

### THE DULUTH LYNCHING.

Duluth has now joined the American cities which have discovered how easily the safeguards of civilized justice can be leaped. Suddenness is a common factor of all such outbreaks and law finally reasserts itself, but after lives are sacrificed and the community's good name is besmirched.

In Omaha, it was said, delays and failure of justice in cases of offenses against women had inflamed public feeling. Pictures of the mob showed callousness and irresponsibility rather than uncontrollable passion. The delay of justice theory did not bear examination very well. In the Duluth lynching it seems to have less validity if it has any.

The problem is deeper. At its base, of course, is a very strong trait in American character which creates, in spite of inconsistencies and exceptions, a special attitude toward women. In the Duluth case the men charged with the offense were Negroes, and undoubtedly this was an important factor in the psychology of the outbreak. But white men are sometimes lynched for this offense when circumstances are aggravated. In the Duluth lynching motives of sex protection and of race instinct were combined.

We can eradicate neither and we would eradicate neither. Both are useful, perhaps necessary if properly controlled and directed. But they were not controlled in Duluth, as they were not controlled in Chicago, in Omaha, in Springfield. The authorities of Duluth permitted the leaders of the mob to go about in automobiles gathering recruits for the lynching. This was a sign of inefficiency, of lax police discipline, if not of connivance, which challenges the self-respect of Duluth and warns the responsible elements of its population that the morale of its police protection is low. Prompt arrest of the mob leaders would have saved a blot on the city's scutcheon and perhaps the lives of innocent men.

That is for Duluth to think about; but all America has in this new lynching a cause for the gravest reflection. The Duluth mob heard appeals to let the law take its course. Its members did not heed these appeals because they themselves wanted to kill. We doubt if they were certain as to the guilt of the men who died asserting their innocence; but they wanted victims to assuage their lust for vengeance, and victims they would have, whether innocent or guilty. We doubt if the uncertainty and tardiness of legal processes of justice have much to do with lynch psychology, but we think it might be tempered by a keener sense of responsibility to the law. Mobs, and even mob leaders, are seldom punished. Until they are there is little to check the lynching evil.

We hope Duluth will do better than other cities in dealing with the men who have brought stain to her good name. Duluth is a very proud city and may set us all an example. We certainly need one. Mob violence is inexcusable in civilized communities. The American lynching is a disgrace to us the world over.