

Chapter 4, "The Lynching of Negroes – Its Cause and Its Prevention," from, "The Negro: The Southerner's Problem," by Thomas Nelson Page, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1904.

CHAPTER IV Page 86

THE LYNCHING OF NEGROES_ITS CAUSE AND ITS PREVENTION

IN dealing with this question the writer wishes to be understood as speaking not of the respectable and law-abiding element among the Negroes, who unfortunately are so often confounded with the body of the race from which come most of the malefactors.

On pages 86 and 87 is a long footnote about the origin of the term and earlier American history of lynching which is omitted.

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To say that Negroes furnish most of the ravishers is not to say that all Negroes are rapists.

The crime of lynching in this country has, at one time or another, become so frequent that it has aroused the Interest of the whole people, and has even arrested the attention of people in other countries. It has usually been caused by the boldness with which crime was committed and the inefficiency of the law In dealing with lawbreakers through Its regular forms. Such, for Instance, were the acts of the Vigi-

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lantes in California In the old days, and such have been the acts of the Vigilantes in other sections of the country at times. In these cases, there has always been a form of trial, which, however hasty, was conclusive on the essential points of the commission of the crime, the identification of the prisoner, the sentence of "Judge Lynch"—that Is, of the mob—and the orderly execution of that sentence. And, in such cases, most persons who are well-informed as to all the conditions and circumstances have found some justification for this "wild justice."

Lynching, however, has never before been so common, nor has it existed over so extended a region as of late years in the Southern States. And it has aroused more feeling outside of that section than was aroused formerly by the work of the Vigilantes. This feeling has undoubtedly been due mainly to the belief that the lynching has been directed almost exclusively against the Negroes; though a part has, perhaps, come from the supposition that the laws were entirely effective, and that, consequently, the

lynching of Negroes has been the result of Irrational hostility or of wanton cruelty. Thus, the matter is, to some extent, complicated by a latent idea that it has a political complexion.

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This is the chief ground of complaint in the utterances of the Negroes themselves and also in those of a considerable part of the outside press. And, indeed, for a good while, the lynching of Negroes appeared to be confined to the South, though lynching of whites was by no means the monopoly of that section, as may be recalled by those familiar with the history of Indiana and some of the other Northwestern States.

Of late, however, several revolting instances of lynching of Negroes In its most dreadful form: burning at the stake, have occurred in regions where hitherto such forms of barbarous punishment have been unknown; and the time appears to be ripe for some efficient concert of action, to eradicate what is recognized by cool heads as a blot on our good name and a serious menace to our civilization.

In discussing the means to put an end to this barbarity, the first essential is that the matter shall be clearly and thoroughly understood.

The ignorance shown by much of the discussion that has grown out of these lynchings would appear to justify plain speaking.

All thoughtful men know that respect for law is the basic principle of civilization, and

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are agreed as to the evil of any overriding of the law. All reasonable men know that the overriding of law readily creates a spirit of lawlessness, under which progress is retarded and civilization suffers and dwindles. This is as clearly recognized at the South as at the North. To overcome this conviction and stir up rational men to a pitch where the law is trampled under foot, the officers of the law are attacked, and their prisoners taken from them and executed, there must be some imperative cause.

And yet the record of such overriding of law in the past has been a terrible one.

The *Chicago Tribune* has for some time been collecting statistics on the subject of lynching, and the following table taken from that paper, showing the number of lynchings for a series of years. Is assumed to be fairly accurate:

1885.....	184	1895.....	171
1886.....	138	1896.....	131
1887.....	122	1897.....	166
1888.....	142	1898.....	127
1889.....	176	1899.....	107
1890.....	127	1900.....	115
1891.....	192	1901.....	135
1892.....	235	1902.....	96
1893.....	200	1903.....	104
1894.....	190	1904 (to Oct. 27).....	86

Total lynchings.	Whites.	Negroes.	In the South.	In the North.
1900.....115	8	107	107	8
1901.....135	26	107	121	14
1902..... 96	9	86	87	9
1903 (to Sept. 14)..... 76	13	63	66	10

Causes Assigned.

