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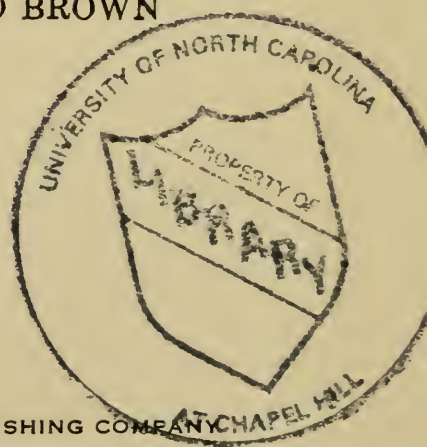
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Harold the Klansman

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BY
GEORGE ALFRED BROWN



THE WESTERN BAPTIST PUBLISHING COMPANY
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NEODESHA, KANSAS

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As a tribute of love and in appreciation of her encouragement and help in my various lines of labor I respectfully dedicate this volume to my wife, Lela Lockhart Brown.

G. A. B.

PREFACE

THE purpose of the author in writing this story is to furnish the public with reliable information about the Ku Klux Klan, and at the same time give entertainment. It is also hoped that Klansmen who read this story will be given a greater appreciation of the Invisible Empire.

While this is essentially a work of fiction, yet the principles as here elucidated are the true principles of the Ku Klux Klan.

Statistics quoted in this story are accurate and quotations credited to real persons are correct. The story as a whole is fiction but many of the incidents are true.

GEORGE ALFRED BROWN.

Neodesha, Kansas,
August 14, 1923.

Chapter I

RUTH BABCOCK was a heroine. To be sure folk did not think of her as deserving a place in any catalogue where the names of heroic folk are recorded. She was known in the community as a girl with a kindly heart and plenty of grit. She was descended from fighting stock—her mother, who had died when she was twelve years old, was the daughter of an ex-confederate colonel, Clayton Jameson. She had run away from home to marry Fred Babcock, the son of Major Babcock of General Sherman's staff.

The Jamesons were opposed to the match. Their family was one of the oldest and most aristocratic of Virginia. They knew nothing of young Babcock except that he was an intelligent, well mannered young man and the son of a major who had fought against the Southland during the war. Caroline Jameson had a number of suitors, scions of "best families," but, contrary to her parents' wishes, she refused to accept any of these and insisted on marrying Fred Babcock. When her parents positively refused to give their consent, she defied them and eloped with him.

They came West and settled in the town of Zala, where young Babcock secured employment in the only bank of the town. When the baby came and Caroline Babcock wrote her parents that they had named their

baby girl Ruth, in honor of her mother, the Babcocks received a letter, by return mail, containing a message of forgiveness and blessing and insisting that they come home on a visit and give the grandparents an opportunity to become acquainted with their granddaughter. In this way the estrangement came to an end.

Two years before this story opens, when Ruth was eighteen, an event happened which brought Ruth, who had just graduated from high school, face to face with the stern realities of life. Her father was at this time president of the bank where he had worked for twenty years. Through careful economy he had become the principal stockholder. Ruth had noticed for several weeks that her father was nervous and worried. One night he was called out of bed and had a conference with Dick Watson, his cashier, and Jim Stover, the president of Wilford Springs Central State Bank. The next morning after this conference her father told her that Stover was helping him out of a little difficulty he was having in his banking business. That morning Stover took charge of the Ranchmen's Bank of Zala. The same afternoon her father was hurt in an automobile accident. He was seriously injured, and for a time his life was despaired of. He had partially recovered from the injury, but with his memory destroyed to the extent that he could remember nothing that had transpired before the accident.

When Ruth inquired about the business she was told by Stover that he had bought her father's bank stock for twenty thousand dollars. She found a balance of only twelve hundred dollars to her father's credit. Stover informed her that her father had been in debt to him in the sum of twenty thousand dollars and that he had taken the stock to accommodate him. He showed her the assignment which her father had made.

Most of the twelve hundred dollars was spent for hospital fees and doctor bills. When her father was brought home, unable still to take up active work and with his memory gone, Ruth found herself confronted with the problem of how to earn a living for herself and family.

After consulting with Mr. Stover, she decided to take a stenographic course in a business college. In order to provide the money to do this she sold the home in Zala and moved with her father and aunt (who, since the death of her mother, had been their housekeeper) to Wilford Springs where there was a good business college. As she must husband her resources she felt it would be advisable to rent a residence and live at home; another consideration was her father's condition. She could not bring herself to the point where she was willing to leave him in Zala with her aunt; besides, after disposing of the home, she concluded that

the expense of living in Wilford Springs with the family all together would not be as great as if part were to remain at Zala. After a year in business college she felt qualified for a position. It was imperative that she get employment as soon as possible as her finances were getting low again.

She went to her friend and former advisor, Jim Stover, to ask his assistance in securing employment. Much to her surprise he offered her a position in the Wilford Springs Central State Bank. It was with a great deal of figuring—close figuring, too—that she met the bills of her family with the meager salary she received as stenographer.

One evening, after she had been employed in the bank about a year, as she stepped out on the street she met her friend Harold King, a young architect, whom she had met soon after coming to Wilford Springs.

“Hello, Ruth.”

“Hello, Harold.”

“Which way, Ruth?”

“I am going down to Smith and Son’s Grocery Store to get some groceries, then I intend to catch a Sylvan Avenue car.”

“If you have no objections I will walk with you to the grocery.”

“None whatever. I always enjoy good company.”

“How is your father?”

“Apparently there is no change in him. He has a good appetite and rests well but gets very nervous at times and his memory doesn’t come back to him. If I only had the money I would take him to Dr. Lilly, who is recognized as one of the best mental and nerve specialists in the United States.”

“It is too bad that so many of us have to be so often hampered for money,” he remarked.

“I can stand it except when we need it for the services of a doctor. I don’t mind having to wear the old dress longer than most girls wear theirs, but when Daddy is in the condition he is and I think there might be some help for him if I just had the money then the lack of it hurts.”

“Don’t worry,” he remarked, endeavoring to comfort her, “circumstances may soon change.”

“Circumstances must change. I’ll make them change,” she said with determination.

“Ruth, I wish I could help in some way. Maybe, if someone would suggest to Stover that he raise your salary he would do so.”

“He might. I have worked there a year. He seems pleased with my work but has raised my salary only once and that raise was but ten dollars. Of course, I wouldn’t want to ask any of my friends to make a suggestion of that kind to my employer.”

The subject of salary was dropped and Ruth remarked, "There was a man in the bank today who said that there is an organizer of the Ku Klux Klan in town and that he wants to organize here."

"I hadn't heard that," he replied, "but I have been reading considerable about Klan activities."

"You haven't read much that was good of them, have you?" she asked.

"Well, yes; I have read of some charitable deeds of the Klan and also of some other good things that they have done."

"The most I have read of them were accounts of where they had whipped someone or given somebody a coat of tar and feathers. Mr. Stover said that it would be a disgrace to the city to have a Klan here. He says that it's an outlaw organization."

"Really, Ruth, I don't know enough about it to judge."

"Here is Smith and Son's. Goodbye."

When she reached home, not seeing her father, she asked for him.

"He just went for a little walk down the street."

"How is he?"

"He has been talking all day about that safe combination," Aunt Clara answered.

"I was in hopes he had gotten his mind off of that. He hadn't mentioned it before since I told him they

had found the combination and opened the safe. Which way did he go? I will go and meet him."

"He started east on this street."

She walked several blocks east but saw nothing of her father, and was about to turn back when she looked down a side street and saw him only a short distance away. She waved her hand to him and he waved his in answer. She was soon by his side. "How are you, Daddy?" she asked.

"Busy, Ruth; very busy. I have been trying to remember the combination to that safe. I almost had it once—I got as far as two turns to the right and then back to the left to forty. I can't remember any more."

"What safe is it, Daddy?"

"My safe; where all our money is locked up. We wouldn't be poor if I could find that safe and get it open."

"Where is that safe? Can't you remember at all?"

"No, honey, that is what I am trying to do. If I could remember the combination it might help me to remember where the safe is."

"Daddy, don't you remember that you sold your bank stock to Mr. Stover and that the only safe you had was the bank safe?"

"No. I can't remember anything about ever having had any bank stock."

"Can't you remember at all about being a bank president?"

"No. I remember that you have asked me about a bank lots of times, but then you know I can't remember anything that happened before I woke up in the hospital and they told me that I had been in an automobile accident; except, that I had a safe with money, lots of money."

"Well, don't bother about it now. Look at the beautiful roses in that yard."

"They are beautiful. How wonderful it is that God touches the cold dull earth with life and it brings forth such marvelous beauty."

Ruth looked up at him admiringly. He was a tall well proportioned man, a little past middle age. His features were noble, his bearing dignified. In spite of the loss of memory, his speech and acts expressed a refinement which had become second nature to him.

"Come, Daddy," she said, taking him by the arm, "let's go. Aunt Clara will be waiting dinner for us."

Aunt Clara was on the porch waiting for them when they arrived.

"It's about time you were coming, the dinner is getting cold."

"We are here 'ready to go,'" said Ruth, laughing, "and I have a wonderful appetite that is craving some of your chicken salad."

"My dear," said Aunt Clara, "you are not going to be disappointed tonight. I have the salad prepared."

"Fine! Doesn't that sound good, Daddy?"

"Yes—if I can remember the other numbers."

"I was talking about dinner. Aunt Clara has chicken salad for dinner. Isn't that fine?"

"Yes, chicken salad is all right."

At the dinner table Ruth remarked, "I heard in the bank this afternoon that there is an organizer of the Ku Klux Klan in town, and that he intends to organize here."

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Aunt Clara, "I hope those awful Ku Kluxers won't come to this town. I was just reading today of some of the terrible things they are doing in Texas."

"I know it's two turns to the right, then back to the left to forty."

"Father, we were talking about the Ku Klux Klan."

"What's the Ku Klux Klan?" her father asked.

"Don't you remember from your study of history of the Ku Klux Klan that came into existence after the Civil War?"

"No, I have no memory of it. You told me about the Civil War the other day, and as you told me it seemed to me I had heard of it before."

"The Ku Klux Klan was an organization that originated at Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1866. Its object was to preserve order. Local authority had been broken down as a result of the war and women were not safe on the streets. Carpet-baggers from the North were controlling the negro vote in the South and actually placing

ignorant negroes in office for the purpose of preying on the impoverished South. The Ku Klux Klan was not only for the purpose of preserving order, but to control the political situation as well and keep ignorant negroes from office. It was claimed that while it seemed necessary to establish law and order at that time through an organization outside of the officers, since these were mostly carpet-baggers and negroes during the reconstruction period, there were many cases of abuses, such as whippings for minor offenses and occasionally someone even punished who was not guilty of any offense."

"It's dangerous for people to take the law into their own hands," said Aunt Clara.

"Yes, but you remember it was thought necessary to have vigilance committees in pioneer days out West. The old Ku Klux Klan claimed that no one was ever punished without a trial."

"But wasn't there courts to give trials?"

