

When the Klan Rules

The Business of "Kluxing"

By STANLEY FROST

THOUGH the sins of the Klan be as scarlet, yet the world will always owe it a little something for giving us the verb "to klux," with its derivatives "kluxing" and "kluxer." They enrich the language. We have long needed some word to express the vociferous rounding up of the populace, which is one of our great National activities. "Kluxing" does it to a nicety; not merely because of the barnyard suggestion in the sound of the word, but because of its brevity, its implied humor, its onomatopoeic fitness. Our American air is already reverberant with the ululations of various gentlemen aiming at a majority of noses next June or next November; time, trouble, and brain fag will be saved now that we can lump all their varied activities under the thrilling name of "kluxing."

The Ku Klux Klan has brought recruiting to a point of efficiency which is almost scientifically perfect and far beyond any similar system. No matter how much credit is given to the appeal made by its ideals and purposes, these could not propagate themselves. It is great skill in kluxing that has spread them so far and so fast.

Much of the Klan propaganda needs very little mention, as it is entirely in harmony with the ideals and professions already reported. In the addresses of its leading speakers and in the columns of the publications controlled by its National officers one finds much that is fine and stimulating and little that can be construed as an appeal to hatred even by the most bitter critic. Its proposals and assumptions are of course debatable; the foundation on "native, white, Protestant supremacy" is always present; but within those bounds the appeal is to the best side of patriotism and religious devotion and there is no inconsistency and no sign of hypocrisy. It seems that the effect of this form of propaganda must be on the whole stimulating and inspiring. It is far below abstract idealism, but almost as far above average thought and practice.

But this is only one side of the Klan appeal. There is another side which fosters and stimulates tremendous evils. In fact, in turning from the theory and ideals of the Klan, with which these articles have so far been concerned, to its actual operation, we find these evils in every field. The actual practices of klans

"THEORY and practice," as John Hay once remarked, "don't gee." Stanley Frost in this article discusses the philosophy behind the Klan and tells the methods of putting this philosophy into practice. It is the sixth of a series of independent but related articles on the growth and meaning of the Ku Klux Klan

and of individual klansmen fall far short of the professions made; faults appear of which there is no hint in the platforms; there are discrepancies so great that it is very easy to discredit all talk of ideals and high aims as the merest camouflage. This verdict would be unavoidable if it were not that evidences of high aims and idealism do also appear. The same thing is true in some degree of every organization—there are many men who quite sincerely condemn every church and Christianity as a whole on just these grounds. The Klan is at least as fallible in its workings as the churches!

Judgment will largely depend in the end on the point of view. It is possible to think of the Klan as actually an idealistic—if often mistaken—body, struggling to maintain its high aims against the faults and mistakes and selfishness and sometimes downright criminality of its agents and members, and wrestling with the compromises which must be made by any organization if it is to gain the strength for effective action. There are always such compromises; a recent similar case was that of Roosevelt, who in organizing his Progressive Party used many discredited politicians, riffraff, down-and-outs, and "the lunatic fringe." The Klan has all these elements in it.

It is just as easy, because of these same facts, to decide that the Klan's professions are purely hypocritical, that its hidden purposes are as evil as imagination can conceive, that the real control lies with the most vicious elements, that all its decent actions are dust thrown in the eyes of opinion, and that it is only in its worst deeds that it has dared to drop its disguise and act as it really desires and as it would act everywhere if it dared. This belief is of course very common; it

seems to have about the same degree of reason as the one mentioned in the last article, that the Catholic Church will resume burning Protestants at the stake whenever it dares. The fact seems to be that the Klan, like every other body, has both idealists and crooks, and that there is struggle between them.

It is certain that, just as the Klan appears at its best when talking of ideals and purposes, it appears at its worst in its day-to-day workings. The compromises or revelations, mistakes or vice—you can take your choice—which show in actual operation are far below its own standards.

Farthest of all, perhaps, is its work of recruiting—its "kluxing." Recruiting seems to be a business which always does bring out the worst in any man or organization, since it is so easy to believe that almost any kind of support is worth getting for the sake of "the larger cause," and that almost any means is justified also for that cause. I recall one utterly devoted head of a missionary college who will be damned for all eternity if half the stories told of his lies and subterfuges in enlisting workers are true! I have known of no leader of any cause who ever refused support, however vicious, if only it would actually work for the object he aimed at. Since this is true of admittedly great movements and of splendid leaders, the Klan can hardly be expected to do better.

