

A HUMANITARIAN

Josephine Butler, "The Great Feminist"

by Belinda Peacey

International Review commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by publishing various articles concerning the Red Cross and the rights of man. It might also be appropriate to recall here that another text, inspired by the same ideal as the Universal Declaration, was proclaimed by the international community: the "Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women" adopted unanimously on November 7, 1967 by the U.N. General Assembly.

One may wonder why this was necessary, in view of the wide range already covered by the provisions of the Universal Declaration and seeing that the preamble thereto affirms "the equal rights of men and women". Nevertheless, the need was sufficiently apparent in numerous countries for the United Nations to promulgate a special declaration.

Before doing so, the nations had on many occasions, by agreements, recommendations and resolutions, tried to establish international standards applicable at national levels to the rights of women. In one particular field in which the dignity of women is outraged, there is, for example, the important Convention for the Repression and Abolition of the White Slave Traffic and the Exploitation of Women for the Purpose of Prostitution, which was adopted on December 2,

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1949, by the United Nations General Assembly. *The Declaration on Discrimination against Women provides that all appropriate measures, including legislation, should be taken to combat all forms of traffic in women and their exploitation for prostitution.*

The International Conference on Human Rights, meeting at Teheran in May 1968, approved an extensive programme on measures intended to promote women's rights in the modern world.

It therefore appeared of interest, in this year of 1968, designated Human Rights Year, to recall the memory of a woman who carried on a courageous struggle in the defence of those rights; Josephine Butler, Founder of the International Abolitionist Federation, of which one of the present objectives is to promote the social rehabilitation of prostitutes. Josephine Butler was an outstanding figure of the XIXth century general humanitarian movement for the safeguarding of man and human dignity, a movement of which one of the luminaries was Henry Dunant, and one of the achievements on a world scale, the Red Cross.

We might add that the Red Cross itself offers women a wide field of activity. But one of the obstacles to their development in many parts of the world is woman's inferior status and the discrimination to which she is a victim in matters of education and professional training. By offering scope to women who have received an education, and by making occupational training available to them, the Red Cross contributes considerably to the cause of the advancement of women.

*In addition, it offers scope for courage and self-sacrifice. There is much unsung heroism in the day-to-day activities among the sick, in the self-abnegation of nurses; as Max Huber wrote in *La Croix-Rouge au temps présent*, "Our organization's strength and prestige, the confidence it inspires, are derived from its eminently humanitarian work".*

We therefore extend our thanks to Mrs. Belinda Peacey for the following article outlining an exemplary life and struggle. (Ed.)

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JOSEPHINE BUTLER, "THE GREAT FEMINIST"

To the majority of people the name of Josephine Elizabeth Butler and her campaign for the abolition of State-regulated prostitution are by now equally obscure. Yet her courage in fighting an injustice and opposing certain laws connected with matters which were unmentionable a hundred years ago, entitles her to her place among the great social reformers of the nineteenth century.

She was born in 1828, inheriting many of the qualities of her father, who was an ardent fighter for reform and who, until her marriage to George Butler in 1852, exerted the greatest influence upon her character.

George and Josephine Butler were a devoted couple. That she achieved so much was largely due to his understanding and the sacrifices he made. She was endowed with good looks and charm, was highly intelligent and capable of expressing herself skilfully in the written and spoken word.

The Butlers' first home was Oxford, where their three sons were born, and which they left five years after their marriage when George Butler was appointed Vice Principal of Cheltenham College. It was at Cheltenham that Josephine Butler gave birth to a daughter whose tragic death, at the age of five, was to prove a turning point in her life.

Shortly afterwards, George Butler was offered and accepted the principalship of Liverpool College, welcoming the move which would take his wife away from unhappy associations. 'I became possessed with an irresistible desire to go forth and find some pain keener than my own',¹ she told a friend some years later; and Liverpool was to provide her with precisely this.

A long-established tradition for charitable works existed among the city's prominent families, and Josephine Butler's attention was soon drawn to the Brownlow Hill Workhouse, where some of Liverpool's human derelicts—women ousted from the labour markets and abandoned children—found a refuge.

It came as a surprise to the two hundred women and girls at work in the oakum sheds at the workhouse to find one day in their midst, a tall, beautifully dressed young woman, trying to

¹ George W. & Lucy A. Johnson: *Josephine Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir*, 3rd edition. J. W. Arrowsmith, 1928, page 43.