"Yes, but the civil courts were at that time presided over by ignorant negroes and by carpet-baggers who were anxious for political reasons to please the negroes. It is quite likely that there were not nearly so many cases of miscarried justice where cases were passed on by the Ku Klux Klan as there would have been if these cases had been passed on by the courts."

"But you said a moment ago that it may have been true that some innocent persons were punished."

"Of course that is always to be regretted but our courts often make mistakes also."

"Is this the same organization that is coming here?" her father asked.

"Oh, no, the old Ku Klux Klan was disbanded in 1871. Congress passed a law providing suppressive measures, and as the best people of the South, many of whom were members of the Klan, did not wish to oppose a law of Congress, the society was disbanded; however, during the time it existed it had done much to bring order out of chaos. My mother told me that Grandfather Jameson was a member. Today when we were talking about the Klan in the bank, Mr. Stover said that the Klan might have been necessary in the South in reconstruction days, but that the courts and police officers were now amply able to enforce laws and furnish the public with protection. He says that this new Klan is composed of outlaws, that it has all the vices of the old order and none of the virtues."

"Judging from what I have been reading in the papers, he is correct," said Aunt Clara, and then added, "Ruth, have some more chicken salad?"

Chapter II

REVEREND ROSSINI was the priest who presided over the Roman Catholic parish in Wilford Springs. He was an Italian by birth and was educated for the priesthood in Italy. He had been in this country only ten years. He did not mix with the general public and apparently took but little interest in public affairs. Protestants often remarked that one thing that could be said for the Reverend Rossini was that he attended strictly to his own business.

The Reverend Rossini was seated in the living room of the priest's home one evening enjoying a cigar, when his housekeeper announced a caller. "Father," she said, "Patrick McBryan is in the reception room and wishes to see you."

"Have Patrick come in."

Patrick McBryan was a local politician. He had held some office for the past fifteen years and was an important factor in every election. At the present time he was one of the city commissioners.

"How are you, Patrick? Have a chair."

"Glad to see you, Father. Are you well?"

"Quite well, Patrick."

The priest rang a little bell on the table by his side. A maid came promptly in answer to this summons.

"Margaret, bring up a bottle of wine and two glasses."

"Yes, Father." She courtesied and left the room. In a short time she returned with a bottle of champagne and two glasses. The priest poured a glass of the sparkling beverage and passed it to Patrick. When he had filled his own he held it up and toasted his visitor. "May you prosper and be granted many years to serve the Holy Church."

"Thank you, Father; the same to you." After Patrick had emptied his glass he smacked his lips and remarked, "Splendid stuff! We don't get anything like that at Hennesy's."

"It is too bad," said the priest, "that a lot of prohibition cranks can pass laws which compel the common people to drink poor liquor; and that where they do not have liberal officers, as we have here, are compelled to buy it clandestinely. It's a shame! The time will come, though, when we will have the votes to repeal this ridiculous prohibitory amendment."

"You are right, Father. It's only a question of time until we will be able to restore the saloons. The expense of trying to enforce the law and the great number of violations will disgust the public and make them anxious to repeal the amendment."

"Another bad feature of this law is that it increases crime. Statistics show that crime is on the increase in this country. Folk are restless without liquor. Of

course, I believe that folk should obey the law, but a law that increases crime is a bad law. Patrick, have another drink." He filled the glasses again, and they both drank.

"This is certainly fine, but a little expensive, I should judge."

"Yes, that is another evil effect of the law. This wine was made in the famous Champagne district of France, shipped to Canada and was brought via airplane from Canada here. The runner is entitled to reasonable compensation but, Patrick, I tell you he is unreasonable—even to his regular patrons, charges five times what he should for this wine. It's a shame that the government will pass a law that permits grafters to take advantage of the public in this way."

"Father Rossini, I came to talk with you about a very important matter."

"All right, Patrick. What is it?"

"A Ku Klux Klan organizer is in town and is wanting to organize a Klan here."

"Mercy, mercy! Is that a fact? Do you know it to be true, Patrick?" The priest rose from his chair and walked nervously to and fro.

"Yes, Father, there is no mistake about it. The Knights of Columbus at Asher notified us that he was coming. We located him at the Andrew's Hotel. One of our Knights of Columbus took a room next to his. Last night he heard the organizer and some man, whom

he could not identify by the voice, making a prospective list. Our Knight of Columbus stood on a chair near the transom but did not dare to look over to see who was with the organizer."

"God bless the Knights of Columbus! They are rendering valiant service to His Grace, the Pope, and the Holy Church. What was the character and standing of the men whom they were discussing as prospective Klansmen?"

"They were among the very best men of the town."

The priest resumed his seat. "Patrick," he said, "this Ku Klux Klan is a very dangerous and vicious organization."

"Yes, Father, we often hear that in the Knights of Columbus hall."

"Yes. I know we have often discussed it there, but I am afraid that you do not fully realize the danger. The Catholic Church is strong in the United States and growing stronger every day. Stronger not only in numbers but in influence and wealth. We have many men in important public positions, naturally this is to be expected—but Patrick, do you know that we have men in office out of all proportion to our numerical strength? Why? Simply because we are united. Politicians know that if they can get the support of Catholics that they will have back of them an organization that will act as a unit. 'In union there is strength.'

The fact that we are united has a powerful influence in the industrial as well as in the political world."

"Yes, I am sure of that. Down at the L. & B. factory we have Catholic foremen in every department, and the employees there don't need to be told that it is advantageous to a Catholic.

"The Protestants are divided, and we want to keep them divided. If the Ku Klux Klan becomes a great organization uniting the Protestant men of this country (and it is having a marvelous growth) our influence will be lessened. This Klan organization is opposed to foreign immigration. In 1921 there were eight hundred five thousand, two hundred twenty-eight immigrants to the United States." (He went to a cabinet and took out a little book which he consulted). "Two hundred twenty-two thousand, four hundred ninety-six of these were Italians, my own countrymen, thirty-nine thousand, fifty-six were Irish, your countrymen——"

"I was born in America," said McBryan, interrupting the priest.

"Well, the land of your ancestors, then. Twenty-nine thousand, six hundred three were Mexicans. Of this group of two hundred ninety-one thousand, fifty-five, at least ninety per cent are Catholic. Of the remainder—one hundred nineteen thousand, fifty-six were Jews, in whom we have no especial interest. Of the remaining three hundred ninety-five thousand, one

hundred seventeen it is safe to say that fully fifty per cent are Catholic. You see that the Catholic Church is gaining through immigration more numbers than all the other churches combined, while the next greatest number go to the Jewish Church. We must keep the bars down to immigration, as it means a rapid increase in membership for our church, and that means an increase in influence and power. Father Vaughn says: 'The tide of immigration is a Catholic one. And it is more: it is from these Catholic immigrants settling in the states, that teeming generations are to come condemning by their overwhelming numbers the sterility of the old American settlers.' Patrick, I am satisfied that if this organization is not put down we will never be able to repeal the eighteenth amendment. In the cities where the Klan has become strong our men have been voted out of city offices and our teachers have been removed from the teaching forces of city schools. The things which this organization has already done are outrageous and the things which they purpose to do are damnable."

"Yes, Father, I know that what you say is true, but the Knights of Columbus are on the job to prevent the spread of this Klanism."

"That is true, Patrick, I know it's true. A blessed organization is the Knights of Columbus! You said that the men suggested good citizens for membership.

We must prevent as many of these good citizens from joining the organization as possible."

"Father, how is that to be done?"

"We must put out propaganda to discredit the organization. The press of the country for the most part is very helpful; occasionally there is a renegade paper that supports the Klan, but for the most part the papers that support it are small country papers. As you no doubt know, many of our metropolitan papers are owned by Catholics and many more that are owned by Protestants are under obligations to Jewish and Catholic advertisers. However, we must have a local paper that will quote the law violations of the Klan from the press all over the country and write editorials against it. Springer, the editor of The Journal, is a Catholic sympathizer, and I am satisfied that with proper inducements offered he will line up all right. If we can continually put before these good citizens propaganda to the effect that this is an outlaw organization they will be slow to join. I will see Springer."

"Don't you think that it would be a good thing to get the mayor to make a public statement denouncing the Klan as an outlaw organization and warning the citizens against becoming members or in any way encouraging this organization?" McBryan asked.

"That is the thing to do if we can find the proper person to approach the mayor."

"Jim Stover is the man to see the mayor."

"You mean the president of the Central State Bank?" queried the priest.

"Yes."

"He's a Protestant."

"Yes, but very much opposed to the Klan. A number of Ks. of C. have heard him express himself as bitterly opposed to the Kluxers. He is able to get anything he wants from the mayor."

"You see him, Patrick, and give him to understand that if he stands by us in this fight he can expect more deposits than he has had from Catholics and that the Ks. of C. will return the favor in a political way whenever he wants it—just so they are not asked to oppose a Catholic or support a Protestant who is hostile to Catholics. Patrick, it would be advisable to get a Catholic or a Catholic sympathizer to join the Klan so that we may get inside information."

"I know just the man. His name is Tom Glynn. He works at the mill. He told me that his wife is a Catholic and that he was raised a Catholic but that he had not been to confession for so long that he no longer considers himself one."

"See if you can't get him to undertake this mission for His Grace, the Pope, and the Church. Tell him that sometime he will want the consolation of the Church, and that if he renders this service I will absolve him and give him my blessing. I think that is all for the present."

“Goodbye, Father.”

“Goodbye, Patrick. The Klan is dangerous and an enemy to Rome, but we have the Knights of Columbus, *Deo gratias.*”

Chapter III

CHARLES WILSON, a prosperous real estate dealer, sat in his office enjoying the breeze from his electric fan. Charles was a hustling real estate agent in spite of his two hundred forty pounds. He had just returned from a long, hot drive in the country and found the fan very agreeable. He had just removed his collar and tie when a young man entered.

“How are you, Harold? Have a chair.

“How are you, Mr. Wilson?”

“Just able to sit up and take nourishment. You see I am wasting away.” Wilson shook his fat sides with laughter.

“I hope you will soon take on a little flesh,” said Harold.

“Harold, how is architectural business?”

“The facts are that I am not doing much, but I still have hopes.”

“It would be an awful world without hope. Just keep a stiff upper lip and things will come your way some of these times.” Wilson’s voice was so cheerful that Harold felt encouraged, already.

“Why don’t you make a bid for the proposed new city building?”

I had thought of trying for this work, but I am not acquainted with the mayor and only slightly acquainted with one commissioner."

"That doesn't make any difference, if you can convince them that you can do the work."

"I have a good recommendation from the architect in whose office I was draughtsman before coming to Wilford Springs. Since I opened the office here I have designed only a few small buildings, but I am competent to design any kind of a building they want."

"Harold, you apply for the work, and I will see what I can do for you."

"Thank you. I will make application. I did not come up here to talk of my own affairs. I understand that your stenographer has quit and I want to recommend one to you."

"No, my stenographer has not quit, but she is off for a two weeks' vacation."

"I thought if you didn't have a stenographer I would make a recommendation. Do you know of anyone who does need one?"

"No, not at present. Who is the stenographer you wish to secure a position for?"

"Miss Babcock, the stenographer at the Central State Bank."

