

MRS. BYRNE, IN COLLAPSE, IS PAREDONED BY WHITMAN

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Governor Whitman signed a pardon at 7 o'clock last night for the release of Mrs. Ethel Byrne, who has been hunger-striking for the last 11 days at Blackwells Island for the cause of birth control, at the plea of a delegation of women, headed by Mrs. Margaret Sanger and Mrs. Amos Pinchot. Mrs. Sanger and her attorney, Jonah Goldstein, were given passes yesterday to see Mrs. Byrne by Commissioner Lewis of the department of correction.

"When you go there," said the commissioner, as he issued two passes to Mrs. Sanger, "you will probably notice inflammation on your sister's elbows, knees and about the eyes. Dr. Hunt reminded me this morning of what he and Dr. Gibb told me on Sunday concerning this.

"The physicians informed me that Mrs. Byrne, when she thinks she is unobserved, rubs her knees and her elbows together and claws at her eyes. She evidently is trying to produce some open lesions on her body, such as would give her the appearance of having been roughly handled."

Almost Starved to Death

After Mrs. Sanger saw her sister, she broke down completely and could scarcely talk. "My sister was so weak that she could not lift a finger," she said to a *Call* reporter last night, before she went again to the island to bring back her sister. "She was in a state of total collapse. They left her alone until she could not live a moment longer without food, and then they forcibly fed her. And in addition to the bruises on her knees and elbows and eyes, where a woman would be held if she were forcibly fed, several of her teeth were broken. She could not possibly live two days more if she stayed in that place, so I took matters into my own hands. I feel that my sister's life is worth more just now than this end of the movement, so I took all responsibility and accepted the pardon on the governor's terms."

In regard to Commissioner Lewis' statement that Mrs. Byrne bruised herself purposely, Mr. Goldstein said: "Mr. Lewis lied, just as he had lied from start to finish about Mrs. Byrne's condition. She never gave up for an instant. So far as her will is concerned, it's as strong as ever. Unless she gets out of the workhouse tonight or tomorrow, we don't believe she'll live. She's in a terrible condition. She has been too weak to move for a week."

Governor Whitman arrived here last night at 5:30 o'clock, and immediately a group of women, including Mrs. Sanger, Mrs. Amos Pinchot and Mrs. Graves, visited him at the St. Regis

hotel on behalf of Mrs. Byrne. He was asked to go to the workhouse to see Mrs. Byrne, but he granted the pardon willingly without that preliminary.

Lewis at a Cabaret

“It’s the fight of two brave women against the whole system,” he said to the reporters. “I was glad to issue the pardon. I didn’t have any of the necessary papers here, and my pardoning her was informally done. Mr. Lewis must be seen, first, to give the order to the warden to set Mrs. Byrne free.”

Friends of the birth control movement feel that this is the most intensely pro-social thing the governor has done. They are unanimously enthusiastic over the proposed investigating commission and are prepared to cooperate with it.

Although the pardon was issued at 7 o’clock, it was not until 10:30 that the governor reached Commissioner Lewis, at a cabaret, to order him to set the machinery at the island to work.

Dr. A. S. Goldwater, in consultation with Dr. Bass examined Mrs. Byrne when she reached home, but at 12:30 this morning refused to issue a detailed statement saying the patient’s condition would not permit anything definite.

Mrs. Byrne Will Live

At the time, Mrs. Byrne was practically unconscious and her body exceedingly emaciated. The doctors did think, however, that she would survive and based their conviction on her former good health. They confirmed the statement that the body was bruised and that some of Mrs. Byrne’s teeth had been broken.

Mrs. Byrne was taken from Blackwells island about 10:30. Commissioner Lewis refused to leave the Charity Ball, merely issuing the release order and returning to his dancing. Mrs. Sanger and Attorney Goldstein and other friends then went to the prison. There they were greeted by First Deputy Kelly who swung open the cell door.

“My sister’s head was wobbling weakly as two attendants held and dressed her,” said Mrs. Sanger. “Some one suggested getting a stretcher, but one of the officials said she needed none, and could walk. Then they forced her to walk around the room, but she was so weak that a stretcher was brought and two prisoners ordered to carry it.

“As we were going out Dr. William A. Gibbs, who is official physician at Blackwells, threw a bill at Mrs. Byrne. The bill was for \$100, and as he flung it at her, he exclaimed:

“‘Here, you notoriety faker, you’ll pay this bill before I get through with you.’

“Then we left, and when we reached New York, Mrs. Byrne was placed in an ambulance and driven home.”