	1900.	1901.*	1902.†	1903.
Murder	39	39	37	32
Rape.....	18	19	19	8
Attempted rape.....	13	9	11	5
Race prejudice.....	10	9	2	3
Assaulting whites.....	6	—	3	3
Threats to kill.....	5	—	1	—
Burglary	4	1	—	—
Attempt to murder.....	4	9	4	6
Informing.....	2	—	—	—
Robbery (theft).....	2	12	1	—
Complicity in murder.....	2	6	3	5
Rape and murder.....	—	—	—	1
Suspicion of murder.....	2	3	1	3
Suspicion of robbery.....	1	—	—	—
No offence.....	1	—	—	—
Arson.....	2	4	—	—
Suspicion of arson.....	1	—	—	—
Aiding escape of murderer.....	1	—	1	—
Insulting a white woman	—	1	—	—
Cattle and horse stealing.....	—	7	1	—
Quarrel over profit-sharing.....	—	5	—	—
Suspicion of rape.....	—	1	—	—
Suspicion of rape and murder..	—	1	—	—
Unknown offences.....	2	6	—	4
Mistaken identity.....	—	1	1	3

* In 1901 one Indian and one Chinaman were lynched.

† In 1902 one Indian was lynched.

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The lynchings in the various States and Territories in 1900 were as follows:

Alabama.....	8	New York.....	0
Arkansas.....	6	Nevada.....	0
California.....	0	North Carolina.....	3
Colorado.....	3	North Dakota.....	0
Connecticut.....	0	Ohio.....	0
Delaware.....	0	Oregon.....	0
Florida.....	9	Pennsylvania.....	0
Georgia.....	16	Rhode Island.....	0
Idaho.....	0	South Carolina.....	2
Illinois.....	0	South Dakota.....	0
Indiana.....	3	Tennessee.....	7
Iowa.....	0	Texas.....	4
Kansas.....	2	Vermont.....	0
Kentucky.....	1	Virginia.....	6
Louisiana.....	20	West Virginia.....	2
Maine.....	0	Wisconsin.....	0
Maryland.....	1	Washington.....	0
Massachusetts.....	0	Wyoming.....	0
Michigan.....	0	Arizona.....	0
Minnesota.....	0	District of Columbia.....	0
Mississippi.....	20	New Mexico.....	0
Missouri.....	2	Utah.....	0
Montana.....	0	Indian Territory.....	0
Nebraska.....	0	Oklahoma.....	0
New Jersey.....	0	Alaska.....	0
New Hampshire.....	0		

From these tables certain facts may be deduced. The first is that, in the year of which an analysis is given (1900), over nine-tenths of the lynchings occurred in the South, where only about one-third of the population of the coun-

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try were, but where nine-tenths of the Negroes were; secondly, that, of these lynchings, about nine-tenths were of Negroes and one-third were in the three States where the Negroes are most numerous; thirdly, that, while the lynchings appear to be diminishing at the South, the ratio, at least, is increasing at the North. Of the lynchings in 1903, 12 occurred in the North and 92 in the South. Of the total number, 86 were Negroes, 17 were whites, and 1 a Chinaman. Among the alleged causes were murder, 47; criminal assault, 11; attempted criminal assault, 10; murderous assault, 7; "race prejudice," 5. Of those in 1904 there were 82 Negroes and 4 whites; 81 occurred in the South and 5 in the North.

It further appears that, though after the war lynching in the South may have begun as a punishment for assault on white women, it has extended until of late less than one-

fourth of the instances are for this crime, while over three-fourths of them are for murder, attempts at murder, or some less heinous offence. This may be accounted for. In part, by the fact that often the murders in the South partake somewhat of the nature of race-conflicts.

