

Contributing Editors.

CONCERNING A SALUTARY PENALTY FOR THE CRIME OF RAPE.

In my memorial early last autumn to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of West Chester, Pa. (printed in the *CHRISTIAN STATESMAN*), upon the subject of felonious assaults by negroes upon white females, for which crime it was proposed by some to petition the Legislature to make capital punishment the penalty, the alternatives of special dismemberment or of imprisonment for life were suggested in lieu of any extension of the death penalty.

A little later in the autumn, at the National Council of Colored Men, held in Cincinnati, Bishop Turner called earnestly upon the people of his own race to denounce the heinous crimes referred to; that the brand of Cain be put upon the offenders, and that they be doomed to significant dismemberment—a much more effectual punishment, he believed, than the taking of life.

The like infliction has been recommended by Alfred H. Love, President of the Universal Peace Union, and an active associate of the Pennsylvania Prison Society, who has given much thought to problems in penology.

Finally, in a late number of the *National Popular Review*, Dr. F. E. Daniel, as quoted in the *Literary Digest*, makes an earnest argument for punishing rapists by depriving them of the power of procreation, believing that such radical treatment would be a better deterrent than capital punishment, inasmuch as (he states) that it frequently results in a cure of nervous disorders that cause sexual perversion and insanity. So far from capital punishment operating as a deterrent of the crime, Dr. Daniel is of the view that even so extremely barbarous a reprisal as the execution of the negro by fire at Paris, Texas, only tended to act "as a suggestion or excitant." He quotes Drs. Everts, Lydston, Kellogg and Chaddock in the same direction, and also refers to a conversation had with the present Governor (Hogg) of Texas, who for four years was Attorney General of the State, and who said with assurance that "there is not a doubt of the legal right on the part of the superintendent of an insane asylum to castrate a patient for mental trouble if in his judgment it be necessary or advisable. Without conceding such a prerogative to any superintendent or surgeon (which, indeed, Dr. Daniel himself does not), he yet advises it restrictedly as a penalty for sexual crimes to be imposed by the judge upon the finding of a jury." He concludes (looking at the subject perhaps more from the strictly physiological than from the moral view point): "I predict that in twenty years the beneficial results of castration for crimes committed in obedience to a perverted (diseased) sexual impulse will be established and appreciated."

Meanwhile, the whole subject has a further bearing in considering the question of accountability and a righteous sentence therefor. It is thus stated in the writer's recent tractate entitled "The Commonwealth vs. The News Stand:"

"The incitement to felonious assaults upon females undoubtedly owes its origin in many cases to vicious illustrated sheets, cigarette pictures and the like. I therefore reiterate this conviction concerning the heinousness of the offence of the manufacturers and venders of printed poison, expressed in a protest upon the subject a few months ago: 'The manufacturers of and the dealers in so-called "blood and thunder literature" need to be stood in the felon's cell right alongside of the thieves and murderers they have helped to make; the printers and the purveyors of indecency in the same manner should be banished from the society that they have so grossly outraged, to the same separated sort of habitation as that which holds the overt outrager of female virtue.'"

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