

THE WAGES OF SIN

Ernest Witmer, the murderer, is dead by his own hand. Last Thursday night he swallowed a dose of strychnine and within two hours was dead in his cell at the county jail. His passing is not mourned by Antelope county people. He did what he should have done after he came to the realization of the enormity of his crime, committed on September 26th, when he brutally slew his young wife.

The story of Ernest and Rose Witmer is a warning to modern youth. Both were reared in good families and were no better nor no worse than the average boy or girl. But the pitfalls of this fast age claimed them as victims of their own folly. Not much is known of them before they came to this county less than a year ago. They were classed as good fellows, attending dances, drinking and otherwise enjoying themselves and making themselves agreeable to others who traveled the same pace. There were no home interests, no children, no desires to get ahead and prosper. All they thought of was indulgence and a good time. Then came the day when he flew into a frenzy because, as he said in his confession, his wife smoked cigarettes and lied to him about it. The unlawful drinking of liquor had gotten in its work. He knew he was a criminal when he drank it. His mind developed along criminal avenues until he came to hate himself and the wife he had sworn to love, honor and protect. With his criminal tendencies urging him on, he let loose of all restraint and took a human life in the most brutal way imaginable. He had become so calloused in his way of thought and disregard of right and decency that he had no remorse for the terrible thing he had done and with an air of bravado said he was not sorry.

However, a two weeks' confinement in a prison cell, probably the first restraint he had ever known, set him to reflecting.

Ernest Witmer, an average young man, had brains, and when he used them knew as well as anyone else that he deserved death for taking the life of another. It took him two weeks to decide, but the decision was the same as of any normal person in the world. The only spark of humanity shown by him was that he was sorry for his mother. What a different story his life would have been had he followed her teachings.