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Does the U. S. A. Need the K. K. K.?

Fred Bair

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DOES THE U. S. A. NEED THE K. K. K.?

By FRED BAIR

It was a dark and rather rainy night; but the highway was alive with automobiles and the glare of their headlights, so that I almost had to walk in the ditch. As I got within two or three hundred yards of the grounds, I heard sweet voices ahead. A little farther, and I came upon a gang of young Kluxers, half a score on either side of the road, the majority in uniform, lustily singing above the whir of the motor-cars. They were singing jazzy songs about wine and women—if I may keep to genteel description. If I may not—if I must tell the naked truth—their ditties were vulgar sing-song about the joys of breaking the 18th Amendment, and of breaking a certain intrinsic possession of our pure womanhood. Perhaps, though, I should leave out the words "our pure," for the implication was that the young ladies were Negresses, and it is more or less doubtful whether colored virgins are pure in the sight of the Ku Klux Lord. I speak of "the implication" because there certainly is at least an implication of inter-racial lechery when young Caucasian bucks, in singing their love-songs, not only imitate the Negro dialect, but go the length of trying to put themselves in the emotional attitude of the dark lover wooing his dark sweetheart. The only line that I remember verbatim was comparatively tame: "Show me the way to go to bed." It took no elaborate psycho-analyzing to plumb the portent of the

sly singing of those young hypocrites garbed in their militant white. Perhaps their songs were recent vaudeville hits that were only moderately bawdy when first composed. But if that is so, then these Junior Klansmen had interpolated some dainty frills of free art upon the work of the professional composer. Their lewdness is charming commentary on the soundness of an idea that has appeared, among other places, in the *Haldeman-Julius Quarterly* the idea that the rank and file of white men are capable of growing more enthusiastic over the belles of African lineage than over their own wives and fiances.

* * *

At the field, there were two "gates," one to accommodate automobiles, and the other, pedestrians. A throng of Klansmen and Klanswomen leaned on every fence-rail. A conglomeration of moving and stationary lights rendered everything dazzling, so that it was like entering Heaven or Vanity Fair. A score of the most lavishly-uniformed Klansmen, strutting like archangels arrayed in snowy policeman-togs, acted as a traffic-force. They stood in the gate-ways and in the middle of the pike, blowing whistles and shouting orders. The confusion of cars that turned into the field obeyed them meekly, and so did most of the flivvers that anxiously flurried past; but one malevolent driver of a high-powered machine yelled at them to "get the hell out of the road!" and made a fair effort to run them down. Most likely he was a Cardinal's chauffeur.

Inside the fence, the Kluxers who intended

camping there over the week-end had pitched tents. Despite the myriad-candle-power illumination that nearly knocked a newcomer's eyes out, there were many dark nooks and corners that unavoidably suggested, because of the licentious atmosphere that flourished in the lime-light, that it was highly probable that Ku Klux Kopolations were in progress somewhere about—strictly Caucasian, of course. But I am not a member of the Invisible Empire: so I can only vouch for what was plainly visible and plainly audible.

I had received my invitation to this Konklave about two weeks previous. It had come with an invitation to join the Order. The announcement of the big doings read thus: "K. K. K. Lemoyne Klan Demonstration. July 16th and 17th, 1927. Saturday, BIG PARADE 2 P. M. KLAVALIER & KOURIER DRILLS. Our program is a big one. Don't miss it. SPORTS, SPEAKING, . . . FIRE WORKS DISPLAY. . . . Sacred Music and Religious Services all day Sunday. Refreshments at reasonable prices. Cars Parked and Protected Free. Free Camping. 4 miles from Harrisburg [Penn.] along Carlisle Pike. State Highway ROUTE 13. Admission to Field 25c. A Souvenir to All Who Attend."

The souvenir was a button which served as a ticket as well. You got it from the sentry at the gate in exchange for your two bits, and it entitled you to go in and out as you pleased. It had a picture on it of a tumble-down barn and a silo, and it bore the inscription "Lemoyne

Klan Home." In my other article on the Ku Klux, (in the September, 1927, *Haldeman-Julius Monthly*) I stated that the proceeds of the festival described in that article were to be used for "the K. K. K. building that is under construction somewhere around." I must have made a mistake, or else the announcer shrouded the business in a false dignity. For the building was purchased second-hand, and was only this old barn. But before God is installed there, during the outdoor revivals that are scheduled for the approaching rutting season, the cattle-stalls will be removed and the rest of the edifice remodeled. The silo will certainly be a fine place to keep the Holy Ghost over the winter. He can fatten on the ghosts of all the ensilage that was ever stored there. And local steers, branded with the triple K, will come and help Him chew the cud. But that magnificent snorter, that long-horned evangelist from Dallas, Texas, the Rev. "Doc" John A. Tabor, will not be there. No shivering in bleak sheds for *that* gent! Instead, he will be kicking up his hoofs in the faraway, smiling pastures of the sunny South, bellowing to the herds of White Supremacy cows that graze on the green grass of righteousness that grows so luxuriantly between Miami and Los Angeles.

But the Ku Klux Klavaliars would not thank anyone for implying that their mighty Doc Tabor is a Texas steer; it is their opinion that he is a prize-winning Texas bull—dehorned in no sense of the word. And it must be said for them that they are partly justified by the Doc's own oratory. For the most vulgar sort of "sex

appeal" is one of the predominant notes in his carnal bellowings. I will speak later of the Klavalliers' private confidences concerning him.

When I first saw him, he was acting as the band-announcer. The band was part and parcel of the Harrisburg Klan. For, though the Lemoyne Klan was holding the demonstration, the Harrisburg Klan and other klans attended *en masse*. Lemoyne is a suburb of Harrisburg, but it has many times more Klansmen *per capita* than the Capitol. Also, its commanding officers are of higher rank. I know that it has an Exalted Cyclops, and I have heard that it has a Grand Vizier.

Speaking of the Exalted Cyclops, the initials E. C. constituted the signature of the letter accompanying the Klavocation circular:

Your friends within the folds of our great organization desire to have you as a member of our great organization which stands for so much in this country which you naturally are interested in.

We are taking in a large class on July 16th at our demonstration, it will be necessary to have your application this month in order to join on that date. . . .

A childish "Aulick," drawn in brown ink, of the Imperial Wizard on his hooded battle-charger pranced all over the page. Came also a questionnaire—from the "Imperial Palace. Invisible Empire. Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (Incorporated)." Romance of antiquity—you understand—on a Big Business basis. The questionnaire was much the same thing as the specimen called "At the Klavern Door" in Little Blue Book No. 650, *K K K: The Breed*

of the Klansmen. Two cards were also enclosed. One of them read:

DO YOU REALIZE the immediate necessity of a National, *Non-political*, Secret, Christian Organization, unselfishly co-operating for—

The protection of your home—the shielding of the chastity of your pure womanhood—the separation of Church and State—the *eternal* maintenance of White Supremacy—the upholding and preservation from tyrannical oppression from any source whatsoever, of those *sacred constitutional rights and privileges* of a free-born Caucasian Race of people, so wisely enacted by the Founders of our Constitution, Washington, Jefferson, Marion and their compatriots?

Also, DO YOU REALIZE the importance of having at the helm, *cool, prudent, conservative, red-blooded, thinking men*, capable of directing the execution of such a reformation?

The other card was a variation of "A Klansman's Creed" in the little Blue Book. For example, it argued for "preventing the causes of mob violence and lynchings." This merely means that if you mask and regiment a mob, it is no longer a mob, and that its activities with the hemp are no longer lynchings, but official hangings decreed by the Imperial Authority of the Invisible Empire. This card also bore such Klan slogans as "DUTY WITHOUT FEAR AND WITHOUT REPROACH" and "NON SILBA SED ANTHAR." And at the bottom was written, "Discuss this with no one. If you wish to learn more, address 'Ti-Bo-Tim.'" But Ti-Bo-Tim wouldn't tell me any more. The wonder is that I heard the first time, for there are so many God-fearing gossips in Lemoyne who know that I am absolutely godless that

some of them must inevitably be synonymous with the Klan's thousand ears.

About ten percent of the ten thousand Klansmen who cluttered the field on the night of the demonstration had paraded that afternoon in their glad rags and got caught in the rain a mile from town—which is more proof that the Lord is on the side of the Vatican. Their costumes had been admirably resplendent—and were now replaced by others just as spick and span—and even the steeds of the half dozen really-and-visibly-mounted Klavaliers and Kouriers were decked out in magnificent robes. But if you happened to look down at the feet of those steeds, you were sadly disillusioned—you became aware that the horse-flesh so gaudily draped was pitifully decrepit. The grand equestrian tradition of the Ku Klux Klan, at least in the North, is just about as authentic as Mother Goose. The steeds of the Knights could no more prance in the proud "Aulick" fashion than a milch cow could jump over the moon.

But the Rev. Doc Tabor pranced in a style that vindicates from ridicule the whole sheeted mob appreciative enough of fine art to come and gape up at him. Standing on the band-pavilion, amid the dazzle and the bunting, with a blood-red electrical cross hard by his left ear, and with the glittering uniforms and brass instruments of the bandsmen for a background, he was "a guy to be proud of," as I heard some Klavalier say to a Kourier. When I arrived, the first speaker had just sat down, and the Doc was ordering a musical interlude to pep

up the atmosphere for his own harangue. I decided it would be worth while taking notes. So I am able to set down a pretty thorough report for the ranting of this boss evangelist of the Ku Klux Klan, as I later learned he is reputed to be.