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Over 2,700 lynchings in eighteen years, with a steady increase in the barbarity of the method and with the last the most shameful instance of this barbarity, are enough to stagger the mind. Either we are relapsing into barbarism, or there is some terrific cause for our reversion to the methods of mediævalism, and our laws are inefficient to meet it. The only gleam of light is that, of late years, the number appears to have diminished.

To get at the remedy, we must first get at the cause.

Although in early times there were occasional assaults and even some burnings at the stake these outrages appeared to have passed out of fashion and time was when the crime of assault was substantially unknown throughout the South. Though criminal assaults had been sufficiently common at one time for many of the States to adopt laws of Draconian severity relating to them, yet during the later period of slavery, the crime of rape did not exist, nor did it exist to any considerable extent for some years after emancipation.* During the war the men were away in the army, and the Negroes were

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the loyal guardians of the women and children. On isolated plantations and in lonely neighborhoods, women were as secure as in the streets of Boston or New York, indeed, were more secure.

Then came the period and process of Reconstruction, with its teachings. Among these was the teaching that the Negro was the equal of the white, that the white was his enemy, and that he must assert his equality. The growth of the idea was a gradual one in the Negro's mind. This was followed by a number of cases where members of the Negro militia ravished white women; in some instances in the presence of their families.*

The result of the hostility between the Southern whites and Government at that time was to throw the former upon reliance on their own acts for their defence or revenge, with a consequent training in lawless punishment of acts which should have been punished by law. And here lynching, in its post-bellum stage, had its evil origin.

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It was suggested some time ago, In a thoughtful paper read by Professor Wilcox, of Washington, that a condition something like that which exists in the South at present, had its rise in France during the religious wars.

The first instance of rape, outside of these attacks by armed Negroes, and of consequent lynching, that attracted the attention of the country after the war was a case which occurred in Mississippi, where the teaching of equality and of violence found one of its most fruitful fields. A Negro dragged a woman down into the woods and, tying her, kept her bound there a prisoner for several days, when he butchered her. He was caught and was lynched.

With the resumption of local power by the whites came the temporary and partial ending of the crimes of assault and of lynching.

As the old relation, which had survived even the strain of Reconstruction, dwindled with the passing of the old generation from the stage, and the "New Issue" with the new teaching took its place, the crime broke out again with renewed violence. The idea of equality began to percolate more extensively among the Negroes. In evidence of It Is the fact that since the assaults began again they have been chiefly

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directed against the plainer order of people, instances of attacks on women of the upper class, though not unknown, being of rare occurrence.*

Conditions in the South render the commission of this crime peculiarly easy. The white population is sparse, the forests are extensive, the officers of the law distant and difficult to reach; but, above all, the Negro population have appeared inclined to condone the fact of mere assault.

Twenty-five years ago, women went unaccompanied and unafraid throughout the South, as they still go throughout the North. To-day, no white woman, or girl, or female child, goes alone out of sight of the house except on necessity; and no man leaves his wife alone in his house, if he can help It. Cases have occurred of assault and murder In broad day, within sight and sound of the victim's home. Indeed, an instance occurred not a great while ago in the District of Columbia, within a hundred yards of a fashionable drive, when, about three o'clock of a bright June day, a young girl was attacked within sight and sound of her house,

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* It is significant that, on large plantations where the Negroes, though in large numbers, are still in the position of old plantation servants, the crime of assault is almost

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and when she screamed her throat was cut. So near to her home was the spot that her mother and an officer, hearing her cries, reached her before life was extinct.

