

frequent triviality of his offence, on the absence of that fair free trial before a jury of his peers which the law guarantees to every man; but our business is more with the consequences of such deeds to society itself: for the community which accepts lynch law thereby loses its civic spirit and at once begins to go down.

For what can such crimes mean but a spirit of lawlessness, that spirit which actuates men to disregard all laws and to follow only the leading of their own wild passions, which, though their victim be guilty of the most heinous crime, is only what he did when he gave the offence. Thoughtful men all over the country are calling attention to the deeper significance of these crimes. Through the columns of the press the record of every such outrage is spread far and wide saying in unmistakable terms to all, "There are times when no law needs be obeyed; times when you can take law into your own hands with impunity and the choice of such times rests entirely with you." This is anarchy and such lessons instead of deterring men from crime only incite them to far wilder deeds of violence. What republic can live when its own citizens refuse to obey the very laws they themselves helped to create, laws which must lie at the very foundations of all organized society.

But the most ominous part of all is that public opinion supports the lynchers. Since the South Carolina tragedy both the state and national governments have done all in their power to discover and to punish the lynchers but thus far in vain. Though there must be many who know who the guilty ones are, not one is honest enough, brave enough, and patriotic enough to come forward and deliver the murderers to justice. After the Urbana riot last summer the pastor of one of the leading churches of the city preached a sermon in which he had not one word of rebuke for the lynchers themselves but rather excused their action on a plea of its being justified by great provocation and he has thereby sown seeds from which will one day be gathered another harvest of bloodshed and crime. That man who gives moral support to such outrages is equally guilty with those who do the violence.

Of the 166 lynchings last year, doubtless for many there was grievous provocation; but what has provocation to do with the matter? Shall we adopt for our code "Let past crime be met by present crime in order that future crime may be prevented?" How many say when some victim, guilty of a horrible crime,