

her off. "And now," said Miss Betty Flint—"now that the counterpane is my own, I shall make it into a petticoat." The remark seemed uncalled for, and must have filled the minds of those present in court with a vague feeling that injustice had been done somehow and to somebody. But it is not unlikely that disinterested parties were pleased with the acquittal of the prisoner, because she was evidently a woman of some personal attractions. Now, it is a principle of English popular law, even to this day, that a pretty woman can commit no offence; or if she can, then that there are always extenuating circumstances. These extenuating circumstances are usually a good figure, bright eyes, plump cheeks, a well-shaped nose, and satisfactory lips.

When women produce an equal effect on public opinion with men, we shall probably find it laid down as a corollary to the principle above mentioned that a handsome man cannot transgress the law. The beauty of the race may then be expected to improve very rapidly, for it is clear that the ugly and law-abiding part of the community will be at the mercy of the unrestrained Venus and Adonis; they will consequently suffer severely in the battle of life, and probably not survive very long. It is already a noticeable fact that the handsome Latin races are less law-abiding than the pudgy-faced Teutons. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the connection between good looks and inability to commit crime in the eyes of so-called administrators of the law.

A second principle of popular law is that if a man has been nearly convicted of a crime he ought to be punished to some extent. In such cases moral certainty ought to override legal technicalities. Thus there is a sentence on record of a western Judge which probably gave general satisfaction at the time it was pronounced. A man was charged with forgery and a number of other offences, but the prosecution succeeded in establishing only the charge of forgery. For this the Judge sentenced the prisoner to one year's imprisonment; "but," he added, "you are sentenced to an additional fourteen years for general cussedness." Nothing could be more in accordance with popular notions of justice.

Connected with this principle is the theory that when a serious crime has been committed a corresponding punishment ought to be meted out to someone or other, just as during the siege of Paris by the Germans it is related that people went about exclaiming that somebody ought to get shot. There were long periods when only buildings suffered, and though the French soldiers loudly proclaimed that they were ready to die for their country, somehow or other they failed to do it. This gave an air of unreality to the siege in its earlier stages—it was not business, and it was not war. It is the same in popular law. Thus some English travellers were once touring in Arabia, when they were set upon by a band of robbers and deprived of their baggage. They proceeded to complain to the local Cadi, who promised to bring the marauders to justice. When the day came on which the Cadi was accustomed to administer the law, the Englishmen were invited to attend the court, and were accommodated with seats on what, for want of a better word, may be called the bench. Coffee was handed round, and everything was done to make the Englishmen feel that they