For a time, the ordinary course of the law was, in the main, relied on to meet the trouble; but it was found that, notwithstanding the inevitable infliction of the death-penalty, several evils resulted therefrom. The chief one was that the ravishing of women, instead of diminishing, steadily increased. The criminal, under the ministrations of his preachers, usually professed to have "got religion," and from the shadow of the gallows called on his friends to follow him to glory. So that the punishment lost to these emotional people much of its deterrent force, especially where the real sympathy of the race was mainly with the criminal rather than with his victim. Another evil was the dreadful necessity of calling on the innocent victim, who, if she survived, as she rarely did, was already bowed to the earth by shame, to relate in public the story of the assault—an ordeal which was worse than death. Yet another was the constant delay in the execution of the law. With these, however, was one other which, perhaps, did more than all the rest

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taken together to wrest the trial and punishment from the courts and carry them out by mob-violence. This was the unnamable brutality with which the causing crime was, in nearly every case, attended. The death of the victim of the ravisher was generally the least of the attendant horrors. In Texas, in Mississippi, in Georgia, in Kentucky, in Colorado, as later in Delaware, the facts in the case were so unspeakable that they have never been put in print. They simply could not be put in print. It is these unnamable horrors which have outraged the minds of those who live in regions where they have occurred, and where they may at any time occur again, and, upsetting reason, have swept from their bearings cool men and changed them into madmen, drunk with fury and the lust of revenge.

Not unnaturally, such barbarity as burning at the stake has shocked the sense of the rest of the country, and, indeed, of the world. But it is well for the rest of the country, and for the world, to know that it has also shocked the sense of the South, and, in their calmer moments, even the sense of those men who, in their frenzy, have been guilty of it. Only, a deeper shock than even this is at the bottom of their

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ferocious rage—the shock which comes from the ravishing and butchery of their women and children.

It is not necessary to be an apologist for barbarity because one states with bluntness the cause. The stern underlying principle of the people who commit these barbarities is one that has its root deep in the basic passions of humanity; the determination to put an end to then ravishing of their women by an inferior race, or by any race, no matter what the consequence.

For a time, a speedy execution by hanging was the only mode of retribution resorted to by the lynchers; then, when this failed of its purpose, a more savage method was essayed, born of a savage fury at the failure of the first, and a stern resolve to strike a deeper terror into those whom the other method had failed to awe.

The following may serve as an illustration. Ten or twelve years ago, the writer lectured one afternoon in the early spring in a town in the cotton-belt of Texas—one of the prettiest towns in the Southwest. The lecture was delivered in the Court-house. The writer was introduced by a gentleman who had been a member of the Confederate Cabinet and a

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Senator of the United States, and the audience was composed of refined and cultured people, representing, perhaps, every State from Maine to Texas.

Two days later, the papers contained the account of the burning at the stake of a Negro in this town. He had picked up a little girl of five or six years of age on the street where she was playing in front of her home, and carried her off, telling her that her mother had sent him for her; and when she cried, he had soothed her with candy which, with deliberate and devilish prevision, he had bought for the purpose. When the child was found, she was unrecognizable. Her little body was broken and mangled and he had cut her throat and thrown her into a ditch.

A strong effort was made to save the wretch for the law, but without avail: the people had reverted to the primal law of personal and awful vengeance. Farmers came from fifty miles around to see that vengeance was exacted. They had resolved to strike terror into the breasts of all who might contemplate so hideous a crime, so that such a thing should never occur again.

This was, perhaps, the second or third instance of burning in the country after the war.

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Of late, lynching at the stake has spread beyond the region where it has such reason for existence as may be given by the conditions that prevail in the South. Three frightful instances of burning at the stake have occurred recently in Northern States, in

communities where some of these conditions were partly wanting. The horror of the main crime of lynching was increased, in two of the cases, by a concerted attack on a large element of the Negro population which was wholly innocent. Even unoffending Negroes were driven from their homes, a consequence which has never followed in the South, where it might seem there was more occasion for it.

It thus appears that the original crime, and also the consequent one in its most brutal form, are not confined to the South, and, possibly, are only more frequent there because of the greater number of Negroes in that section. The deep racial instincts are not limited by geographical bounds.

