower than it was in 1852, according to the same author. Nor has the diminution been caused by the reception of this class of patients into general hospitals, for no change in the mode of distributing the patients in the Paris hospitals has taken place since 1855.

The Reviewer states (page 48) that a large number of syphilitic patients are treated surreptitiously in the general hospitals, an absurdity patent to any one familiar with the Parisian system of hospital administration, and easily refuted. M. Lecour (page 86) gives the number of syphilitic patients admitted into each of the general hospitals at Paris in 1867 and 1868. They altogether numbered 1,403 in 1867, and 1,551 in 1868.

The foregoing remarks have shown what reliance can be placed on the arguments of the article, and which are summed up by the Reviewer in the following paragraph (p. 51):—

“The group of facts we have last described may be thus summed up: there are 1,000 beds in the Paris hospitals continuously occupied by venereal patients” (see Remarks 1 and 3); “during the last five years, concerning which we have information on the subject, there has been a gradual and great increase in the number of patients admitted to the Lourcine and the Midi” (see Remark 3); “the severity of the disease has increased; the proportion of women inhabiting the *maisons tolérées* who are attacked with syphilis has increased” (see Remark 2); “the proportion of those registered women living in their own apartments who are attacked with syphilis is increased” (see Remark 2); “the total number of those clandestine prostitutes (*insoumises*) who are annually arrested and the proportion of them who are diseased is increased” (see Remark 2); and finally, “the proportion of diseased women among those inhabiting the *maisons tolérées*, into which the administrators would force the whole prostitute population of Paris, is far greater than is the proportion of those diseased among the registered women inhabiting the *maisons garnies*.”

With respect to the last statement in this paragraph, it need only be mentioned that the women of the *maisons tolérées* are of the lowest class, and, inhabiting the very commonest brothels, are exposed far more frequently to contagion than their more prosperous sisters who can live in private lodgings.

It is not for a moment to be inferred that the preceding paragraphs are intended to defend or uphold the “French System” *in toto*; but simply to shew that it effectually checks disease.

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