

The Lynching of Cook.

We regret that there has been a lynching in Carroll. At all times the law should be allowed to take its course, and summary punishment, without judge or jury, is opposed to good government. The crime of Cook was of the most revolting character, and he bore a bad reputation. The punishment inflicted upon him was light as compared to the injury he inflicted upon his victim. This, with the frequency of similar occurrences in Maryland within the past two months, is some palliation for the swift punishment meted out to him. There have been two assaults by colored men on white women in Dorchester county, two in Baltimore county, one in Prince George's county, one in Carroll and one in Howard, all within a few weeks. In Cook's case there was no question as to his guilt, for he confessed it, and the assault of a colored man on a little twelve-year-old white girl in Howard county on Sunday, not far from the neighborhood of Cook's outrage, no doubt in part prompted the lynching that occurred near this city early Tuesday morning. As some of the party that aided in the matter remarked to Attorney-General Roberts, the actors regarded the lynching a public necessity in order to protect their wives, daughters and sisters. In their judgment summary action and swift punishment was demanded to deter others and prevent similar outrages.

It would have been six months before he could have been tried, and, as his victim was seriously ill, in the event of her death there would have been nothing but hearsay evidence against him. Cook, then, in all probability, would have gone unwhipt of justice.

Under all the circumstances of the case, it is not to be wondered at that summary punishment was visited upon the culprit.

The *Baltimore Evening News*, while condemning the lynching, thus alludes to the palliating circumstances:

There is not a more law-abiding people on the face of the earth than the people of Maryland, and particularly the agricultural portion. They do not rise up and lynch prisoners save of one class, the brutal ravishers. Whatever their indignation or horror or alarm over any other crime or shock, they are patient and await the action of the courts and abide by the determination of the constituted authorities. Even so horrible a murder or series of murders as was committed by a man in Cecil county last Saturday did not provoke such an outburst of passion as to interfere with the officers of the law. The instinct of self-preservation in society did not cause the murderer to be lynched, nor did indignation or passion effect such a result. It is only where females are assaulted and violated that the mob responds. The purity and the helplessness of the women, who have necessarily to be left defenceless for hours by men, call for special protection, and of late crimes of this character have become not only very frequent, but so shocking and brutal that men cannot stand still and wait for the law to take its course.

But this class of crime is thus summarily avenged for another reason. When a man is killed that is all the wrong and hurt and harm his assailant can do him. The trial of the assassin does not disturb him or repent his tortures. But when a woman is outraged the case is different. She is subjected to weeks of suffering and criticism, of sympathy and curiosity, which are as torturing to a modest woman almost as the original crime. Then she is dragged before a grand jury and is ravished over again in being compelled minutely to describe all her wrongs. Then she is brought into a public court and again publicly outraged by examinations and cross-examinations, and perhaps upon some trivial technicality a new trial will be awarded to the scoundrel who has so mortally wronged her, and who is being coddled and defended at public expense. And finally, if the villain is properly punished, she has been kept before the public for months, and the hanging of the beast makes her dishonored conspicuous and immortal.

Against this horrible ordeal for an innocent woman the instinct of manhood revolts. The victim of the outrage is far more keenly and painfully punished than the perpetrator of it. And it is this knowledge that makes the farmer conscious of the insecurity of his home, and determines him to make swift punishment a warning to ruffians, and, above all, to save his wife, mother, sister or daughter from actual persecution and torture, from being paraded in her misery and shame, he joins with his neighbors in taking the case out of the courts and furnishing a prompt and efficient warning to violators of female chastity.

This can be said in mitigation of the action of the Carroll county farmers. And further it may be said that the recent case of Howard Cooper has not encouraged the residents of the counties to trust to the courts. Cooper has been tried as fairly and honestly as ever a prisoner was. Our Criminal Court acted vigorously and firmly. His sentence was just and the victim of his brutishness was spared all the pain and mitigation possible at the trial. But what is the result? Delay, and effort to repeat the trial and the appearance of apologists for the wretch. This has certainly not been an encouragement to popular patience.