"Are you interested in stenographers in general or Miss Babcock in particular?" Wilson asked with a knowing smile.

“It’s an interest in Miss Babcock in particular,” admitted Harold.

“Eh, you sly fox, I thought so,” said Wilson as he gave Harold a vigorous punch in the ribs. Well, I don’t blame you. If I were twenty-five years younger you might have some competition, but as I am old and fat I presume I will have to trot along in single harness, pulling the whole load by myself to the end of the road. What is the matter with the job at the bank?”

“She only gets ninety dollars a month. You know, Mr. Wilson, that that isn’t enough for a good stenographer. Ruth—I mean Miss Babcock—has to support her father and aunt. They can get along on her salary, but her father was injured in an automobile accident and as a result of the injury he lost his memory. Miss Babcock is anxious to save enough money to send her father to a specialist.”

“I like to see a girl like that succeed. If she is worth more than ninety dollars a month Stover should pay it to her.”

“Maybe if you would make a suggestion that she should be paid more Stover would raise her salary.”

“I’ll find out what she can do, and if I think she should have more money I will mention it to Stover.”

“Thanks, I will appreciate it and I am sure Miss Babcock will.” Harold arose and walked to the door and then turned and asked, “What do you think of the Ku Klux Klan?”

"Judging from what I know of it—from sources other than the newspapers I read—I think pretty well of it."

"I do too. I hear that there is to be a lecture on 'The Klan' given in a pasture four miles west of town. What do you say? let's go."

"All right, Harold. I'm with you."

That afternoon Wilson went into the Wilford Springs Central State Bank. "How are you, Jim?"

"How are you, Charles."

"My stenographer is off on a vacation and I need to draw up a contract. I thought perhaps I could get your stenographer to write it for me."

"Certainly," replied the obliging banker, "come right into my office and she will get it out for you." Stover and Wilson walked into the office. "Ruth," Stover said, addressing his stenographer, "Mr. Wilson wants you to draw up a contract for him."

"Yes, sir."

She sat down to a table and took down the dictation without once asking him to repeat. When he was through dictating she went into her private office to make typewritten copies. The two men remained in the president's office talking. In a short time Ruth returned and handed Wilson the contracts and returned to her office. After looking them over Wilson remarked, "Jim, that's a fine stenographer you've got."

"Yes, she's good and always on the job."

"What do you pay her?"

"Ninety dollars."

"How did you manage to get a girl like that for ninety dollars. I pay my stenographer one hundred thirty dollars, and the chances are that if she had done this work I would have had to send the work back to have one or two corrections made. If you don't pay that girl more money someone will take her away from you."

The banker smirked and rubbed his thin hands together. "I have raised her wages once since I employed her. I think a lot of Ruth, both as a stenographer and a girl. I will probably give her another raise soon. You see, Mr. Wilson, I am a special friend of her father. He got into some difficulty when president of the bank at Zala a couple of years ago, and I bought his stock to help him out, and of course I feel an interest in the girl."

"Well, I must be going."

A little way up the street Wilson met Harold King.

"I saw Jim Stover and had a talk with him about the salary of your friend. (Just brought it up incidentally.) He said that he would probably raise her salary soon. You see he is an old friend of the Babcock family."

"So I have heard."

“Her salary is a little low, but I presume Jim never thought much about it, but since it has been called to his attention, I think he will raise it.”

“I thank you, Mr. Wilson.”

Harold could scarcely wait for night to come when he could call on Ruth. He was anxious to get business for himself, but he was more anxious that Ruth should receive an advancement in wages, not alone because she was a dear friend, but largely because he knew she had her heart set on sending her father to a specialist. Harold didn't believe that it would do him any good. He had talked with several local doctors who had examined him and they pronounced his case as hopeless. He knew, though, that Ruth would never be satisfied until she had sent her father to Dr. Lilly.

That same evening when he called at the Babcock home he found Mr. Babcock on the porch, his head resting between his hands, his elbows on his knees. “Good evening, Mr. Babcock.”

“Good evening, Mr. King. Have a chair.”

“How are you feeling, Mr. Babcock?”

“I am feeling better, but not very strong yet. I worry so much because I can't remember. If I could only get my memory back I believe I would be myself again.”

“Can't you remember anything that happened before the accident?”

“No, nothing; except that I had a safe with money in it, but I can’t remember where the safe was. I can remember part of the combination. It was two turns to the right then to the left to forty——”

“How do you do, Harold.”

“Good evening, Ruth.”

“Here, take my chair, Ruth; I am going inside, if you will excuse me, Mr. King.”

“Ruth,” said Harold, “I have something of interest to tell you. I heard it in the early afternoon and could scarcely wait until evening.”

“I have something of importance to talk to you about and am so glad you came, but first you tell me what you were going to tell of interest. You have my curiosity aroused, and you know that when a woman’s curiosity is aroused she must know at once.”

“Here goes, then,” he said, laughing. “I have reason to believe that you are going to have your salary increased.”

“That sounds good, but where did you get your information?”

Harold then told her of his conversation with Wilson and of Wilson’s report that Stover would probably raise her salary soon.

“Oh, that will be fine! I thank you so much. I wouldn’t have asked you and Mr. Wilson to have done so much, but since you have I certainly appreciate it.

I am so anxious to see if anything can be done for father."

"Well, here is hoping that you will get a raise within the next few days."

"Will you please thank Mr. Wilson for me?" What I wanted to talk to you about is the Ku Klux Klan.

"That's a common subject of conversation nowadays. I hear it being discussed everywhere on the streets."

"Mr. Stover called all the men employees of the bank into his office this evening and told them that any one and every one of them who joins the Ku Klux Klan will be discharged."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, I heard two of the men speak of it after the meeting."

"What are Stover's objections to the Klan?"

"I do not know what he told the men, but I have heard him say that it is an organization of outlaws and that it is a great money-making scheme for the promoters. I told him that my grandfather had belonged to the old Ku Klux Klan in Virginia. He said that some good people had been connected with the old order but that this present organization is very different; that it has all of the vices and none of the virtues of the old order."

"He may be right, and then again he may be wrong. There is going to be a public lecture four miles west

of town Friday night and I am going to hear a representative of the organization explain it."

"I don't think it will do you any harm to go and hear him, but I want you to promise me that you won't join. I have lots of confidence in Mr. Stover, and he says that when it becomes known that a man belongs to the Klan he will be branded in the community and never will have any standing again. You saw what the editor of the Journal had to say?"

"Yes, but you can't always depend on what you see in a newspaper. Springer may have been sincere in his statement that the organization is a menace to America, but again he may be hired to say that, or he might be misinformed."

"You also saw the statement of the mayor warning the public against joining the organization and telling the people that the police are amply able to enforce the laws?"

"The mayor is a politician, and politicians do not like the rise of organizations that they cannot control for political purposes, as to the enforcement of the laws—if his police force are amply able to enforce the laws they had better get busy and do it. Case after case of law violation is brought to their notice and they refuse to act."

"I was out riding with Chester Golter last night and——"

"With whom?" Harold was more interested now than he had been in her discussion of the Klan.

"Chester Golter."

"Who is Chester Golter?"

"He is our new bookkeeper, from Indiana. He is a nephew of Mr. Stover. What I started to tell you was that he said the Klan in his home town was composed of 'roughnecks' and thugs."

"They may have had a hard bunch to choose from in his home town. Ruth, I do know this, that there are numbered among the Klansmen of the country judges, congressmen, ministers, doctors, lawyers, merchants and men from every vocation. I have this on good authority. It is quite likely that much of this adverse criticism comes from people who are misinformed or are natural enemies of the Klan."

"Promise me, Harold, that you won't join."

"Ruth, I can't promise you that, until I am convinced that this organization is detrimental to the best interests of America. I want to be a hundred per cent American, and I do not want to withhold my support from an organization that is for the good of my country."

"You understand, Harold, that I am interested in you because you are my friend, and I do not want you to do anything that will impair your chances for success or injure your standing in the community."

"I appreciate your interest, and I promise you that I will have nothing to do with this organization if I find on careful investigation that it is not lawful, has unworthy purposes and is composed of bad citizens."

"I feel quite sure then you will not join, for when men like Stover condemn a movement the chances are it is dangerous and wrong."

"I hope you will have the raise before I see you again. Good night."

"Good night, Harold."

As he walked to his room he was not in a pleasant frame of mind. He was concerned about what she had told him of the attitude taken by Stover toward the Klan, but he was worried most of all about Chester Golter, the nephew of Stover. Ruth had gone riding with him. He wondered what he was like. He knew he would not like him. He was sure of that. He was a little peeved that Ruth would go riding with him when he had been in town such a short time. He was a little fearful that his relationship with Stover might have undue weight with her.

Chapter IV

THE Klan meeting held in the open was well attended. Stover, Springer and McBryan had predicted that there would be but few there. Contrary to their prediction, there were thousands present. Many came to this first public Klan meeting through curiosity; others came earnestly desiring to know something of this much talked of organization.

The next time Harold saw Ruth after this meeting she asked, "Did you attend the Klan meeting?"

"Yes, I was there and heard every word."

"I heard there was a big crowd."

"Yes, the crowd was estimated all the way from six to ten thousand."

"Mr. Stover said that they were drawn there by curiosity and had no intention of joining. He also said there was a morbid curiosity to see some Kluxers in their robes."

If they came for that purpose they were not disappointed. There were twelve men in full regalia who passed application blanks."

"I should have liked to have seen them."

"Some time when there is another one we will go, if you care to."

"Did you like the speech?"

“Very much. He explained the thirteen points of Klanism.’

“Thirteen points, you say; may I ask what they are?”

“Certainly. These principles are not kept secret. You have the same right to know of them that I have and the other thousands who heard the speech.”

He reached in his pocket and took out an inquiry blank with the thirteen principles of the Klan printed thereon and handed it to her.

She took it and read aloud as follows:

I am a “Native Born” American Citizen, having the best interests of my Community, City, State and Nation at heart, and believe in, viz:

1. The tenets of the Christian religion.
2. White supremacy.
3. Closer relationship between Capital and American labor.
4. Protection of our pure womanhood.
5. Preventing the causes of mob violence and lynchings.
6. Preventing unwarranted strikes by foreign labor agitators.
7. Prevention of fires and destruction of property by lawless elements.
8. The limitation of foreign immigration.
9. Closer relationship of pure Americans.

10. The upholding of the Constitution of these United States.

11. The separation of church and state.

12. Freedom of speech and press.

13. The much needed local reforms.

When she had finished reading, Harold asked, "What is the matter with those principles?"

"Nothing at all so far as I can see, but I thought Jews and Catholics could not join. There is nothing said about either in these principles."

"No, Ruth. The principles say nothing about either. The Jews cannot subscribe to the first one, the tenets of the Christian religion. The Jews do not believe in the Deity of Christ, consequently they are excluded from this organization."

"That's so, but I do not see anything in these principles to exclude Catholics."

"No; but the lecturer said that all candidates for membership in the Klan must, before they become members, be able to declare that they do not owe allegiance to any foreign power, either civil or ecclesiastical. Catholics cannot make this statement—as they owe allegiance to the Pope of Rome."