One qualification should be made, not only in regard to this report on the Klan's recruiting methods, but in regard to all my reports on its actual workings. It is possible to say that certain good or bad things have been done by the Klan, but it is not possible to strike an average. In a body of such size and such secrecy nothing less than omniscience can determine on which side the balance stands, for, no matter how much is learned, there will always be much that has not been discovered. I can only say this—and I realize that it has too little weight to determine even my own opinion—that so far as my own observations go, and in spite of the confusing mixture of good and bad in many things, the useful actions of the Klan seem on the whole to outnumber the bad, and the general level of Klan activity seems to be improving considerably.

This of course is outside any question of the good or evil in the Klan movement

of itself. And also it is aside from the fact that the Klan cannot escape responsibility for the evils which exist, or at least for the burden of proof of lack of responsibility, since it uses an organization and a type of propaganda which make those evils easy.

THE kluxing system of the Klan was invented by Edward Young Clark, the same whose huge profits were one of the main targets in the Congressional inquiry two years ago, whose departure from the Klan was accelerated when Dr. Evans and the reform group took charge, and who recently offered to help President Coolidge expose the Klan. Its simple efficiency stamps him as almost a genius.

At the head of the kluxers is the Imperial Wizard; each State is in charge of a "king kleagle," who employs the field kleagles. These field kleagles each get \$4 a head for every member enrolled; the king kleagles get \$2 a head, and the balance of the \$10 initiation fee goes to the Imperial treasury. Each pays his own expenses. The Imperial government supplies high-grade speakers in large number, paying their salaries. The king kleagles pay the expenses of the speakers in their territories, the salaries and expenses of minor speakers, office workers, and organization in general; the field men pay their own costs. The whole army is spurred on and trained by special instructors and schools, along the lines of any modern selling organization.

The system is naturally immensely effective—far more than any system of paying straight salaries would be. It keeps each man on his toes every minute, stimulates his salesmanship and ingenuity to the utmost, eliminates unsuccessful men promptly, and leaves no room for discord. It has resulted in what seems the best selling organization in America.

From its very nature it has two great faults. The first is the chance that some of the kleagles will make enormous profits, that the whole system will appear as a profit-making scheme, mulcting the "suckers" of their \$10 "klectoken," and providing comfortable living for a large number of loafers. This is at least half true, but then every organized movement is more or less open to the same charges; the Red Cross, the charity organizations, Y. M. C. A., and all the rest are accused in the same way.

The actual profits of the kleagles do not seem to be very large. Klan men tell of three or four who have made around \$50,000 a year by unusually successful campaigns, but the average is stated to be under \$5,000. I cannot of course guarantee these figures, but they check up fairly well with what I have been able to learn of the number of en-

rollments. The total amount gathered and mostly spent in propaganda in the last year is staggering—around \$30,000,000. With such funds, it is no wonder the Klan grows fast!

A far more serious fault is the pressure which this system puts on kleagles to take in every member they can get and to use every kind of an argument that may work. Apparently they do. I have not learned of a single case where a kleagle refused a member—who had \$10—no matter how vicious or dangerous he might be. And there are reports, wherever the Klan organizers are active, of the use of the most abominable forms of appeal. In every case I have known of when such conditions were reported to headquarters prompt action was taken. But the system of itself stimulates just such abuses. It is needless to point out that they give the lie to every ideal the Klan professes.

Dr. Evans declares that these evils carry their own corrective. He says:

"This is a matter that has been a problem to all executives, and even today there is debate as to the better form—straight commission, salary and commission, or salary only. Possibly the present system has a tendency to make kleagles accept undesirable individuals. But it has been our experience thus far in the new order of things that kleagles very quickly learn that the successful development of a particular unit of organization depends on the high class of the individuals that form the nucleus around which they build. Many of them have found, much to their regret, that they have inadvertently let an undesirable individual slip in. Immediately they have found a slowing up in their organization work, and sometimes we have had to send other kleagles before we found the cause.

"The experience of the kleagles has been—and this is quite true—that they guard the membership very closely, realizing that undesirable individuals retard propagation. Therefore the commission system really does not bring about the condition that might generally be expected to follow. Further, the surest way for a kleagle to make certain of his discharge would be to admit an unworthy man or to spread propaganda not in harmony with the principles of the organization."