These last-mentioned lynchings were so ferocious, and so unwarranted by any such necessity, real or fancied, as may be thought to exist at the South by reason of the frequency of assault and the absence of a strong police force,

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that they not unnaturally called forth almost universal condemnation. The President felt it proper to write an open letter, commending the action of the Governor of Indiana on the proper and efficient exercise of his authority to uphold the law and restore order in his State. But who has ever thought it necessary to commend the Governors of the Southern States under similar circumstances? The militia of some of the Southern States are almost veterans, so frequently have they been called on to protect wretches whose crimes stank in the nostrils of all decent men. The recent shameful instance where an officer is charged with having connived with the mob is the single exception to fidelity that can be recalled, and even in that case the men showed a fidelity in marked contrast to that weakness. The Governor of Virginia boasted, a few years ago, that no lynching should take place during his incumbency, and he nearly made good his boast; though, to do so, he had to call out at one time or another almost the entire military force of the State.

Editorials in some of the Eastern papers note with astonishment recent instances where law-officers in the South have protected their prisoners or eluded a mob. The writers of these

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editorials know so little of the South that one is scarcely surprised at their Ignorance. But men are hanged by law for this crime of assault every few months in some State in the South. A few years ago, Sheriff Smith, of Birmingham, protected a murderer at the cost of many lives; a little later. Mayor Prout, of Roanoke, defended with all his power a Negro ravisher and murderer, and, though the mob finally succeeded in their aim, six men were killed by the guards before the jail was carried. These are only two of the

many instances in which brave and faithful officers have, at the risk of their lives, defended their charges against that most terrible of all assailants—a determined mob.*

For a time, the assaults by Negroes were confined to young women who were caught alone in solitary and secluded places. The company even of a child was sufficient to protect them. Then the ravishers grew bolder, and attacks followed on women when they were in company. And then, not content with this, the rav-

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ishers began to attack women in their own homes. Sundry instances of this have occurred within the last few years. As an illustration, may be cited the notorious case of Samuel Hose,

Footnote from prior page continued over this table on the next page prior to the table.

* The following table is from the Chicago Tribune. The number of legal executions in 1900 was 118, as compared with 131 in 1899, 109 in 1898, 128 in 1897, 122 in 1896, 132 in 1895, 132 in 1894, 126 in 1893, and 107 in 1892. The executions in the several States and Territories were in 1900 as follows:

Alabama.....	4	New York.....	3
Arkansas.....	0	Nevada.....	0
California.....	5	North Carolina.....	9
Colorado.....	0	North Dakota.....	1
Connecticut.....	1	Ohio.....	1
Delaware.....	0	Oregon.....	1
Florida.....	1	Pennsylvania.....	15
Georgia.....	14	Rhode Island.....	0
Idaho.....	2	South Carolina.....	3
Illinois.....	0	South Dakota.....	0
Indiana.....	0	Tennessee.....	4
Iowa.....	0	Texas.....	18
Kansas.....	0	Vermont.....	0
Kentucky.....	0	Virginia.....	7
Louisiana.....	6	West Virginia.....	0
Maine.....	0	Wisconsin.....	0
Maryland.....	3	Wyoming.....	0
Massachusetts.....	0	Washington.....	2
Michigan.....	0	Arizona.....	4
Minnesota.....	0	District of Columbia.....	3
Mississippi.....	1	New Mexico.....	0
Missouri.....	3	Utah.....	0
Montana.....	3	Indian Territory.....	0
Nebraska.....	0	Oklahoma.....	0
New Jersey.....	4	Alaska.....	0
New Hampshire.....	0		

Footnote starting on page 107 and continued to page 108.

There were 80 hanged in the South and 39 in the North, of whom 60 were whites, 58 were blacks, and one a Chinaman. The crimes for which they were executed were: murder, 113; rape, 5; arson, 1. Thus, of the 119 hangings, about two-thirds (80) were in the South and one-third (39) in the North; about one-half (60) of the entire number were of whites, and one-half (58) were of blacks. So, the South appears to have done its part in the matter of punishing by law as well as by violence.

