

ONE DEMORALIZING EFFECT OF LYNCHING.

Judge Boyd directed the grand jury at Cumberland yesterday to investigate the lynching of William Burns, the negro murderer of Policeman August Baker. It cannot be doubted that the people of Cumberland regret sincerely the law was not allowed to take its course in the regular and orderly way prescribed by the statutes of Maryland. Mr. Baker was a useful and respected officer and citizen and met his death while doing his duty. Naturally there was great indignation in Cumberland. But it is always the wisest and best policy, not to speak of every citizen's obligations under the law, to leave the punishment of criminals to the courts. It is best for the community, even under the greatest provocation and excitement, because lynch law is apt to have demoralizing consequences in quarters in which such results would be least expected.

The people of Cumberland are probably as humane, as law-abiding and as free of morbid tendencies as the people of any community of the same size in this country. Yet it was stated in THE SUN'S dispatches yesterday that a crowd estimated at 10,000, including many Sunday-school children, closely examined the body of the murderer as it lay at the undertaker's. "In the evening an attempt was made to close the shop, but the crowd threatened to force the doors and they were reopened." Such an exhibition of morbid curiosity on the part of adults is incomprehensible in a city with so intelligent and refined a population as that of Cumberland. But it is simply amazing that Sunday-school children should have been permitted to gratify a curiosity which ought not to be encouraged even on the part of adults. The effect upon these children cannot but be harmful, because it tends to make them callous—to accustom them to bloodshed and to deeds of violence. If the murderer had been executed according to the laws of the State and the prison regulations the sentence would have been carried out in an orderly way in the presence of only such persons as are required. There would have been no curious crowds peering into his coffin. Lynching is the result of an excess of passion and, like excesses of all kinds, it has a demoralizing effect upon all who are brought under its influence. It is to be hoped that never again may the spectacle be presented in Maryland of Sunday-school children permitted, if not encouraged, to gaze upon the body of a victim of lynch law.