

THE LITERARY DIGEST

December 2, 1922

THE KLAN AS A NATIONAL PROBLEM



A KLAN "NATURALIZATION" CEREMONY.

This outdoor initiation was staged in Wisconsin. Note the flag and the fiery cross. At a similar ceremony in Chicago a record class of 4,650 initiates took the oath in the presence of 25,000 Illinois Klansmen.

HALF THE STATES in the Union are now the scenes of Ku Klux activities, according to a study of the news dispatches made by a Massachusetts paper, the *Worcester Gazette*. The Klan carried the State elections in Texas and Oregon on November 7. In Louisiana the situation is such that Governor John M. Parker makes a special trip to Washington for help to handle "horrible crimes" in his State attributed to clansmen there and to others coming over the borders from other States. The announced readiness of the Federal Government to cooperate with Louisiana or any other State, "whenever Federal interests are involved," seems to the *New York Tribune* "a definite warning to the Ku Klux Klan that its leaders will do well to heed." While at present there is apparently to be no actual aid given by Federal agencies, *The Tribune* notes that several States are now ready to cooperate with Louisiana against the "Invisible Empire." The Governor of Georgia, where the present Ku Klux Klan started, says he will cooperate. Governor Olcott of Oregon says the Klan has been an "active menace" in his State, that "no greater menace confronts the United States to-day" and that "the time has come for Americans to assert themselves in a nation-wide battle against this political iniquity." The Governor of Connecticut says the State police have been watching the Klan there. Governor Allen of Kansas recently announced that the Klan officials would be expelled from his State and the Supreme Court of that State has been asked to halt all Klan activities in Kansas.

While Governor Parker denounces as "extravagantly inaccurate" the *Washington Post's* recent assertions that the Ku Klux Klan "has virtually reduced the sovereign State of Louisiana" to vassalage, and that "the machinery of State Government has almost ceased to function," the press are convinced by his request for assistance that the problem has outgrown State boundaries and must now be dealt with by the nation as a whole. The organization, as the *Washington Star* notes, is found now North, South, East and West. It is only right, declares the *New*

KKK Problems

York *World*, "that the Federal authority should take cognizance of a subversive movement that is far wider than any State:"

"The Klan in its new form and spirit is not confined to the South. It raises its ugly head even in New York pulpits. It is an issue in Oregon. No State between is free from it. Nor is it confined to the old purpose of terrifying ignorant Negroes in the black belt into what the local white minority considers good conduct. It has taken on sinister attributes from the old Know-Nothing movement. Its aim is the negation of constitutional government in order that it may set up a super-government of its own for the tyranny of an arrogant and narrow intolerance.

"It may not be true, as the Ku Klux have claimed, that there are more than seventy members of the organization in Congress. The fact that such a claim can be made plausible shows that the movement has invaded the Capital in such strength that it can not be ignored. President Harding and the Department of Justice have a plain duty to perform in using all the resources of the Government for the repression of a cabal that aims to make of free government a mockery."

Altho a New Orleans correspondent of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* says the Ku Klux Klan boasts 145,000 members in Louisiana—more than two-thirds of the vote cast in the last State election—representatives of Louisiana in Congress deny that there is any absence of normal order, or anything like a Ku Klux "menace" in their State. The *New Orleans Item* wires us that "no grave nor unhappy situation exists as yet, and wise action and considerate action may avert it." From the Louisiana capital the *Baton Rouge State Times* telegraphs that the Ku Klux Klan has not at any point "usurped the functions of the State Government" altho "there may be instances where a few weak-kneed parochial and district officials have joined the Klan where it is politically powerful." This paper offers a very simple explanation of the Governor's trip to Washington:

"The Governor in his investigations in Morehouse Parish, of the murder of two citizens—Richards and Daniels—who are supposed to have been done away with by the Ku Klux Klan, found some leads the State could not follow out. They led into other states. It was to seek the cooperation of the Federal Government in this particular, that Governor Parker went to Washington."

