

Writing to the judge at Evansville on the 8th Gov. Durbin said:

I decline to sanction an arrangement whereby the Negro Lee is to be immediately tried at Evansville under the military forces of the State. My information obtained from medical officers of the State reformatory is that the prisoner is suffering severe and possibly fatal gunshot wounds. However heinous the crime, or seemingly clear the guilt, he is entitled, under the most sacred tenets of our jurisprudence, to a hearing, which he cannot have in the very nature of things until he has sufficiently recovered to make a defense, if he has one to offer. No grounds should be given for the suspicion that even a guilty man has been railroaded to the gallows to satisfy public sentiment or that the civil authorities have been influenced to the determination of their course by the demonstration of the lawless. I do not wish, by consenting to the programme suggested, to confess to the world that in the second city of Indiana the law has not been enforced in an orderly manner without the presence of troops being necessary for the protection of those charged with the duty, nor do I desire to yield an inch to compromise for a moment with the mob spirit. Let this man be tried as speedily as his condition will permit, under the safeguards prescribed by law. If guilty, he will pay the penalty of murder with his life. If at any stage of the procedure it shall appear there are still those in your city who desire to oppose the State in its efforts to exercise the function conferred upon it by the people, then the State will be ready to give further demonstration of its disposition and its ability to do with rioters as they deserve.

When there is so much popular insanity and official pusillanimity in connection with race lynchings by "the better classess," such sane sentiments and determined purpose as Gov. Durbin has exhibited are refreshing.

ONE ASPECT OF MOB FURY.

The good nature of an American crowd is proverbial. It has, perhaps, its best exemplification in the great cities where inadequate transit facilities lead daily to shameful overcrowding in the cars and to the massing of thousands of individuals on platforms built for hundreds only. Often the crowding becomes in highest degree perilous, and a few riotous or panic-stricken persons could precipitate a terrible catastrophe; but almost all remain cool, officials keep

control, and though individuals often suffer the catastrophe is time after time averted.

The same national good nature is largely responsible for the shortcomings of our governments. Inefficient and corrupt public servants rely on the tolerance, the laziness and the short memory of the public, and their reliance generally proves a safe one. Disregard of promises, extravagance, favoritism are condoned again and again by an easygoing electorate which, in slavish allegiance to party, takes repeated betrayals with seeming indifference.

Similarly the great exploiters of the nation, who fence in nature's reservoirs and monopolize labor's opportunities, are regarded in the main with an amazing amiability, rising often to admiration. During the great strike of last year the coal barons traveled unprotected back and forth between the mines which they kept idle and the cities which clamored for fuel, and not a hand was raised to threaten them. Railroad officials whose economies born of greed, lead to horrible wrecks go unwhipped of justice save as the companies may be mulcted for damages in the civil courts. Anarchical assassination and violence outside the law are universally and rightly reprobated.

But to this there is a glaring exception, becoming even more ominous. One class of crimes when committed by one race have been singled out for mob vengeance. Lynching of Negroes has spread from South to North. Burnings, unheard of a few years ago save in darkest Texas and Arkansas, have taken place in Colorado, in Kansas, in Illinois, in Delaware. Shall we hear of one next in New York or Massachusetts? It is not even necessary now for the victim's crime to have the diabolical character it took in Delaware. An ordinary murder, even an attempt at murder, may suffice.

As a mob will do deeds from which the individuals who comprise it would shrink, so a community will justify public crimes that committed privately its citizens would abhor. There seems no reason to doubt that the majority of the inhabitants of

the places where these horrors have occurred excuse if they do not applaud the action of the mob. The fact, however deplorable, is established that in some circumstances Americans, despite their native good nature, can be, like other peoples, collectively ruthless in cruelty.

If any further proof of this be needed it can be found in the records of the Philippine conquest. Not all the doughty denials of Roosevelt and Root can explain away that carnival of slaughter and torture. And here there were no crimes against women and children to incite to reprisals, but only the ordinary incidents of the resistance of a feeble people to a strong one.

There is one question suggested by this lamentable fact that is seldom asked. Is the spirit of race contempt a necessary ingredient in American cruelty, or may circumstances arise in which white men will treat with equal ferocity members of their own race? Is it not conceivable that some day the mob fury that now breaks on the head of depraved Negroes may break over public robbers and forestallers and their legislative tools? It may seem utterly impossible that the scenes of the French Revolution will ever be repeated in the United States. Fifteen years ago it would have seemed equally impossible that a human being should be burned to death in the United States amid the plaudits of a community and while the officers of the law stood supinely by.

Nothing has been more thoroughly exploded than the old notion that the leaders of the French at the time of the Terror were naturally monsters of cruelty and vice. Marat was a physician of ability and standing; Danton and Desmoulins were patriotic young lawyers and devoted husbands and fathers; Robespierre once resigned a judicial office rather than pronounce the death sentence.

Nor was the mob which mastered them exceptionally ferocious or hardhearted when the revolution began. On the contrary, it was filled with sentiments of universal fraternity and benevolence. The first victims of its fury were public criminals and oppressors. Its love for

bloodshed grew with what it fed on, and the world knows the result.