* * *

His subject was, "Does the U. S. A. Need the K. K. K.?" And he livened it up with a volley of puns and plays on words that took his auditors' breath. "Some people," he said, "say that K. K. K. stands for Koca Kola Kid." And then he came across with one trinity of K's after another, for example: "Krout, Kucumbers and Kholera Morbis." But this harmless "humor" didn't last three minutes. Never was there a more competent rabble-rouser than this Tabor. He talked as fast as a busy typewriter clicks, but there was no stenographic monotony about his intonation. His words were literally "like wild-fire," and the mob of Klansmen, in and out of costume, that crowded around the pavilion, seethed—if I may use a somewhat hackneyed comparison—like a forest in an electric storm. The three great menaces he spoke of were the Catholics, the Infidels and the Jews. He was too far away from his native Texas to harp over-much on the Negroes. So, like Rev. Hawes, he used them for sneeze-powder.

He began on the Catholics of Boston, but quickly grew contemptuous and asked where Boston is. "Isn't Massachusetts in Boston?" Then he piled into New York, where he said he had lately been and had told the folks he

didn't like to be and wouldn't stay longer than he had to. But he was soon chasing all the Catholics put together, and at every jump sticking spears into the Knights of Columbus, whom, to great applause, he called "the Knights of Co-lum-bus!" The Pope, he said, thinks he is in the place of God Almighty. And then a little later, when he was speaking of the insidious infidelity that has crept into the Klan, he averred that, "The enemy is licked *outside* the Klan, and when the enemy is licked *inside* the Klan, the Klan'll go down the line like God Almighty and do—just—what—it—*should!*" He brought up as evidence of the corruption of Catholic politics the fact that the Pope's agents are everlastingly lobbying in Washington. And then he began to boast what a magnificent lobbyist the Ku Klux Klan has—none other than the Imperial Wizard, Dr. Hiram Wesley Evans himself. Next, he said, "The Catholic doesn't do his own thinking. His thinking is done by the Bishop. The Bishop's thinking is done by the Archbishop. The Archbishop's thinking is done by the Cardinal. And the Cardinal's thinking is done by the Pope—*we'll not press who does the Pope's thinking!* . . . The Pope presses a button and gives the Cardinal orders. The Cardinal presses a button and gives the Archbishop orders. The Archbishop presses a button and gives the Bishop orders. The Imperial Wizard presses a button and gives the Grand Dragon orders. The Grand Dragon presses a button and gives the Exalted Cyclops orders. . . ." And so on, down to the poor, ordinary Kluxer. Perhaps I have missed a few

titles in coming down the ladders of the Papists and Ku Klux hierarchies. But the point is that, in three major instances and a multitude of minor ones, this calculating quack deliberately turned his arguments against the Catholics back against the Klan—and got applause for doing it. He pretended that the Papacy is wicked for wishing to monopolize God Almighty, for getting itself mixed up in American politics, and for letting its Big Boss do all its thinking. And then he flattered his fellow Klansmen by proclaiming that they have a better hold on God Almighty than the Catholics have, and that they have a political genius who has it all over any McGinty that ever was born, and that their Wizard is just as capable of controlling their ideas as the "Big Wop" is capable of controlling the ideas of the "Mick." And every point he scored was brought to a climax with the rhetorical refrain: "*Does the U. S. A. need the K. K. K.!*"

A truck that was passing the other side of the pavilion for some reason or other suddenly interrupted the Doc by racing its engine with a racket like that of a battle between a whole Klavernful of Grand Dragons and a shipload of Irishmen and Italians. "That truck," said the Doc, "makes more noise than I do, but not so smooth running." Then he told a story about McAdoo advertising in a paper for a servant girl, and specifying "Protestant help preferred," and about the Catholics who came to give him hell for such a Klannish ad, and how he demolished their arguments with his solid-silver tongue. But the truck was still going too

strong, and I was too intent on studying the reaction among the servant-girl types round about me, to get the story straight. The same with the next several anecdotes—one about the Grand Dragon of Oklahoma. Apparently the Dragon had been accused of using his wings to cover up some rottenness of some kind, and had had to fight the hounds of heresy until his teeth were broken. Then the Doc spoke of another Klan scandal, in which the chieftains had evidently been caught with the goods. But the Doc roared that they were traitors to the Klan, and that at the time of their detection they were going it on their own. He spoke so guardedly that I was unable to determine whether or not his reference was to the ex-Grand Dragon of Indiana who is doing life for his patriotic political activities in the days when there were two hundred thousand Hoosier Klansmen to gape up at the monstrous wings of his regal white airplane whenever he flew abroad to gloat on his fair domain. (Nor, for that matter, did the Doc mention the present Grand Dragon of Indiana, who was recently married to a daughter of Rome.)

He talked about the incorrigible Catholics of his native Dallas. He had been in one of their churches one Sunday when a priest had thrown a man out for coming in overalls. "No man in clean overalls is ever turned out of a Klan church!" he declared for the edification of the poor toilers who constitute ninety-five percent of the Klan's enrollment.

Then he told how he had called a priest's

bluff one time at a church convention of some sort, I forget whether Catholic or Protestant. He had recited to the priest the secret oath of the Knights of Columbus. It was a terrible oath if ever there was one. He repeated it verbatim to us. If it were valid, the Knights of Columbus would be sworn to cut the throats of all Protestants and put all Protestant homes and churches to the torch, and do a lot of other horrible things. The priest had offered to bet that Tabor couldn't prove that that was the oath. And he had defied Tabor with the sanctified phrase, "*Put up or shut up!*" Tabor had whipped out a hundred-dollar bill and laid it on the altar or pulpit or somewhere, and crowed victoriously at the priest, "Let's see *you* prove that it *isn't* the oath! I'll bet you this hundred you can't! The Pope won't let you! Now *you put up or shut up!*"

If the Doc had stepped down from the pavilion just after telling that story, the Ku Klux rabble would have carried him in triumph around the field on their shoulders. And before going for the Jews and Infidels, he thought it wise to lubricate the smoking machinery of his mob with several gallons of Negro humor. With that sophisticated air—which Texans and other Southerners like to affect—of a specialist in the ways of the Negro, he proclaimed that if you wake up some morning and find one chicken or one watermelon stolen, "It was a *nigger* that stole it!" But if you find all your chickens or all your watermelons stolen, "then it was a *white* man!" This largely spurious

testimony to the noble Nordic tendency toward grand larceny, flattered his audience as much as did their absolute ownership of God.

"Keep your blood pure!" he suddenly whooped. "Black man marry the black woman! White man marry the white woman! Yellow man marry the yellow woman! Red man marry the red woman! And—brown—man—marry—the—*brown*—woman!" It is highly probable that this suggestive accentuation was meant to give the word "brown" a certain woefully-indecent double meaning.)

Every time the Doc had a chance to bring in a Negro story to illustrate an idea, he did so. For instance, when he was expounding the advantages derived by the Klan from the fact of its being organized, he told this one: There was once an old Negro stage-driver who was very expert with the whip, and loved to show off his talent in front of his passengers. One day when his passengers consisted of a bevy of nice old ladies, he reached out with his whip as he drove along and gathered them bouquets of American Beauty roses. But presently, instead of bringing in a flower, he brought in a chicken. (Incidentally, Rev. Tabor had been using the word "chicken" every few minutes with its old vaudeville meaning—that is, "young lady.") The nice old ladies got ready to be presented with it, but the venerable Africano very polite told them, "Dis is foh maself." So the ladies began to tease him. And when they were passing a wasps' nest, they wanted him to reach out for it with his

lash (?). But, very sagaciously, he declined, because "dem gen'lemens is *organized!*" (I have a notion that when the Doc tells this story in a smoking-car, or at a stag-dinner of the Gideon Society, its Jurgenesque implications give way to the more direct method of Emile Zola.)

And of course he told one about a Jew and a Catholic. A priest went to a Jew to hock his overcoat. He wanted a hundred dollars, but the Jew only wanted to give him five. Whereupon the priest told him to look in the pockets. The Jew pulled out a golden crucifix with diamond eyes, and forthwith agreed to come across with a hundred. Several months later, the priest came to take his coat out of hock. He paid back the hundred, and got his coat back all right, and found the crucifix in his pocket; but he discovered that it no longer had its diamond eyes. When he raised a protest, the pawn-broker made no denial of its previous begemmed condition. Instead, he made a rueful explanation: "Oh! it was a dreadful zings! When the gentleman on your crucifix find himself in a Jewish vault, he cry his eyes out!"

