

LYNCHED FOR WRITING A DISRESPECTFUL LETTER.

We learn from the Standard, published in Lexington, Ky., that a Robert Morton was lynched in Bowling Green, Ky., Feb. 4th for writing an insulting and insinuating letter to a white lady. The Standard says:

"Morton wrote an insulting and insinuating note to Miss Tommie Johnson, a popular young white woman of the town, and when it became known a posse went to arrest him. He ran and they gave chase, capturing him after shooting him several times. While the officers were guarding Morton, a mob overpowered them and took the prisoner out of their custody and carrying him three miles from town, hung him. The body was found the next morning. The matter was kept so quiet that it was not known until noon the next day. Morton was 21 years old and the son of a section hand."

The above article is reproduced, not so much to show up another case of lynching, as to prove the fact, that, life is daily becoming cheaper. We mean Negro life within our own domain. It may be considered a sign of awakening conscience in the tone of the Southern press, which at this time is using its influence in trying to stir up public sentiment against such outrages, that strike at the race's very existence. It is a matter of appreciation to note the worthy attitude. But will it amount to any more than the press of the North that has been thundering away at the iniquitous institution? There are many noble minded white men and women of the South who have always upheld the supremacy of the laws, yet, as in the days of rebellion, what did their puny opposition amount to? We do not underrate the influence of their demonstrations, but the evil must show some sign of abatement before we conclude as to the potency of the press. The learned are to be convinced, but the standing army of intellectual beggars will not be educated in a day. The unwillingness to believe that the Negro is anything but an inferiorly endowed being, is difficult to eradicate when so great a pleasure results from the belief. To be hung for writing an indecent letter is a spectacle for modern civilization. If Morton alone suffered, well might we hold our peace, but 'tis not Morton that was stricken down. It was a blow aimed at ten million of people who are unfortunate simply in being born. No question of pessimism or optimism at this juncture. Dollars and cents have long ago dropped out of the equation. The unknown quantity of respect for the race remains *quad erat demonstrandum*. Misdeemeanors of all denominations will occur, do occur daily; but it is not the prerogative of any hastily organized tribunal to settle the matter. It is nothing within the court's province to mete out punishment commensurate

with the crime. Those who first framed the laws took into cognizance the probable existence of the malefactor. They accordingly specified the possible crimes and the penalties for the committing of the same. The only excuse for the existence of courts, criminal or otherwise, is to protect the weak against the strong. "A nation on trial," says the English, and with much show of reason. A nation that acts for a part of the people, defends them, when criminals, tries them, and when innocent acquits them, that recognizes the blinded condition of the goddess of justice, that weighs all in the balances alike, has a government for, of and by the people. If these conditions do not obtain, the nation is but an experiment; its people submitting to its rules and regulations at their fancy. These irregularities are being winked at in some parts of the country; a process which is disreputable from a national standpoint. National honor! What an odd sound, when like a whited sepulcher lay in its bosom an object of perpetual detestation. Cuba Libre, and Delenda est Negro! will do to couple together for a National yell. Armenia for Christ! Negroes for hell, is the joyful refrain. The Sultan of Turkey comes in for his share of scoring by the christian world. What about the bullet riddled Negro whose life mounts the smoke of the fire by which he is consumed? The skeptical Negro is in the land. His almost superstitious religious beliefs keeps him from multiplying only. The apparent causes are amply sufficient. The weakness of Republics is no more apparent than in cases of this kind. Officers who hold their offices and are sworn to do their duties, are intimidated in various ways, all resulting in the maltreatment of a class of citizens at the behest of popular sentiment or approval, regardless of the mandates of the law. Every man is innocent until proven guilty! What a beautiful theory; but how ruthlessly violated! Crime or crimeless, the violation of the proprieties, whether great or small, when supposed to be committed by a Negro, death is the only compromise. Nor is it peculiar to one section. The length and breadth of the South are so inoculated with the venomous spirit that suspicion is a synonym for death. While the millions are law abiding, having no part in, nor sympathy for, the rascally members of the race, it should not be held that these irregular takings off are of no moment. It must be born in mind that whenever these charges are preferred, no matter in what community, the whole community is for the time inflamed as one man against the Negro, proving an utter contempt for him when he swings beyond his prescribed circle. It is hard to say, but safe to say there is no power strong enough to combat the evil. To threat, to denounce, all ends in threatening and denouncing. The fire will burn until there is no longer substance on which to feed. As the years roll on the Negroes will still be shot down in cane-brake and bush. They will expire amid the cracking flames and voluminous smoke that ascends to heaven as an only protest. The sheep of a nation—domestic and docile—waiting in the shambles for sacrifice—such is the picture of our most free institutions up to date.