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untwist the tarry ropes with hands that were totally unfitted to the task. At first they laughed at her; but Josephine Butler went back regularly, and by talking to and befriending them learnt much of the sordid circumstances that had brought them there. Many of them were prostitutes who had become infected with disease and drifted in and out of the workhouse infirmary, where they were kept alive in conditions harsh enough to discourage them from returning too often.

Josephine Butler's next step was to bring into her own home a young prostitute who was dying of disease. The effect of her action on the residents of the respectable suburb in which the Butlers lived, can be imagined, as also upon the outcasts of Liverpool, among whom the news that kindness and sympathy were to be found at the Butlers' home spread rapidly. Before long, the attic and cellar were crowded to the point at which not one more sick prostitute could be taken in. She then appealed for funds to rent and furnish a Home of Rest for these unfortunates and established a workroom where they could earn a little by sewing. Later, she raised sufficient money to convert a large house into a factory at which they were employed in making envelopes.

Meanwhile, fate was preparing a more extensive theatre for her activities, one that was to send her crusading through her own country and the Continent.

THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS

In 1864, 1866 and 1869, the British Government passed the *Contagious Diseases Acts* authorizing the control of prostitutes by the State. The title of the Acts was, perhaps intentionally, ambiguous to obscure a loathesome subject, and since the *Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts* were passed about the same time, people were confused as to whether the new laws affected humans or beasts. The legislation was brought in as a result of official concern at the increase in venereal disease in the crowded new industrial areas, though 'the preservation of the health of the armed forces of the Crown' was the issue of primary importance. The solution to the

problem seemed to lie in the system introduced into France by Napoleon in 1802, and which now operated all over the Continent. Under this, prostitutes were registered, kept in brothels licensed by the police and compulsorily medically examined by army surgeons. 'Regulationists' in Europe had for some time been pressing the British Government to adopt the system; the medical profession were wholly in favour of it.

By 1869 the provisions of the Acts had been applied to fourteen naval and military areas in England,² and it was hoped to extend them to others. The responsibility for registering prostitutes was in the hands of a special force of plain-clothes police, who had powers to arrest a woman simply on the grounds of 'having good cause to believe' that she was a prostitute; the subject could be induced to sign a 'voluntary submission' declaring herself to be one, and agreeing to be medically examined at regular intervals. Some poor wretches signed the submission because prostitution was their only means of livelihood; others gave in under pressure. The woman who neglected to attend for her medical inspections was imprisoned, and if found to be diseased, confined in a certified hospital. But the unfortunate suspect who refused to sign a submission was served with a summons and brought before a magistrate, who had only the policeman's word or his own deductions from the case, to guide him. No further evidence was needed to prove she was a prostitute; and there was no appeal.

Many women who had committed no crime were thus arbitrarily imprisoned. The Acts were, moreover, conspicuously a class measure, and by their unfair discrimination against one sex infringed the basic principle of the equality of all before the law. The system, which compelled only registered prostitutes to undergo medical examinations, was futile, since it could never guarantee complete safety from infection as long as there were other prostitutes illicitly carrying on their profession, and men were free to spread disease unchecked.

² Scotland was free of the *Contagious Diseases Acts*.

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IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Josephine Butler was horrified when she read the Parliamentary report of these Acts. At the time she was absorbed in the movement for Women's Rights, their education, employment and suffrage. She did not immediately consent when asked to lead the National Association for the Abolition of the Contagious Diseases Acts.³ Before giving her answer to the Association she endured months of intense mental conflict, when she was torn between acceptance of a task which she interpreted as a call from God, and dread of the consequences, were she to identify herself with this question, to her beloved family and the career of her husband who was highly respected throughout the educational profession. At length, in her own words, 'driven into it by anger against injustice',⁴ she plucked up the courage to speak to him and he unhesitatingly told her to take up the work.

First, she made a tour of the areas where the Acts were in force, visiting a brothel in Chatham and, subsequently, many other 'houses'. Her first test as a speaker for the cause came when she addressed a large gathering of working men at the Mechanics' Institute in Crewe. Her audience, struck by her eloquence and simple explanation of the facts, understood her perfectly. It was their womenkind who suffered from the enforcement of the Acts; their innocent daughters and sisters, trudging home from work with no wealth or social position to protect them, who were liable to arrest. The meeting at Crewe was followed by numerous other meetings, at which she spoke to audiences from all walks of life, and the publication of many pamphlets, which she wrote for the cause.