"That makes it perfectly clear why both Roman Catholics and Jews are excluded, but will their exclusion not create bitter feeling and strife?"

"It seems that the Klan has already aroused the antagonism of Catholics, and they are doing all they

can to prevent its growth. But, Ruth, why should the Jews or Catholics object? The Jews have the B'nai B'rith organization and the Catholics have the Knights of Columbus. Protestant Gentiles are excluded from both of these organizations and do not object. I never heard of a Protestant condemning a Catholic for belonging to the Knights of Columbus."

"Harold, what about the lawlessness of the Klan?"

"You see by these principles that it is the purpose of the organization to put down crime and prevent violence and lynchings. The lecturer stated that in no instance had the Klan been convicted of crime."

"The principles are good and the organization may be all right in practice, but some way, Harold, I can't help but wish that you would stay out of it. Maybe it is because I have so much confidence in Mr. Stover and he is so bitterly opposed to it."

They were seated on a bench in the park. A dapper young man about Harold's age approached them and lifted his hat to Ruth. "How do you do, Miss Babcock."

"Good evening, Mr. Golter, I want you to meet my friend, Mr. King."

King stood and shook hands with him. The two men were about the same height, each standing a good six feet. King was the heavier and more rugged in appearance.

"I heard that you were in town, Mr. Golter, but this is the first time I have had the pleasure of meeting you."

"I have been quite busy in the bank since I arrived in Wilford Springs and have been able to meet scarcely anyone except those who work in the bank. I have had the pleasure of taking several rides with Miss Babcock." Ruth colored slightly.

"You are related to Jim Stover?"

"Yes, he is my uncle. Where are you from, Mr. King?"

"I was born in Kentucky but came West with my parents when I was only nine years of age, hence I feel that I am of the West as much as if I had been born here."

"This is my first experience west of the Mississippi. I was born and educated in Indiana." Golter, at King's invitation, took a seat on the bench. For some time they talked of the opportunities of the West compared to the East. Ruth was asked what she thought of the West as compared to the East.

"I like the West," she said, "however, I do not know much of the East—except Virginia. I have been back there often to visit. It is a great place to be entertained;" and she discussed the hospitality of the people of the state of her ancestors at some length. She spoke in an interesting way of some of her visits to the old plantations. She was a pretty girl and had a dash and

at the same time an air of refinement that made her very attractive.

Several times while she was speaking King noticed Golter bestow admiring glances upon her in a way that told him that in Golter he had a rival; but that was no more than he had expected when Ruth spoke of having taken a ride with him a few evenings previous.

"There is lots of excitement in town over the Ku Klux Klan," remarked Golter.

"Yes. Were you out to hear the lecture?"

"No, I wouldn't go to hear any of their lectures. I know too much about them."

"You are acquainted with the activities of the Klan?"

"Yes, the members in my home town were the lowest class."

"Were you a member there?" There was a trace of sarcasm in King's voice.

"Certainly not, sir," replied Golter with feeling.

"How did you know then who were members?"

"Well, I knew whom they said were members."

"A matter of hearsay, then?"

"Well, you might call it hearsay, but there are some things one is confident of though he is without positive proof. I know that the organization is lawless."

"Now, that is what I would like to have proof of. How do you know?"

"I read the exposure in Judson's International."

“Aren't the Judson's publications Catholic?”

“I believe they are.”

“Don't you think Judson's International might be a bit prejudiced?”

“I don't think so. It's a great magazine. Well, I must be going. I will see you at the bank tomorrow,” he said to Ruth.

When Harold separated from Ruth at her home, she asked, “What do you think of Mr. Golter?”

“To be frank,” Harold replied, “I don't think much of him, that is, I am not favorably impressed.”

“I think he's nice,” she said, teasingly, and added, “don't you think he is good-looking?”

“I think it's going to rain,” Harold remarked and then told her good-night.

Chapter V

DURING the summer several public meetings of the Klan were held near Wilford Springs. Ruth accompanied Harold to one of these and remarked, when she saw some Klansmen in robes, "I would like to wear one of those myself. I think it would be fun!" However, she continued to express a desire that Harold would not become one of them, not that she did not believe that the principles were all right, but she heard so much adverse criticism of the Klan and condemnation of the men who were suspected as belonging that she was afraid that in some way he would suffer from joining.

Occasionally it was reported that a fiery cross had been seen on mounds near the city, and a number of times passing cars had seen men in robes and masks guarding the entrance ways into woods or pastures.

Springer continued to fire broadsides at the Invisible Empire through the columns of the Journal. He published all of the alleged reports of acts of lawlessness that he could secure from far and near. Occasionally he tried ridicule and referred to the Klansmen as the "boys who parade in nighties," and the "pillow slip boys." He said that there were only a few, a very few, in Wilford Springs, who belonged or who were in sympathy with them.

The mayor of the city frequently warned the city employees that if it became known that any of them belonged to the Klan they would be dismissed from the employ of the city. One or two industrial plants gave like orders.

As the spring election drew near there was a great deal of interest manifest, also a feeling of uncertainty pervaded the camp* of the Stover-McBryan-Springer bunch who had dictated the politics of the city so long that they had come to regard their rights to dominate as inherent. There was the usual interest in the control of the affairs of the city and the public patronage, but in addition to that there was added interest because the city was to vote on the issuance of five hundred thousand dollar bonds for the purpose of erecting a municipal building and auditorium. One afternoon, about two months before the election date, McBryan was transacting some business in the Wilford Central State Bank. Stover noticed him at the cashier's window, and said, "Mac, when you're through there I would like to see you in the office." When McBryan came into the president's office, Stover said, "Do you realize that it's only two months until election?"

"Yes, I know it, and we had better get busy at once."

"Let's have a little caucus here in my office tonight and fix up a slate."

"Whom shall we ask to be present?"

“Not many. It doesn't take many to do the head work, we want the rabble to do the voting. I think we should have Hennesy; he controls the votes of the roughnecks, and Thompson should be invited.”

“Does Thompson want the nomination again for mayor?”

“No, it would be useless for him to try again. There is too big a 'holler' about the non-enforcement of law. Abe Greene has announced himself as a law-enforcement candidate, and he will be a hard man to beat. We must get a man that there is nothing against. I told Thompson that he'd better not try it and that we would take care of him in some other way. Of course we want Springer present.”

“All right, you notify Thompson and Springer, and I will see Hennesy. What time shall we meet?”

“Nine o'clock. We want to keep this meeting secret. There are a lot of people who resent slate fixing, but there must always be leaders.”

“Sure, there must be leaders,” replied McBryan, as he left the room.

That night McBryan, Hennesy, Springer, Thompson and Stover met in the bank office. “Let's see, are we all here? Here's Thompson, who has a big personal following, and Hennesy, who has a lot of good patrons whom he can control, Springer furnishes the publicity and shapes the opinions of the general public and McBryan represents the Catholic vote. We have a real

lineup. They can't beat it," remarked Stover, rubbing his skinny hands together and smiling one of those hungry smiles of the avaricious before devouring a meal.

"We need a good lineup," said Springer, "the insurgents are going to make a desperate effort to control the election and have put up a strong man for mayor."

"That's so," replied Stover, "Abe Green will not be an easy man to beat. He has always trained with the prohibition crowd, and in addition to that he is a successful business man. What we must do is to get a candidate for mayor who can divide the dry vote with him."

"We ought to have Isaac Goldberg here, too. We can't afford to neglect the Jews," said Springer.

"That's right," Thompson affirmed.

"We simply overlooked Goldberg. I will call him and ask him over."

"Stover went to the 'phone and called Goldberg, and in a few minutes the little Jew came puffing in. "Vat is it, vel, vel, vat is wrong? Has anytings happened to the monies market?"

"No, Goldberg, there's nothing wrong with the money market. Stocks and bonds are steady."

"Vat den, vat den?"

"There is an election close on the way," explained Stover.

"An election is it, vell?"

"Yes," said Stover, "we've got a hard fight on. Greene has come out as a law enforcement candidate and we must get busy or he will be elected."

"The Ku Klux Klan are getting strong, and of course they will be for Greene," Springer remarked.

"No, the Ku Klux are not strong, they are veak, veak, I say.'

"I have an idea that there are more of them here than you think for, and we must be on the job or they will get control.'

"You say in your Journal that they are veak, very veak. Vy don't you tell the truth, Springer?" Goldberg was becoming excited.

Springer laughed.

"Goldberg, you don't always tell the truth to your customer when you try to sell him a suit of clothes."

"Yes, yes, I tells dem shust the truth."

"Wait a minute, Goldberg. I was in the store the other day and you sold a fellow a suit of clothes. When he asked you if it were a new suit you told him it was. Now, I happen to know that that suit was sold to you by a fellow that was hard up and it was a second-hand suit."

"It would not have been goot bezness to tell it vas second-hand. It vas shust as goot as new."

"Neither would it be good business for me to tell the public that the Klan is getting strong. There are al-

ways a lot of people who want to go with the crowd.”

The Jew laughed and slapped the editor on the back. “I see you vas a bezness man,” he said.

“Come, boys, let’s get to business,” said Stover.

“What about the ‘niggers’?” Thompson asked.

“I’ll handle the ‘niggers’—just leave that to me. You never want to take a ‘nigger’ into your conferences. You don’t want him to get the idea that he is of much importance. Decide what you want him to do and then tell him to do it. If necessary, bring pressure enough to bear on him to make him do it.”

“The question is, whom shall we put up for mayor? We want a man that there is nothing against but one who is not radical on anything,” Springer remarked.

“How would Bill Frazier be?” Thompson asked.

“He would run well but he is pretty ‘bull-headed.’ We might have trouble with him after he was elected,” Springer answered.

“Fred Clark is a good, clean fellow, at any rate, no one has ‘got anything on him,’ ” said Thompson.

“Fine! He is good timber. He seldom expresses an opinion on anything,” said Stover.

“But do you know we can handle him?” McBryan asked.

“Sure. He will be all right. He owes the bank seven thousand dollars—he couldn’t afford to turn us down.”

It was agreed that Clark should be the candidate for mayor. McBryan was to run again for commissioner.

A Jew was selected for a place on the ticket. When men had been selected for all the offices, Goldberg and Stover were appointed as the committee to get their consent.

"Before you say anything to these men," McBryan advised, "I had better take the list to Father Rossini for his approval."

This suggestion was well received by the others, and they agreed to meet the following night to hear McBryan's report from the priest. When they met the next evening McBryan reported that the priest was favorable to all of the selections except one, whom he knew to have expressed anti-Catholic sentiment. The name of this man was dropped and another substituted.

During the following three weeks Springer announced the names of these men as candidates. It would not do to announce them all at once as the public might suspect a secret caucus.

These leaders went to work at once to elect their candidates. Rastus Jones was the colored janitor of the Wilford Springs Central State Bank. He was a good janitor and prided himself on the fact that he was the janitor of the "biggest bank in Wilford Springs." Like most members of his race, he was superstitious and possessed an imagination that became very active under the stimulus of fear.