Such a page, let us fervently hope, will never be written in American history. But it will be well if the great commercial magnates who seem to hold the nation in the hollow of their hands should see in the temper of an American mob once thoroughly aroused a warning to beware how they press their power too far. It will be well, too, if thoughtful citizens, who recognize that three "civilized" men out of four are, after all, but varnished savages, should be led to seek more earnestly a remedy which by establishing a just system of taxation will not only make forever impossible the widespread destitution and despair that give birth to French revolutions, but also by raising the morale of all, black and white, from lowest to highest, eventually cause to die out the atrocious individual crimes and the hideous collective retribution that now ever and anon disgrace the nation.

W.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Lincoln, Neb., July 4.—On the summit of a prairie billow, four miles out of Lincoln and commanding a fine view of the capitol and of the charming city about it, stands the commodious and handsome Fairview home of Mr. and Mrs. William Jennings Bryan. Here Mr. Bryan does his literary work and superintends his little stock farm, and to this place come his friends from all quarters and all distances. Fairview is a Mecca for the democratic-Democrat of this new century, as Monticello was for the democratic-Republican of the new century of a hundred years ago.

On the eve of the national birthday this year, Mr. and Mrs. Bryan opened their new home at Fairview to their personal friends of Lincoln and its neighborhood. The distances were long and the night was stormy, but the parlors were filled and the occasion was one which those who participated in it will remember with peculiar pleasure. Among the guests were the present governor of Nebraska, John Mickey, ex-Gov. Poynter, Prof. Ross, of the University of Nebraska, and several of his associate professors. Mr. and Mrs. Tom L. Johnson were to have assisted Mr. and Mrs. Bryan in receiving their guests, but illness prevented Mrs. Johnson from making the long journey. Mayor Johnson arrived, however, and, along with

Dr. Howard S. Taylor and Louis F. Post, of Chicago, he received with the distinguished host and hostess.

The storm of the 3d had spent itself when the sun rose on the 4th, and from dawn till twilight the Fairview celebration was waited upon by the fairest of fair weather. The day was what in Kansas is known as a "Kansas day"—one of those days of which Senator Ingalls said that they "cannot be described, but once seen can never be forgotten." A high canopy of blue sky stretching out to a horizon like that of the ocean, masses of cloud brilliantly white suspended beneath the blue, a balmy atmosphere and softened sunlight, all contributed to a weather effect of indescribable splendor.

Down in a hollow of the billowy prairie, in full sight of the Bryan home, a huge tent had been spread over one of the nearly treeless fields, and there the crowds began to assemble early in the day. The generous invitation of the Jefferson club to attend an old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration had met with a cordial response. When the hour for speaking began the long road was lined on both sides with wagons and buggies, and over 6,000 people had crowded into the tent. Mr. Bryan presided, with that simple dignity and gentle power of oratory which have become so familiar to the American people.

On the platform were assembled only those who were to participate in the proceedings. The highest State officials sat with the rest of the audience, as part of the common people whose temporary servants they are. There were no distinctions other than the necessary distinction of service for the occasion.

When Mr. Bryan had opened the meeting, and the Rev. Harry Huntington, a local clergyman, had pronounced the invocation, the audience arose and joined in singing. Then came the reading of the Declaration of Independence by W. W. Bride, of Washington, who read it not only with elocutionary skill and in good voice, but also with democratic emphasis. The next thing on the programme was a speech by Louis F. Post, of Chicago, on "The Common People," and the next a speech by Dr. Howard S. Taylor, of Chicago, on "The Keystone of the Republic." Dr. Taylor closed by reading an original poem, written for this celebration, entitled "The American Commons."* Later in the proceedings Dr. Taylor read an older poem of his, at the request of Mr. Bryan, on the hauling down of the flag.

Dr. Taylor was followed by Mayor Johnson, the principal speaker at the

* Dr. Taylor's poem will be found in this issue of The Public in the Miscellany.

celebration, whom Mr. Bryan introduced to the audience as "the Hon. Tom L. Johnson, of the United States."* Mayor Johnson's subject was "Local Self Government." He touched lightly, though with no uncertainty, upon national questions; but his speech was devoted almost entirely to the political situation in Ohio, where the democratic-Democrats are striving to establish local self-government and to secure equality of rights in their municipalities. He made a national application by saying that local self-government in municipalities will generate self-government everywhere.

At the close of Mayor Johnson's speech Mr. Bryan brought the meeting to an end with a brief address upon the American flag. This was an oratorical gem. It was as simple and lucid and spontaneous in thought and language as it was brilliant in effect.

The vast audience broke up with a neighborly handshake all around, and Mr. Bryan drove the special guests of the Jefferson club to the railroad station. Trolley cars from Fairview to Lincoln loaded beyond their capacity, and crowded railroad trains out of Lincoln, marked the close of this revival of the old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration, where holiday sports gave way to the inspiration of democratic sentiment.

L. F. P.

* Mr. Bryan's introduction and Mayor Johnson's speech are printed in this issue of The Public, in the Miscellany.

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, July 9.

Again the war cloud in the Far East darkens. Russia has not only failed to evacuate Manchuria (p. 58) but has allowed her troops to cross over into Korea; and England and Japan, pursuant to their treaty (vol. iv., p. 712), have made demands upon China which have the sound of an ultimatum to Russia.

The report that Russian troops had crossed over into Korea came from Yokohama on the 28th. It told of two posts on the Korean side of the Yalu river which had been seized by the Russians saying that 150 Russian soldiers had been stationed there. This report was followed by one from Tokio on the 30th, which was to the effect that Japan was then preparing a protest to Russia regarding this invasion of Korea. It was noted in the latter dispatch that