The Abolitionist movement grew more rapidly in the North than in the South, until the defeat of a former governor of Malta, who was a staunch Regulationist, in a Parliamentary by-election at Colchester in November 1870. The Acts were a controversial point in the election, during which mobs urged on by the brothel-keepers stirred up disturbances and threatened Josephine Butler, who was

³ Many associations for the repeal of these Acts were formed up and down the country. All worked in close conjunction and in time looked to Josephine Butler as their leader.

⁴ A.S.G. Butler: *A Portrait of Josephine Butler*; Faber & Faber, 1954 (page 186).

obliged to disguise herself as a working-class woman and take refuge in a disused warehouse. Twenty months later another election gave the Abolitionists a further opportunity of demonstrating against the Acts.

But the Colchester election had succeeded in sufficiently arousing public opinion for the appointment of a Royal Commission, with power to suggest whether the Acts should be amended, maintained, extended or repealed. The Commission's twenty-five members, among whom were peers, bishops, Members of Parliament, representatives of the armed services and doctors, first met in December 1870. The following March they summoned Josephine Butler to give evidence before them. She was the only woman present and well aware of the Commissioners' hostility. Even so, they all were impressed by the reasons she advanced against the *Contagious Diseases Acts*. Nothing less than their repeal was acceptable, she told the Commission, nor could any amendment be considered.

No sooner had she arrived back in Liverpool, than she was obliged to return South to present to Parliament a petition against the Acts, signed by over 250,000 women.

The Royal Commission published its report in July, and a record of inconsistencies and dissident views it proved to be. Although it advised that the compulsory medical examinations should be discontinued and the special police be in uniform, it did not recommend the repeal of the Acts. The Abolitionists at once called a conference, and a deputation which included Josephine Butler went to see the Home Secretary, who, the following February, announced his intention of introducing measures to replace the Acts. These proved equally repellent and were, moreover, to be extended to the entire country. Opposition to them proved so strong, however, that they were withdrawn. But the Abolitionists had achieved nothing; the hateful Acts still operated. This was, perhaps, the hardest period of Josephine Butler's campaign in her own country, when many of her supporters lost heart, or considered that it had been foolish not to accept the Home Secretary's propositions.

It was then that the Abolitionists gained an ally who was to lead them to victory. With the general election of 1874 came a change of government. J. B. (later Sir James) Stansfeld M. P.

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found himself in opposition, and now openly declared for the Abolitionists by accepting the Vice-Presidency of their National Association.

For some years he was a member of the Select Committee set up by Parliament to study the question of Regulation and in 1883 his masterly attack on the Committee's report resulted in the government putting an end to the compulsory examination of women and withdrawing the police who administered the Acts. Three years later the Acts were repealed.

BRITISH INDIA

Although the *Contagious Diseases Acts* had been repealed by the British Parliament, a year or so later disturbing reports from India and the publication in the British press of the text of a circular, reputed to have been issued by the Quartermaster-General to all officers commanding British troops, revealed the extent of regulated prostitution there.

'The Infamous Memorandum' (the name the published document acquired) complained of the inadequacy in standard and number of the women supplied for the troops, and ordered the dismissal of the 'matrons' in charge of the brothels which showed no improvement in these respects.

The Memorandum raised an outcry. The Secretary of State for India telegraphed the Viceroy, who replied several months later informing him that the Indian Government had agreed to repeal the Acts. Nevertheless, the Abolitionists learnt from unofficial sources that a system of prostitution almost identical to the one that had been abolished in the United Kingdom, still operated under the Cantonment Acts. Brothels had reopened in a number of military areas, the prostitutes being provided with premises and a regular wage; medical examinations had been resumed and the 'matrons' were encouraged to replenish the stocks of women by a fee for each new girl they 'recruited'.

The Abolitionists now decided to institute an independent enquiry. Two American women, Dr. Kate Bushnell and Mrs. Elizabeth Andrew, left for India at the end of 1891. They spent

three months there and confirmed that the abhorrent system was still in full operation and sanctioned by the military authorities. Their *Statement of Facts* was sent to the India Office and subsequently published. The Secretary of State was unable to ignore their report, especially since they had brought back with them, as part of their evidence, one of the tickets issued to a soldier allotting a prostitute to him.