“Rastus,” said Stover as the janitor was straightening things in his office, “what do you think of the race for mayor?”

“Law, Mistah Stover, I don’t know much about elections. I ain’t no politician.”

“What do the colored folks think of the candidates for mayor?”

“I hears a heap o’ them say that they’s goin’ to vote for Mistah Greene—that he’s a powerful good man.”

“Do they talk that way, Rastus?”

“Yes, sar, lots of them do.”

“Rastus, you tell your friends that if they vote for Greene they are working against their own interests. Greene is in favor of the Ku Klux Klan.”

“Fo’ de Lawd’s sake! You sholy don’t mean dat, Mistah Stover!” Rastus dropped the waste basket which he held in his hand and threw up both hands.

“Yes, that’s a fact, Rastus, and you know what the Ku Klux Klan is.”

“Yes, sar; I’s herd my ole father tell how they uster whip niggers down South afteh the wa’.”

“The new order is worse on colored men than the old one. I was reading where they took a colored man from his home the other night and whipped him—and then gave him a coat of tar and feathers, just because he had had a dispute with a white man over a bill that the white man owed him.”

“Is that a fac’?”

"In many places they run the negroes out of the country."

"Lawd help us! You sure that Mistah Greene is for the Ku Klux?"

"Yes, there are a few of them here now and they are supporting him. If we can elect Clark we can see that they do not do any damage here. I advise you to tell your friends that if they want to get a flogging or swing from a tree some dark night just to go ahead and vote for Greene."

"Say, Mistah Stover, you don't know nuffin' 'bout niggahs if you think they're goin' to vote fo' Greene after I tell 'em about them Kluxers."

"Mr. Roberts is waiting out here to see you," one of the bookkeepers informed Stover as Rastus left his office.

"Tell him to come in."

Roberts was a small contractor who had a good reputation for honesty.

"How are you, Roberts? Have a chair."

"Thank you."

"What can I do for you?"

"I just wanted to talk with you a little while. What do you think of Clark's chance for election?"

"Fine! I don't think there is any doubt about it. He has the support of all the good politicians."

"If he is elected, he is willing to appoint me chief of police."

“That suits me. You would be a good man for the place.”

“Clark says that campaign expenses are heavy and he would like to have me ‘kick in’ two hundred dollars.”

“That would be a safe investment.”

“The trouble is I am short at this time. I haven’t the two hundred.”

“That’s all right, you needn’t let that worry you.” Stover picked up his pen, took a promissory note from a pigeon hole and made it out for two hundred and passed it to Roberts, who signed it and received the money, which he contributed to the campaign fund.

Chapter VI

“**H**AVE a chair. I will call her,” Clara Babcock said to the young man who had called and asked for Ruth. She went to Ruth’s room where she was pounding away on a typewriter. Several months previous Ruth had been hopeful of securing a raise in salary but the raise had not come. When the second pay-day failed to bring the increase, she inserted an advertisement in the paper asking for stenographic work to be done of evenings. In this way she was able to earn from six to ten dollars a week toward a fund to send her father to Dr. Lilly. She was joyful every time she could add a dollar to this fund, although she knew that she was doing this extra work at the expense of her health.

When her aunt entered her room she found Ruth playing a merry little tune on the typewriter.

“Ruth, dear, there is a young gentleman here to see you.”

“Is it Mr. King?”

“No, Mr. Golter. He is in his car. I suspect he has come to take you for a ride.”

“I haven’t time to go riding. I have more work than I can get done by tomorrow night.”

"Ruth, you are sticking too close to your work. If you can't get the work out and take an hour or so for recreation you had better let it go until the next day."

"I don't like to disappoint my customers."

"I know you don't, dear, but it is not right for you not to take any recreation."

"Well, if I take a little time off tonight maybe I can work a little longer and faster and make it up tomorrow night."

"Tell him I will be in in a minute."

Her aunt left to deliver the message, and Ruth looked at herself in the mirror, tucked in a few straggling wisps of hair, rubbed her face with her powder puff, but the tired expression would not rub off. It stared at her from the mirror. There was no disputing the fact that the home work after banking hours was telling on her.

"Good evening, Mr. Golter," she greeted in a cheery voice when she entered the room where the young man was seated.

"Good evening, Miss Babcock. I thought that perhaps you would like to take a ride."

"I enjoy riding and would be pleased to go for a short ride. I have such a demand on my time that I cannot be out late."

She walked to the far end of the living room where her father was seated with the evening paper. "Papa,"

she said, "I am going for a ride. I will not be gone long."

"All right, Ruth. Good evening, Mr. Golter."

"Good evening, Mr. Babcock."

After riding a few minutes in the fresh air Ruth felt revived. "How invigorating the air is! It certainly refreshes one to ride in the fresh air when tired."

"Yes, I couldn't get along without a car. That makes me think of it. You remember that fellow you introduced me to in the park—let's see, what is his name?"

"Do you mean Mr. King?"

"Yes, that's it—King. What I was going to tell you was that the Dodge Auto Sales Company are offering the car they sold him a few months ago, for sale at a bargain. It seems that they sold it to him on time and had to take it back. I should think it would be very humiliating to a man in business to have to do a thing of that kind. Ruth knew all about his car deal. Harold had told her. His uncle owed him two thousand dollars which was due three months after he purchased the car. He had expected to finish paying for it out of this. When the money came due his uncle had written him that he had been disappointed in some financial matters and that it would work a hardship on him to repay it at that time. Rather than work this hardship on his uncle he turned the car back and lost what he had paid on it. Ruth wondered whether Golter was simply telling this

as a news item or whether he was seeking to belittle Harold. She feared the latter and felt a resentment rise within her. A desire to resent in strong language this slur aimed at her friend tugged at her heart strings, but she held herself in leash; her judgment told her that she might be mistaken as to his motive, but she was sure she saw in the remark the manifestation of littleness in Golter.

She replied, "Yes, of course it is embarrassing to anyone to be unable to meet his obligations. Sometimes this is due to no fault of his own."

"Yes, there are occasional cases where that is true, but Uncle Jim says that this fellow is a ne'er-do-well."

She felt her face burn and was thankful that it was too dark for him to see her flushed face.

"Mr. King has been in business for himself but a short time. He is a young man and has talent and ability, and I am sure when he has had his chance he will succeed."

"He may have ability, but you know there are some people who never can cash in their talents. Uncle Jim was saying the other day that so many men with education lack practical knowledge. Uncle Jim has but little education, but he has much practical sense, which has enabled him to make money. Miss Babcock, do you know that in all probability Uncle Jim is the wealthiest man in Wilford Springs?"

“I know that Mr. Stover is very wealthy and I have lots of confidence in both his honesty and ability. Speaking of what he said about educated people lacking practical knowledge, I have often heard my father refer to their inability to make money. He said that one reason so many educated men were poor was due to the fact that many of them spent the best years of their lives in lines of work where there were no opportunities to make money. This, he said, was often the case with preachers and teachers. After they find that their meager salaries will not provide for the increasing needs of their families, or when they realize that old age is creeping on them and that when they can no longer serve as pastor or teacher the gaunt wolf which has been hounding their steps for years will draw nearer until at last his hot breath will be felt on their cheeks and later his fangs will tear their flesh, they quit their jobs in desperation and attempt to compete without capital with men who have been studying the business game and acquiring capital all of their lives; it is no wonder that many fail. The wonder is that so many succeed. Sometimes the educated man has ideals that will not permit him to make money in ways others who succeed consider legitimate.”

“I believe you have missed your calling. What an orator you are!”

“I was just telling you what my father said.”

"No doubt what your father says is true in regard to the classes you mentioned. I am thinking more of those who work all their lives in the line of their talents but fail to cash in, as musicians, artists, poets, designers, etc. Some fellows with ability often sit around and let other fellows with much less talent surpass them in making money out of their talents. Why? Because one fellow lacks practical sense and the other possesses it."

Ruth felt that Golter had come just as near naming architects as he felt he dared to.

"Changing the subject, who are you going to vote for, for mayor?" he asked.

"I am not old enough to vote," she replied.

"Oh, excuse me, I should have thought of that. I am sure you do not look old enough to be a voter. How stupid of me!" He continued to make most profuse apologies.

"That's all right. You needn't try to fix it. I know you mistook me for an old grandmother," she said, laughing.

After they had driven about for an hour Ruth suggested that she must return home. As she stepped from the car Golter attempted to compliment her on her good looks, but she interrupted him with a curt good-night.

She found her father still sitting where she had left him in his great arm chair, asleep over his paper. She

placed her hand gently on his shoulder and spoke to him, "Daddy, wake up." He opened his eyes with a start. "It's you, is it, Ruth? I was dreaming."

"What did you dream about, Daddy?"

"I remembered the rest of that combination. It was two turns to the right, to the left to forty and then to the right to thirty-two. I dreamed that I showed this combination to a man in whom I had confidence and he stole my money."

"Father, we never had a safe except the bank safe, and you sold your bank stock."

"I don't remember anything about having any bank stock, but if I did have it and sold it, where is the money?"

"You owed Mr. Stover, and he took the bank stock to satisfy the debt as an accommodation to you. You told me the night before you were hurt that he was going to help you out. You know I have told you this many times before."

"Yes, I know you have, and I have tried hard to remember, but I can't—I just can't."

"Well, don't worry about it, Daddy. We have plenty to live on."

"But, dear," he said, placing his arm affectionately about her, "it is you I am thinking about. I don't like to have you work so hard to support an old worthless fellow like me. If I could just get over having this pain in my head so much I would be able to work."

"There, there, Daddy, I don't want you to worry. Some of these times we are going to send you to Dr. Lilly and get you fixed up so that you will be as good as new. I have ninety dollars in my special fund for this already."

The father stooped and kissed his daughter on the forehead and then went to his room."

Ruth stood looking after him until he had closed the door to his room behind him, then shook her head and sighed. As she passed her Aunt Clara's room her aunt called to her, "Is that you, Ruth?"

"Yes."

"You had another caller. He came just a few minutes after you left."

"Who was it?"

"Mr. King. He sure looked down his nose when I told him that you had gone riding."

"You should have told him I was 'not in.' I fear that I will have to coach you," she said, laughing. "Really," she added, "I am sorry that I was not at home when Mr. King called."

"Well, you needn't be," said her aunt, who had never had a love affair and who was inclined to be mercenary, "you were with the one who has some money of his own and who belongs to a wealthy family."

Ruth went on to her own room, closed the door behind her, threw herself on the bed and gave way to tears.

When Harold King had been informed that Ruth was out riding he felt keen disappointment and had a strong suspicion as to whom she was riding with. As he was riding home on the street car his suspicions were confirmed as a roadster passed the street car under an electric light. He at once sank into the valley of despondency where jealousy like a poisonous miasma sickens the heart.

Chapter VII

THE city election resulted in a complete triumph for the anti-law enforcement, anti-prohibition, anti-Ku Klux crowd. The Klan not being fully organized took no active part, as an organization, in the election. The enemies of the Klan who were supporting the Clark ticket, used the Klan as a scarecrow to line up the Catholics, Jews, negroes and bootleggers for Clark. This influence, together with the personal following of Clark, easily elected him.