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who, after making a bet with a Negro preacher that he could have access to a white woman, went into a farmer's house while the family, father, mother, and child, were at supper; brained the man with his axe; threw the child into a corner with a violence

which knocked it senseless, ravished the wife and mother with unnamable horrors, and finally butchered her. He was caught and was burned.

Another instance, only less appalling, occurred two years ago in Lynchburg, Va., where the colored janitor of a white female school, who had been brought up and promoted by the Superintendent of Schools, and was regarded as a shining example of what education might accomplish with his race, entered the house of a respectable man one morning, after the husband, a foreman in a factory, had gone to his work; ravished the wife, and, then putting his knee on her breast, coolly cut her throat as he might have done that of a calf. There was no attempt at lynching; but the Governor, re-

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solved to preserve the good name of the Commonwealth, felt it necessary to order out two regiments of soldiers, in which course he was sustained by the entire sentiment of the State.

These cases were neither worse nor better than many of those which have occurred in the South in the last twenty years, and in that period hundreds of women and a number of children have been ravished and slain.

Now, how is this crime of assault to be stopped? For stopped it must be, and stopped it will be, whatever the cost. One proposition is that separation of the races, complete separation by the deportation of the Negroes, is the only remedy. The theory, though sustained by many thoughtful men, appears Utopian. Colonization has been the dream of certain philanthropists for a hundred years. And, meantime, the Negroes have increased from less than a million to nine millions. They will never be deported; not because we have not the money, for an amount equal to that spent in pensions during three years would pay the expenses of such deportation, and an amount equal to that paid in six years would set them up in a new country. But the Negroes have

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rights; many of them are estimable citizens; and even the great body of them, when well regulated, are valuable laborers. It might, therefore, as well be assumed that this plan will never be carried out, unless the occasion becomes so imperative that all other rights give way to the supreme right of necessity.

It is plain, then, that we must deal with the matter in a more practicable manner, accepting conditions as they are, and applying to them legal methods which will be effective. Lynching does not end ravishing, and that is the prime necessity. Most right-thinking men are agreed as to this. Indeed, lynching, through lacking the supreme principle of law, the deliberateness from which is supposed to come the certainty of

identification, fails utterly to meet the necessity of the case even as a deterrent, though it must be admitted that there are a respectable number of thoughtful men who dissent from this view. The growth of a sentiment which, at least, condones lynching as a punishment for assaults on women is a significant and distressing fact. Not only have assaults occurred again and again in the same neighborhood where lynching has followed such crime; but, a few years ago, it was publicly stated that a Ne-

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gro who had just witnessed a lynching for this crime actually committed an assault on his way home. However this may be, lynching as a remedy is a ghastly failure; and its brutalizing effect on the community is incalculable.

The charge that is often made, that the innocent are sometimes lynched, has little foundation. The rage of a mob is not directed against the innocent, but against the guilty; and its fury would not be satisfied with any other sacrifice than the death of the real criminal. Nor does the criminal merit any consideration, however terrible the punishment. The real injury is to the perpetrators of the crime of destroying the law, and to the community in which the law is slain.

It is pretty generally conceded that the "law's delay" is partly responsible for the "wild justice" of mob vengeance, and this has undoubtedly been the cause of many mobs. But it is far from certain if any change in the methods of administration of law will effect the stopping of lynching; while to remedy this evil we may bring about a greater peril. Trial by jury is the bed-rock of our liberties, and the inherent principle of such trial is its deliberateness. It has been said that the whole purpose of the

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Constitution of Great Britain is that twelve men may sit in the jury-box. The methods of the law may well be reformed; but any movement should be jealously scanned which touches the chief bulwark of all liberty.

The first step, then, would appear to be the establishment of a system securing a reasonably prompt trial and speedy execution by law, rather than a wholesale revolution of the existing system.

Many expedients have been suggested; some of the most drastic by Northern men. One of them proposed, not long since, that to meet the mob-spirit, a trial somewhat in the nature of a drum-head court-martial might be established by law, by which the accused may be tried and, if found guilty, executed immediately. Others have proposed as a remedy emasculation by law; while a Justice of the Supreme Court has recently given the weight of his personal opinion in favor of prompt trial and the abolishment of

appeals in such cases. Even the terrible suggestion has been made that burning at the stake might again be legalized!

