

this prisoner any mothers! If there are would they like a son of theirs to be killed if he seduces a girl and refuses to marry her? Would they think that this was fitting punishment to inflict on a son of theirs for his misconduct? By asking the release of the woman they are really affirming that that is suitable punishment to inflict on a young man twenty-ones years of age for what he is said to have done.

I may further state that the woman fired three shots at the man. Some of them were fired when he was lying helpless, wounded on the ground. Further, that she attempted to commit suicide and shot herself in the head, and I understand that the bullet is still in her brain. After the event she has expressed no contrition and no remorse. Dr. Moore, who was a witness called by her on her behalf, noted her attitude in prison, and he said, "She was always in very good spirits; she did not seem to be put out in any way about what had happened—she did not seem as if she had any regret or any remorse." That also was her attitude when being examined in Court, and during her trial she stated the facts as if she had been an impartial observer and not an actor. As to some of her evidence I did not believe her—namely, that she did not know what had happened after the first shot; and the jury did not believe her. I am also of the opinion that the last shot she fired was the shot at her own head. She did not seem to have any idea of the sacredness of human life. Perhaps the fact that a maternal and also a paternal uncle had both committed suicide may show some hereditary want of appreciation of human life. Whatever the cause, there is the fact. The whole history of the case seems to me to show that she could have had no real love for the deceased, or else she would never have killed him. If love had dominated her, her action would have been something different. Her denunciation of the deceased, the names she called him, and the names she called his family, also show that she could have had no regard for him as a lover.

As to her previous good character, that was not investigated in Court. There was evidence of her good character whilst she was young and at Sunday school, and the hotelkeepers called knew nothing against her. Her letters, the language she uses in them, the fact that she kept up an illicit connection with the deceased for about two years, that she had been twice enceinte, and that her main female associate was not called as a witness by the Crown, shows that her character was not unblemished. What the character of her female associate was can be learned from the police report. According to the evidence at the trial she was enceinte in December, 1913. She appears to have had a miscarriage, for she was again enceinte about April, 1914.

I may add that it is well known that a sentence for life does not necessarily mean that there will not be after some years some remission extended to the prisoner. I am not aware of any prisoner who has been sentenced to life imprisonment in New Zealand and has acted properly in gaol who has not obtained some mercy from the Executive; but those who ask for mercy now are those apparently who believe that private assassination is justified if a man has seduced and broken a promise of marriage to a woman. Were the Executive to yield to a such a clamour justice could not be administered in this Dominion.

Masterton, 22nd September, 1915.

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