Springer boasted in many issues of the Journal of "The victory the respectable law-abiding citizens gained over the lawless Klan and its sympathizers." He told the people through the columns of the Journal that the election had sounded the death knell of the Klan in Wilford Springs; that the law-abiding citizens had emphatically protested through their votes, and that no self-respecting citizen would think of joining this organization after the community had shown its disapproval.

In spite of this propaganda fiery crosses and white robed figures were more frequently seen in the vicinity of Wilford Springs than before the city election. During the entire summer the frequency of these reports increased.

Soon after Clark took the oath of office as mayor he appointed Roberts as chief of police. Roberts was inexperienced in politics and knew but little of the methods and less of the principles of the men who had been elected. Roberts was not a strong character, but, generally speaking, he desired to do what was right. No sooner had he become the head of the police department than he made his police force a talk and told them that he expected the law to be enforced without fear or favor.

Sixty days after he had been acting as chief he was passing the Wilford Springs Central State Bank. Stover stepped to the door and asked him to come in.

"Come into my private office." The banker led the way.

"Have a seat, Roberts."

"Thank you. This electric fan feels good this kind of a day."

"We're having some very warm weather."

"We can expect it this time of the year. It's a little unpleasant but mighty good for the corn."

"Roberts," said the banker, "you have a note here that is thirty days past due."

"Yes, I know I have. I have been intending to take care of that out of my salary, but one thing after another has happened to prevent my doing so. First, one of the children had to have his tonsils removed; then

my wife was called back to Illinois, on account of the illness of her mother."

"Too bad that you have had so much bad luck."

"Can't you renew this note for me?"

"Yes, we can take care of that for you. You will always find the Central ready and willing to accommodate its customers. There is another little matter I want to talk to you about. The other day Hennesy was in here paying his rent and told me that he wouldn't be wanting my building after the first of next month. I asked him what was wrong, and he said that there is a policeman hanging around there a great deal of the time and his niggers, who are employed to put out his stuff, are scared and are not doing any business. I wouldn't want to lose Hennesy as a tenant. (I couldn't get half the amount of rent he pays me for the use of the building for the use of ordinary lines of business.) Hennesy can't afford to pay me one hundred seventy-five dollars a month for that building to use for a pool hall alone."

Roberts chewed hard and nervously on the end of a cigar. When Stover ceased speaking Roberts said, "I didn't know that building belonged to you."

"And that isn't all. Hennesy was one of your best supporters. He worked faithfully for Clark and recommended you for chief. If I were you I would tell my police to lay off of Hennesy's place and of every other

place where the proprietor is a well established taxpayer and has some influence."

"I told the people that if I were appointed chief I would see that the laws were enforced."

"That's all right, Roberts; but you can't afford to endanger your political future and damage your friends to enforce a law that was placed on the statute books through the influence of cranks and some old ladies."

"I will tell the boys to stay away from Hennesy's place. I really don't know anything against it anyway."

During the entire conversation the lean banker had been rubbing his hands nervously together. Now he smiled. Scarcely ever did he laugh. "Roberts," he said, speaking in a very confidential tone, "there are plenty of law violaters who are transients or who have no influence in the community whom you can prosecute and make an enforcement record for yourself without interfering with the business of your friends and supporters."

"I thank you for your suggestions," said Roberts as he rose to go.

"That's all right, Roberts, I am always glad to help my friends. Let that note run as long as you like." Stover smiled blandly as the chief left the office.

After Roberts left the bank he began at once to put Stover's advice into practice. He instructed his policeman on the beat where Mike Hennesy operated his pool

hall not to see anything when he passed there. He also instructed other policemen to pass up other joints and bootleggers.

A few days later Roberts received word that a common bootlegger known as "Slim" was due to arrive that night with a carload of booze. Slim had been a resident of Wilford Springs only a year. He had no established place of business. Slim was in disfavor with Mike Hennesy and the other joint keepers of the town. He worked independently and had refused to contribute anything to the campaign fund, which Hennesy had been appointed to raise among the liquor fraternity during the campaign. Hennesy furnished Roberts the information and told him to "pinch" him.

It was two o'clock in the morning when "Slim" was halted as he was entering the city limits. The chief took possession of the car and booze and "Slim" was taken to the city jail. The next morning another wheel in the machinery turned and the police judge gave "Slim" sixty days in jail and a two hundred dollar fine.

The Daily Eagle contained a statement of the facts. The Journal not only gave the facts but was loud in its praise of the chief and his force.

It was only a short time after "Slim's" arrest and conviction and while he was still in durance vile that two policemen surprised a party of poker players in a room at The Antler House. The players were prominent business men. They were playing for big stakes.

It was one-thirty in the morning, almost the same hour that "Slim" had been arrested and taken to jail. Were these poker players taken to jail? Oh, no, they were taken to the city building. The chief was then called. He called the police judge, who was accommodating enough to get out of bed to accommodate this group of business men. Each man was permitted to enter a fictitious name on the record and deposit a cash bond of twenty dollars for his appearance. (Of course they forfeited the bonds.) No reference was made of this raid by the Journal. The Eagle simply stated the facts, without giving names and without any comment.

The day following this event Judge Rider, who was the youngest judge of a district court in the state, being only thirty-three years old, met Springer on the street. Judge Rider was a clean-cut, straight, upstanding man who had a strong sense of justice. He could not resist this opportunity of taking Springer to task."

"Hello, Springer."

"Hello, judge."

"Say, Springer, how did you happen to overlook such an important news item as the raid of The Antler House?"

"I didn't overlook it, judge. I purposely omitted it."

"Why should such an important bit of news be omitted from the columns of the Journal?"

“Judge, it wouldn’t do to give that affair publicity. Every one of those fellows were prominent business men.”

“If a business man violates the law he should pay the penalty the same as the friendless outcast. If publicity and the condemnation of the public is to be a part of the penalty he should have that, too.”

“We didn’t write them up because of the feelings of their families.”

“You gave a column to ‘Slim’s’ arrest and conviction. I understand that ‘Slim’ has a wife and three children. Doubtless the members of ‘Slim’s’ family have feelings the same as the members of the families of these business men.”

“If I had mentioned these men by name and they had objected, I couldn’t have shown by the court records that they were charged with poker playing.”

“Springer, you know that it wouldn’t be hard to prove their identity. The police who made the arrest can give the names of every one of them. It was a shame and a disgrace that they were permitted to enter fictitious names on the record and forfeit small cash bonds. I tell you, Springer, that sort of a farce is making Bolsheviks. ‘Slim’ couldn’t be made to believe that the laws are being impartially enforced, and they are not. It is just such partiality as this that makes the Klan necessary.”

“What, you a judge and in favor of that lawless organization?”

“The Klan I am in favor of is not lawless. It is an organization that insists on the impartial enforcement of the law. In no instance would I be a member of an organization that takes the law into its own hands. I can see how an organization of the best citizens, who will co-operate with the officers by serving as private detectives and turning all information over to the officials, can be of great benefit. Furthermore, the Klan I am for is an organization that insists that the officers do their duty and supports them in the performance of it; and demands that the officer who won't do his duty get out. If we can have a Klan like that here, I am for it.”

“I must be going, judge,” said Springer, and the conversation was brought to a close.

Chapter VIII

THE Reverend Earl Benton, pastor of the Methodist Church of Wilford Springs, took an active interest in the Klan. He made several speeches on Americanism and had publicly stated that he was a member of the Klan.

One day when he had called at the office of Charles Wilson to get an insurance policy Patrick McBryan was present.

"Reverend Benton, are you acquainted with Mr. McBryan?" Wilson asked as the minister entered.

"Yes, I know Mr. McBryan. How are you?"

"Very well, Reverend. How are you and the Ku Kluxers?" McBryan asked.

"I am all right and the Klan is getting along fine."

"If you have no objections I'd like to ask you a few questions about this organization."

"None whatever, unless you want to know who the members are. I don't object to telling you that I am a member but farther than that I cannot reveal the membership roll."

"I'd like to know if you think that it is American for the Klan to fight other churches?"

"The Klan does not fight any church nor does it persecute anyone for their religious opinions. Quite the contrary. Members of the Klan are obligated to

uphold the Constitution of the United States, not part of the Constitution, but every article and clause. As you know, one of the fundamental principles of Americanism is religious toleration. The first amendment to the Constitution provides that Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The last clause of the sixth article of the Constitution provides that no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States. The members of the Klan are obligated to support the Constitution of the United States and believe in the principle of religious toleration. If any person or any group should interfere with the Catholics of Wilford Springs meeting in their cathedral to worship God as they please the Klan would be the first to protest against such action."

"You have stated that the Constitution provides that no religious test shall be required for office holding, but the Klan is everywhere opposing Catholics who are candidates and doing all it can to keep them out of office, and yet you say that the Klan supports the Constitution."

The minister smiled. He was amused at the absurd statement of the Irish politician.

"I am afraid," he said, "that you wouldn't have made much of a lawyer. The Constitution says that no religious test shall be required for office holding. That

certainly does not mean that one may not vote against a man because of a religious opinion if he so desires. If Congress were to pass a law requiring all office holders to be Baptists, that would be a religious test for office holding."

Wilson, who was a Baptist, reached over and slapped the minister on the leg and laughingly said, "That would be fine."

"Why do you not permit Catholics to join the Klan?"

"I might ask you why the Knights of Columbus do not permit Protestants to join that organization."

"If you did, the answer would be easy. I would tell you that the Knights of Columbus is a Catholic organization," declared McBryan.

"I can frankly say that the Ku Klux Klan is a Protestant organization—but to give you a little more definite information, I will inform you that in order to become a member of the Klan the applicant must be able to declare allegiance to the United States, which many good Catholics can do, and disown any allegiance to any foreign government, prince or potentate, civil or ecclesiastical, which no Catholic can do."

"Do you mean to say that Catholics are not patriotic?" shouted McBryan, springing to his feet.

"Sit down, Mac, and take it easy," said Wilson. "You remember you are just having a friendly discussion, and the preacher is only answering your questions." McBryan resumed his seat.

Reverend Benton continued to speak with the greatest self-control. "I do not say anything of the kind. Many of them have demonstrated that they are patriotic and good citizens, but the fact remains that as Roman Catholics they owe allegiance to the Pope of Rome. Isn't that true?"

"Yes, he is the head of the Roman Catholic Church."

"Do you not believe that it would be better to have your church organization complete in this country and have no foreign allegiance?"

"I would think so if the pope were an ordinary man."

"Mr. McBryan, will you please explain to me in what sense the pope is not an ordinary man?"

"The pope is the vicar of Christ, and as such is infallible."

"How did the pope get to be vicar of Christ?"

"He is the lawful successor of St. Peter."

"I deny that St. Peter was a pope. He never claimed to have any authority of an ecclesiastical nature not possessed by the other apostles. The other apostles did not recognize any such authority vested in him. Paul, in referring to a disagreement with him, said, 'I withstood him to his face.' If there were any power vested in him that was not shared by the other apostles the Bible makes no provision for a successor."

“That’s the way you Protestants interpret the Bible, but you are fallible and we have an infallible interpreter.”