The appointment of a special commission to investigate the allegations coincided with the return from India of Lord Roberts on the completion of his term of office as Commander-in-Chief. He offered to give evidence before the commission and asserted that on his orders the system had been abolished in every cantonment. He was, however, completely given the lie by his former Quartermaster-General, who had arrived back in England two years earlier and now declared that not only had Lord Roberts been shown the Infamous Memorandum, but he had read and entirely approved it. In a humiliating interview with W. T. Stead, a prominent journalist of the time, Roberts apologized to the American women and acknowledged his fault in neglecting to see that Army discipline had been carried out.

Yet, even after this, the situation in British India remained unsatisfactory. Although the system had been officially condemned, the British Government was on more than one occasion petitioned by the Indian Government to allow the reintroduction of the Acts, but firmly stood its ground.

PARIS

Twelve years before the *Contagious Diseases Acts* were repealed in the United Kingdom, Josephine Butler proposed that British Abolitionists should co-operate with Abolitionists on the Continent to fight the detested system everywhere.

Towards the end of 1874, armed with letters of introduction to various government officials, she went to Paris. She knew something of the moral corruption that prevailed in the streets and the tyranny exercised over the unhappy victims hunted down by the *Police des Mœurs* from her study of Parent Duchâtelet's definitive work on the subject of prostitution in Paris, and her

investigations confirmed the statements he made in his 'faithful and terrible history'.⁵

She obtained an interview with the head of the *Police des Mœurs*.⁶ When she asked him whether vice and disease had diminished or increased in Paris during the past five years, he replied that they had increased, were continually increasing and attributed the causes to the 'increasing coquetry' of women. When she pointed out the injustice and hygienic failure of the system he upheld, he shrugged off her observations.

She left his office with a permit to see over Saint-Lazare, the immense, sinister-looking prison into which were cast the refractory and vagabond women of Paris. She was deeply affected by their utter degradation and misery, but realized there was nothing she could do for them.

Discouraging as this visit to Paris seems to have been, she was able to report a few signs of hope. She had discovered that in two working-class quarters the *maisons tolérées* had been ordered to close; and numbers of people from all classes had sought her out to speak to her on the subject which had brought her to Paris.

It was shortly after this visit that the Abolitionists acquired another valuable adherent, in the person of M. Yves Guyot. Formerly Minister of Public Works, Guyot became a member of the Paris Municipal Council, and in his journal, *Droits de l'Homme*, persistently attacked the methods of the *Police des Mœurs*. In 1876, he was instrumental in organizing a conference to which foreign Abolitionists were invited, and which Stansfeld and Josephine Butler attended. A larger meeting followed for members of the public, whom Josephine Butler addressed in French. Guyot tells us that she 'carried her hearers away' by her argument that, if prostitution was indeed an institution of public safety such as should be organized by governments, then the ministers, prefect of police, high functionaries and doctors who defended it, were failing in their duty if they did not consecrate their own daughters to it.

⁵ Parent Duchâtelet, Alexandre Jean Baptiste, *De la prostitution dans la Ville de Paris*, 2 vols. Paris 1836 and 1837.

⁶ W. H. Stead tells us that Lecour, the head of the *Police des Mœurs*, was said to have made 15,000 arrests a year. These were made by the police on suspicion. "There was no redress, no trial—nothing but ruin irremediable for these victims." *Josephine Butler: A Life Sketch*. Morgan & Scott, 1887, p. 80.

BELGIUM

In the next five years the campaign for Abolition advanced considerably and in 1875 the International Federation was formed. It was evident from the Federation's annual conference in Liège four years later that widespread interest had been aroused in the principles of Abolition. The delegates attending the conference represented not only a variety of countries, but men and women—which was what Josephine Butler wanted—of all classes of society.

After the conference she left for Brussels. Her attention had first been drawn to the international traffic and commerce in prostitution three years before, when she was told of the railway trucks which had been seen passing through Liège to Brussels, packed with foreign girls and under the protection of the police.

Two men from the Society of Friends had already started investigations in Brussels; a third man, a Belgian lawyer, was engaged on a private enquiry. Josephine Butler met all three.

In Belgium, like the rest of the Continent, the State derived an income from the taxation of brothels; but the Belgian penal code forbade the admission to them of girls under sixteen. The Quakers had collected reliable evidence of little girls (many of them British) aged between twelve and fifteen, being sold into prostitution and installed in the *maisons de débauche*.

The Quakers' report was shown to Josephine Butler on her return to London; in addition, a Belgian detective gave her information which enabled her to launch an attack on the traffic that undoubtedly existed.

