

The Bee's Home Magazine Page

In the Web of a Woman's Smile

By Nell Brinkley

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Ella Wheeler Wilcox "White Slavery"

Twenty-five Years Ago English Girls Could Be Abducted at 13 Without Their Parents' Consent. Late W. T. Stead, Titanic Victim, Brought About Much Needed Reform.

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By ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

Twenty-five years ago any girl of 13 could be trapped and led into vile houses, and there was no law to protect her.

The law of England, as it stood at that time, recognized that a girl one day over 13 year old was legally a woman, and was fully competent to consent to her own undoing. The law as it then stood put a positive premium upon the corruption of very young children by refusing to let them give evidence against men unless they could satisfy the judge and jury that they understood the nature of an oath.



As soon as the child was over 13 years of age she could be inveigled into an illegal house without any possible hope of redress, because if she had consented to go into the house she was held to have consented to everything else, although she might at that time be, and probably was, absolutely ignorant of what she meant.

The law today protects girls to the age of 16; it has raised the age of consent from 13 to 16, admits the evidence of children, even if they are not able to satisfy the judge and jury that they understand the nature of an oath, and it has increased the pains and penalties inflicted upon all those who attack girls, whether by abducting them abroad or attacking them at home.

This change in the laws came about through one man, W. T. Stead, who died on the Titanic.

The white slave traffic is a world-wide trade in young girls for immoral purposes, out of which enormous profits are made. They are captured by false advertisements, offering employment as governesses, secretaries, companions, servants, etc., and by making acquaintance with girls alone in streets or trains or buses.

It is estimated that only five girls in every hundred know what they are doing; the remaining ninety-five are girls who never heard of such things, girls just like your own daughter, who, but for the white slave traffic, might have become happy wives and mothers. If they wanted to be had there would be no necessity for this trapping business.

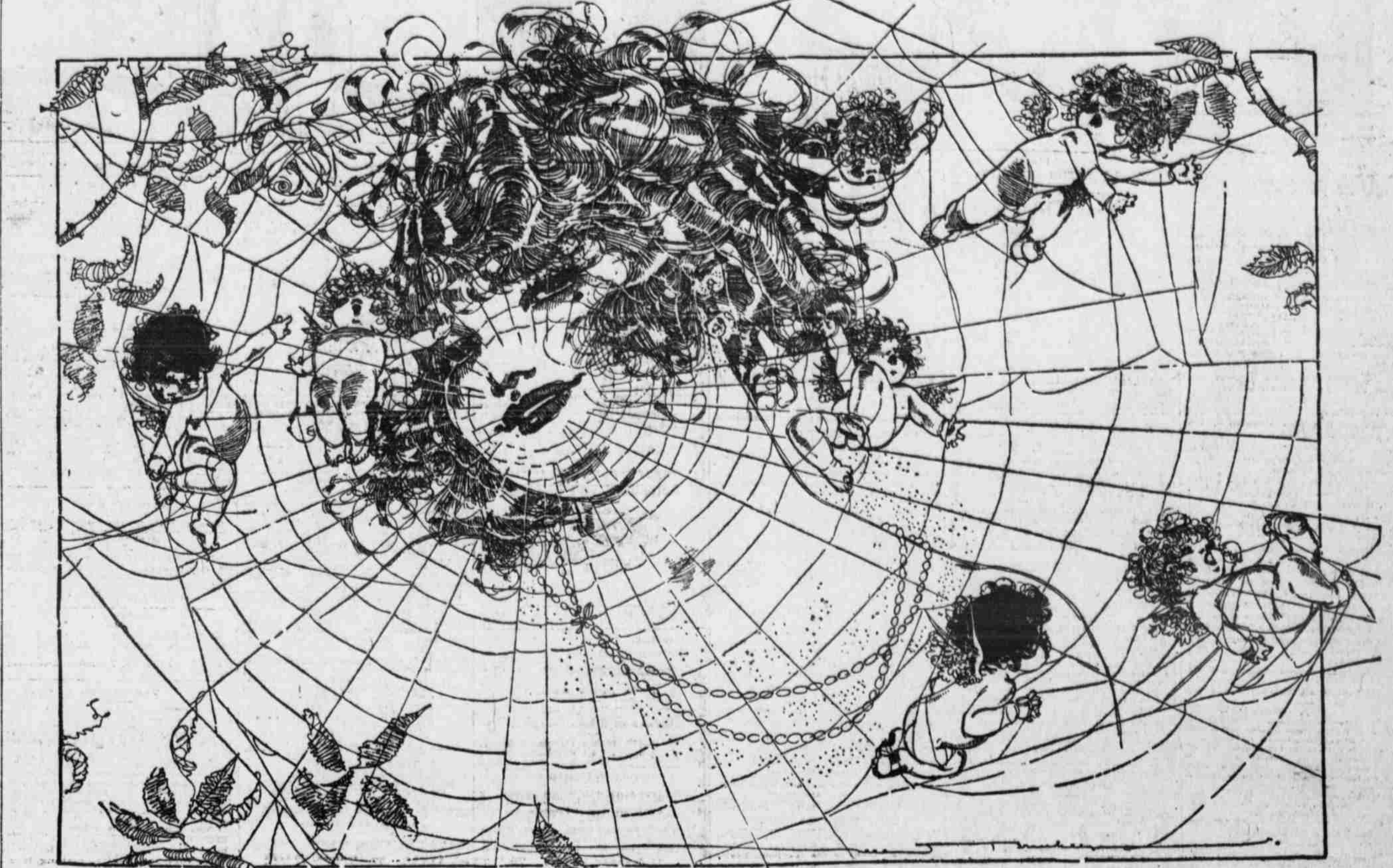
Twenty-five years ago it was regarded as improper, unclean and highly indecorous to speak about the white slave trade in polite circles. Today, kings and queens, princes and princesses attend conferences for the discussion of this question.