But the Doc didn't let the Jews off at that. He told of their devilish plots to make Yiddish "the American National Language!" And he said they aren't interested in Jerusalem. New York is the town they are playing for. "*New York is to the Jews what Mecca is to the Mahammedans and Rome is to the Catholics!*" Then he told about the terrible Jewish society that is the Semitic equivalent of the Black Hand and the Knights of Columbus. If the

K. K. K. doesn't "tramp its bowels out," it will tramp the bowels out of the K. K. K., and its members will as well as drink the blood of all Christians, or subjugate them to slavery. "It, also, is spelled with a K!" he yelled, as though that were an outrage, "K-a-h-i-l-a! *Kahila!*" Then he told all about the Kahila's secret plans, and came once more to the fiery refrain, "*Does the U. S. A. need the K. K. K.?*"

Then he gave his war-tank's steering-wheel a quick twist, stepped on the gas, and tore through the territory of the Infidels—on whom he showered a machine-gun fire that was like that coming out of the mouth of Jehovah. His main charges against them were that they are in collusion with the Catholics to exterminate the Volstead and Mann Acts, and that their copulations are un-Ku Klux. They believe that no one should stay married for more than three months at one time, though they are willing to tolerate, in extreme cases, contracts for a whole year or even fourteen months. Some of them are fiendishly clever at seducing the populace to these Godless ideas of theirs. They strive to become judges in the juvenile courts because children are their easiest prey. If they "succeed in getting their three months law through, there should be a klan in every village!" The Doc's implication here, apparently, was that there would be so much tarring and feathering, night-riding and the like to be attended to, that vast forces of new recruits would be needed to do all the spying and grind-stone-turning required to catch all offenders and keep sharp the sacred castrating-knives. The mob literally

boiled with righteousness as the Doc inflamed it with this fire-brand from Wrath Divine, and allowed itself to be convulsed with the noble desire to set itself up as an official board of American eugenists. The Doc warned it that there are brains among the infidels, and that it would take a powerful organization to lick them. *"Does the U. S. A. need the K. K. K.!"*

Next, he laid down the dire tenets of "the Society of the Damned," "the Society of the Godless" and "the Society of Lost Souls." And then he reviewed all the societies that the Klan is against, in terms that seemed to indicate that knighthood is still in flower. Among the organizations that the Knights of the K. K. K. must fight, are "the Knights of Columbus," "the Knights of the Saloon," "the Knights of the Kahila," "the Knights of the Infidels," "the Knights of the Koran" and "the Knights of the Niggers." This last was supposed to be a pleasantry, but as to the rest, I can't say whether the Doc wished to be courteous, for once, toward the enemy, or whether he wished to make the situation more dramatic by bestowing titles of errantry upon all his foes, since the Catholics were thus outfitted already. Anyhow: *"Does the U. S. A. need the K. K. K.!"*

One minute he raved for the separation of Church and State, and the next minute he raved against the demand of the Infidels that the Bible be taken out of the public schools. Also, he waxed eloquent for trial by jury. And then he spoke of the charges brought against the Klan of "roughness, intolerance, et cetera, ec-

zema, and so forth and so on." But he didn't seem to think they cut any ice.

He endeavored to herd the "gutless" Protestant preachers into the camp of the Infidels. He said, "When I hear a preacher say, 'The whale swallowed Jonah, as it were,' or 'God created the world, as it were,' I know he *were* an Infidel!" (Bacchanalian applause.) But a little later he treated the Infidels with more respect. He called attention to the fact that there are whole hordes of back-sliding Protestants who haven't the courage to help strangle the menaces, but who nevertheless have the gall to feel that they are better than the Catholics, the Jews, the Aliens, the Infidels and the Negroes. "What I despise," he roared, "is the weak-kneed, spineless Protestants! And they aren't all outside the Klan! If I were a Jew or a Romanist or an Infidel, I would *fight* for my belief! If I were a Jew and thought that hogs were unclean, no one could make me eat any bacon! If I were a Catholic and believed in the Pope, no one could keep me from eating fish on Friday! If I were an Infidel and didn't believe in the sacredness of marriage, why I'd tell the old hen she could hang around if she wanted to, and then I'd go out and get a young chicken!" (The laughter that this provoked seemed to come mainly from the sheeted females.)

Then came the general question, which the Doc put to the audience and all Christendom, "Do you belong to the rat-gang?" It was his opinion that many people who are swamped with rats, won't admit it. To illustrate what

he meant, he told a little tale: "Two men were boasting about which of them had the rattiest barn. One of them said you could see five hundred rats an hour in his barn. And the other said, 'Aw, that's not many! Just come along over to my barn once!' And when they got there, the owner told his friend to go in and see how many rats there were. The friend went in and stood in the middle of the floor with his eyes closed, while the rats ran around his legs and almost ate him up. After while the owner hollered in, 'How many rats d'ya see?' 'I don't see *any* rats!' his friend hollered out. So he went in and saw his friend standing there with his eyes closed, and the rats almost eating him up. That bird was just like the Protestants that won't see the rats of Bolshevism and the rats of infidelity and the rats of Rome that are running around their legs and just about ready to eat them up! *Does the U. S. A. need the K. K. K.!*"

Then he very forcefully addressed Klan back-sliders. In a Ku Klux circular that I have before me, I find this stimulating statement: "REAL MEN whose oaths are inviolate are needed." From all that the Doc said about the overwhelming hordes of Klan back-sliders, I imagine this must be pathetically true. But he wouldn't admit that the back-sliders have the Klan catacombed. He told them their neglect of their duties did not hurt the Klan—that they were only hurting themselves. "If any of you think you are injuring the Klan, just fill a tub with water when you go home tonight!" I thought he was going to tell them

to take a bath, but not so. "Stick your finger in the water, and then pull it out—and see if you can find a hole!" (The applause he got for this seemed to come from back-sliders and all.)

Then he asked all those in favor of the K. K. K. ideals to raise their hands. I was the only person in the crowd who didn't oblige him, just as I was the only person in the crowd who was taking notes. And, naturally, since I was standing conspicuously in the lime-light, I was given plenty of attention. In the heat of the mob-passion that the Doc had created, my note-taking had hardly been noticed, save for an occasional curious glance. But now two impressively-dressed Klansmen came and stood by my right shoulder and waited for an opportunity to address me. (No doubt they were Klexters or Klokans, or perhaps even Kligrapps.) But the Doc was still letting off steam enough to haul a U. P. freight over the Great Divide. He was telling Ku Klux back-sliders that they could join up again this evening. And new members would also be welcome. "Just come up on the platform and sign a card!" You were to put down your name and other data, and designate your standing with the Klan by underlining, encircling, or doing one of various other things to your signature. This plan would save embarrassment. And if any Kluxers wished to pledge donations, they, too, could sign cards.

Then, after a few more jabs and kicks at the rumps of the "Knights of Co-lum-bus," and a gay story, containing a pun, about the "dagoes," the Doc rushed into the terminal with, "I'm not through! I'd never get through! I'm just

going to quit!" He announced what the band had in store for us, and solicited applause for the stalwart musicians, "Come on before the boys play!—let's givuma!—" and he clapped his hands, and everyone followed suit.

And as the card-signers trooped up on the platform amid a fanfare of robustly-blown wind-instruments, my two policemen asked me if I were a reporter. And then they wanted to know for what paper. I told them it was really none of their business, but that I belonged to the Doc's friends, the Infidels, and was writing for an Infidel magazine, and meant to write a bunkless account of the Doc's harangue. This annoyed them so much that I was quite flattered. They wanted my notes and didn't want me to write any more. I pointed out that this demand was absurd, and that if they were so sure the Doc's arguments would hold water, they should be glad for any publicity their enemies would give them. But they wouldn't agree that their enemies deserved fair play. They told me frantically that what the Doc had said was the truth, and that no Infidel had any right to tamper with the truth. I thought it would be very interesting and dramatic to appeal to the Doc to whistle off his dogs—to challenge him to prove that a great transcontinental crusader is a more courteous and fair-minded antagonist than the spokesman for a provincial mob. He was standing on the platform with his face turned three quarters away from us, and the musical fusillade was so momentous that it was no easy job to get his attention.

Just then, a little boy came along selling the Klan paper, *The Fellowship Forum*. I wanted a copy, and by the time I had made the purchase the Doc had sat down behind the bunting, where it was even more difficult to communicate with him. The back of his shrewd, grizzled head could just be identified through the red, white and blue. In comparison with his bristling front, it looked exceedingly humorous, especially when contrasted with the serious and judicial mien of the two men in uniform who were waiting for me to hand over my notes. You could tell, somehow, by the back of Doc's head that he was no impractical fanatic, that all this excitement was, to him—at bottom—only a form of salesmanship. With a slight change of external circumstances, he might have been vending cure-alls, medical soaps, or anything else that is fraudulent enough to permit of high and easy profits. To get his attention during the din was too awkward a performance; so I told the Klansmen I would talk to him when the music stopped. They didn't seem to like the idea, and slunk away muttering something surly.

Off to the left, the spectral glow of fireworks filtered through the crowd, and I heard weird rumors of initiations and Klavalier drills. When I arrived on the scene, the initiated were in their sheets and pillow-cases, and the veteran members—Klavaliers in white, policeman-like caps—were going through some solemn maneuvers around them. Sky-rockets, fiery fountains, and other pyrotechnical phenomena, served to illuminate the seance of

these Caucasian Congo-men. And a little farther on, a great ring of red-lights—ordinary railroad red-lights—were burning on a cleared portion of the field. Outside of this unearthly circle, which was about a hundred yards in diameter, a ring of yellow-lights served as foot-lights for the enchanted red stage, which looked like an arena flooded with celestial blood. Between each pair of yellow-lights, a robed Kluxer stood at salute, facing the center of the circle, with his or her hood pointing fantastically toward the sky. Here was the Ku Klux Klan in all its glory—the grandeur that was Greece and the glory that was Rome. Whether this was supposed to be a Kourier drill or a Klavaliier drill—Kouriers are ladies and Klavaliiers are gentlemen—I don't know. But my impression was that both male and female forms acted as clothes-trees for that majestic circle of shrouds.