Her exposure of the violation of the Belgian penal code and the cruelties inflicted upon these children was published in England in May 1880, and appeared in French, Belgian and Italian papers. The rage and uneasiness aroused by the disclosures led to the Belgian authorities' demanding that she should affirm her allegations on oath before a magistrate.

She did so in Liverpool, testifying to everything that she had written. Her statement was first sent to the British Home Office, thence to the Belgian Government, who immediately instituted an enquiry. Police officials, white-slavers and several brothel-keepers

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were brought to justice; the revelations in court profoundly shocked the public and authorities.

'Pure vengeance is not our object', Josephine Butler had written in a letter to W. T. Stead, who had shown up the hideous business in a series of articles. 'We are actuated... by pity for the wronged and outraged.' ⁷ Some evidence of the results she hoped for, 'an awakened, indignant public', was seen in the United Kingdom. The City of London formed the Association for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Girls; the British Parliament introduced a *Criminal Law Amendment Bill*, which was passed in August 1885. This law made it an offence, punishable by severe penalties, to procure a girl or woman under twenty-one, not only in England but abroad, and brought the traffic from England to the Continent of Europe to an end.⁸

ITALY

Josephine Butler was in her mid-sixties in 1893 when, at the request of Italian Abolitionists, she went to Italy to see what could be done to end Regulation there. It was not her first visit to the country on behalf of the cause. About twenty years earlier, she had secured an interview in Rome with the Minister of Justice and Police, whose opinion she failed to alter.

State clinics and compulsory brothels were to be found even in the remotest Italian villages, except in Tuscany, where the peasants fiercely resisted police attempts to register their daughters. The system was, moreover, expensive to run, for it was administered nationally rather than by the municipalities, as it was in France.

When Josephine Butler arrived in Italy the country was in the grip of a severe financial crisis; unemployment was widespread and people were dying of hunger. With her gift for recognizing the right moment to act, she urged those Abolitionists who were parliamentary deputies to attack the question of State-regulation on economic grounds, pointing out the strong case they had to

⁷ A.S.G. Butler, *op. cit.*, page 141.

⁸ *The Report of the League of Nations Special Body of Experts on Traffic in Women and Children*, Geneva, 1927.

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put before parliament 'condemning this shameful use of public funds' which could be better spent on bread for the starving.

She realized, too, that a Papal pronouncement against Regulation would carry much weight in Roman Catholic countries, and while in Rome explored the possibilities of making a personal appeal to Pope Leo XIII who, like his predecessor Pius IX, earnestly desired Abolition. Both English cardinals, Manning and Vaughan, were among her staunchest supporters, and had provided her with letters to the Holy See. She did not, however, make use of them, deciding rather to plead her cause 'merely as a humble individual'.⁹

Plans for her audience with the Pope were all but completed the following spring, when she fell dangerously ill. As soon as she was well enough to travel she was removed to Frascati and thence returned to England. But her efforts had not been in vain. In 1895 Cardinal Vaughan wrote to tell her that the Pope had decided to issue the encyclical she so earnestly sought; entitled *Permoti Nos*, it was issued on July 10th of that year.

GENEVA

The International Abolitionist Federation held its first major congress in Geneva, the place chosen for its permanent headquarters, in September 1877.

The purpose of the congress, which was promoted by Josephine Butler, Stansfeld and a number of other leading Abolitionists, and attended by over 500 representatives from fifteen countries (some of them as far afield as Russia and the United States), was to ventilate and clarify all the arguments against State-regulation so that Abolitionists everywhere should speak with one voice. To this end, five commissions were appointed, covering every aspect of the subject under the headings: Hygiene, Morality, Economics, Preventive and Rescue Work, and Legislation. Each resolution was first submitted to the particular commission and thereafter put to the vote of the entire assembly. The results were wholly satisfactory. Governments, municipalities and the press throughout

⁹ E. Moberly Bell, *Josephine Butler: Flame of Fire*, Constable, 1962, page 204.

Europe were sent copies of the proceedings, which concluded with a demand for an immediate end to State-regulation.

Unfortunately, these deliberations had little effect upon the city in which they took place. The State-regulated brothels in Geneva were amongst the oldest on the Continent. Running them had become 'big business'.

Geneva was always a great disappointment to Josephine Butler. No prostitutes were to be seen in the streets only because they were kept shut up in numerous *maisons tolérées*; thrown into hospital week by week as they became diseased, denied Christian burial when they died.