These suggestions testify how grave the matter is considered to be by those who make them.

But none of these, unless it be the one relat-

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ing to emasculation, is more than an expedient. The trouble lies deeper. The crime of lynching is not likely to cease until the crime of ravishing and murdering women and children is less frequent than it has been of late. And this crime, which is well-nigh wholly confined to the Negro race, will not greatly diminish until the Negroes themselves take it in hand and stamp it out.

From recent developments. It may be properly inferred that the absence of this crime during the later period of slavery was due more to the feeling among the Negroes themselves than to any repressive measures on the part of the whites. The Negro had the same animal instincts in slavery that he exhibits now; the punishment that follows the crime now is quite as certain, as terrible, and as swift as it could have been then. So, to what is due the alarming increase of this terrible brutality?

To the writer it appears plain that it is due to two things: first, to racial antagonism and to the talk of social equality that inflames the ignorant Negro, who has grown up unregulated and undisciplined; and, secondly, to the absence of a strong restraining public opinion among the Negroes of any class, which alone can extir-

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pate the crime. In the first place, the Negro does not generally believe in the virtue of women. It is beyond his experience. He does not generally believe in the existence of actual assault. It is beyond his comprehension. In the next place, his passion, always his controlling force, is now, since the new teaching, for the white women.*

That there are many Negroes who are law-abiding and whose influence is for good, no one who knows the worthy members of the race—those who represent the better element—will deny. But while there are, of course, notable exceptions, they are not often of the "New Issue," nor, unhappily, even generally among the prominent leaders: those who publish papers and control conventions.

As the crime of rape of late years had its baleful renaissance in the teaching of equality and the placing of power in the ignorant Negroes' hands, so its perpetuation and

increase have undoubtedly been due in large part to the same teaching. The intelligent Negro may understand what social equality truly means, but to the ignorant and brutal young Negro, it signi-

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fies but one thing: the opportunity to enjoy, equally with white men, the privilege of cohabiting with white women. This the whites of the South understand; and if it were understood abroad, it would serve to explain some things which have not been understood hitherto. It will explain, in part, the universal and furious hostility of the South to even the least suggestion of social equality.

A close following of the instances of rape and lynching, and the public discussion consequent thereon, have led the writer to the painful realization that even the leaders of the Negro race—at least, those who are prominent enough to hold conventions and write papers on the subject—have rarely, by act or word, shown a true appreciation of the enormity of the crime of ravishing and murdering women. Their discussion and denunciation have been almost invariably and exclusively devoted to the crime of lynching. Underlying most of their protests is the suggestion that the victim of the mob is innocent and a martyr. Now and then, there is a mild generalization on the evil of lawbreaking and the violation of women; but, for one stern word of protest against violating women and cutting their throats, the records of

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Negro meetings will show many resolutions against the attack of the mob on the criminal. And, as to any serious and determined effort to take hold of and stamp out the crime that is blackening the good name of the entire Negro race to-day, and arousing against them the fatal and possibly the undying enmity of the stronger race, there is, with the exception of the utterances of a few score individuals like Booker T. Washington, who always speaks for the right, Hannibal Thomas, and Bishop Turner, hardly a trace of such a thing. A crusade has been preached against lynching, even as far as England; but none has been attempted against the ravishing and tearing to pieces of white women and children.

Happily, there is an element of soundminded, law-abiding Negroes, representative of the old Negro, who without parade stand for good order, and do what they can to repress lawlessness among their people. Except for this class and for the kindly relations which are preserved between them and the whites, the situation in the South would long since have become unbearable. These, however, are not generally among the leaders, and, unfortunately, their influence is not sufficiently extended to counteract

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the evil influences which are at work with such fatal results.