I can't say whether the arena was too holy for even the most sanctified mortals to enter it, or whether gladiators and comic actors presently tumbled in and gave impersonations of the Imperial Wizard and Jehovah chucking Al Smith and the Pope into the bottomless pit. For the band suddenly stopped playing, and I hurried back toward the pavilion, so as not to miss any spiel that the Doc might make.

But I only got half way before I was intercepted by a delegation, apparently from the Kloncilium—that is, the Klan's officiating body. My former questioners and a group of Klavaliiers were a few yards behind them. Whether the fellow who now talked to me was the "Griffinlet" I referred to in my former article on

the Klan, is another question I can't settle, for the Griffinlet—who was not in costume—looked like an emaciated clerk, whereas this fellow, though his features seemed to resemble the Griffinlet's, looked like a Seraph confectioned of fondant. I later established to my own satisfaction that he was the Exalted Cyclops, but I can't say for a certainty. His companions, no doubt, were Hydras and Night Hawks and Furies, with probably even a Titan or so among them. He demanded my notes as though he were a Caesar, and didn't even bother to demolish my protests with avowals that nothing has a right to stand in the way of the truth. For every sentence I put in about personal rights he simply reiterated his demand more harshly and magisterially than before.

For five minutes a crowd gathered at the rate of about five a second, the majority in uniform, many entirely masked, probably not one among them who wasn't a member or a Klan sympathizer. It looked as though my notes were to be taken by force, but the Cyclops, or whatever he was, thought it better to have me put off the grounds. Out of braggadocio, I told him what was hardly the truth—that it would make a scandal. He turned to some of his officers and began giving them orders as to my ousting. But there were Kluxers there who took my threat more seriously than I took it myself. Like the majority, they seemed to dislike too much notoriety. And everyone looked toward the pavilion for Doc Tabor, as though they considered his judgment in such matters better than that of their own officers.

The Doc must have been on the way already, and a lane was made for him to come through the crowd. The situation was explained to him as he came; and he told the Cyclops immediately that he couldn't put me out, since I had paid admission and was behaving myself. "You could put him out, all right," said the Doc, "if he was drunk and came on the grounds with a bottle. But for just taking notes, I don't think you can do anything about it." He further stated that it would be to the Klan's advantage to have the outside world know what the Klan has to say—and he delivered himself of several epigrams on the value of advertising. Some of the stay-at-home Kluxers manifested that they were less fond of sensationalism than was the roving Doc. They had reputations for sobriety that they didn't want meddled with. And they even seemed to suspicion that the Doc was subverting the Klan's best interest to his personal caprice. But he made them understand that I had most of the dope already, and that it would therefore only aggravate matters to throw me out. He talked to me in a very friendly manner. And I enthusiastically called him a good sport, and praised him in such a way as to imply the opposite for my intercepters. The Cyclops stood there silent and sour while the Doc argued with me about the Scriptures, and wrote down his name for me on a scrap of paper. The Doc wanted to know about the magazine I was writing for, and pretended to know less about it than I think he really did, or at least less than I want him to know about it in future. I naively asked him whether he was a Dragon

or a Wizard, and he told me, in a wistful and righteous tone that spoke volumes about his Godly self-denial, that he was "just an evangelist," but he expressed his pride in the great work he has done in building up the Ku Klux Klan. And I suspicion that, if the truth were known, he is some sort of Super-Kleagle or Supreme Kashier.

He tried to trick me into declaring that I had read the second chapter of Jude. It didn't work; but I will confess that one of the reasons was that it sounded like such an obscure book of the holy tome that I thought it more becoming to be just as contemptuous of such ante-diluvian trash as though he had asked me if I had read something in the last issue of *Liberty*. He praised me for my honesty, and said that most free-thinkers fall into his trap. He further said that what is the matter with free-thinkers is that they don't think for themselves. He had once argued with a free-thinker who said something quite clever. But the Doc had had him on the hip; the Doc had said that Tom Paine had made that crack so long ago that it was stale. But when I spoke of the super-staleness of the Bible, added to its super-mendacity, he told me I "could know absolutely nothing about anything without the help of the Bible. The only way men can find out for sure that they are different from mules is by believing in the Bible. You find out in the Bible what the name of mules is and what the name of men is, and without knowing those names there is no way of differentiating between the two creatures—a man might be a

two-legged mule, or a mule a four-legged man." The mob applauded this brilliant logic, and I told the Doc that, since he only took an argumentative advantage of the fact that the crowd was on his side, he was a fine fellow worthy of a better cause. We shook hands again, and, after asking him some very pointed questions about the Cyclops who was still standing there as glum as a pickle-barrel, I asked him to guarantee me that I would not be bothered for the balance of the evening. He promised, and told me that I had the run of the field.

It was not until I edged out of the crowd that had gathered, that I realized how large a crowd it was. But it wasn't the whole show; there was such a horde of Kluxers at that Konklave that there were large groups scattered over the entire field. Sky-rockets were soaring from half a dozen points, and less imposing fireworks were everywhere. The long-drawn "a-h-h-h-h-h!" from the young ladies and the young men whenever a fiery surprise blazed forth, sounded so infantile as to turn the grim effect of their regalia into a mere drollery. Flivvers were coming and going. And I trailed through the parked cars to a distant part of the field, where I could avoid notice. There I came on a group of Klansmen struggling with something that looked, in the gloom, like a colossal alligator. But, instead, it was the great cross destined for the picturesque theological arson that would bring the whole circus to a climax.

I wanted to know just what sort of concoction it was, and so I went over and gave a

hand. It was an ordinary telegraph pole with a sawed-off telegraph pole fastened to it for a cross-piece. (A Harrisburg paper later stated that a sixty-five-foot cross had been burned. Maybe so—if the sawed-off pole had been fastened on in the manner of a top-mast.) These poles were rip-rapped with burlap and stout wire, and the burlap was thoroughly drenched with oil. They were as uncouth as barber-poles, and as slippery as the tails of greased pigs. And before we got through, the Klavaliier who toiled across from me had his previously spotless white costume black and dripping from oil from neck to waist. He told me confidentially—for neither he nor the others had been among the crowd that accosted me, and he therefore took me for at least a Klan sympathizer—that the fellow who was bossing the job was a wonderful erector of crosses, and, in fact, a professional erector of telegraph poles.

So I kept my attention on the boss, to discern whether he realized what a holy job we were doing. But, alas, he didn't: when things went wrong, he swore; and when he gave orders, he referred to the "center-pole" and the "cross-arm" and the "guy-wires," just as though we were putting up an unpretentious altar of public utility for the Bell Telephone Company. And even the Klavaliiers swore about having to get greased up. It is true, though, that they did seem to find a little poetry in the business, but this was less the solemn sort that goes with religious rites than the frolicsome sort, as though we were raising a new mast on a sloop-of-war that had won a great victory after

having been shot at and shorn by the Spanish Armada. When we finally got the butt in the ground and the top toward the stars, and were staking down the guy-wires, the telegraph-pole expert discovered that something was wrong. "Who in the name of God," he yelled wrathfully, "got that guy-wire hitched around the center-pole!" Or maybe it was around the cross-arm; his oath was the thing that I cherished.

A few minutes later, a light was applied to the base of the sacred wick, and a blaze sprang up that was quite commonplace beside the spectral fireworks. You will perhaps remember that my friend Rev. Hawes talked about trying to make crosses burn as red as possible—apparently the better to symbolize the warm life-blood of a living Jesus. If that is what the telegraph-pole expert and the Klavaliars had been trying to do before I joined them, they were certainly wretched chemists and failed miserably. Or maybe they made the mistake of leaving the trick to the alchemy of God. At all events, if someone had set the god-forsaken barn on fire, the flames would have been no less holy-looking than those of the cross. Just as the bonfire started, one of the impressively-clad Klan officers came strutting into the foreground and shouted, "Everybody toot your horn!" And what a medley of discords arose from the thousands of automobiles that were parked in that broad field! And some buffoon jovially yelled, "Ya-a-a-y!"—not the religious yell, "Yea!", but the grand American sporting yell. Really, I was a little bit shocked. Jesus

is too extremely time-honored for such ephemeral commemoration. It was like a funeral at which the pall-bearers drink orange pop and near-beer to the health of the deceased.

The flames gradually crawled up the cross to the top, and then out the left arm. But the other arm was against the wind, and we waited in vain for it to catch—waited until the flames at the base began to flicker, and until the cross was pretty well blackened up to the middle, and all hope of a symmetrical Calvary had to be abandoned. An infinitude of engines were started in unison, and the Klan's traffic-department grew frantic in its endeavor to keep the automobiles in line. From the vicinity of the tents rose the shrill voices of women and the yelps of youngsters. A Klan sympathizer from a distant part of the state, who was admonishing me to do as Rome does when I am in Rome, and to do as the Christians do when I am in Christendom, was good enough to warn me that I had better take a bus or find an automobile of some one I knew to go home in, for the Klan coveted my notes and would "watch" me, and the highway was dark. And I did take the precaution to put my notes in my shoe and write down as many of them as I could remember on a blank piece of paper to carry in their stead. The whole business about the notes was rather uncalled-for, but I am glad I took them.

