

The case of the girl Kate Shoesmith, recently condemned to death for the murder of her illegitimate baby, has called public attention once again to the haphazard, Draconian character of our punishments for homicide. Between a half-demented girl and a cold-blooded poisoner the law knows no difference. An unwilling jury convict, and an unwilling judge sentences, imploring God to have mercy on an unhappy soul more sinned against than sinning, the mercy of man being postponed till "recommendations are forwarded to the proper quarter." Then, after a week of mental agony for the prisoner, the Home Secretary intimates that Her Majesty is graciously pleased only to inflict a punishment on the poor wretch some twenty times more severe than the usual punishment of a garrotter. Occasionally the law stretches its benignity to the uttermost. After five or ten years a Home Secretary may, if not otherwise occupied, give his attention again to the case, and the woman emerges, a battered gaol-bird of five and thirty, good for nothing more in this world. Yet the man escapes spot-free. Bentham, with whom punishment was a science as well as a sentiment, wrote of the subject long ago:—"The laws against this offence, under pretence of humanity, are a most manifest violation of it. Compare the offence with the punishment. The offence is what is improperly called the death of an infant who has ceased to be, before knowing what existence is—a result of a nature not to give the slightest inquietude to the most timid imagination, and which can cause no regrets but to the very person who, through a sentiment of shame and pity, has refused to prolong a life under the auspices of misery. And what is the punishment?—the barbarous infliction of an ignominious death upon an unhappy mother whose very offence proves her excessive sensibility; upon a woman guided by despair, who, in hardening her heart against the softest instinct of nature, has harmed no one but herself. She is devoted to infamy because she has dreaded shame too much, and the souls of her surviving friends are poisoned with grief and disgrace.—*London Law Times*.

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(Continued from p. 676.)

Mr. Osler, from the Reporting Committee, presented the following report in respect to the delays in issuing the reports, and on the reporting of cases on (winding-up) companies: Your Committee have enquired as to the delay in the issue of the reports by the publishers, and report as follows: That some delay arises from the difficulty in obtaining revisions of the draft reports as first printed from the judges, and that for this delay there seems to be no remedy. That there is a delay of from eight to fourteen days after the advance copies are delivered at Osgoode Hall before the edition is distributed to the profession, and that this is the necessary and ordinary time required for the publishers' staff to bind and deliver the numbers. Orders have been given that advance copies are to be sent to each county library, and this will to some extent put the country members on a par with those in the city. As to the reporting and winding-up cases before the Master-in-Ordinary, it will be found that many such cases have been reported, and Mr. Brown has been instructed to report all cases under the Winding-up Act that are of sufficient importance, whether such cases go to appeal or not.