There is undoubtedly some truth in this, but it fails to cover two cases: first, places where the general tone of a community is so low that the profits will be greater if the lower elements are organized instead of the better; and, second, cases where a few extra dollars can be made by slipping in undesirables after the organization is well started. The

evidence which has come to me all indicates that both these things do occur, that a considerable number of vicious types are admitted, and that in some communities the Klan is composed almost entirely of the lower elements. As previously stated, I cannot give the average, though it does seem to be improving, and is much better in the States more recently organized by the Klan.

The propaganda of the Klan takes three main forms. First is that of the speakers. Such speeches as I have heard or of which I have full reports are open to very little criticism. They follow the lines of the Klan appeal already reported—better government, better citizenship, patriotism and religion in general, and "native, white, Protestant supremacy." They have been fine, spirited, balanced, eloquent, but without any attempt to stir prejudice or appeal to hatred except what comes from the subject itself. They are as good, or as bad, as the Klan movement at its best.

The published propaganda—the Klan press—is far different, however. There are published some thirty Klan papers, with a combined circulation of more than a million—another testimonial to the strength of the movement. The style of most of these publications is execrable, but perhaps no worse than the general run of country weeklies. Most of their matter is about the same, except that they add material along the lines of Christian and patriotic idealism of about the intellectual level of a Brisbane editorial.

IN addition, however, almost all of them carry very definite appeals to hatred and prejudice, almost always against the Catholics. This is crude, raw, sometimes indecent. A few samples will illustrate.

The "Protestant Standard," of Merryville, Louisiana, carries these headlines: "Klan Calls Rome's Hand in Oklahoma. Jesuit Judases Jeopardize American Life and Liberty. Pope Uses Walton in Effort to Bring Back Inquisition of Dark Ages." The text shows that Walton is merely having the Klan investigated by courts martial!

The "Good Citizen," of Zarephath, New Jersey, says in its editorial on "The Rising of the Ku Klux Klan:" "Now Rome has come across the great sea with her un-American hordes, to sweep away Protestantism as with a flood. For a time she was restrained, but she grows bolder in her assaults on Protestant institutions, in her efforts to make this country subserve the purposes of the Vatican."

The "Patriot," published in St. Louis, tells how "Syracuse, N. Y., Patriots

Rally to Defend Public Schools from Rome-Controlled Politicians."

The "Arkansas Traveller," of Little Rock, prints under the caption of "Lincoln's Warning" a statement beginning: "I do not pretend to be a prophet. But though not a prophet, I see a very dark cloud on our horizon. That dark cloud is coming from Rome. . . . A cyclone such as the world has never seen will pass over the country, spreading ruin and desolation from north to south." There is nothing to show what "Lincoln" said this, or when.

Since The Outlook is involved, I will finish the sampling with an item from the "Texas 100 Per Cent American." Under the heading

"LIES—LIES—LIES"

editorially addressing a priest who had written to The Outlook in defense of the Catholic Church, this Texas kluxer says:

Reverend Sir.

Now, Reverend Sir, you who wears his collar backward like a mule, that you have denied that the Jesuit Order, or the entire Catholic world for that matter, does not hold to the doctrine that the end justified the means, we should like for you to deny some other things.

Did Your Church Cremate Joan of Arc?

Was Joan of Arc burned as a heretic by your fanatical followers, or rather those who led your church in the centuries past?

Deny that if you can.

Then, after she had been burned at the stake for being heretical, why did your church in these latter days canonize her?

Come on, Rome, we are asking you!

THERE is any quantity of such stuff. It reminds one somewhat of the propaganda of the Know-Nothings, though it is far milder, for they filled the country with supposed confessions of monks and nuns, with sickeningly illustrated brochures on the Inquisition and on martyrdom, and similar horrors. This lessened virulence is probably encouraging, but the stuff is more than bad enough.

Klan officials deny responsibility for these publications, except for the "Fiery Cross" and the "Night-Hawk," its official organs, which are not subject to the same criticisms. The Klan has no control over these raging unofficial sheets, its leaders declare, and the editors are often not even Klansmen, but are merely seeking a profit by catering to Klan feeling. This is likely true; yet the very defense is an admission of the widespread religious prejudice in the Klan ranks, since there is profit in such screeds.

