

9/1. May 12, 1894

The appearance of the following correspondence in the Daily Post ~~on May 16th~~ undoubtedly helped give us ~~the splendid~~ ^{the} audiences we had in Birmingham

A WEARIED COUNCILLOR'S PROTEST.

To the Editor of the DAILY POST.
Sir,—If Solomon were living now he would say "Overmuch philanthropy is a weariness of the flesh." This morning I got a packet of literature relating to "the prevalence of Lynch law in the United States of America," and announcing meetings to be held in Birmingham next week on the subject. They appear to be called on the initiative of "an American negro lady," herself the victim of a Tennessee mob, and an English lady who edits a newspaper. A list is appended of Birmingham men who "have expressed their cordial sympathy with the object of the meetings," and I am invited to attend. My time is valuable, my powers are limited, and I feel justified in asking what possible practical object can be attained by such meetings? I have no wish to disparage the zeal or to question the motives of a lady who, having been I presume ill-treated by a Tennessee mob, has come four thousand miles to raise a question which could be dealt with effectually only on the spot; but I fail to see what ground there is for Birmingham people to dictate on questions of detail in the local police arrangements of certain towns in the United States. As a public man, I cannot find time to do all I should wish for our own city; and I protest against being expected to give my attention to matters of municipal detail in a civilised country at a great distance, any interference with which by English people would be an impertinence.

Birmingham, May 12.

A CITY COUNCILLOR.

DISCIPLINE IN

Da
mit
Cl
mu
it
to
giv
cl
re
as
w
p
p
m
ir
le
v
f
c
f
l
c
l
g
v
s

On the 16th ~~two~~ a day before our meetings, the following answer appeared

LYNCH LAW IN THE UNITED STATES.

To the Editor of the DAILY POST.

Sir,—“A City Councillor” asks in Saturday's Post, “What possible practical object can be attained by such meetings?” He refers to the meeting to be held Wednesday, in which an exposition of lynch law in the Southern States of America will be given by the writer. I beg space to answer that question. Resentment because of the freedom and citizenship of the negro race has been continually shown by southern whites. In the ten years succeeding the civil war thousands of negroes were murdered for the crime (?) of casting the ballot, and their vote is entirely nullified throughout the entire South. The laws of the Southern States make it a crime for whites and negroes to intermarry, or even ride in the same railway carriage. Both crimes (?) are punishable by fine and imprisonment. The doors of the churches, hotels, concert-halls, and reading-rooms are alike closed against the negro as a man, but every place is open to him as a servant.

The latest culmination of this war against negro progress is the substitution of mob rule for courts of justice throughout the South. The judges, juries, sheriffs, and gaolers in these States are all white men, and thus make it impossible for a negro to escape the penalty for any crime he commits. Yet wherever a black man is charged with crime against a white person, these mobs, without disguise, take him from the gaols in broad daylight, and hang, shoot, stab, or burn him to death, as their fancy dictates. A coroner's jury renders a verdict that “the deceased came to his death at the hands of parties unknown to the jury.” In the past ten years, over one thousand black men, women, and children have met this violent death at the hands of white mobs. And the rest of America has remained silent; not even when three men were burned alive in the past twelve months, has she opened her mouth to protest against this barbarism. One religious body which met in Philadelphia last June refused to pass a resolution condemning lynching because it feared to offend the Southern delegates present.

The pulpit and press of our own country remain silent on these continued outrages; the voice of my race, thus tortured and outraged, wherever lifted in America in a demand for justice is stifled or ignored. It is to the religious and moral sentiment of Great Britain we turn. These can arouse the public sentiment of America so necessary for the enforcement of law. The moral agencies at work in Great Britain did much for the final overthrow of chattel slavery. They can, in like manner, pray and write and preach and talk and act against civil and industrial slavery; against the hanging,

shooting, and burning alive of a powerless race. America cannot and will not ignore the voice of a nation that is her superior in civilisation, which makes this demand in the name of justice and humanity. If the moral reforms of the age have been brought about by Christianity, here is one which calls loudly for Christian and moral effort. I am in Great Britain today because I believe that the silent indifference with which she has received the intelligence that human beings are burned alive in a Christian (?) country and by civilised (?) Anglo-Saxon communities is born of ignorance of the true situation; and that if she really knew she would make the protest long and loud. The horror and amazement with which my story has been received in Scotland and England, the prompt and vigorous resolutions of protest and condemnation of lynch law have convinced me of the truth of my supposition. And I believe the people of Birmingham, when they hear the story, will not be one whit less willing, nor too busy, to lend their moral influence to check what is fast becoming a national evil.

IDA B. WELLS,
Of Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.A.
66, Gough Road, Birmingham, May 14.

THE WESTERN

This copy contains the complete text of the original document, which has been discarded because of its poor physical condition.