* * *

The copy of the *Fellowship Forum* that I bought that night cried for the blood of Sacco and Vanzetti, and everyone else connected with Rome. The main article was by "John Bond,

Rome Correspondent," who has a scare for the folks at home every week, and who recently published a great biography of the Borgia's blood-pump ("the blackest heart that ever beat in a human breast"). I think this "Bond" must be the fellow to whom Rev. Hawes referred when, in speaking of a valiant exposure of the Papacy's preparations for war, he said, "... a *Klansman* was on *that* job!" In the issues of the *Forum* under discussion, Bond wrote that Protestant growth in Italy "rouses Papal fear and fury," so as to render, "Assaults on Protestant Ministers and Destruction of Chapels Ordinary Events—Fascist Paper Says Protestant Teaching Must Stop—Rome Resents Charity Work Among Orphans." Mussolini, who is the Pope's "tool," won't allow as many as three Methodists to get together for a quiet little service without having his police "con-*nive*" with the mob to handle them as the American police used to handle a meeting of Wobblies. It would be a very foolish sort of skepticism to doubt that there is some truth behind these charges. But I contend that the regal red that is flashed by the toreadors of the College of Cardinals is hardly as guilty of the Papist-Protestant bull-fights as are the long horns of the Texas Tabors—or, if you will, turn the metaphor the other way around, and let the Klavaliens in their red sashes be the provocative vaqueros, and the priests be the beefs for the carnage.

Warnings against Papist, Jewish, wet, infidel, hell-machines thronged the whole paper; but the worst of these infernal engines were

all run by the dynamos of Rome. Here is a typical specimen: A terrible society of Catholic girl-students at the New York State College for Teachers, have built a palatial club-house in Albany, and from this headquarters they range the town like so many prostitutes and lure all the poor, innocent Protestant girl-students they can find into their outpost of the Vatican, and there they ravish them with a heinous mechanism of cultured opulence, from which insidiously drips the semen of Papist propaganda.

A little church in Dracut, Massachusetts, mysteriously catches fire in the small hours of the night, and a gang of modest Klansmen, thirty strong, who keep their identity a secret, come unsolicited from the grand old towns of Lowell, Littleton and Westford to repair the roof, and then, after having their pictures taken, unmasked, for the *Fellowship Forum*, vamoose before the danger of their recognition grows too great, leaving word that they will come back in the same mysterious manner and give the roof a coat of paint. This proves that the mystery shrouding the Knights of Columbus is for the purpose of covering up black deeds and incendiarism, and that the mystery shrouding the Ku Klux Klan is for the purpose of saving its members from the necessity of blushing receiving congratulations whenever they manifest their "fraternality."

But that's enough of the *Fellowship Forum*.

On the Sabbath, I set out for the demonstration grounds shortly after noon, confident that I would be admitted, for Protestants are too

evangelistically inclined to turn even the devil away from a Sunday jubilee. Being Klansmen, they might snort and sniff at an un-Caucasian visitor, even if he were a praying Christian, but, being Methodists and Baptists, they could never resist a chance to thaw the ice out of an Infidel's heart with the all-melting warmth of their Jesus's love. And so it proved; I received a hearty welcome from the not-in-the-least-diminished traffic-force. Gay Klavaliars and Kouriers, their bright blue or scarlet sashes flashing in the blazing sunlight, fluttered about in all directions, clad in uniforms as immaculate as lilies of the valley—that is, all but some of the campers, who looked like snow that has lain for two weeks in a Pittsburgh gutter, due to the oily cross-h'isting and powder-burning of the night before, and possibly to camp-chores.

The band played religio-military music for nearly an hour. Then a Klansman came forward and announced that we had with us this day a certain Harrisburg preacher. He proved to be one of those sky-pilots who didn't know they were to come until two hours ago, and so will have to speak extemporaneously. His lungs seemed to be so expansive that he could store in them a Bible as hefty as a ship's hawser. Hence, all he had to do was to mouth his usual line, in which he tied, about once in every two or three yards, a burly knot of auxiliary rhetoric about "the good that is being done by the Q Klux Klan." He said that Martin Luther was the first Imperial Wizard. And then he shouted, "*Romanism is Babylonian idolatry in*

the guise of Judaism laboring under the mask of Christianity!" The Kluxers clapped him for that as though he had kicked a football from New York to the Ural Mountains. He took the tip and went on the war-path on the roads that lead to Rome. And he did it in the name of the Lord, Whom he called "Gah-h-h-d!" in a voice that was vibrant with theatrico-theological passion. (Whenever he spoke of "Gah-h-d!" he closed his eyes, wrinkled his bovine visage, looked toward the sky, held his hands up before his face with the palms out, and made quick, flipping movements with his fingers, as though trying to push away from him some exceedingly malodorous abstraction.) He said that he had preached for four years in Steelton, the steel-mill town adjoining Harrisburg, "and you don't know how rotten," he declared over and over, "the politics in Steelton is!" And then in a fit of what seemed to me to be sheer professional jealousy, he forgot politics to fly at the throats of the Steelton priests administering to their flocks. I suppose that Steelton politics is as rotten as any ward-leader could wish, and it may be that the Catholics run it, though he, taking it for granted, offered no evidence. But Harrisburg politics, and Lemoyne politics—if the little games that go on in Lemoyne can be called that—have not become famous for their purity. And I don't think the Rev. would deny that they are in the control of Protestants. But most of his tirade against the Catholics was purely abstract or historical. At the height of his frenzy, he yelled that they would have thrown Martin

Luther into Hell. And two minutes later he had herded the whole dead, living and yet-to-be-born menagerie of them into that pasture themselves. And of course he didn't forget the other menaces, particularly the wets, but he came back to the "Micks" for the finish, and ended with a mighty bellow and a terrible stamp of his hoof on the none-too-substantial pavilion-floor.

Doc Tabor now appeared on the scene to superintend the collection-taking. And while the gay Klavaliars who toted the glittering plates were shouldering through the steaming mob, the Doc drew some questionably pert music from the band—which, by the way, wasn't the same band that had played the night before. (It appears to be the custom of the various klans to swap bands with their distant brethren.) The Doc angled for the money of his multitude with such tantalizing bait as this: "If any of y'don't come across, we'll all know that you're *dead broke!*" Then he silenced the band and announced that there would be speaking that evening "by a man who is known all over the United States"—meaning himself. Once more the band began to play, and I cleared out until the sun was low.

* * *

When I returned, I found the gaudy circus on the wane. The band was no longer there. The gala mob was reduced to about five percent, and the pompous traffic-force had dwindled in like ratio. The two or three hundred people remaining on the field were milling, for the most part, around the eats-and-drinks stand.

I discussed infidel literature with a group of Klavaliens, and tried to get them to describe the inner workings of their organization. It was from them that I learned that, "A Klavaliens is a male and a Kourier is a female." They urged me to join the Klan as they might have urged me to enter a saloon or a poolroom. Members of the Ku Klux Klan can have good times, they assured me. Considerations more grave were to them a vague theology which concerned intimately only the Dragons and Wizards. That is why I call them "the gay Klavaliens." Of course they knew that low-percentage Americans must be hated and fought against, and that a Negro who rapes a white woman should have his neck wrung, and they were not insulated against high-voltage speechification, but, nevertheless, their loyalty to their side was sheer make-believe like that of boys playing cops and robbers.

A trim pair of ankles glided past, and while the rest winked and whistled, the most outspoken exclaimed facetiously, "There goes one of the Cyclops' girls!" This was followed by comments more racy, which, because of me, were partly veiled. It was inconceivable to these fellows that any traveling-man should not be a "sporting-man" as well. And they considered the Doc the most admirably well-traveled reprobate that ever condescended to stop off between 'Frisco and the Big Town. Presently the Doc passed us, and one of the Klavaliens yelled, "Hello, Doc!" and another yelled, "Hello, Reverend!" as though greeting a baseball captain.

And when he was out of hearing, they began talking about good booze, and murmuring about some other klan that was playing them dirty. When this other klan had staged an entertainment, they had gone and given it their support; and now when the favor was supposed to be reciprocated, the other klan didn't show up—and it was supposed to bring its band—and the Klavaliens considered its members “rotten!”

It seems to me that a petty moral hypocrisy, furtively wedded to a petty hedonism, begets a bastard philosophy if ever there was one. And a humorous philosophy as well. Can you imagine anything more ironical than these “grocery boys” most solemnly swearing to the long-winded oath given in the Little Blue Book aforementioned? The whole oath is absurd enough to quote, but I only have room for a few representative phrases:

. . . I will forever keep sacredly secret the signs, words, and grip; and . . . I most sacredly vow and most positively swear that I will not yield to bribe, flattery, threats, passion, punishment, persuasion . . . by any person or persons, male or female, for the purpose of obtaining from me a secret or secret information of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. I will die rather than divulge same. So help me, God. Amen! . . . God being my Helper, Amen! . . . All to which I have sworn by this oath, I will seal with my blood. Be thou my witness, Almighty God! Amen!

I conversed with one of the Klavaliens about Doc Tabor's career. He told me, “The Doc has been in this game for a long time.” He seemed to realize that the Doc's motives were entirely commercial. But the Reverend was therefore all the more admirable.

Against a cold, blue, evening sky, that was beginning to be overcast with vague symptoms of more rain, the charred cross rose darkly and rather forlornly. It was very gruesome-looking for a merely symbolical death-apparatus, though the Kluxers—whose congenital callousness is like the shells of turtles—seemed to take it quite for granted, much as had the telegraph-pole expert of the night before. One of them told me that it had burned almost to sunrise, but only in unscenic splotches.

At the piano in the pavilion's far corner, was a homely woman of the usual ascetic type. I soon learned that she was the Doc's wife. His spouse appeared to me to be of the genuinely maternal sort, and sincerely religious.

