

The New

REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

March 29, 1922

page 120

GROUPS of women in Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Virginia and Alabama, formed for the purpose of promoting race cooperation in the South, have recently assembled and passed a remarkably courageous and significant set of resolutions about one aspect of the Negro question. Recognizing that where there is weakness and failure of public officials in the execution of the law, it is usually due to the "weakness of public sentiment on moral issues" they appeal to "all good citizens to recognize the forces which are undermining our life and speedily to banish self-constituted agencies which usurp authority and constitute themselves the prosecutors, jurors, judges and executors of suspected criminals." They "feel a deep sense of appreciation for the chivalry of men who would give their lives for the purity and safety of the women of their own race" yet "they find in their hearts no extenuation for crime, be it violators of womanhood, mob violence or illegal taking of life" and they "believe that no falser appeal can be made to southern manhood than that mob violence is necessary for the protection of womanhood or that the brutal practice of lynching and burning human beings is an expression of chivalry." They associate by implication the practice of lynching with another practice which the ordinary man regards as one of his most precious privileges. "The double standard of morals," these Southern women declare, "is rapidly producing results which imperil the future integrity of our national life." They "are persuaded that this problem can never be solved as long as there is a double standard for women of any race." "They wish to bring about a state of public opinion which will compel the protection of the purity of both races."