

Margaret King ID12384 per *Tory* 1848

Margaret King aged 24

Lancaster Summer Assizes Liverpool 16th August 1847, Attempt to murder her husband, 10 years transportation, Gaol report – Very Good

Series – HO 18, Piece Number 208

Request a report from []

Mitigation of the prisoner's sentence is prayed for on the grounds of her general good character and the ill treatment she received from her husband.

Guildford Street

27th September 1847

Sir

In consequence of receiving a letter from Mr Le Marchard requesting me to send my opinion and observations on the case of Margaret King, convicted before me at the last summer Assizes for Liverpool, of throwing scalding hot water on her husband with intent (*not to MURDER him but*) to do him some greivous bodily harm – I transmit herewith a report of the trial – from which you will perceive that the prisoner had just reason to complain of her husband's ill usage of herself and of his infidelity to her – he was a faithless and cruel husband – but admitting this to the fullest extent as alleged in the Petition on her behalf – her offence consisted in deliberately forming a scheme to punish him and avenge herself by scalding hius person so as to prevent his ever repeating the offence – and this scheme she

carried into effect by tying him down in his bed and then lifting the clothes and throwing boiling water upon his naked private parts – while he was asleep – the result of which was to produce very grievous bodily harm which confined him to the infirmary for a month – in a state of suffering and danger – I thought the case called for an example of severity and but for the verdict of the Jury (finding that the crime was committed under circumstances of great provocation and the recommendation to mercy , I should have transported her for LIFE.) – however much an individual may deserve death, the deliberately inflicting the punishment of death is murder and if there be no excuse from sudden passion and the act be WILFULLY and DELIBERATELY done I doubt whether it be less criminal and less fit to be punished if done by the injured party as a matter of revenge than if done by another from a wild sense of justice – In this case I thought the act was stripped of the excuse of passion or angry blood but was calmly and deliberately adopted to inflict a mischief by way of punishment adequate to the injury the prisoner had received, and I thought this a much more serious case on that account than ninety nine case out of a hundred of violation of the rights of property, but hitherto I have assumed that the intended punishment was in some degree commensurate with the offence – looking however at the strange indecency of the act – and the extra ordinary outrage that was intended. I thought I should have failed in my duty had I not passed a sentence more severe than imprisonment.

I have stated the grounds upon which I acted without any intention of preventing the Petition in favour of the prisoner from receiving a favourable consideration if the case is considered to be one that calls for mitigation of punishment – I would willingly have passed a milder sentence if I had thought it within the scope of my duty so to do.

I have the honour to remain

Sir

Your most obedient servant

Ned [Pollark].

REPORT

The case of MARGARET KING tried before the Lord Chief Baron at Liverpool Assizes on Monday 16th August 1847 – for throwing a certain injurious liquid viz: scalding water on the Belly, Thighs etc of JOHN KING her husband with intent to do him some grievous bodily harm.

Mr King : I am the husband of the prisoner – on the 1st June last I went to bed, and fell asleep between 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning I was awoken by scalding water poured over my person – I was tied down and could not at first get up – but I was at last able to get way from what fastened me and I ran out of the house for assistance:

I was a month in the infirmary

I am now entirely recovered.

Cross examined: I had struck my wife – she said she would [] me out – she was jealous of another woman.

The Lord Chief Baron states that altho' the prisoner was a bad and unfaithful husband no amount of provocation on his part could extend the barbarous cruelty inflicted on his person by his wife upon whom he felt bound to pass a sentence of transportation, altho' he has no wish to prevent her case from receiving a favourable consideration.

23rd August 1847

To Her Most Gracious Majesty The Queen

We the undersigned inhabitants of Stockport and the neighbourhood humbly join in the Petition to be presented to Her Majesty the

Queen for a mitigation of the sentence passed upon MARGARET KING at the last Liverpool Assizes.

Considering all the circumstances of the case and the provocations and ill treatment the unfortunate woman had received and the Jury having joined in recommending her to mercy.

We humbly hope that Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to remit some portion of her sentence and prevent her being removed from this country.

And your memorialists as in duty bound will ever pray.

Alfred [] – Mayor of Stockport

Henry Marshland

Charles Baker JP for Stockport

James Newton JP for the County of Chester

William Andrew JP for the Borough of Stockport

And a further 64 signatures.

Stockport

11th September 1847

I the undersigned JOHN KING the husband of the prisoner do humbly join in the prayer of the above memorial expressing my deepest regret that my own misconduct had led my unfortunate wife to the commission of the crime for which she is now in prison

The x mark of John King