The Ku Klux "Bureau of Information," according to the *Albany Journal*, claims that "the Klan is growing at the rate of about 10,000 new members every week." What, asks the *Washington Star*, "explains the growth of this organization?" We might let the Klan's spokesmen help furnish an answer. For instance, in an issue of *Colonel Mayfield's Weekly* (Houston, Tex.), appearing after the Ku Klux candidates won the Texas "run-off" primary last summer, the editor, who must not be confused with Senator-elect Mayfield, sets this down as the Ku Klux Klan's mission in Texas and the rest of the world:

KKK Problems



THE FIRST KU KLUX FUNERAL IN THE NORTH,

In Reading, Ohio. The regalia, American flag and cross are clearly pictured.

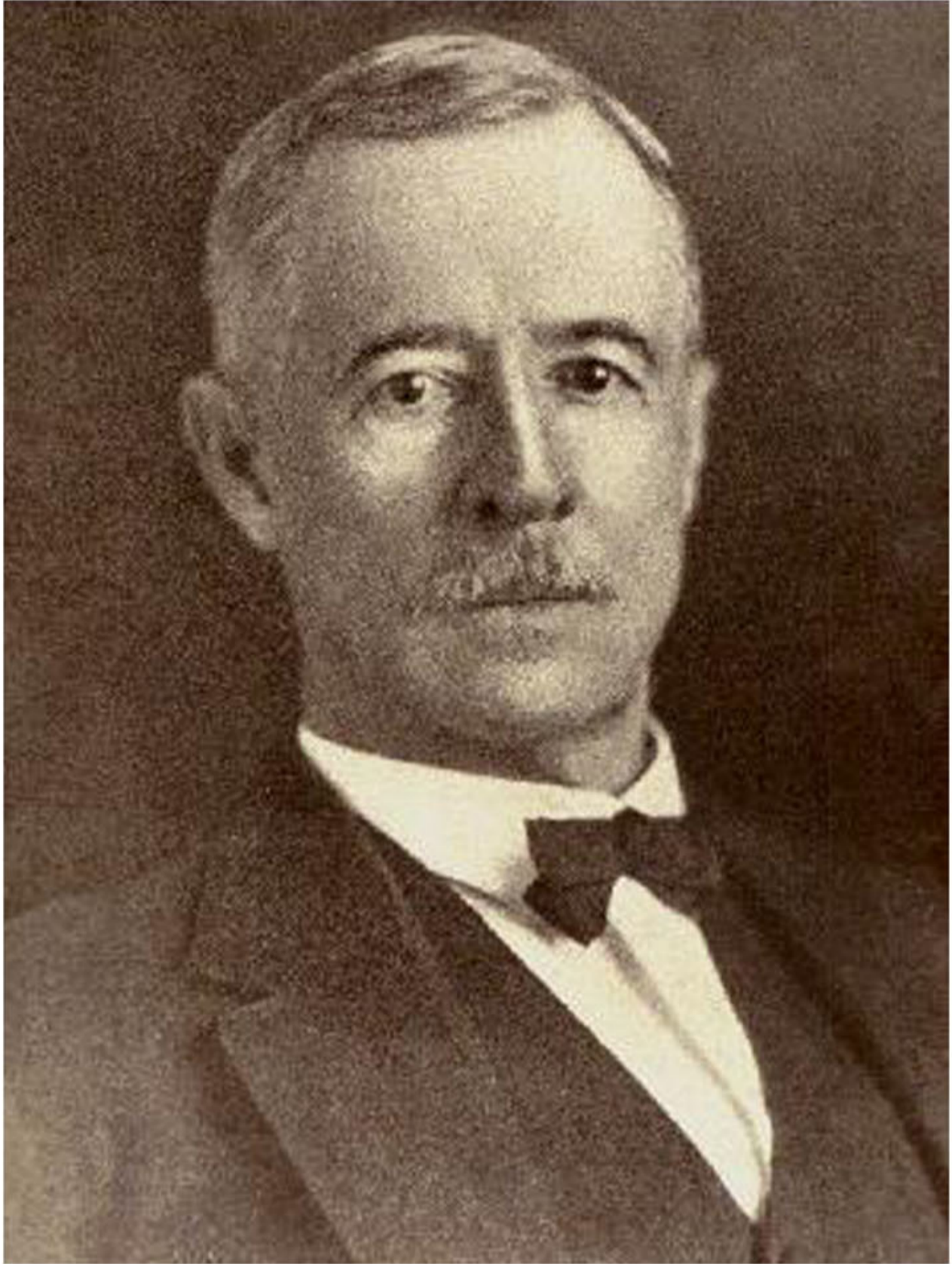
"It is going to drive the bootleggers forever out of this land and place whisky-making on a parity with counterfeiting.

