

THE LYNCHING.—That the lynching of Benjamin Hance was in defiance of law cannot be denied. Who among us, however, can say that had the injured girl been our relative, we too, would not have been law-breakers? Good citizens deplore the crime that begot the outbreak but in their hearts none condemn the father, brother and husband who defends the honor of his family and wreaks vengeance upon anyone who dares insult and assault his kins-women. The *Baltimore Sun*, of the 20th instant, in an editorial expresses the following opinions:

The hanging of Benjamin Hance, colored, by a mob in St. Mary's county for feloniously assaulting a young lady in that county is greatly to be regretted, as are all such acts of violence, which tend to lower the majesty of the law and to encourage infractions of the peace and good order of the community. The lynching is said to be the first that has ever taken place in St. Mary's county, and it is to be hoped that it will be the last. From the admission said to have been made by the prisoner just before death, his crime would seem to have been of a more heinous character than the attempted assault with which he was formally charged; but even if this were the case, his punishment might have been meted out to him by legal methods. On the other hand, the lynching may be regarded as in part at least the fruit of the prolonged delays in the case of Biscoe, twice convicted in the Charles County Court of a murder committed a year ago within the jurisdiction of St. Mary's county, but not yet punished for his crime. In his case the delay, although perhaps justifiable from a technical stand-point, has had a most irritating effect upon the public mind both in Charles and St. Mary's counties, owing to the horrible nature of the crime, the overwhelming evidence against the prisoner and the great cost of the trials. The case of Biscoe and also the desire to save the young lady assaulted by Hance from the mortification of appearing in the witness box seem to have been the chief considerations which prompted the lynching at Leonardtown. But, however great the aggravating causes for interference, the act cannot be justified, and those who took part in it have no occasion to congratulate themselves on having wreaked vengeance on a criminal who was already within the grasp of the law and would have received due punishment.