

As a Native moving among Natives I have been able to get behind the screens, as it were, and see or hear things there; the information I shall disclose hereunder is therefore very reliable; at the same time, from the nature of it, it is very confidential. I shall deal with one aspect of the moral degeneracy there is in Durban. This is the practice of Homosexuality.

In the Compounds, in the barracks and in individual private quarters, Homosexuality is practised. I reckon that 15% of the Native males in Durban practise sexual union among themselves. The practice, from what I hear, is gradually gaining ground. It is bound to be so long as Native urban conditions remain what they are.

There are two sets of Native male "females." The first set consists of male persons who dress in ordinary male clothes but put on female antics in their deportment. This is done to draw the attention of other males with a view to possible engagement. The girlish behaviour is so studied that, under girls' clothing, such girls could easily pass for females. I have seen that done in Maritzburg and here in Durban and the effect was as I have described. These people practise sexual union with other males both because they have become used to the game and because they supplement their earnings by that way. I know one man in Durban who was run down to the extent of £105 through ravages on his purse by Native "females!"

The other set of Native females consists of those who, by the help of Christianity and Education, could be reformed quicker. Their conscience has its edge not totally blunted by vice; for they dare not reveal to the public what they are. To all intents and purposes, they appear good men. When they visit their male partners they do not like anybody else to know it. The motives for indulging in Homosexuality are the same as those of the first set.

Chronic cases arise out of these situations. In addition to Native women prostitutes there are Native male prostitutes. These form the sexual market. In most cases, but not always, the article goes to the highest bidder.

From what I have said the question forces itself: how can we explain these facts? To this we might try to bring out the possible causes of Homosexuality. Nowadays here in Durban good, healthy and moral girls are hard to find because they are so few; the majority of single females are possessed of venereal diseases either got through actual contact with diseased persons or artificially made by Native medicine. Bitter experience has therefore taught these people that Native town women are to be shunned altogether. Speculation leads one to the pit. If you have sexual union with males you get an outlet for your carnal desires and at the same time escape getting diseased.

It has been said town girls are bad. Yes, a good many are; but can you have good women with bad men morally? When a male female visits you at your sleeping quarters no suspicions arise as to what he has come for. The game is played without the landlord or boss being wiser. A girl, even if she is free from disease, brings suspicion and you are not at ease.

When you do have a girl, contact with her may lead to a creation of a third person at a time when that person is not welcome. By the other way you escape that.

In any case, (men being of course at bottom males with masculine ideas on masculine tastes), are less troublesome than girls.

Many of these people, however, do not confine themselves strictly to Native male "females"; some of them are loved by girls as well and have contact with them.

The probable sources of Homosexuality: It has been alleged with some plausibility that in the Mines, Barracks, Compounds and in the Gaols on the Rand where men of all sorts of mentality meet, some perverse mind or minds started practising sexual connection with other males. By various attractive devices, such as protection, money, and by provoking the sex organ, a much younger person would be gradually won in. You will invariably find that, where Homosexuality is practised, it is practised between two males of different ages, the male "female" being much younger than the other party.

With the non-availability of women in the mines and gaols Homosexuality was introduced as the next best thing to do. When such men returned home from the Mines and Gaols or went to other parts of the country, they perpetrated the practice there. In Johannesburg I understand the practice is so widely carried out in some quarters that nobody does worry over it as far as the Natives are concerned. Men there have actually male "wives." I do not think this extreme point has been reached in other parts of the country.

The evils of this system are economic as well as moral. Economically the males are gutted out of purse as is the case with women prostitutes. That means that less money reaches the Native Territories than would be the case otherwise because the men have less opportunity for saving.

Morally, the custom of Homosexuality is to be deplored and condemned very much. It goes down to the very roots of a morally balanced mind and distorts one's view. The practice is more than effeminating in mind, it drains away masculine vitality and may lead to poor specimens of any race when done in a mass scale. It is a most unnatural practice.

One way which would counteract such a system is to introduce, as far as possible, the system of Workmen's Homes where Native workers could settle with their wives and children. In that case there will, or ought to be, less temptation for self-abuse on the part of the men.

The question is, who is to put up these Native Labour Villages. The question is immaterial. If all Industries could do that well and good; but if the Municipality put up the Villages, then Industry Commerce should help by paying the Natives a living wage. If that were so we might hear less of the Natives being unable to pay their rents. (This view applies to the Housing Problem as a whole).

In the single quarters Barracks, Compounds and Gaols there should be a system of inspection at night and all persons found sleeping two in a bed should be severely dealt with.

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