

Comment--and Discomment

A day or so ago, in a serious moment, we discussed in this column the Cole and Grammer cases, and the efforts of certain misguided people—and some others—to save the worthless lives of two men whom the courts had decided should die for the murder in cold blood of Grandma Voight, whose only crime was that she had money. Incidentally, we paid our respects to the Society for the Suppression of Capital Punishment in Nebraska, which issued a lot of publicity stuff, unsigned and bearing other evidence that it came from those interested in the case.

We said a number of other things, and our remarks seem to have been felt in certain quarters. We have received a letter from Louis A. Gregory of Lincoln, Neb., whom we remember as a regular contributor to newspapers by way of the letter route. We'll be perfectly fair with Mr. Gregory, and print his letter in full:

"LINCOLN, Neb., Jan. 30, 1920.—
Editor, Alliance Herald: The clip-

ping show that your recent article about Cole and Grammer deals as carelessly with the facts of the case as it does with the lives of two boys who have never had a fair hearing.

"Both Cole and Grammer had been thoroughly debauched by whiskey, drugs, and cigaarets, which were sold to them in defiance of the law, and at the time of the crime, Cole at least was maudlin from liquor.

"The wife of Grammer, referred to here, is the daughter of the woman who was killed. Does not that make your appeal for sympathy for the family of the victim rather ridiculous. Mrs. Grammer has spent everything she has and done all she can to help her husband, and has not given up in spite of even vicious opposition.

"Facts and reason agree that taking human life, even by a supposedly legal process, tends to increase murder. Mexico is an excellent example of the fact that people do not hold life sacred, if the state does not. I lived there for a time and know there is no place where murder is more frequent, yet there is no place on this continent where capital punishment is more frequently invoked.

"I have barely seen these men and have no interest in this, except the good of the state.

"Sincerely,
"LOUIS A. GREGORY."



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Mr. Gregory's first point is these two boys have never had a fair hearing. It is true that down in Howard county, where they knew Grandma Voigt, the citizens were pretty well worked up, and that they talked lynching. Incidentally, it is cases like this, where the law is not rigidly enforced, that breeds lynching parties. If the people of Howard county had had any idea that years would elapse before these men—we object to that sob-sister term, "boys"—paid the penalty for their crime, there might have been more than talk of a lynching.

But the counsel for the defense had the right, when the jury was selected, to challenge every man in the box, and they exercised that right. The law provides plenty of opportunity for the defense to secure an impartial jury—and the lawyers of the defendants were no fools—their subsequent conduct shows that. Why not drop this ridiculous talk of an unfair trial? The lawyers defending these murderers have appealed to every court that could entertain an appeal, and the higher courts have passed on the fairness of the trial. Their decision satisfies us, whether it does Mr. Gregory or not.

Mr. Gregory says that these murderers had been "thoroughly debauched by whiskey, drugs and cigaarets," and pleads this in extenuation. Our statement was that there were no extenuating circumstances—no sudden blow in anger; no head muddled with wine—simply a murder of a defenseless woman in cold blood. We do not believe that when a man plans a murder when he is sober, even to the smallest detail, the fact that he takes a drink or two of whisky to nerve him to do the work is an extenuating circumstance, and if it were Mr. Gregory's mother, we fancy he would not welcome a plea by the murderer that he wouldn't have done it if sober. What could be more ridiculous than a plea that cigaarets, for instance, were responsible for the crime?

Another point or two, and we have done. We do not appeal for sympathy for the family of the victim. We cannot sympathize with Mrs. Grammer, the daughter of the murdered woman, because, according to the definition of the term, only those who have gone through with a similar experience can sympathize. Mr. Gregory is inaccurate—we pleaded for pity for the family of the victim—and they need it, whether they want it or not. Mrs. Grammer may be convinced that her husband is innocent—and if her eyes were not blinded, and she could truly weigh the evidence presented to the jury, it is possible that she might still stand by him.

In cases of this kind, there are always some members of the family who stand by the criminal. We do not condemn them—that is their privilege. There never was a murderer so brutal that he did not find someone to fight for him. Mrs. Grammer standing by her husband makes a pathetic picture—but it did not touch the jury, who were sober-minded men with families. To them the more pathetic picture was that of Grandma Voight, murdered for money.

We now come to the question of Mexico, and the effect of capital punishment there. Mr. Gregory's position is amusing, as it is the first time we have heard anyone refer to the scrappy little country across the Rio Grande to prove anything. His reference to Mexico as an argument against capital punishment reminds us of the way old Uncle Billy Lakin got out of a tight hole.

Uncle Billy was the self-appointed weather prophet of our town as long as he lived. He had some system for telling when it was going to rain—as we remember it, if the carpet on his parlor floor raised up about so high, it was a sure sign, and he had other infallible means of beating the weather man to it. Two or three times, in dry years, he guessed right, and it went to his head. Every time there was a dry spell he'd consult his oracles and bring the result to the newspapers to be published.

There came a long dry spell—several weeks of it—and the farmers were beginning to worry. Uncle Billy came to the rescue, finally, and forecasted a rain for a certain Monday. Unfortunately, it failed to arrive. Tuesday passed, and no rain. So did Wednesday and Thursday. Uncle Billy came to town on Friday, and the first man he met hopped on to him. "Where's your rain?" he was asked. And right there Uncle Billy showed that he was a diplomat. "I didn't say where it was going to rain," he said, with painful dignity. "I said it would rain Monday—and it did. Down in Indianny they had three inches; in Texas they had five inches, and on the east coast of Jay-pan, they had a reg'lar cloudburst."

Mr. Gregory should get a little nearer home. There is no civilized government in Mexico, worthy of the name, and therefore the executions Mr. Gregory speaks of are—murders. Instead of proving his contention, he

(Continued on Page 7.)

Spring Improvements

Already many building operations have commenced in spite of the earliness of the season. With the opening up of Spring we expect all kinds of permanent improvements to be made on every hand. The forward movement of the City of Alliance and Box Butte County is practically unquestioned.

New Homes and Business Houses

will be counted by the scores, possibly by the hundreds.

While this unusual development is going on is the ideal time for you to fall in line. No doubt you have been contemplating some improvements about your place—a new porch, a new barn, a new garage or shed—something, at least.

Why not take the matter into your own hands and build you a new home of your own? You probably need the place now, and it will be many months before building material can come down.

Let Us Help You

We are able to offer you assistance in many ways—and we are only too glad to do so. If you are contemplating making any improvement, no matter how large or how small, kindly give us the pleasure of offering you our best advice.

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PHONE 22

ALLIANCE, NEBRASKA

Public Sale of FARM LANDS

The Sale Takes Place at the Court
House in Rushville, Nebraska

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 1920
at 2 o'clock P. M.

The land to be included consists of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$, the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$, the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$, the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$, of section 29; lots 1 and 2 and the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$, and lots 3 and 4 and the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 30, all in township 32 north, Range 46 W, 6th P M., Sheridan County, Nebraska, which lies about four and one-half miles northwest of Hay Springs and is known as the Redmond Hand farm.

The above described land will be sold as a whole or in parcels.

Practically all of this land is tillable. Good house and outbuildings. All fenced.

TERMS:—This land will sold on the 10th day of February, 1920, at 2 p. m. at the court house in Rushville, Neb., upon the following terms: One-half cash, deferred payments in five years from date of sale, secured by first mortgage, 6 per cent per annum, tax free clause, 5 years.

For particulars write or inquire of—

DR. G. J. HAND, Alliance Neb.

JOE HAND, Crawford, Neb.

B. M. BRUCE, Rushville, Neb.