Before Mr. Stead died he wrote a pamphlet, "Why I Went to Prison in 1885." It is interesting reading. Known as a great philanthropist and reformer, he was urged by good people to try to bring about a change in the laws of England on this subject.

A commission of the House of Lords had reported upon the question and strongly recommended that an act of Parliament should be passed to cope with the two cancers that were eating into the body politic. Mr. Gladstone's ministry—Sir William Harcourt being then home secretary—recognized the urgency of the demand, and introduced a bill giving effect to the recommendations of the committee, but it had no motive power behind it. It was strongly opposed by a small group of men who seemed almost to have a personal interest in preventing the strengthening of the law against the corruption of weak and innocent girls. Neither political party saw any means of making capital out of it, and the result was that session after session the bill was introduced in due course and then laid aside in the measure of the innocents at the end of the session.

Then the plot was laid to bring such disgrace on the laws of England that a change would be forced by public censure. So Mr. Stead was induced to act the part of a procurer; and a weak and wicked mother sold her daughter, aged 13, to him for 3 pounds—\$45—believing that her daughter was to go into an infamous house. The daughter was indeed taken to a house where madames and trained nurses and physicians were on hand to rescue her and attest to her leaving the house as chaste as she entered it; but the story was published in full in the Pall Mall Gazette in an article by Mr. Stead called "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." It brought a perfect storm upon the heads of all concerned, but a worse storm of censure on English laws. Mr. Stead meantime sent the rescued girl away from her wicked mother and he was therefore arrested for abduction and imprisoned.

