

# In the Paradise of the Lynchers

THE darkest shadow which rests over American civilization is that spirit which gives rise to lynching. This happens to be more or less localized in the South, though there is not the slightest reason to believe that it will remain so if racial or economic conditions equally critical arise in other sections. There is hardly an atrocity in the history of any nation, even that of the organized barbarism that we are fighting in France, that can not be matched in the history of American lynchings. How greatly President Wilson's recent appeal against mob action was needed may be gathered from an account just made public by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People of the "five days' lynching orgy," which occurred in Brooks and Lowndes counties, Georgia, last May. Eleven men and women were killed in these counties in retaliation for the murder of a white farmer. Of those lynched it is believed that only one was implicated in the crime. One woman, Mary Turner, was slaughtered because she "made unwise remarks" about the lynching of her husband.

The details, as given in the report of John R. Shillady, the investigator for the association, are revolting, but that is hardly an excuse for suppressing them. If the word lynching could be made to call up in every newspaper reader's mind the diabolical reality for which it stands the sentiment which will put an end to it would soon be aroused. Mr. Shillady says:

Mary Turner was tied by the ankles and hung head downward. Gasoline was taken from the automobiles of the lynching party and poured on her clothing, which was then burned from her person. After her clothes had been burned off \* \* \* her body was riddled with bullets from high powered rifles until it was unrecognizable. She was buried ten feet from the tree and at the head of her grave was placed a whisky bottle with a cigar stump in the neck of it.

This is not quite all of Mr. Shillady's account. The whole could not be printed in a paper of general circulation. What is given is enough to show to what abominable depths of savagery a portion of this Georgia community (and not the poorest or most ignorant portion, for it rode around in automobiles) had sunk.

Is there a cure? Perhaps an economic boycott of such communities could be of some effect. Since they put themselves outside the pale of humanity the rest of the country might well take cognizance of the fact. But the lynching neighborhoods are merely aggravated cases of a disease of racial intolerance, which lies dormant almost everywhere in the United States. It shows itself chiefly where there is wide economic or racial divergence. It is worst in the South because there one race is endeavoring to keep another in a state of chronic subservience. It has shown itself in a form approaching private war in Colorado, Arizona and other parts of the West and Northwest. It is not unknown in the industrial districts of the East. But it never manifests itself except where there is inequality and special privilege. In every case it is the final argument of dominating men defending an immoral and untenable position.