The Doc wanted his audience to troop up on the platform and occupy the chairs evacuated by the band. A score of Klansmen and a like number of Klanswomen went up and assembled in stiff Sabbath fashion and stared at the pianist's back. And while they were slowly reinforced from the field, the Doc called to me, "Come on up here, young fella; we're waiting for ya." As I took a seat, directly under the little, red, electrical cross, a Klavaliar and his bride came sauntering toward the pavilion, and just as they reached the steps, the Klavaliar blew a great puff of smoke in the lady's face by way of starting the show. The gallant Rev. rebuked him with, "That's no way to treat a nice young wife—to blow smoke in her face!" And then the Doc looked reflectively up at the sky, and, after a moment's commun-

ion with God, mediated aloud, "And yet, they tell me the old smoked bacon is the best."

After the applause, Ma Tabor kept the ball rolling with "The Old Rugged Cross." Then, for about twenty minutes, there was the most amusing hymn-singing that was ever served in my soup. It was also the least obnoxious—for the simple reason that, instead of being staged in a stifling chapel where the fumes could accumulate, there was a fresh breeze blowing, on which could be detected a purifying, pagan tinge of summer rain. The pavilion was elevated sufficiently into the free sweep of wind that romped over the field, to be a little bit like the deck of a ship on a freshening sea. And the Doc cut her adrift for the coast of celestial gold: "In the sweet bye-and-bye, we will meet on that beautiful shore." And as the vessel sailed faster and faster, the Doc grabbed the tiller and steered for the recording-angel's gate: "The books will be open over there." And as the glittering cliffs of the all-surpassing realm towered over us, and we only had a few more whirlpools of wrath to sail through, the Doc yelled into port to the Harbor Master—with the hope, no doubt, that He would come out on a tug and throw us a heaving-line—"Hallelujah, Thine the Glory!" But as we drew nearer, with all sails set and the engines under full steam, the pressure of all this sublimity rose so high that the boiler burst; and the result was the ridiculous "When nothing else would help, Love lifted me," alternated with "When nothing else would help, John three sixteen."

I had read about that fabulous stunt before, but this was the first time I ever came in personal contact with it. The Doc played it until its tail dropped. And, to make it funnier yet, he had the folks out on the field, huddled in their automobiles, sing it too. He would have the pavilion-crowd sing until they were all balled up, and didn't know whether to sing "Love lifted me" or "John three sixteen," and made an omelet out of it and had little arguments about separating the yolk from the white—a feat that would surely have baffled all the horses and all the men of any king but the Heavenly King. Then he would yell fieldward, "Now let's hear you gentlemen out there in the automobiles sing it!" And when they had finished, he would diversify the scheme still further: "Now let's hear if you ladies out there can beat the gentlemen!" And then, "Now let's hear if you gentlemen *in here* can beat the ladies *out there!*" . . . "And now let's hear if you *ladies* in here can beat the *gentlemen out there!*" Then he raced the two kennels of gentlemen, and then the two coops of ladies, and then all the gents against all the ladies, and so on—never forgetting the tanglement motive. Presently he stopped, and gazed toward the eats-and-drinks stand, as though resolving to yell to the carousers that the Lord invited them to take part in the vocal festivities. But he apparently was shrewd enough to decide that the time to wean Ku Kluxers from the carnal side of their orgies is not when they are devouring hot dogs and soda pop. That reminded him that men are born

in sin, and he accordingly set a course once more toward the angel that does the bookkeeping. With his left flank to the automobiles and his right flank to us, he had first one side sing and then the other side sing that the books will be open over there. "That's fine! Now when I raise my *left* hand, *you* sing, and when I raise my *right* hand, *you* sing!" In addition to this, he had rules about what was to be done when he furiously whirled his arm around in a circle as though he were giving railroad signals with a lantern. (Perhaps the Doc had been a brakey on the Southern Pacific or the Santa Fe or the "Katy" in his young days.) And once he got limbered up, he whirled both arms and one leg, and nearly succeeded in whirling both legs. Suddenly he stopped the circus and said, "Boys, we've got to *fight* that Alcohol Smith! We're going to have a hard time to keep that bird out, but we're going to keep him out!" Then he reassured his customers that the Klan has the Catholics, the Jews, the Infidels, and all the rest of its enemies "*licked!*—because they're all organized against us!" I wanted to butt in and ask him if the proof that Ben B. Lindsey licked the Klan and the Holy Church, single-handed, is of a like sort. But, before the applause subsided, he whooped for a hymn. And the Kluxers glared at me while they sang, as though I were the joint representative of Rome, Moscow, Constantinople, New York, Berlin, Jerusalem and Hades.

After another voyage to the Promised Land, the Doc started a sermon, about "The Strength

of the Ku Klux Klan." He made it snappy, so as to be done by eight o'clock, for the sky was darkening with storm-clouds, and there was lightning that was just a little bit too ferocious to be called heat-lightning, and the Doc said he and his better part were going to drive all night to Watkins Glen, New York, where they would help the Klansmen fight the devil for a week. He invited any of us who wished to do so, to drive after him and give aid in surrounding Gotham with fortresses of Christ.

The main point of this harangue was, "The strength of the Ku Klux Klan lies in its unity! Stand behind your Exalted Cyclops! It was *you* that exalted him!" I could not be quite sure which of the little group of important-looking Kluxers across from me the Doc was referring to as the Exalted Cyclops. They all fidgeted somewhat, as though there had been some private unpleasantness that needed to be smoothed over by the golden voice of this great evangelist. But the one of them who had been my adversary the night before, and who looked more important than the rest, fidgeted, I fancied, in the most Exalted and Cyclopsical fashion. I am informed that there have been four splits in the Ku Klux Klan within the last few seasons, and that now there exists a Ku Klux Klan, a Reformed Ku Klux Klan, and other species of Klux, and that the species are well on the way to become general in the Darwinian sense of the word. Perhaps it was this age-old Protestant tendency to division that was troubling the Doc and the Cyclops. But the

Doc was careful to say that the Lemoyne Klan must be blessed with heavenly harmony, "or else you couldn't have bought this fine field and that building over there"—meaning the barn.

The Doc was not at all enthusiastic about such orders as the Knights of Pythias; and, like Rev. Gentles, he damned the petty sticklers for the various Protestant denominations. The protestants, he said, must all hang together like the Catholics, and then the Catholics can be licked. And the Klan is the only organization that caters to no sect. He had once talked to a city preacher who sneered at the Klan, and he had asked the preacher to point out his church; and then he had pointed out to the preacher another church that was right next to it, and asked what denomination it was. The preacher—who, as I remember it, was an Episcopalian—contemptuously told him that it was Methodist. And then the Doc asked him, "Do you know what the difference is between your church and that church? An *alley!* And that church across the street is Baptist, isn't it? Do you know what the difference is between your church and it?" "I suppose a street," meekly replied the Episcopalian. "*Right!*" the Doc thundered. "*Just a street!*" I wondered about that alley and that street. I wondered, since he gave them metaphorical significance, whether they mustn't have been in some filthy district such as that around the Bowery, or somewhere in South Chicago. And what conclusion would the Doc have drawn if the church across the alley had been Catholic?

Somehow or other, the Doc blamed the fights between the Protestant denominations on the Infidels. And he made the very obvious statement that, "The strength of the Ku Klux Klan is not in art, literature and science. The strength of the Ku Klux Klan is in its faith in God!" And it was his opinion that a preacher's faith in God should be in no wise regulated by matters of money. He said that most preachers preach in order that they may have butter and jelly on their bread. "Take the jelly and the butter off their bread!" he shouted, "and see how soon they start to sell something that pays!" "A *real* preacher," he declared, "will preach the Gospel if he has to work in a ditch all day and preach at night and on Sunday!"

Next, he damned the dancers. At a meeting that he had held for a certain decadent clan of Kluxers, a young officer of the Klan had yelled to him in the middle of his spiel, "Say, Doc; you can announce that Ku Klux dance tickets are now on sale at 50 cents apiece!" Of course the Doc had denied that such a thing as a Ku Klux dance ticket exists, and there had been no dancing while the Doc was there. Dance tickets are tickets to Hell—and not return tickets; and "Sixty percent of the fallen women get that way from dancing! . . . Did any of you folks ever know a dancer that was really a good Christian?" Quite unexpectedly, some courageous Kluxer in a far automobile raised an affirmative hand. "*Thank you!*" snapped the Doc before dropping the subject. Then he said his say favoring blue Sundays,

without considering what a jolly day he was making of this one.

And then he asked everyone present to raise his or her right hand and repeat after him an awful oath. It started like this: "I . . . dedicate and rededicate, consecrate and reconsecrate . . . to the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." And it took in all the Klan's animosities and barbarities. But it wasn't anything like the Doc's personal statements. He spilled a few more golden words and verbal pearls into the deepening night, with its waxing rainy wind and increasing lightning. Then he had a Klavaliere pass a collection plate, and repeated his epigram of the afternoon concerning anyone who didn't come across being dead broke.

Soon after the money was caged, the Doc and lady got into their car, but not until she and other Kouriers had invited me to attend the revivals that will soon be held on that field. I told them honestly what I was there for, and where I suppose I'll spend Eternity, and declined their invitations. They told me, "We should thank God that He lets us live and gives us this beautiful world!" And, of a truth, the dark cross against the dark sky, and the now-bleak pavilion with its little red cross that was still aglow, did have a certain demoniac beauty. The Doc came and shook hands with me again before he went, and told me, confidentially, while he shook his head pessimistically at an angry storm-cloud that loomed to the north, that he was afraid he and the Mrs. would have a nasty ride of it. On my bicycle, I followed his car out to the highway.

