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SECOND EDITORIAL

{‘Equality Before the Law’}

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**E**quality before the Law,” as practiced in the capitalist State, has been again graphically illustrated. Elizabeth Flagler, the daughter of one of our legalized cut-throats, General Flagler, shot twice and killed a boy, Ernest Green, in Washington. Thereupon, the judge and the whole machinery of the court goes about to free the culprit. Already a coroner’s jury had tried to “vindicate” her. The popular outcry that followed caused her to be “indicted.” But this was only a pretence, subsequent events showed. Last Tuesday, at an unusually early hour the court met, evidently by appointment with the culprit. She pleaded guilty to involuntary homicide, and was forthwith sentenced to 3 HOURS imprisonment and a fine of \$500. The fine, the report says, was paid on the spot in 10 crisp \$50 bills, and the “convict” rode off to jail, where she remained three hours in pleasant chat with a friend and the matron, and then rode home to celebrate her triumph—the triumph of the vicious class that now dominates this nation.

While Miss Flagler was lunching, the distressed mother of the boy Green was seen and asked what she thought of the “trial.” She answered sobbing:

“It isn’t for poor colored folks to say what should be done. I have no bitterness in my heart. I only know I loved my boy, and that he is gone. If he had been a bad boy I would raise my hands, and say it was better thus. But he was a good boy, and I looked forward to his future with great pride and joy. Then came this woman’s shot. And I am told she is free. That she paid the law some money and sat in the jail parlor. Perhaps Miss Flagler and her friends feel that she has been fully punished. It will take God to make me think so, and to God I leave her.”

“To God?” Aye, let it be so! But God also rules on earth. This Flagler episode is not a private issue. The convict Elizabeth Flagler is a presentative being; she is the incarnation of her class—guilty of one more all-around crime that will be redressed here.

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

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