Mr. Stead says of this incident: "After a long trial, for which the archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Manning and Bishop Temple, John Morley, Mr. Balfour, Lord Loreburn (then Sir Robert Redd), Mr. Labouchere, Mrs. Butler and many others were subpoenaed for the defense. I was convicted, together with my colleague, Mr. Musashi, Mr. Bramwell Booth and Madame Combe were acquitted. Madame Mouree was sent for six months to prison, where she died. The trial, which was reported in all the leading papers of the world, brought out all the facts of the case, so that every statement which I now make can be verified by reference to the files in the British Museum. The moment I was convicted there was a great agitation set on foot. The government was besieged with petitions and protests. Telegrams rained in upon the home office, the prime minister and the queen, and after I had been three days in Coldbath Prison Lord Salisbury, on his own motion, without waiting for the consent of the judge who had sentenced me, ordered me to be transferred at once to Holloway as a first-class misdemeanant. The remainder of my sentence—two months and four days—I served out at Holloway, where I edited the Pall Mall Gazette from November, 1885, to January, 1886."



I know a girl with a smile. From her crisp metallic hair to the straps of her slippers she is what folks call "comely." But it isn't the crinkle in her hair, nor the white column of her neck, nor any of these fortunate things—small ears and a beautifully turned wrist and a head with real ideas in it and a warm heart—that call men to her like yellow-jackets to a honey jar! "She has such blue eyes," offered one chap. "But there are miles of girls with blue-bluer eyes!" "Her hair is so gold." But the girls with "golden" hair who are prettier than she would make a glittering girdle around the world! Only one chap confesses: "I don't know what it is, but whatever it is, and whatever you are—man,

woman or little kid—you answer right up to it and bring your heart on a platter!" It's her smile! She is one of those women with a smile. All the angels in Paradise get out their song books and begin when she does smile. The sullen little kid can't hold out against it to save his slim little stem of a neck. The woman who is over-fond of masculine camaraderie and sniffs at the friendship of her own soft sex, who is tainted with the bitterness of envy of all fair women, flops right over into the choir that sings her praises after "bout half a dozen smiles. All childhood wreaths its arms 'round her waist and its heart about her image when she stops and smiles. But man

—the groughest one of them all—glows like a kitten in the sunshine when her eyes crinkle and the red of her mouth curls away from the snow of her teeth; the bashfullest one spreads the gay wings of his fancy under the warmth of her laugh like a grateful butterfly under the sun; it's her smile! It's as real as the color on the cheek of a peach—it's as soft as a sigh—as luring as the last-plucked string of a harp—as tender as a California valley in blossom-time! Sometimes when I look straight into the amazing marvel of her soft, soft smile the world grows dim and fades, and before the dearness of her face a web grows—a golden rainbow web—and it rays out from the smile of her mouth in a thousand

gossamer threads. And, caught by the wings and toes, and tummy and nose, are countless little pink loves—struggling and thrashing, caught coming for honey—blinded by the great light of her smile—giddy with its beauty! This isn't like it. I must "scratch for a living" seems longer to be able to put it on plain white Bristolboard. If it was like it you'd be tangled up in this web also, my friend. How do you smile? Have you ever thought to look? Maybe you have a great one if you'd let it come often. Everybody can't entangle the world with the smiles of their mouth—but they draw closer all human kind—smiles do.

transferred at once to Holloway as a first-class misdemeanant. The remainder of my sentence—two months and four days—I served out at Holloway, where I edited the Pall Mall Gazette from November, 1885, to January, 1886." Millicent Garrett Fawcett has issued an appeal to all friends of Mr. Stead and to all friends of clean womanhood to use their influence to help pass the criminal law amendment bill now proposed. It is well known that this bill deals with the white slave trade and provides additional moral protection for the young. A deputation about the bill waited on the home secretary a few weeks ago; he expressed approval of the measure, but held out no hope that the government would take it up. She closes her appeal with these words:

A Widow in Distress—Some Timely Advice

By BEATRICE FAIRFAX.
Dear Miss Fairfax: I am a young widow, 25 years of age, and for the last three years a man has been trying to induce me to marry him. I refused him repeatedly, telling him that I did not intend to marry any one. He induced me to promise that if I ever married I would marry him. Some time ago I met a man whom I love very much and married him. Since then the other man has become a wreck and says he cannot live without me. I love my husband very much and he loves me, but I cannot be happy knowing that the other man is unhappy on account of me. He says that if I would let him see me sometimes it would make it easier for him. Please advise me if it would be right if I should let him see me.

not try to harm you. He knows perfectly well that he is asking you to do something you have no right to do at all—something which will get you into trouble just as sure as you even consider it for a minute. Who is he that he dares presume so far? When you married your husband you were through once and for all with this man—don't see him again at all—if you can help it. Don't risk a good home and a good husband for the sake of a vain fool who wants to make you appear as silly as he is.

