

LAST YEAR'S LYNCHINGS

LAST YEAR'S LYNCHING FIGURES, suggests Principal Robert R. Moton, of Tuskegee Institute, may well be kept in mind when we consider the northward migration of the negroes. The latter movement, says the *New York Age*, a negro paper, "is following a natural economic pull, but back behind it, increasing and hastening it, are lynching and all the other forms of oppression and injustice practised against the race." This is not believed due to the number of lynchings, for there were only fifty-four last year, as compared with sixty-seven in 1915, but, so the negro editor thinks, to "the horrible atrocity of several cases: the burning alive of the victim at Waco, the lynching of two women in Florida, and the lynching of a respectable and well-to-do colored man at Abbeville." All but four of the victims, it might be added, were negroes, and all but one of the lynchings took place in Southern States, according to the figures sent out from Tuskegee.

The geographical distribution of these occurrences interests the antiprohibition *National Herald* (Philadelphia), which notes "that forty-four of them were in prohibition States, or prohibition territory of 'wet' States," and that the only Northern lynching occurred in prohibition Kansas. So, it observes, "prohibition, at least, does not prevent mob murder any more than it prevents mob confiscation of property by ballot."

Georgia keeps the lynching record, which she held in 1915, a fact that leads the *Montgomery Advertiser* in the neighboring State of Alabama to remark that there are people "who meekly hold that it might be good for this whole section of the nation if Georgia would kindly mend its ways and quit spilling human blood on the picturesque theory that 'it's no harm to kill a n*****.'" We come to the end of 1916, admits the *Atlanta Constitution*, speaking for Georgia, "with fourteen out of a total of fifty-four to our credit, or more than 25 per cent. of the whole." And it adds:

"The seriousness of it all is stressed by the fact that in only three of the fifty-four cases was the victim lynched for the particular crime which many have held to justify mob action, and which first gave rise to it. In nine cases there was attempted assault, while in forty-two, or 77 per cent. of the whole number, the crime varied from murder down to slapping the face of a boy. Men were lynched for aiding suspected prisoners to escape, and there is one recorded instance where a man was killed because he protested with a mob about to put another to death."

In face of the scorn and criticism which have been directed at Georgia, says *The Constitution* regretfully, "we have done nothing." Another Georgia daily, the *Savannah Press*, believes "the lynchings in this State can be traced almost wholly to the fact that none is punished for complicity in such unlawful and dastardly acts." Indeed, "more energy is expended probably in getting evidence against a man accused of violating the prohibition law in the average Georgia community than there is in getting the data together upon which to convict a man of the crime of murder—for lynching is only murder by the many instead of by the individual."