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EDITORIAL

THE PATERSON MURDER.

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The recent murder in Paterson is of more than passing interest for various reasons. The girl, Jennie Bosschieter, was a working girl. The four thugs that drugged her, violated her, and murdered her, were of the kid-gloved class, were clerks and manufacturers, were such men as fall in the train of McKinley and Bryan and stand for the protection of the home, and the sanctity of the marriage tie. Such things have been done before. "Knockout drops" have not always been administered. Many a girl has been ruined by the liquor which such degenerates have persuaded her to drink. Then, when she was helpless, they have ruined her.

The case of Jennie Bosschieter is peculiar in this way: *The World, Journal, Tribune, Sun, Herald*, and all the other capitalist papers here in New York picture her as a prostitute. Think of such men, with money to burn on such things, drugging a woman in order to get her! Why, were she a prostitute a few dollars could have bought her. Either she could not be bought, or else these saving, thrifty, shrewd society men wished to obtain her without cost. The money they spent disproves this latter contention. They could not get her, and so they resorted to the usual methods of their kinds. They drugged her, they rendered her helpless, they murdered her, they violated her while she was dying, if not already dead, and yet the papers of their class, recognising the enormity of the crime, try to palliate it, excuse it, lessen it, insinuate that Jennie Bosschieter was a wronged woman, and being so was at the mercy of any chance brute who came along. She was alone with them, therefore she was an outcast, and any wrong was permissible; she was drinking with them, therefore they had a right to go to any extreme, even to the most inhuman, the grossest, and the most contemptible crime that has been come to light for years.

{Walter C.} McAlister, who administered the poison, had been connected with a similar case some few weeks before. {William A.} Death is simply a weak-minded

idiot, a criminal because of his physical condition, and therefore a worthy companion for the other three. {George J.} Kerr was with McAlister when he attempted to murder the first woman, and apparently was fascinated by the trick, and was a willing partner in the second and more successful attempt.

The family affairs of the four men amount to nothing. They did not prevent the crime, and they should not stand in the way of the punishment. The sweethearts and wives were nothing to the men, and the sisters and mothers were less, if such a thing is possible. The New York papers run in the sad connections, the "shock to the families," and the sorrow that all evince. That sorrow and that shock will not bring Jennie Bosschieter back to life, and the family ties did not prevent her from being rendered helpless and then murdered. The brutish instincts were the strongest, the appetite for crime was the most powerful, the inclination to vice had been carefully fostered, and we have the result in the shocking, bestial murder. We also have the press attempting to excuse it, because the victim was a "depraved woman." Seventeen years old, and depraved! What sort of a system is it that can make the depravity of a child an excuse for such savagery as only a moribund civilization can bring to light? How much better, how much more trustworthy is a paper that tries to shield itself behind what it terms the wickedness of a girl; a mere child, scarcely yet a woman? The crime was atrocious, but the excuse of it was worse, and yet the excuse and the crime are the inevitable result of present conditions.

Look at the daily papers here in New York. Read the *Telegraph* and see how nearly the criminal comes to having an official organ. It gloats over crime. It gives bawdy house details, it makes a specialty of stories on sexual crimes, and yet it is considered fit to read. Those four men in Paterson must have been readers of the New York papers.

The case, when it comes up in court, is worth following. Such things have been done before, and the criminal has gone unpunished. Already it seems to be a foregone conclusion that those men will not be restrained, but that they will be allowed to go free again to spread death and ruin where they go. They were of those persons who stand on sidewalks and insult women as they go past. They were of those to whom woman is an object of derision, and to whom all women, no matter what the means employed may be, are a prey. They are a type of "Americanism," of Republicanism and of Democracy. They are the legitimate children of the age, and of the present social conditions. They are only the ones whose crimes come to light, and they indicate the seething, rotten mass that lies beneath.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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