

"Prof. Washington Speaks Boldly" Newspaper Article, March 5, 1904

PROF. WASHINGTON SPEAKS BOLDLY.

PROF. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON has at last awakened from a long sleep. His utterances here-to-fore dealt with glittering generalities, but a communication to the Birmingham, Alabama AGE-HERALD under date of Feb. 22, 1904 tells of specific outrages.

This letter, coupled with LINCOLN'S Birth-day speech at New York, Feb. 12, 1904 comprises an addition to national literature which will be as gratifying to the colored people generally as it should be to the lovers of justice every where.

He said:

"Within the last fortnight three members of my race have been burned at the stake; of these one was a woman. Not one was charged with any crime even remotely connected with the abuse of a white woman. In every case murder was the sole accusation. All of the burnings took place in broad daylight, and two of them occurred on Sunday afternoon, in sight of a Christian church.

"In the midst of the nations busy and prosperous life, few, I fear, take time to consider whither these brutal and inhuman practices are leading us. The custom of burning human beings has become so common as scarcely to excite interest or attract unusual attention. I have always been among those who condemn in the strongest terms crimes of whatever character committed by members of my race, and I condemn them now with equal severity, but I maintain that only protection of our civilization is a fair and calm trial of all people charged with crime and in their legal punishment, if proved guilty. There is no shadow of excuse from legal methods in the cases of individuals accused of murder. The laws are, as a rule, made by the white people, and their execution is by the hands of white people, so that there is little probability of any guilty colored man escaping.

And again:

"These burnings without trial are in the deepest sense unjust to my race; but it is not this injustice alone which stirs my heart. These barbarous scenes, followed as they are by the publication of the shocking details, are more disgraceful and degrading to the people who inflict the punishment than those who receive it.

"If the law is disregarded when a Negro is concerned, it will soon be disregarded when a white man is concerned, and, besides, the rule of the mob destroys the friendly relations which should exist between the races, and injures and interfere with the material prosperity of the communities concerned.

"Worst of all, these outrages take place in communities where there are Christian churches; in the midst of the people who have their Sunday-schools, their Christian Endeavor Societies, and Young Men's Christian Association, where collections are taken up for sending missionaries to Africa and

China and the rest of the so called heathen world, is it not possible for pulpit and press to speak out against these burnings in a manner that shall arouse a public sentiment that will compel the mob to cease insulting our courts, our governors, and our legal authority, cease bringing shame and ridicule upon our Christian civilization?

This is unquestionably the most untrammelled appeal that Prof. Washington has ever made to the public. Well, it reads like an editorial in the PLANET on lynching. Truly has a change come over the "Wizard of Tuskegee."

Lynch-law must go!