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THE WHITE SLAVES OF NEW YORK.

In the morning Sun I find a full page article entitled "The White Slaves of New York," an article taken as the result of long inquiry, that the average pay of women who toil with the needle for fifteen hours a day in order to maintain sick husbands or little children amounts on an average to fifty cents, and it states as an indisputable conclusion that those women cannot possibly keep body and soul together without outside aid. What does the Sun propose to do about it? What do the "saviors of society" propose to do about such appalling facts? What has the democratic party to offer? What has the republican party to offer? What we are working for, what we are struggling for, what we propose on Tuesday next to go up to the polls and vote for, is those women. (Great applause.) We say that there is a way, that there must be a way, to get rid of that conditions of things; that there is a way, that there must be a way, to relieve this abject poverty without charity, to do away with that hard toil, that there must be if there is in heaven a just God. (Applause.) If it is impossible, then this is the devil's world; but if it is possible to relieve that distress, then the solemn duty rests on us of finding that way. (Applause.) And we believe, nay, I confidently say we know, what is the cause of it, and how it may be cured (applause); and we are moving forward to take away the cause and to apply the cure.

The bitterness, the worst of poverty that festers in the very centers of our wealth, is not the physical deprivation that it causes; it is not the hunger, the cold, the mean lodgings, the hard tasks; it is the mental and moral and spiritual degradation. Out of poverty

of that kind comes the thief and the prostitute, the assassin and murderer. Out of poverty of that kind comes the greed for wealth that makes men worship the golden calf rather than the living God. (Applause.) People are living stunted and degraded lives; children are growing up in vice and crime because of this great wrong; and if, as I think must be true, we take out of the world the characters that are formed here, how many stunted and depraved souls are every month and every year being packed into the beyond because of this deep wrong? And for them, for ourselves, for that power that all through the universe tells for the good, for that power that everywhere seems engaged in a hard bitter contest with evil, for what we can do for men here for our hopes of the hereafter, those are the things to nerve us and animate us for this great struggle. (Applause.) To every man and to every woman who feels its impulse it is indeed a crusade, a holy war, a crusade not to wrest from the sepulcher wherein the dead Christ lay, as the crusader of old, but to rescue from poverty and crime and degradation those children that to-day are suffering in the very midst of wealth (applause) - growing up in ignorance under the very shadows of our schools, becoming savage and barbarous and vile, while we boast of the enlightenment of our civilization. Triumph? That we will, whether it be next Tuesday, a year hence, or whenever it may come, somewhere in this universe. Every man who struggles for the good against evil may be sure that the good will triumph, that the muster roll will be called, that the chief will gather in those who have served his battle and fought in his good cause. (Great and prolonged applause.)

Speech: Henry George,  
November 12, 1887