

**THE WESTMINSTER LYNCHING.**—The lynching of Townsend Cook, the colored assailant of Mrs. Knott, near Westminster, Md., yesterday, is an occurrence which should be generally deplored and reprobated by the law-abiding people of Maryland. It was not only an unlawful proceeding, but under all the circumstances a gratuitous reflection upon the courts of the State. There can be no excuse for a resort to lynch law in Maryland, in view of the high character of our judiciary and the usually prompt and energetic administration of justice. In this particular instance no doubt the victim of mob violence richly deserved the punishment he received, but the opposition in all well-ordered communities to the wreaking of popular vengeance upon any individual has a just and reasonable basis in the fact that such a tendency is always dangerous, and apt at times to degenerate into brutal and indiscriminate violence. Another grave objection to lynch law lies in the danger of confounding the innocent with the guilty, of ignoring extenuating circumstances, and even of hanging a man who, as seems to have been the case with young Terry, in Virginia, may be morally and legally irresponsible, by reason of mental aberration, for his acts. On the other hand, unnecessary delays in the trials of offenders charged with crimes like that of Cook are to be regretted, as lending some color of justification to those who assume to take the law into their own hands, and mete out punishment which the courts apparently hesitate to inflict. There are certain legal forms which, of course, must be complied with in order to secure equal and exact justice to all concerned, and no citizen who appreciates the value of our legal machinery for securing him in the enjoyment of his individual rights will cavil at the "law's delay" where such delay is necessary to the careful and dignified administration of justice and not an attempt to defeat it. Had the men who lynched Townsend Cook been content to await the ordinary course of procedure, there can be little doubt that his crime would have been atoned for in a proper and legal manner.