This seems to be another of the situa-

tions which the present régime inherited and has not yet straightened out. Some efforts, with small success, were made last spring and summer to tone down the rabid Klan press. Now a new plan is under way; Milton Elrod, an Indianan, who of all the Klansmen I have met is most frank to admit faults and urge remedies, has been appointed to organize a string of Klan papers throughout the country which shall be under absolute control and shall reform or drive out the present lot. When that has been done, it is likely that a very different verdict would be rendered on the Klan press. At present "blatherskite" seems about the kindest adjective that can be used.

THE third type of propaganda is the "whispers." As with any kind of whispering propaganda, it is practically impossible to prove authorship. But there are certain whispers which appear so regularly wherever the Klan activity is great that they must be considered part of the campaign, either as deliberate promulgations or as a natural undertone.

Most of these are revivals of the standard mythology about the Roman Church; stories that a rifle is buried under a Catholic church or under the Knights of Columbus hall whenever a Catholic boy is born; that the Knights of Columbus hold secret drills, that priests seduce women at confessional, and so forth. There are added current accusations: that the Catholic vote is controlled by the priests and used to corrupt political officials; that there is a Papal conspiracy to get control of America, as shown by the plan to move the Vatican to America (the denial from Rome has not stopped this story); that there is a Catholic-Jewish alliance aiming at control of the public schools, which has been so successful that in New York City no Protestant can reach high office in the schools; and that the criticism of the Y. M. C. A. during the war was started by the Catholics and Jews, the former under orders from Rome. This last whisper has had the interesting result of greatly increasing the prosperity of the "Y" in some places.

There are fewer whispers about the Jews, and what there are mostly follow the charges made by the Dearborn "Independent," alleging a world-wide Jewish money conspiracy, Jewish backing for revolutionary movements, and Jewish ambitions for control of America. The large number of Jewish advisers around Wilson when he was President are cited, and there are very dirty whispers to account for the influence they had with him and with other public men. Finally, Jews, Catholics to a lesser extent, and aliens in general are credited with a

natural pre-eminence in crime, vice, and the corruption of officials.

One particular whisper is interesting enough to repeat in detail. It has to do with the dollar bills of the issue of 1917, the ones bearing a portrait of Washington. This bill is supposed to have been covered with Catholic symbols as a result of a defiant and impudent scheme of Catholics in the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. On its face, according to the whisper, there are a portrait of some Pope in the upper left corner decorations, various hailing and recognition signals of the Knights of Columbus being made by members of the group depicting the discovery of America by Columbus, and some snakes and a portrait of St. Patrick in the lower left corner decorations. On the reverse the decorations of the ornate "E's" are supposed to show the Catholic cross, the big figure "1" is declared to represent a crozier, the decoration over it a bishop's miter, and so forth. The whole idea is that the bill symbolizes the watchful eye which the Popes have had on America from the moment of its discovery, and their intention of dominating it. The story goes on that when President Harding discovered the profanation he discharged the head of the Bureau.

This is most effective propaganda. The bill actually is a curious one; it takes no great imagination to see several of the things alleged. It is even true that the Bureau head was discharged, though it was for getting the serial numbers on Liberty Bonds mixed up. But hundreds of thousands believe the story perfectly, and every good Klansman, when he gets one of these bills, tears off the corner with the "Pope's picture." It is amazing that so silly a performance—supposing it to be true—could cause such furor, yet thousands take it as proof that Catholics are disloyal, and expect the Pope to rule America!

Before dropping these phases of kluxing, it should be noted that the counter-propaganda is every bit as bad as that of the Klan in its worst phases. The publications, the whispers, the covert and unproved charges, the defamation—all are unspeakable. The counter-prejudice even goes so far that a very solemn New York paper, after many well-justified attacks on Klan lawlessness, comes out with a justification of the mobbing of a Klan delegation because it tried to put a wreath on a soldiers' monument! Yet it was the Klan itself that called out all these devils of prejudice, and it must bear much of the blame even when they turn on it.

Two more things about Klan propaganda. First, it is highly adaptable. It makes use of resentment against alien farmers in Ohio, against Sabbath viola-

tion in Indiana, bootlegging in Kansas, alien labor in the factories, Catholic office-holders where there are any—and also where there are not!—a Jew's defense of unrestricted immigration, high taxes, high railway rates, grafting contractors, parochial schools, the latest local scandal, use of any and every resentment that is handy. The kleagles everywhere get inside the community psychology.