"It is going to bring clean moving pictures to this country; it is going to bring clean literature to this country. It is going to drive the Catholics back into their church and keep them there. It is going to protect and preserve our public schools at all hazards. It is going to break up roadside parking, and see that the young man who induces a young girl to get drunk is held accountable. It is going to enforce the laws of this land; it is going to protect homes; its conduct is going to be such that to be a Klansman will be greater than a king. The Klan means a new era in the life of America. It means the return of old time Southern chivalry and deference to womanhood; it means that the 'married man with an affinity' has no place in our midst."

In paid newspaper advertisements and in letters to editors, defenders of the Klan say it is anti-Catholic because the Catholic Church is "un-American" and controlled outside of America. Its secret methods are said to be necessary to fight the "Jesuits" and to "slip up on crooked public officials." The Klan is said to be wrongfully blamed for acts of violence because "the daily press is almost wholly owned or controlled by the Romanists and Jews." Nevertheless, if officers of the law will not enforce the law, the Klansmen must "ride forth" and do it. So, it is argued, officials can easily keep the Klan from activity by performing their own duties effectively. It is interesting to note that a reader of *THE LITERARY DIGEST* writes from a Pennsylvania town to say: "If the Ku Klux can assist our courts to secure justice and throw fear into the hearts of men that make mockery of our laws, then I am ready to be a Klansman."

In his recent book, "The Modern Ku Klux Klan," Mr. H. P. Fry, once a "Kleagle," or organizer, tries to explain the success of Ku Klux propaganda by the growth of discordant groups among the American people. He thinks that favors shown to negroes by northern politicians and the activities of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have been powerful recruiting forces for Ku Kluxism. The Ku Klux organizer constantly uses the cry that "social equality is to be forced on the South." On the Pacific coast the Klan "is attempting to win the people by putting forth the doctrine of 'white supremacy' in relation to the Japanese question." The

KKK Problems



"WE HAVE ONLY BEGUN TO FIGHT THIS MOVEMENT," Says John M. Parker, Governor of Louisiana, who has asked the cooperation of the Federal Government in interstate phases of his campaign against the Ku Klux Klan.

writer believes that of late there has been a great increase of antagonism between the Christian and the Jew, between the Protestant and the Catholic. Klan organizers work largely upon "a feeling of jealousy of the Jews' great advance in America along all lines of commercial and professional activity." Mr. Fry says that there is more anti-Catholicism in this country than the average person realizes, and in his study of the Ku Klux movement he has found that "one of its greatest bids for popular favor was in its attitude to the rise of Catholicism in America." He explains:

"Basic causes of group antagonism between Protestant and Catholic lie partly in the fact that the government of the Catholic Church is outside of the United States, and partly on account of the attitude of the Church itself toward certain American institutions, notably the public-school system and the laws in this country governing marriages."

To rid the United States of the "Invisible Empire," Mr. Fry suggests first, publicity, and then Congressional legislation against organizations with secret membership lists or engaged in promoting racial or religious discord. The States, he says, can help stamp out Ku Kluxism through laws directed against organizations "stirring up religious and racial prejudice, against unwarranted interference with the law-enforcing branches of the Government and against going about the community in disguise."