

Reverse the conditions and you would not find one of the skulking degenerates who would dare show his giddy face were an attempt made upon the life of a member of his group. Search deep enough into any of us and you may find something of the primitive, but you will not find it as close to the surface as it was found down on the Eastern Sho'.

The social, economic and educational life in that area is at a low ebb—in fact it hardly exists at all when measured by the yard-stick of metropolitan civilization. One has but to barely scratch the surface of its thin veneer of civilization to find crudities and barbarities of which jungle dwellers, themselves, would be ashamed. The standards of a community are often mirrored in the civic officials, the press and in the cultural organizations that exist to further the community welfare.

Take a look at the newspapers of the Lynchtown area, study the faces of the yokels who make and administer its laws; search, with a magnifying glass, if you please, for any native sons who stand in the forefront of the nation's leaders, and you will see the reasons why men, women and children clapped their hands in glee and paraded like savages as the stench of burning flesh assailed their nostrils and as their eyes beheld the swinging, charred figure of what once had been one of its most defenseless citizens.

One often thinks of the spontaneity of mob action, but if we examine closely, I believe that we will find that there was much more than spontaneity to the action of that Sho' mob. For a long time there has been built up there a complex of crowd-ideas. Unconsciously? Yes, a deep-seated antagonism had been developing there for years. There was a mob complex which fixed itself upon a feeling of white supremacy and a will to power.

This highly explosive antagonism had rested dormant, awaiting an occasion or incident which would serve to fire it. The case of Williams, his alleged slaying of his cheating employer, served to provide a temporary but congenial social environment for all of these persons in whose minds this mob complex had been long forming. Here, unconscious impulses could be released with mutual approval.

It is in soil such as this that Ku Klux Klan seed, once planted, flourish. It is easy to see how any ethical code may be cast aside and in its place have substituted a false principle of "righteous" indignation. A fiery word or two from a third-rate orator, and the converts fall in line, willing to be led to do battle for a rationalized "principle." There is a pronounced intellectual inferiority in such a crowd as compared with the isolated individual, and this, plus the loss of moral responsibility, intolerance and a blind emotionalism, makes it an easy matter to secure "joiners."

That was what happened at Lynchtown, and the town press, one of the greatest factors in crowd control, applauded the action of the mob. What more, then, can one expect of such a community, a community whose leaders, if transplanted to a real municipality, could hardly qualify for the lowest municipal job, a community whose leaders wear the cap and bells?

There seems to be no sorrow, no shame by Lynchtown's citizens at what has hapened. A man has been killed, that's all, and they move on as usual about their daily chores. They are only sorry that the news leaked out and that now, the whole civilized world is pointing a finger of shame at them. The whole affair, to them, was not unlike a celebration when the home team wins an important football game.

I doubt seriously that any of the mob leaders will be punished, regardless of what investigations are made. Even if the leaders are iden-

tified and apprehended, they must be tried by a jury of citizens and before a judge, all of whom are part and parcel of the social system which makes the dwellers of that section what they are.

Until the educational process has functioned sufficiently to spread on a thicker layer of civilization, outbreaks, such as that on the Sho' may be expected almost anywhere where conditions make it favorable to commit murder and get away with it. That will take a long time and, judging from the present crop of prehensile offspring, the solution is still generations away.

A man has been lynched at Salisbury, but few of its citizens seem to realize it.

## IN AND ABOUT BALTIMORE

By K. W.

### PRE-XMAS GIFTS

A local department store is giving away beautifully colored story books to the children this week; and race, color or present condition of servitude does not work against the applicants.

For a week the pool kids have been flocking to the store and receiving theirs, and their joy warms your heart to see. This is all some of them will get, but how much better is this small gift than not having any at all.

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### MARYLAND FREE STATE

It is very rarely that such a city-swept wave of indignation has deluged this section of the **FREE STATE OF MARYLAND** as that occasioned by the brutal lynching on the Eastern Shore at Salisbury last week.

In the pool rooms, lunch rooms, dance halls, churches and by firesides the topic was discussed, and the perpetrators denounced in no uncertain, and in many cases, profane terms. This feeling, of course, was far from the seat of the trouble, but I have no doubt that the expressions would have been true in Salisbury had the larger number been there.

Salisbury colored folk are not to be censured because they refused to comment when they were so completely outnumbered. Their comment would not have returned the dead man to life, but would have precipitated other attacks which they were powerless to resist. Baltimore with its numbers talked because it was not in danger, but I pity the mobbists if the shoe had been on the other foot.

The best suggestion for taking care of similar difficulties came from a man on lower Pennsylvania Avenue. He advocated the sending of the First Separate Company to places where trouble was foreseen. As remote as such action would be from "self determination Ritchie's" curse of action; one chuckles to think of what would have happened if those sixty warriors had been ordered to the "coward zone."

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