

Some Comments On A Mencken Article

Mr. Mencken's article of last Monday, "The Eastern Shore Kultur," has called forth a flood of letters to The Evening Sun, some anonymous, some wishing to denounce under pseudonyms, some with names signed. A few of the last are printed below, some of them shortened.

EDITOR, THE EVENING SUN—Sir:

H. L. Mencken's summing up of the Eastern Shore lynching does not state why such a thing can happen in this, our "enlightened" age.

I may admit all he has to say about the clergy, politicians and populace, but that proves nothing. What makes possible such barbarous actions is the formation of mobs. Mob psychology has not changed from the earliest records of human beings. The state of enlightenment of the individuals makes no difference; when in a mob they do not reckon with consequences any more than cattle or elephants in a stampede.

In cities one of the chief duties of the police is to prevent formation of mobs, and for that reason no public gatherings except church gatherings are allowed to be held without a permit from the police department. Each patrolman is instructed to disperse two or more people talking excitedly on the street.

So far as is generally known, no police regulation for the prevention of mobs has been attempted in rural districts, though now with the advent of the telephone and the automobile such regulation is more necessary than ever before. The formation of a mob, taking in a radius of twenty miles, can be accomplished in less than one half hour.

There appears only three ways to break up a mob: (a) machine guns, (b) heavy streams of water, (c) tear gas. None of these are available in rural districts and the first should not be used on a mob bent on lynching one man.

Governor Ritchie should take steps to put into effect police regulation, or if necessary secure legislation that would enable the rural police to prevent formation of mobs, and if formed to break them up before damage is done. This could be accomplished by equipping police with tear gas bombs or the like.

Baltimore, Dec. 8. J. D. VIRDIN.

Mencken Should Offer A Humble Apology And Then Retire Permanently, Says This Worcester County Champion

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING SUN—Sir:

I sincerely hope that all that was so ridiculously stated in H. L. Mencken's farce on "Eastern Shore Kultur" was not taken seriously by the people of the state and country. Uninformed persons become easy victims of such rambling gabble, but I think any unprejudiced person who has ever visited the Shore or who has had any contact with its people will immediately recognize the injustice and irrationality of Mr. Mencken's accusations.

The Eastern Shore is a stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan, he claims. Does the recent action of the Negroes show any evidence of the existence of such an organization? "It is also a stronghold of prohibition." I beg to contradict that statement completely, because the lower counties are among Ritchie's most ardent supporters. I am in favor of prohibition, but I make this statement just to expose Mr. Mencken's utter ignorance of prevailing conditions.

Statistics show that of fifteen lynchings in the last forty-five years, Friday's was the only one in the last twenty-five years. Yet Mr. Mencken claims that it was a "natural culmination of a degenerating process for years, at least since the World War."

If a Negro had murdered in cold blood four sleeping white people in Carroll county and another Negro offense had occurred in Harford county, I wonder what the reaction of Baltimore county would be if a black man walked into the office of one of its prominent citizens and shot him dead with practically no motive whatsoever. Meanwhile, no steps had been taken by the law to punish the other two culprits.

But my indignation reaches its highest pitch when the people of the Shore are declared to be morons, uneducated and

amount of devilment being done all over the country.

It would be entirely out of order for me in any way to offer a defense of the people of this "benighted Shore." Peerlessly they stand—you know it. Still you print in your paper the lies of a Mencken. My advice to you is go and sin no more.

T. B. EDWARDS.

Salisbury, Md., Dec. 8.

She Writes Ironically On Mencken's Knowledge Of The Eastern Shore

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING SUN—Sir:

Yesterday a most extraordinary picture of the Eastern Shore of Maryland was painted through the colorful vocabulary of H. L. Mencken in his article, "The Eastern Shore Kultur." Such a picture could only be portrayed to the public so vividly by one who has associated frequently with "the poor white trash" in that "forlorn corner of the State"; by one who has also "accepted brutish imbecilities" such as the Ku Klux Klan; by one who has trodden that "stamping ground for knavish politicians" and "whooping soul-savers," and by one who has partaken of the "rot-gut liquors" produced therein.

Such things as these seem to have been the experiences of Mr. Mencken, since he has described them so fluently.

I suggest that when Mr. Mencken's plea for volunteers is answered he leads the procession, since he knows so confidently where the "poor white trash" of Maryland exists and where the "rot-gut liquors" of Maryland are produced.

RUTH M. RILEY.

Snow Hill, Md., Dec. 7.

He Demands An Apology From Us

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING SUN—Sir:

The thousands of self-respecting, law-abiding citizens of the Eastern Shore demand an apology from you for publishing the scurrilous article of H. L. Mencken in your issue of December 7. Mr. Mencken's personal opinion regarding us is a matter of no interest to our people, but when published by a paper of your prominence the many readers who do not know us may believe that there is a scintilla of fact in some of his vituperous utterances. HOWARD L. EDMUNDS.

Cambridge, Md., Dec. 8.