

## THE HOWARD LYNCHING.

It does not appear that there was any ground whatever for distrust of the Governor of Maryland, which the lynchers of the colored man in Howard county sought to convey by the placard which they left pinned to the corpse, stating that they "respected court and judges," but that Governor Brown had "forced the law-abiding citizens to carry out the verdict of the jury." There was not the least evidence for the assumption upon which these "dozen or fifteen" men, masked and disguised and under cover of darkness, took the law into their own hands in the name of "the law-abiding citizens" of Howard county. The Governor, in the performance of his duty and having due regard for the universal and guaranteed right of petition, had instituted proper inquiry into the mental responsibility of the condemned prisoner, as he was bound to do, and was waiting for the report of the experts. Indeed, it was known in Howard county and out of it that the report of the medical men who had examined the prisoner, very carefully and conscientiously, would be to the effect that he was sane and responsible for his acts. The lynching, therefore, was a wanton and brutal and cowardly act—cowardly because its perpetrators not only took the life of a helpless creature whose life was already forfeited, but because those who committed the deed sought to evade the responsibility by putting it undeservedly on the chief executive of the State.

Lynching under any circumstances is a revolting crime, but its enormity is magnified when it is resorted to after court and jury and Governor have done their full duty. No "dozen or fifteen" lynchers or any larger mob of disguised men who participate in the hanging of a condemned criminal can ever be considered "law-abiding," and therefore we do not doubt that the really law-abiding citizens of Howard county will repudiate the claim of these lynchers as well as their assumption that the Governor intended to do anything but his sworn duty toward the prisoner as well as toward society. It is to be very much regretted that greater security could not have been thrown around the prisoner in the jail at Edgett City. But be this as it may, the occurrence is one which demands that it should be inquired into, not merely by the perfunctory process of a coroner's jury, but by every means at the command of the executive, of the attorney-general and of the police force. Nothing less is due to the majesty of the law, which all are bound to uphold. The lynchers should be brought to the bar of justice and nothing should be left undone to convict those who are guilty or at least the principals in this crime. At the same time the lynching emphasizes the importance of adopting the suggestion which Governor Brown made in his last message to the General Assembly for a law requiring all persons sentenced in capital cases to be kept in the penitentiary at Baltimore and executed there. This suggestion has lately received the hearty approval of the chief of the police force, Marshal Frey, and is probably the best thing that could be done. County jails are at best insecure, and they are not the places to keep prisoners under capital sentence.

---