A CLOSE-UP OF A K. K. K. FESTIVAL

By FRED BAIR

Last night I went to a Ku Klux festival. It had been a very rainy Saturday, and so the thing had to be pulled off inside—in a “hall” over a store—where a cross could not be burned very well. The Klan’s original intentions are revealed by this circular which was thrown on all the doorsteps of the town in question:

K. K. K.

Big Festival and Kake Walk

LEMOYNE BASE BALL PARK

Saturday, June 4, 1927

A Big Time for All

Kome Bring Your Friends

Good Speaking
Plenty of EatsKlavalier Drills
Free ParkingOther Amusements
Kome—Kreep—Kraul

ONE AND ALL

Lemoyme is the little burg of six or seven thousand across the river from Harrisburg, Pa., it is the State Capitol’s garbage-bucket on the West Shore of the Susquehanna. Most of its inhabitants cross the toll-bridge each morning to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad, in Swift’s packinghouse, or in the Steel Mills.

I went up the crooked steps to the festival at about 7 p. m. It had been scheduled for sundown at the baseball park—the hour when white sheets and burning crosses begin to look

bunk, and to state how much of the baseball park program was to be pulled off in spite of God's disapproving deluge. He would look secretive and say very non-committally that *maybe* there would be some speeches later. Then he would look at me as though he thought I ought to buy some of the fat man's ice cream, and offer me another green card. I would show him the one I already had and ask him what it signified. It had been given me for nothing: was it a sort of complimentary ticket of admission? He would pass it back to me very solemnly, his attitude: if you aren't a member, that is all yuh know and all yuh need to know, until yuh join up. The rank and file of Klansmen, for all their blatant bluster, are not always so very courageously outspoken.

The only thing that happened during the first half hour was that someone struck up a tune on the piano; I later learned that it was called "The Old Rugged Cross," and that it was supposed to be "stirring." In the meantime, one of the wary fellows to whom I talked did such a daring thing for the good of the cause as to get out several issues of *The Fellowship Forum*, an anti-Papist paper published in Washington, D. C., and hand them to me. But when I asked him whether it was a Klan organ, he shied as though I were trying to back him into a trap. Yet, when he found that I was acquainted with one of the members of his section of the Klan, he started very timidly to spit out a lot of highly volatile propaganda, and then went for one of his officers to come and get my name and address to send me their

literature. I looked over the papers. Here are a few of the scare-heads: *Rome plans for 'When Al is President'—Hierarchy floods Gotham with prapaganda pushing Al Smith for President—Vatican disappointed at results of Smith's reply to Marshall open letter—Romanist says America must bow to Vatican—Frank Papal writer tells secret hopes of hierarchy to control U. S.—Religion injected into Baltimore campaign as test of Smith's chances—Fiendish act of foe sends scores to death by dynamite blast under public school.* This last, for which the sub-title was "Enraged at increase in school tax for enlarging educational plant, Andrew Kehoe, Romanist Treasurer of school board, blows up building, send half hundred to death, at Bath, Michigan," was the particular atrocity that, with "Lolypops for ladies," constituted the present subject of conversation.

I was about ready to clear out in disgust, when a wheezing Kluxer came thumping up the aisle with a pulpit hugged against his heaving bosom, and dumped it on the floor within three yards of where I stood. It looked like a crate draped with bunting. The Lemoyne Griffinlet, or whatever they call a village chieftain, got up and introduced the visitors from Wilkes-Barre who would do the speaking -- Rev. Gentles and Rev. Hawes.

Rev. Gentles came first. For fifteen minutes he bragged and proclaimed that he was not a lecture-parson; instead of lecturing, he *preached the gospel!* Then he steamed into the members of the Klan who are only after a good time, burning crosses and croaking the

enemy, without having had a bath in the blood of the lamb. It soon became apparent that the Catholics, rather than the Jews and Negroes, are the Klan's choice-of-game just at present. Satan, Al Smith and Beelzebub are to Hell what Jehovah, Jesus and the Holy Ghost are to Heaven. The old adultery and seduction charges were brought out and laid at the doors of the Catholic clergy. He wanted it to be understood that he bore the Catholics no ill will, and if there was any person in the audience who hated the Knights of Columbus as man to man, he wanted that person to get that hatred out of his system *right away*. It is only against an *evil principle* that good Klansmen are to battle. The worst menace is the Catholic teacher in the Public School; and, as he saw it, the Catholic School is virtually a normal school for the turning out of public-school teachers whose passion it is to pollute their innocent Protestant charges with Papist propaganda. Rev. Gentles' office, or studio, or stained-glass window, or something, overlooks a convent wall, in Wilkes-Barre. How his heart aches when he looks down and sees the poor little children of Rome herded by sisters robed in black! "They should be in the hands of the women of the Ku Klux Klan robed in white!" he yelled righteously—and got the applause of the ladies licking lollypops.

He made a hen-like fuss about the separation of Church and State (and Church and school) being a portion of the Divine Plan. From this insincerity, he trailed off into even deeper bogs of bosh. He made a tirade against the walls

that intersect the sects—the Protestant sects. His was not the modernist Christian's weakening of the Protestant fortress walls to the heathen beliefs of Italy and Asia; no, no, he wanted the interdenominational walls of the fortress to be abandoned so that the outer walls would be more doughtily garrisoned. All those, he averred, who stick tight in one church, Baptist, Methodist, or whatever, are going to be left behind when the Archangel comes for the few good Protestants who do not quibble over the number of drops required to sprinkle, or duck, a little sinner to his salvation. Most of these good Protestants, he further declared, belong to the Ku Klux Klan.

But, once again, he wanted it distinctly understood that he had no personal enmity toward anyone. He had even helped the child-polluting nuns of the aforementioned convent to circumvent bad trolley-service by driving them somewhere or other in his car, and trying to convert them to Protestantism on the way, and I don't know what else. It was even his boast that the Catholic priests recognized his righteousness. He had gone into a Catholic church for something or other one time, and as he was leaving, the Father asked him, "Will you take my blessing?" and he had answered right jauntily, "Yes; and you take mine!" We of the audience laughed, for we could tell by his tone of voice what he had meant by that. He had meant, "Yes; and you go to Hell!" With this, Rev. Gentles gave place to Rev. Hawes.

Rev. Hawes was even less gentle than Rev.

Gentles. And he had even a more pronounced mania for swimming in the blood of the lamb. He was, in type, as much a politician as a creature of the cloth and Cross. He had an alderman's abdomen and a policeman's pins. And he perspired as much as an alderman and a policeman put together. So it was rather droll to hear him, right at the first jump, plunge into the rottenness of Papal politics. He summed up the situation thus: Twelve and a half percent of the populations of towns under ten thousand are Catholics. *Seventy-five* percent of the policemen in towns under ten thousand are Catholics! And *eighty* percent of the firemen in towns under ten thousand are Catholics! This flabbergasting statement he followed up with a fabulous tale that demonstrated Abe Lincoln's merciless hatred for the followers of the Pope. Then he went after Christopher Columbus. He said that it's a lie that Columbus discovered America. I thought I knew what he was going to spring. I thought that by some ironic freak of chance he must have gotten hold of a recent article on exploration by Vilhjalmur Stefanson, that wasn't published in a periodical for parsons and policemen. But I was wrong. He said "The Pilgrims discovered America in 1620! They came over here to find a home! Columbus was just sailin' around for a queen! He didn't discover America! God kept America for the Pilgrims! And the Pilgrims was Protestants! Columbus landed down in the West Indies! The Catholics didn't have nothing to do with discovering

America! And they don't belong here, neither! Send them back where they come from!"

But Rev. Hawes and his captivating grammar were capable of getting themselves into a far more genial mood. One of his jokes had an overtone which neither he nor his audience seemed to catch. I will tersely relate it for the overtone. A Ku Klux speechifier once did so bold a thing as to go to a town presided over by a Catholic mayor, and ask the mayor if he could conduct a meeting there. The mayor wanted to know what kind of meeting. "Ku Klux Klan," was the answer. The mayor put down his head and thought a while, and then said, "Yes, if you'll hold it in the place I want you to, and use the platform I provide." The Klansman agreed; and the mayor hauled him in his automobile almost out of town, and then said, "D'y'see that field? Well, that field's mine, and that's where yuh kin hold yer meeting. And yer platform's that manure-pile over there." The Klansman amiably thanked him, and proceeded to advertise the meeting. When the big night came, he vigorously climbed up on the dung-pile, and waded around in it with a gusto while he spread his oratory. And after every other sentence of propaganda, he would express his thanks to the mayor for being so generous. At the close of the meeting, he declared that this mayor had given him his first opportunity to speak from a Knights of Columbus platform. The moral of this story, said Rev. Hawes, is that you can't get ahead of the Klan. The real moral evaded him completely, the grim, heathenish Æsopian moral: that the

appetites of superficially-disagreeing Christian sects are basically homogeneous. This story, of course, may have been used by other partisans before the Ku Klux Klan rose from the grave.

