

## **Mrs. Felton Speaks**

*She Makes a Sensational Speech Before Agricultural Society*

*Believes Lynching Should Prevail as Long as Defenseless Woman is Not Better Protected*

*[J. A. Holman, Special to Atlanta Journal]*

South Bend Hotel, Tybee, GA., August 12 The feature of the session yesterday afternoon was the address by Mrs. W. H. Felton, of Bartow county, in which she discussed at length the public questions of interest in Georgia at this time, and dwelt with particular emphasis on the lynching problem. She reiterated her plea for co-educational at the State University. Mrs. Felton spoke of the necessity for the better education of farmers' daughters as a protection from the assaulter, and declared that instead of so much money begin expended for foreign missions it might be used to even better advantage in educating the heathen at home, even in Georgia.

I hear much of the millions send abroad to Japan, China, India, Brazil and Mexico, but I feel that the heathen at home are so close at hand and need so much that I must make a strong effort to stop lynching, by keeping closer watch over the poor white girls on the secluded farms; and if these poor maidens are destroyed in a land that their fathers died to save from the invader's foot, I say the shame lies with the survivors who fail to be protectors for the children of their dead comrades.

I do not discount foreign missions. I simply say the heathens are destroyed in sight of your opulence and magnificence and when your temples of justice are put to shame by the lynchers' rope. If your courthouses are shams and frauds and the law's delay is the villain's bulwark, then I say let judgment begin at the house of God and redeem this country from the cloud of shame that rests upon it.

When there is not enough religion in the pulpit to organize a crusade against sin; nor justice in the courthouse to promptly punish crime; nor manhood enough in the nation to put a sheltering arm about innocence and virtue—if it needs lynching to protect woman's dearest possession from the ravening of beasts—then I say lynch; a thousand times a week if necessary.

The poor girl would choose any death in preference to such ignominy and outrage, and a quick death is mercy to the rapist compared to the suffering of the innocence and modesty in a land of bibles and churches, where violence is becoming omnipotent except with the rich and powerful before the law.

The crying need of women on the farms is security in their lives and in their homes. Strong, able-bodied men have told me they stopped farmed and moved to town because there women folks were scared to death if left alone.

I say it is a disgrace in a free country where such things are a public reproach and the best part of God's creation are trembling and crying for protection in their own homes. And I say, with due respect to all who listen to me, that so long as your politics takes the colored man into your embraces on election day to control the vote; so long as the politicians use liquor to befuddle his understanding and make him think his is a man and brother when they propose to defeat the opposition by honey-snuggling him at the polls, and so long as he is made familiar with their dirty tricks in politics, so long will lynchings prevail, because the causes of it grow and increase.

[Mrs. Felton is one of the most distinguished women of Georgia, intellectually and socially. She is the wife of Dr. W. H. Felton, a former Representative in Congress, and takes a prominent part in everything pertaining to the advancement and protection of her sex. Editor Wilmington *Morning Star* (August 18, 26, 1898)]