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No Prejudice

Men are frail creatures and often tend to blame others for predicaments for which they, themselves, are responsible.

Thus, Carl M. Estep, a 19-year-old Negro, who had confessed to the rape of an elderly white woman, tried to blame prejudice in the extremity of his peril when confronted with a possible death sentence in Montgomery County Circuit Court.

It is fitting that another white woman, Judge Kathryn L. Shook took the occasion to bring Estep back to reality and make him face the fact that he, and no one else, was responsible for his deed. But even further, that his color played no part in her decision to send him to prison for the rest of his life.

The nature of his crime would have amply justified Judge Shook in imposing the death penalty. Testimony during the trial showed that the youth had broken into the woman's home and had brutally beaten her. There was no apparent reason for the attack.

But he was entitled to, and received, a fair trial. He was defended by one of the ablest lawyers in the county. For him to claim prejudice on the part of either the county or the court is obviously like a drowning man grasping at straws.

Judge Shook is to be commended for her stirring words. They make it clear that she abhors prejudice as having no place in any judicial proceedings.