Rev. Hawes had his inevitable whacks at evolution and Clarence Darrow's monkey blood. Then he told an ape story that I had never heard before. "Once there was an ole Indian chief, and the Indians shot an ape and brung it to him. They had never seen an ape before, and they couldn't understand it. So they stood around it in a circle trying to find out what it was, until the sun went down. And the next morning they come out of the wigwams and stood around it in a circle again, until they got tired trying to find out what it was and went away. Only the ole chief remained. After awhile he got impatient and sat down beside it and took hold of its head. He turned its head round and round and looked at it for a long time. Then he pointed to a hill and says, 'Yes; I know now. I look over hill, and see suns and suns and suns and suns—and moons and moons and moons and moons—and suns and suns and suns and suns—and moons and moons and moons and moons.' A Jew had married a Catholic." Rev. Hawes had to laugh at this one himself, and the ladies laughed so hard that one of them choked on her lolypop. What the heathenish *Æsopian* moral was this time, I won't attempt to state.

Rev. Hawes had, a great surprise for me. I had never known that the Protestant's hatred of the Catholic was extended to the Catholic's

crucifix. Do not Methodist and Episcopalian ladies sometimes wear crucifixes around their necks? But to this Klux person, a cross with a carcass on it is a sacrilege. He said, "When we burn a cross, we try to make it burn as red as we can." (He didn't say, but I suppose he meant, as red as the blood of the lamb.) "You go to a Catholic graveyard, and what do you see? A *dead* Christ! We stand for a *living* Christ!" Then he went on to recount, in words that would set both your nerves and teeth on edge, the eligibilities of a Christ that is still on Calvary, writhing, wriggling, and with blood spurting out of his side. That seems to be the Ku Kluxer's favorite beverage at the Feast of Soul, not the cold, scabby, wormy gore that the Catholics and back-water Protestants imbibe at their petrified communions, but the fresh, hot blood of a Christ that is still in His agony.

Rev. Hawes made a gigantic to do about the preparation for war that is going on behind the inscrutable walls of Catholic institutions. He told of the vast quantities of guns and ammunition that are stored in secret rooms. "How do we know? How do we know there are three K's on the bottom of that flag over there! Because a *Klansman* was on *that* job!"

He didn't seem to hate the Negroes quite as much as might have been expected. Their doings furnished him with such a multitude of jokes, that, even he saw the incongruity that would go with his desire to string them up. He expressed his attitude toward them in this wise: "Mr. Nigger, we haven't nothing against you so long as you ain't ornery. We'll help you

build your churches and get an education. We aren't after making you a slave again. We're your friends. *But, Mr. Nigger! You keep that black blood in your own wrist!*" This attitude may sound all right to many fair-minded persons who know little of human nature, and it is held by as large a percentage of Negroes as of Whites. But when it is considered what just such men as this Reverend are capable of under certain circumstances, this rhetoric takes on the hue of hypocrisy.

One of the Reverend's Negro stories—a typical one—ran thus: A colored parson, whose church was endangered by a heavy mortgage, was just warming up to the happiness-point in her sermon, one Sunday, when ten Kluxers in their sheets and pillow cases stole in through the door and up to the pulpit, five on either side of the church. When their intrusion dawned on the congregation, it was verily a scared bunch. The parson, from his hair down to his frock-coat, turned to the color of the Klansmen's gowns. But the Kluxers told him to have no fear. And when the first Kluxer on the right got up to the altar, he handed the parson a check for the amount of the mortgage. And then the first Kluxer on the left handed him a check for a hundred dollars to put the church on its legs. When the Klansmen had withdrawn, and the parson had regained his wits, he exclaimed to his congregation. 'If dat's what dem Ku Klux Klans am foh, Ah wants you all to join!'"

Such, declared the Caucasian Rev., is the

manner in which the Klan treats "niggers who are good, humble Christians."

During all this, and a great deal more that would have no savor unless I could remember it verbatim and accompany it with moving pictures of the Reverend's gestures, he was cavorting, literally in circles, around his portable pulpit. His range was from ten feet behind it to ten feet ahead of it. He had taken off his vest early in the game. And the way he perspired was uncivil, if not indecent. This one kept the Lemoyne Griffinlet on the jump refilling his glass of water; and the ribald style in which he would raise it from the pulpit and pour it down his beak made the business look like old-time boozing across the bar. On one of his rump-first plunges from fore to aft, he banged back into the pulpit so vehemently that pulpit and parson nearly toppled over together, and the water was upset on the Star-Spangled Banner.

The pulpit also came in handy for another sort of Barnumism. The Rev. wanted to refute the idea that the Klan, in limiting its membership to Protestant Nordics, is more snobbishly exclusive than are the secret orders of the enemy. So, turn by turn, he went up to the doors of those orders and applied for admission: Knights of Columbus, Black Hand, Jewish, Colored and Mohammedan. He thumped on the mimic portals as resolutely as the knights of romance used to thump on the gates of hostile castles with the butt-ends of their weapons. And everywhere he got the bounce.

Rev. Hawes was even more ecstatically possessed with visions of the Savior's Second Com-

ing than was Rev. Gentles. He talked nearly as much about Gabriel's horn as about the fiery cross and the blood of the lamb. He drew lightning from the electricity of the yet-dormant Judgment Day by proclaiming that it might come that night, while we were still at the festival, listening to him spiel. I'll bet that if some Ku Kluxer had, at that moment, come up the crooked stairs blowing a bugle, the sound thereof would have turned the festival into a panic.

Dramatically leaving the floor to the Archangel, Rev. Hawes sank exhausted. Then the Lemoyne chieftain got up, with vague apologies for himself, like a bartender who takes the floor when his betters have all gone under the tables. He made announcements, and told about the new K. K. K. building that is under construction somewhere around, for which the festival was intended to raise money. He asked us to cram ourselves up to our epiglottises with the stuff the fat man was selling, and to please drop whatever change we had left into the contribution-box at the head of the stairs. And then he proceeded to outline more elaborate methods of donation in which we were at liberty to indulge ourselves. I was rather curious to see whether the benches and tables would presently be shoved back against the walls and the cakes walked for, or whether the cakes would be sold at auction. But, hearing that the Klavalier drills were to be postponed until another festival which is to be held within the next week or two—when, God willing, the fiery cross will burn with its real, red, living, honest

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to-Jesus—, I decided to get out of the hall while the getting was good, for the Lemoyne Griffinglet was sending up the hue and cry for new members in a voice that was far more momentous than that of his timid flunkies. As I got up to go, the sweating Rev. Hawes was about to be resuscitated with a basin of soup.

THE DEFENDERS OF K. K. K. PURITY GO
TO JAIL

By V. L. LAMAR

The Ku Klux Klan and its membership seems to have a talent for keeping themselves embroiled in the courts and the newspapers, and the Alabama Klaverns, while not as much in the headlines as the soiled knights of Indiana, are no exceptions to the rule.

A group of Tarrant City Klavaliars recently drove over to Oneonta to assist the militant Protestants of the community by conducting a church service for them. An orphan youth, Jeff Calloway, got on their nerves. He had a bottle of liquor on his person and he hung around in front of the church in a way that would make any loyal Klucker's blood boil. That being the case, there was nothing to do but take the friendless lad into the woods and "learn him a lesson." This the gallant gentlemen of the hood proceeded to do. They assisted Jeff into a car which was driven to a secluded spot, then Jeff was allowed to alight and receive an unmerciful lashing. They also drank his whiskey for him. As a result of this sportive evening, Calloway's back was a mass of stripes and bruises and cuts for weeks after.

Doubtless little more would have been heard of the matter, for floggings have a habit of hushing themselves up. If someone raises a lot of racket about a whipping he may find

himself the next victim; at any rate he will become anathema to the hundred percenters of his community. But a reporter got wind of the story, and an account of it appeared in the Birmingham papers. About this time Grover C. Hall, editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser*, was wondering what the morrow's editorial would be about, and he saw in this flogging a theme.

Mr. Hall ripped into the heart of the thing, called on the Governor and the Attorney General to see that the guilty ones were punished, and delivered himself of a valuable dissertation on the evils of mob rule. The next day he was just getting his wind, and he decided to make a series of it. He returned to the charge with new vigor and a lively vocabulary. He upbraided the editors of the religious press of the state for their preoccupation with prohibition when such things as this were going on unpunished. He called on the weekly papers to take up the fight. Most of the state press took up his invitation and called for indictments and convictions. A few, however, saw here an opportunity to allow that the *Advertiser* was throwing up a smoke screen in favor of Al Smith; it was all a very wet Romanist plot.

The work was done, however. Governor Bibb Graves had responded at once by sending state law enforcement officers to investigate. Attorney General McCall conducted the prosecution in person. Both McCall and Graves are Klansmen and owe their present positions to Klan support, but they did not permit this to interfere with their efforts. In a remarkably

short time seven men had been tried and convicted of kidnaping and flogging Jeff Callo-way. Two received eight to ten-year sentences; four were sentenced to six months and fined \$500 each; the other was fined \$500 and received a suspended sentence. As they were all about equally guilty, there seems to be some discrepancy in the severity of the sentences, but there is a probability that the two receiving the hardest terms will not serve the full eight to ten years.

Some Klansmen, notably the Grand Dragon of Alabama, James Esdale, seemed intent on saving the seven Klavaliars of Tarrant City, their actions indicating that flogging is a necessary evil and therefore to be condoned. It is fortunate that the state had been able to demonstrate that the law has other ideas about the rule of mob and lash. Perhaps the next Alabaman who wants to thrash a troublesome neighbor will hesitate before he organizes his whipping party; even the defenders of public decency may land in jail.

The Klan survives the publicity with just a little more mud on its fair name. It thrives on notoriety.