The Girl, the World and the Devil—The Fifth Girl

MISS PATTERSON needs no introduction to the readers of this newspaper as one of the foremost newspaper writers of the day. As she has achieved her success entirely unaided through twenty years of devotion to her work, one could hardly choose a more efficient person to instruct and advise a girl who is going out in the world to earn her own living. And incidentally Miss Patterson, virtually tells her own working life story.—EDITOR.

The Manicure Lady

By WILLIAM F. KIRK.
"I hope to goodness we don't never have a real war with them Mexican fellows," said the Manicure Lady. "That is about all the talk I have heard up to the house for the last week, and I am getting kind of scared and nervous about it. My father's father fought in the civil rebellion, George, and got one of his legs shot clean off at the battle of Missionary Ridge. I used to see him hobbling around the house when I was a little kid and I couldn't help thinking when I see his wooden leg that war was everything Mister Sherman said it was. I suppose the scars of war is honorable scars, George, but you got to admit that there ain't much class to one of them old fashioned wooden legs, big in the calf and little in the ankle and no instep on them. "Every time the old gen gets a little lit up he tells that he is of fighting stock, and you would think to hear him go on that his ancestors all went to West Point and served Uncle Sam all over the world. His old man was the only one that ever smelled gunpowder and he didn't come out of it with no flying colors except the wooden leg, as I was saying. I think he got that leg shot off in the only battle he was ever in. But the old gen is full of the war fever now and he has even got brother Wilfred talking war and strategy. Wilfred wouldn't make much of a boy in blue, with that gentle, shrinking post nature of his, but he thinks that if war broke out there with bells on, I don't believe they would take him for a soldier at all on account of his lamps being weak and

are our character and believe me, dear little Miss Seventeen, upon character, rather than brains, depends success. Studyless, inactivity to be beaten, hopefulness, belief in the best, these are our character, because they are our thoughts. Yes, it is most important what you think about this work finding and living making. Think your own thoughts about it, and see that they are right thoughts. What your mother thinks about it she is terrified, and really thinks that the world out beyond your curtain shades is a place of carnage, of awful, death-dealing battle. It ain't quite that. Take my word, I have been in it for twenty years. Not what Mrs. Brown, who lives around the corner thinks about it. Her's are thoughts of dark suspicion. Out in that world, Mrs. Brown, believes, every man has cloven hoofs and every woman a hard heart. Don't accept Mrs. Brown's thoughts. Looking at the world through a crack in the parlor shutters, her vision is narrow. The business world ain't hades, though its acute moments, its temperature resembles it. The business world, on the whole, corresponds fairly with the family and neighborhood and friendship circle. You will find about the same ratio of good and bad traits in the folk you meet. Working for your living is not a sinister girl trap, nor is it a heavenly state. Like the family and friends, it has its good and bad points. The business world is neither an ideal place, nor an impossible one. It is a place to sell goods, and you have goods to sell. That is what being a business girl means. The business world is a market place or a shop window. Stop at the next market place, or pause at the next shop window you pass, and study it. The man who has something to sell has placed his goods there and arranged it in as attractive a way as he can. That is what you must do. You have to sell some ability or talent. Perhaps you sing. Perhaps you "take shorthand." Perhaps you sit on a high stool and add long columns of figures and make them balance. Perhaps you cook or scrub. "Show your best goods," says the merchant. "Do your best work," say I. The world wants good work, and will pay for it. Don't sentimentalize. Leave your emotions at home. Go clear-eyed and calm pulsed to market. You have something to sell. Make your sales. Polish your goods. Sell them. Those are the right thoughts about business life.

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