The second point is that opposition is of great value to the Klan, especially illegal or violent opposition. Every such case, and there are many, is used to prove the perversion of Americanism and the domination of officials by Catholics, Jews, or aliens. The fact that a boy was fined \$100 for selling a copy of the "Fiery Cross" was one of the best talking points in the campaign that gave the Klan half a million members in Indiana. The attacks on Klan parades in several places brought swarms of recruits. "If we could have a riot a week, we'd own the country in a year," one Klan organizer told me, and he gave figures to prove it. Almost all Klansmen religiously believe that these attacks were ordered by Catholic priests, a sort of religious persecution, and were also ordered stopped because they failed to check the Klan.

Curiously, this has had a reaction somewhat favorable to the Catholics, for, as one Klan official said, "If they're fools enough to do a thing like that, they can't really be very dangerous." I assured him that I didn't believe the Church was responsible, but do not know yet whether my remark hurt or helped the Klan—assuming that I convinced him.

Thus the evidence seems conclusive that the business of kluxing carries with it not only stimulation of patriotism and of a sense of civic duty, but very grave evils. These include the appeal to and

THE next article, "The Lure of the White Masks," will take up the other side of the growth of the Klan, the reasons, aims, and states of mind which lead men to join it. There is one very powerful motive, which does not appear in either the propaganda or the platform of the Klan—the very common passion for removing moles from the eyes of one's neighbors.

stimulation of hatred and prejudice, the circulation of stories some of which are untrue and all of which are calculated to increase class solidarity and National division, and the gathering in of all kinds of riffraff who cannot possibly sympathize with the high aims the Klan professes. The Klan claims that it regenerates and uses such men. Even so, many evils remain; evils which it is nothing less than criminal to foster if the Klan is run for either profit or personal power, as so many believe.

Even if the Klan's own statement of its purposes be accepted, it is still possible to condone these evils on only one ground: that its purposes are high enough, its chance of achieving them good enough, and the incidental reforms it makes important enough to offset the damage it does. This plea has to be made for every organized movement, and the Klan is certainly entitled to whatever benefit it may give. It can also plead in defense the efforts it is making to suppress these evils, and if it should succeed in stamping them out, as it has practically stamped out violence, its position would be immensely strengthened. But there would always remain all the disruptive force implied in its platform of "native, white, Protestant supremacy."

Women in Politics

By MAYME OBER PEAK

This article is based on a series of interviews with the outstanding women leaders of America. It includes women who are high in the councils of the old parties and women who have refused to affiliate with the great political parties of the past

WHERE there's a woman, according to the old theory, there's a triangle. Which seems to hold good in politics. But not in the matter of sex. Women vow that sex shall not enter politics. They vote as citizens, not women. Being women, however, they are naturally argumentative, and are divided in their opinion as to the best way to make their vote count.

Given an outlook beyond the narrow confines of home, women were astonished to find politics so closely allied with other things. It came as a surprise to them to learn that politics meant street laws, ash barrels, speeding laws, the school, the movie, and the playground; that politics, as Kathleen Norris aptly puts it, "was not a mysterious big machine turning vaguely somewhere in space, with no reference to your boys and mine, your little girls and their school, their first beaux and their first babies."

With the realization that the way they

voted would have a profound influence on all these things, came the desire to vote right. And, woefully aware of their lack of political knowledge, the first thing the women undertook was to learn *how to vote right*.

They attended citizenship schools and leagues and joined organizations specializing on women as voting citizens. Which non-partisan training is largely responsible for the woman's vote being the independent unit it is to-day.

A man inherits his politics, voting as his father and grandfather before him. This is not true of a woman. She takes her politics as seriously as her job, and more seriously than her religion. She may be a Presbyterian because her mother is, but she will not be a Democrat because of her father or husband.

She prefers to work out her political salvation, and in doing so has found herself hesitating at the crossroads, before three signposts. These signposts, point-

ing three different ways to reach the main highway, may be represented as follows:

First, the influence exercised by the women executive heads of the two big political parties, the Republicans and Democrats, who argue that the best way to reach the desired goal is by becoming stanch party supporters and working *inside* the parties *with* men.

Second, the League of Women Voters, who urge a period of reflection before becoming identified with either political party and who preach a non-partisan doctrine that enrollment in one party is not confinement for life. They believe in voting by principle instead of party; in placing intelligence and conscience above party loyalty.

Third, the National Woman's Party, which is what its name implies—a separate woman's party working for women *against* men.

This last party, of which Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont is National President and Miss