One who reads the utterances of Negro orators, editors and preachers on the subject of lynching, and who knows the Negro race, cannot doubt that, at bottom, their sympathy is generally with the "victim" of the mob, and not with his victim.

Denunciatory resolutions may be adopted without end, and newspapers may rave over the reversion to barbarism shown by the prevalence of the mob spirit. But it may safely be asserted that until the Negroes shall create among themselves a sound public opinion which, instead of fostering, shall reprobate and sternly repress the crime of assaulting women and children, the crime will never be extirpated, and until this crime is stopped the crime of lynching will never be extirpated. Lynching will never be done away with while the sympathy of the whites is with the lynchers, and no more will ravishing be done away with while the sympathy of the Negroes is with the ravisher. When the Negroes shall stop applying all their energies to harboring and exculpating Negroes, no matter what their crime may be so it be against the whites, and shall distinguish between the law-

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abiding Negro and the lawbreaker, a long step will have been taken.

Should the Negroes sturdily and faithfully set themselves to prevent the crime of rape by members of that race, it could be stamped out. Should the whites set themselves against lynching, lynching would be stopped. Even though lynching is not now confined to the punishment of this crime, this crime is the one that gives the only excuse for lynching. The remedy then is plain. Let the Negroes take charge of the crime of ravishing and firmly put it away from them, and let the whites take charge of the crime of lynching and put it away from them. It is time that the races should address themselves to the task; for it is with nations as with individual men; whatsoever they sow that shall they also reap.

It is the writer's belief that the arrest and the prompt handing over to the law of Negroes by Negroes, for assault on white women, would do more to break up ravishing, and to restore amicable relations between the two races, than all the resolutions of all the conventions and all the harangues of all the politicians.

It has been tried in various States to put an end to lynching by making the county in which

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the lynching occurs liable in damages for the crime. It is a good theory; and, if it has not worked well, it is because of the difficulty of executing the provision. Could some plan be devised to array each race against the crime to which it is prone, both rape and lynching might be diminished if not wholly prevented.

The practical application of such a principle is difficult, but, perhaps, it is not impossible. It is possible that in every community Negroes might be appointed officers of the law, to look exclusively after lawbreakers of their own race.

The English in the East manage such matters well, under equally complicated and delicate conditions. For example, in the island of Malta, where the population is of different classes among whom a certain jealousy exists, there are several classes of police: the naval police, the military police, and the civil or municipal police. To each of these is assigned more especially the charge of one of the three classes of whom the population of the island is composed. Again, in Hong Kong, where the situation is even more delicate, there are several classes of police: the English, the Chinese, and the Indian police. Only the first are em-

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powered to make general arrests; the others have powers relating exclusively to the good order of the races to which they belong, though they may in all cases be called in to assist the English police.

Somewhat in the same way, the Negroes might be given within their province powers sufficiently full to enable them to keep order among their people, and they might on the other hand be held to a certain accountability for such good order. It might even be required that every person should be listed and steadily kept track of, as is done in Germany at present. The recent vagrant laws of Georgia, where there are more Negroes than in the entire North, constitute an attempt in this direction.

In the same way, the white officials charged with the good order of the county or town might be given enlarged powers of summoning *posses* and might be held to a high accountability. For example, *ipso facto* forfeiture of the officers' official bond and removal from office, with perpetual disability to hold any office again, might be provided as a penalty for permitting any persons to be taken out of their hands.

Few ravishings by Negroes would occur if

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the more influential members of the race were charged with responsibilities for the good order of their race in every community; and few lynchings would occur, at least after the prisoners were in the hands of the officers of the law, if those officers by the mere fact of relinquishing their prisoners should be disqualified from ever holding office again.

These suggestions may be as Utopian as others which have been made; but if they cannot be carried out, it is because the ravishings by Negroes and the murders by mobs have their roots so deep in racial instincts that nothing can eradicate them, and in such case the ultimate issue will be a resort to the final test of might, which in the last analysis underlies everything.