The opposition to State-regulation first showed itself among the working classes of Geneva in 1891, when Josephine Butler took up the cause of some little girls who had been raped by a notorious libertine. Their case had been dismissed and the distraught parents had turned to her for redress. The house to house campaign she organized not only ventilated their grievance, but gave the necessary impetus to a petition in support of Abolition which was signed by 22,000 Genevans and presented to the Grand Council, which ignored it.

But the indifference so long maintained towards the Abolitionists changed to active hostility in the months prior to the day when the male population throughout the canton were to vote on a referendum approving or rejecting State-regulated prostitution. Gangs of the worst elements in the city, paid by the *tenanciers*, broke up the meetings of the Abolitionists and threatened to wreck their headquarters. They were stoned in the streets, reviled in the press and menaced by brothel-keepers carrying fire-arms. The poll was a crushing defeat for the Abolitionist cause.

Tenanciers and brothel-keepers celebrated their victory by processing through the city shouting bawdy songs and smashing the windows of the Abolitionist headquarters on the way.

'I shall never forget that memorable evening and night,'¹⁰ Josephine Butler wrote to her family. But a fortnight later she was able to report that the Abolitionist Federation was gaining more

¹⁰ Letter of Josephine Butler dated March 25th 1896, quoted by George W. and Lucy A. Johnson, *op. cit.*, page 164.

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adherents every day. A friend to whom she related all that had happened in Geneva, observed thoughtfully that it was not a defeat, it was the germ of victory. But it was a victory that Josephine Butler did not live to see.

The nine years of life that remained to her were largely spent in writing—books, memoirs, pamphlets, articles—and keeping up a vigorous correspondence with her relations, friends and the members of the Federation. She continued to take a lively interest in contemporary world events almost up to the day of her death, 30th December 1906.

CONCLUSION

Josephine Butler lived long enough to know that her work would go forward. Professor Sheldon Amos,¹¹ one of the chief supporters of her cause, has stressed the greater difficulties in combatting the European system of State-regulation, which, in the majority of countries who adopted it, was based on police administration rather than on law as it was in England and Sweden, where the *Contagious Diseases Acts* applied only to individuals and licensed houses did not exist. Even so, it was a European town, Colmar, which as early as 1881 made a stand against the system by closing its licensed brothels and refusing to register prostitutes. Norway followed suit five years later (in the same year that the United Kingdom repealed the *Contagious Diseases Acts*), and Denmark in 1901. Meanwhile in Switzerland, at various times during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, one canton after another closed its 'houses.' But in Geneva, despite the Federal High Court of Switzerland's pronouncement (in 1907) that the establishment of *maisons tolérées* was illegal, not until November 1925—shortly before the Abolitionist Federation celebrated its jubilee there—was the last 'house' in the city closed. In France, the birthplace of Regulation, an Extra-Parliamentary Commission appointed by the Government officially condemned the system of the *Police des Mœurs* in 1905.

¹¹ Sheldon Amos, *The Laws in Force for the Prohibition, Regulation or Licensing of Vice in England and other Countries*, Stevens & Sons, 1877, page 15 and 227.

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Within Josephine Butler's lifetime evidence from all parts of the world steadily mounted to convince the medical profession of the uselessness of State-regulation; proving to them that the system—so cruel and unjust to women—far from acting as a safeguard against disease, tended rather to spread it, and encourage promiscuity by giving a sense of security which was entirely false.

Josephine Butler has been called 'the Great Feminist'¹² and, indeed, no woman in history has exerted a more far-reaching influence on the general attitude towards women. As Professor James Stuart¹³ has written of her, 'She belongs to all nations and all time,' for her struggle to establish principles of justice and the rights of her sex was not confined to her own country, but extended to Europe and then spread throughout the world.

She perceived that her objective would ultimately embrace far wider issues. These she considered must inevitably lead to raising the status of women, to opening up wider opportunities in the fields of education and employment and eventually granting them full citizenship through woman suffrage.

Today, it is almost impossible to imagine the immense courage she possessed to do what she did. Neither does it diminish her greatness nor detract from her achievement to say simply that she made it safe for a woman to walk alone down a street.

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¹² A.S.G. Butler, op. cit. page 29.

¹³ The Rt. Hon. James Stuart, Introduction to *Josephine E. Butler: An Autobiographical Memoir*, George W. & Lucy A. Johnson.