“If we were to grant for the sake of argument that the pope is the successor of Peter, what makes him infallible?”

“Why, I suppose that God makes him infallible just as he made St. Peter infallible.”

“Cardinal Gibbons says that the pope, as successor of St. Peter, by virtue of the promises of Jesus Christ, is preserved from error of judgment when he renders decisions on faith and morals,” the minister quoted.

“Isn’t the cardinal right?”

“On page 117 of ‘The Faith of Our Fathers,’ Cardinal Gibbons says, ‘The infallibility of the popes does not signify that they are inspired. The apostles were endowed with the gift of inspiration, and we accept their writings as the revered Word of God. No Catholic, on the contrary, claims that the pope is inspired or endowed with Divine revelation properly so called.’ Now if they are not inspired I would like to know just how they are infallible in judgment. The experience of humanity goes to show that the human mind is fallible and prone to error and that the election to an office, be it political or ecclesiastical, does not change the nature of his judgments.”

“I can’t explain it but I believe it.” McBryan spoke with positiveness.

“All Roman Catholics believe that the pope is infallible, don’t they, McBryan?” asked Wilson.

“Sure they do. They wouldn’t be Catholics unless they did.”

“For my part,” said the minister, “I do not see how any fair-minded man can have any faith in the infallibility of the pope or think that he is the lawful successor of Peter when he considers the history of the popes, especially when he considers their morals and decisions. I never could understand how men could believe this doctrine when one infallible pope reverses the decision of a predecessor who was also infallible.”

“You spoke of their morals. What did you mean by that?” Wilson asked.

“I meant that when we consider the immoral acts of some of these men who claimed to be the vicar of Christ, that is, His personal representative on earth, any man whose mind was not stultified by prejudice and superstition would rebel against the doctrine of the pope’s being the vicar of Christ.”

“Just what immorality do you refer to?” McBryan asked.

“Constantine (also known as St. Paul I) was one of the popes. Stephen IV was elected to supplant him. Stephen put out the eyes of Constantine. This pope also amputated the tongue of the Bishop Theodorus Formosus, who had been excommunicated as a conspirator for the murder of Pope John, was elected pope in

891. Stephen VII had the dead body of Formosus taken from the grave, clothed in papal habiliments, propped up in a chair and tried before a council. The corpse was found guilty, three fingers were cut off and the body cast into the Tiber. In——”

McBryan jumped to his feet, his face livid with anger. “Them’s lies,” he shouted, “damnable Protestant lies.”

“Sit down, McBryan, and keep still until the Reverend is through and then you can have your say. One speaker at a time, you know, and Reverend Benton has the floor.” Wilson rapped on the table and spoke with the authoritative voice of a judge.

“Very well, go on,” said McBryan as he took his seat.

The minister, unperturbed, continued: “In less than two months after Leo V became pope he was cast into prison by Christopher, one of his chaplains. This Christopher usurped his place and was afterwards expelled from Rome by Sergius III, who became pope. This pope lived in criminal intercourse with the celebrated Theodora. The love of Theodora was shared by John X. Through her influence John X was made archbishop and later pope.

“John XII was only nineteen years of age when he became pope. His reign was characterized by the most shocking immoralities. He was given to drunkenness and gambling; he put out the eyes of one ecclesiastic

and maimed another. He was charged with incest and many adulteries. He was at last deposed, and Leo VII was elected in his stead. Subsequently John XII got the upper hand and maimed and mutilated his antagonists. His life was finally brought to an end by a man whose wife he had seduced. Boniface VII imprisoned Benedict VII and starved him to death.

“Benedict IX, a boy of less than twelve years, was raised to the apostolic throne. One of his successors, Victor III, declared that the life of Benedict was so shameful, so foul, so execrable, that he shuddered to describe it. The people, unable longer to bear his adulteries, homicides and abominations, rose against him, and in despair of maintaining his position, he put up the papacy at auction and it was bought by a presbyter named John, who became Gregory the VI. These are but a part of the crimes and irregularities of which some of the popes were guilty.”

“I don’t believe all that. I never heard of it before. Where’s your proof?” demanded McBryan.

“My dear sir, these things are a matter of history. Everything I have said of these popes and much more is recorded in Draper’s History of the Intellectual Development of Europe” and can be substantiated by other historians.”

“Aren’t there a lot of Protestant ministers who are guilty of immorality?” McBryan asked.

“There are some Protestant ministers who are guilty of immorality, but when it is discovered that a Protestant minister has gone wrong he is expelled from the ministry. A big difference between the relation of a Protestant minister and his congregation and the pope and the Catholic church is that Protestants do not hold their ministers or any ecclesiastic to be infallible, while the Catholics do hold the pope to be infallible. I do not doubt that many of the popes were good men, and I do not claim that because some of them were bad that all of them are to be condemned, but the point I am making is that one must be very credulous to believe that Christ would recognize as His direct representatives men who had committed such gross immoralities and outraged every human right—men who were among the greatest reprobates and degenerates the world has ever produced. I cannot understand how men who are not controlled by superstitious fear can believe that these men were the successors of St. Peter and that through them Christ passed down the office of pontiff, including all of the prerogatives of his vicarage, to the present incumbent.”

“I believe He did,” said McBryan.

“I suppose you believe that Christ authorized the sale of the papacy at auction by Benedict IX. Well, I don't believe it.”

"It don't make any difference to Catholics what damn Protestants think of their pope."

"Mr. McBryan, I have no objections to your believing in the infallibility of the popes if you want to. The Klan does not object to any religious belief. It stands for the worship of God according to the dictates of conscience, and will protect Catholics as well as Protestants in such worship. What the Klan does oppose, and what every American should oppose, is the exercise of civil power by the Church. Whenever any church, Catholic or Protestant, attempts to gain control of the affairs of state they will find solid opposition from the Klan. One of the principles of this organization is the separation of church and state."

"I would oppose even the Baptist church's doing that," said Wilson.

"Catholics don't believe in the church controlling the state," said McBryan.

"I hope not, but the history of the Catholic church is largely the history of a church directly controlling, or dominating, civil powers; and when such powers have been wrested from it, struggling to regain them.

"The time was when the Catholic church controlled the political affairs of all Europe. In 754 Pippin, king of the Franks, recognized the temporal authority of the pope. In 774 Charlemagne confirmed this power and enlarged the dominion of the pope. For many years contentions between the church and the rulers of

Europe were common. France, under Philip the Fair, was the first power to successfully resist papal authority. The rise of Protestantism under Luther caused the pope to lose fully one-half of Europe. This power was never regained. After the treaty of Westphalia in 1648 conditions were brought about that made a rapid decline of the pope's temporal power.

"Napoleon III was forced to withdraw the French troops from Italy during the Franco-German war, Victor Emmanuel took advantage of this circumstance and on September 20, 1870, entered Rome and took possession of the palace. The pope was stripped of all direct temporal power. His influence in church matters was in no wise interfered with. Since then he has exercised much indirect political power.

"I am not in favor of the pope's exercising temporal power, and Catholics as a whole are not in favor of it. You see we only believe in the infallibility of the pope in religious matters," said McBryan.

"Well, if it is true that the Roman Catholics are not in favor of the pope's exercising temporal power certainly they should not object to the Klan's insisting on the continued separation of church and state. And while there may be some Catholics like yourself who would oppose the re-establishment of the direct temporal control of the pope, there are many who would welcome it and assist in bringing it about."

“You are mistaken. You see that we don’t believe in the pope’s infallibility in political affairs.”

“While it is true that your church teaches that the pope is infallible only in spiritual matters, yet Catholics believe in his right and ability to rule in temporal affairs.”

“How do you know they do?”

“Cardinal Manning, in his debate with Robert Ingersoll, declared, ‘The greatest statesmen and rulers that the world has ever seen are the popes of Rome.’ Cardinal Gibbons, in his book, ‘The Faith of Our Fathers,’ in the chapter headed ‘Temporal Power of the Popes,’ says:

“‘The Papacy,’ they say, ‘is gone. Its glory vanished. Its sun is set. It is sunk below the horizon never to rise again.’ Illboding prophet, will you never profit by the lessons of history? Have not numbers of popes before Pius IX been forcibly ejected from their See, and have they not been reinstated in their temporal authority? What has happened so often before may and will happen again.

“For our part we have every confidence that ere long the clouds which now overshadow the civil throne of the pope will be removed by the breath of a righteous God, and that his temporal power will be re-established on a more permanent basis than ever.”

“Well, I guess everybody has a right to his own opinion,” said McBryan.

“Yes, freedom of speech and freedom of the press is another of the Klan principles,” replied Reverend Benton, as he rose from his chair. “If you will give me my insurance policy, Mr. Wilson, I will go.”

“The premium is nine dollars and forty cents,” Wilson stated, as he handed the policy to the minister.

“Will it be all right to let that go until the first of the month? I am short of funds now.”

“Yes, that’s all right, but I didn’t know that preachers ever got short,” remarked the real estate and insurance agent, laughing.

When Reverend Benton had gone out Wilson turned to McBryan. “I will appreciate it if you will give Harold King a chance at the city building, he is a fine fellow.”

“He has already spoken to us, and we have asked him to submit a perspective drawing. There are several other applicants.”

“He’s a fine young fellow and a home man, and I’d like very much to see him get it.”

“He’ll be given careful consideration,” McBryan replied. “Other things being equal, I would prefer to hire a home man.”

Chapter IX

THE door between Ruth's office and the president's office was slightly ajar. She could hear the suppressed voices of Stover and another man. She caught a sentence that caused her to leave her desk and tiptoe to the door. She stood with her ear near the opening.

Ruth had a high sense of honor. She would have been the last one to eavesdrop through idle curiosity. The sentence which she caught convinced her the conversation taking place on the other side of the door concerned her indirectly, if not directly, and she felt warranted in listening.

She listened with bated breath while the color left her cheeks. She opened and shut her hands nervously.

When the conversation ceased and Stover's caller left she sat down to her desk and wrote a note. She looked at her watch; it was almost quitting time. She stepped to the president's office. "Is there anything more tonight?"

"No, Ruth, nothing more tonight. You may go if you wish to."

"She went back into her room, tore up the lengthy note that she had written and wrote a very brief one. After she had placed this in an envelope and addressed it, she put on her hat and went out on the street.

She had walked but a short way from the bank

when she met a small boy. "Say, boy, will you deliver this note for me?"

"Yes, ma'am."

She gave him a dime and he hurried away on his errand.

Harold King had seen but little of Ruth in the last two weeks. He had been busy getting up a perspective and plans to submit to the mayor and commissioners. He had seen Ruth a couple of times lately in ice cream parlors with Golter. That afternoon Harold had submitted his drawing and plans. Now that he had submitted them he wondered if anything would come of it. The architect's fee would be fifteen thousand dollars for this city job. If he could just land that his financial embarrassment would be relieved and he would be sufficiently advertised to get other good jobs. He had been three years in Wilford Springs, and had barely made a living. There had been many expensive buildings erected since he came, but out-of-town architects had been employed. Sometimes he had been discouraged and felt a desire to seek a new location, but his friend, Charles Wilson, would always tell him at such times: "Stay with it and things will come your way; just keep a stiff upper lip. When you get a job, no matter how little it is, do your best and some day the big jobs will be running after you." Harold was inclined to question this philosophy, but nevertheless it encouraged him somewhat.

Ruth Babcock had had a large place in his thoughts since he had met her two years before. He admired her and was sure if he would allow himself to he would love her—but what right did he have to allow himself to fall in love with a girl when he couldn't properly provide for his own needs!

He had felt bitter pangs of jealousy when he had seen Ruth with Golter. He didn't blame her for accepting the attentions of someone who had an income sufficient to take her out in public and properly entertain her, one who had a right to entertain thoughts of love and matrimony—but he didn't like this man Golter and wished that she would not keep company with him. Golter was a snob and in no sense a man that appealed to men, but deep down in his heart Harold knew that he would be unhappy to see Ruth escorted by any man. If he wasn't so poverty stricken he wouldn't stand back for anyone. His best suit was hardly decent to appear in at social affairs. He would not, in his present condition, embarrass Ruth by asking her to accompany him any place, but maybe fortune would soon smile on him. If he landed the city job and the fifteen thousand dollars, things would be different. His reverie was interrupted by a small boy who entered the office and asked, "This Mr. King?"

"Yes."

"Here's a letter for you. A young lady sent it to you."

"Was she good looking?" asked Harold, smiling.

"You bet yer life. She's a peach."

"Well, I'm interested. What do I owe you?"

"How'd a dime be?"

"All right." Harold tossed him the coin.

As he was going out the door he stopped and looked back. "Say, mister, the girl had done give me one dime, but I thought you'd want to go fifty-fifty with her." He hurried down the stairway without waiting for a reply.

As Harold tore the letter open he thought, "That boy may land in the penitentiary, but his chances to escape the poor house are good. However, I am inclined to believe I would be willing to go fifty-fifty with Ruth in a life partnership, but the one great obstacle is I can't furnish my fifty."

The letter was brief but interesting:

Dear Mr. King:

I would like to have a talk with you. If it will not greatly inconvenience you I would be pleased to have you call at my home this evening.

Yours truly,

RUTH BABCOCK.

"There is nothing to do but to go, if I do have to wear the old suit," he thought. He tried to conjecture what it could be that she wanted to talk to him about.

Maybe she had some suggestion to help him secure the city job. Her employer, Jim Stover, was regarded as the political boss of the town and whatever he said went with the city officials. He was quite sure Ruth was going to make a suggestion to help him to secure Stover's assistance. Wilson had already talked with Stover in his interest but had not secured a definite answer.

That evening Harold got out his best suit and brushed it thoroughly. It was badly worn. When he had dressed he viewed himself in the mirror. "Harold, old boy," he said to himself, "there is no mistaking the fact you are run down, you look seedy. You need a new casing but will have to make out with the old one for awhile."

As Harold walked down the street to the car line he met Golter. Harold noticed his well groomed appearance. When they spoke, the supercilious smirk on Golter's face nettled Harold.

"Come in, Mr. King. Let me have your hat. Ruth ran over to a neighbor's. She said if you called before she returned to tell you that she would be back in a few minutes."

"How are you, Mr. Babcock? I believe you are looking better."

"If I could only get over having this pain in my head. Sometimes I do not have it for two or three days and then it will come back and I suffer terribly. I

worry lots, Mr. King, because I can't remember my business affairs before I was hurt."

"It may come to you some time."

"I hope so. Not long ago in my dream I remembered the rest of the safe combination."

"Are you sure that was really your safe combination?"

"Yes, positive of it. I had remembered all but the last number before the dream."

"Did you remember anything else besides the combination?"

"Yes, I dreamed that I showed the combination to a man in whom I had confidence and that he stole the money."

"Whose money was in the safe, Mr. Babcock?"

"My money."

"Are you sure you had money?"

"Yes, I have always remembered that."

"You say you dreamed that you showed the combination to a man in whom you had confidence?"

"Yes, I trusted him. The dream was very real."

"Can you remember anything about this man's appearance or what his business was or his connection with you?"

"No, I have been trying for days to remember who he was but have not been able to."

At this juncture Ruth came in and the subject was dropped. Soon after, the door opened and Clara Bab-

cock started to enter, but seeing there was company present, hesitated.

"Come on in, Aunt Clara," said Ruth.

The four visited together for a time. When Ruth's father and aunt had left the room Ruth asked, "Were you surprised to get my note?"

"Yes, I was somewhat surprised," he replied.

"I first wrote you what I wanted to tell you but afterwards decided that I could tell you better; so I tore up the letter I had written you and wrote the note asking you to come."

"I was pleased to come, and if I can be of any service to you I will only be too glad to help you."

"Harold," she spoke in a low, soft voice, "I did not ask you to come here because I needed your help."

He felt a little twinge of disappointment. He would like to have her look to him for help and be able to help her. The only time he had attempted to help her he had failed.

"I asked you to come because I wanted to help you."

His pride was hurt. He thought she was beginning to pity him. Pity is not relished by a strong, self-respecting man. He became conscious of his rundown condition. He would not have been much surprised if she had offered to loan him money to buy a new suit of clothes. He wished he was away.

"You know," she continued, "I think that friends should always guard the interests of each other and,

Harold, if I should need advice or assistance I do not know of anyone, outside of my father, whom I would rather trust than you." He felt better.

"I hope I may always be worthy of your confidence," he said.

"What I have to say concerns you directly, and it concerns me because you are my friend. I know that I can trust you not to tell the source of your information."

"Certainly you can."

"This afternoon I was seated in my office with the door slightly ajar. There was someone in the president's office talking with Mr. Stover. I am not sure who the man was, but from the quality of his voice I believe it was McBryan. I heard this man say 'Harold King is one of them.' I moved close to the door that I might hear better. Mr. Stover asked, 'Are you sure of that?'"

"What did he say?"

"He said, 'Yes, I am positive. We have a man who is a member of the Klan, who gave us this information.'"

"Did he say who it was?"

"No, the man to whom Stover talked——"

"I'm sure that it was McBryan," said Harold, interrupting her.

"This man said, 'we'll fix this young upstart.'" Harold clenched his teeth and hands. He felt the

muscles of his arms tighten. "Mr. Stover said, 'let's give him one chance.' 'What do you propose?' the other asked. I could not hear what Mr. Stover said as he dropped his voice to a whisper."

"What else did they say?"

"That was all I heard except the man said, 'I'll keep you informed.'"

"You are sure he said that he got his information from a member of the Klan?"

"Yes, positive."

"So they are going to fix the 'young upstart,' are they?"

"Mr. Stover did not say that; it was the other man who said it. Mr. Stover said, 'Let's give him another chance.'"

"I thank you, Ruth, for this information."

"Harold," she said, laying her hand gently on his arm, "I hope you can prove that you are not a member of this organization."

"Didn't you say the principles were all right?"

"Yes, but so many claim that a lawless element belongs."

"Ruth, you know that hatred and prejudice will cause people to make bitter accusations which they cannot prove and which have no basis in fact. Enrolled as members of the Klan are ministers, lawyers, judges, congressmen, governors. Do you believe that officers who have taken an oath to support the government and

enforce its laws and who have always been law-abiding citizens would become and remain members of an out-law organization? I tell you, Ruth, the Klan is composed of many of the best citizens and its purpose is to uphold and enforce law—not to violate it.”

“I suppose that is true, but somehow I can’t help but hope you do not belong and that if necessary you can prove that you do not. I hardly know, after what you have told me about the Klan, why I should feel this way unless it is because I am your friend and interested in you and do not want you to do anything that will injure your chances for success in the business world or subject you to worry and persecution.”

“I appreciate your consideration for me, but, Ruth, if the issues are as vital as I believe they are and the United States needs an organization of this character to protect our American institutions and our Christian civilization would you want me to refuse my support for fear of personal consequences?” As he asked this question, his gray eyes looked straight into her brown ones.

“Excuse me a moment,” she said and left the room. She soon returned with two portraits. “This,” she said, handing him one of the pictures, “is a portrait of Colonel Jameson, a Virginian, who was an officer in the Confederate army, and a member of the old Ku Klux Klan. He was my mother’s father; and this is a picture of Major Babcock of General Sherman’s staff,

who was my father's father. Both of these men fought at the risk of their lives and at the sacrifice of personal interests for principles they believed to be right. On both sides of the house ancestors fought in the wars of 1812 and the Revolution. My family had a part in making this nation. Not only did the men of the Jameson and Babcock families fight, but the women folk sent them forth to battle in the spirit of love and sacrifice. The blood of these ancestors are in my veins. If the institutions and laws of our country and the sacred principles of Americanism are imperiled I ask you to do your duty courageously as becomes the man that I know you are." They were standing now, and as she made this speech he met her steady gaze unflinchingly. He slipped his arm about her and for a moment neither spoke. There are moments when speech is inadequate.

The following morning at the breakfast table in the Babcock home Mr. Babcock remarked, "You know that the more I see of that Mr. King the more favorably I am impressed with him. He strikes me as a man who has good stuff in him."

"Looks to me like he's kind of rundown at the heel—as mother used to say," said Aunt Clara. "He sure isn't prosperous looking like that Mr. Golter. In this day and age it's mighty essential that a man have money or a good income when he gets married or his wife can't have a place of any consequence in society."

Ruth blushed but made no reply. Her father noticed her embarrassment and said, "Ruth, money has its place in life, but character is the big thing."

Chapter X

“COME right in, Harold. Glad to see you.” Judge Rider greeted his friend warmly.

“Judge, I ran up to talk to you a few minutes, if you are not busy.”

“Sit down, Harold. I am not too busy to talk with you. Anything of importance?”

“Yes, Judge, there is. Something very important. There’s a leak. Somebody is giving out inside Klan information.”

“Is that so? What has been given out?”

“Someone told Stover that I am a member and that they would fix me. Stover suggested that I be given one chance. I don’t know what that chance is to be nor how Stover’s informant meant to fix me.”

“Do you know who Stover’s informant was?” Judge Rider asked.

“Not positively. I am of the opinion that it was McBryan.”

“How did you get your information?”

“I am not at liberty to tell you that, Judge. It would be betraying a confidence.”

“By all means don’t tell it, then, but are you sure that it is correct?”

“Yes, there is no question about the truthfulness of the report.”

"You say that this man whom you think is McBryan said that they would fix you?"

"Yes."

"He was going to get you because you are a Klansman?"

"He told Stover that I was a Klansman and that they would fix me, and naturally the inference is that being a Klansman is the reason for the desire to fix me."

"Was that all that was said?"

"Stover's informant said that he was sure of his information as they have a man on the inside?"

"What! A man on the inside!" The judge sprang to his feet.

"Yes, and when he parted from Stover he said, 'I will keep you informed.'"

"We must look after this at once. It is serious. Just keep it as quiet as possible and we will undertake an investigation. As this is the first leak we have heard of, it is quite likely that the traitor is someone who has recently been taken in."

It was the middle of the afternoon of the same day that this conversation took place that Harold received a 'phone call from the Wilford Central State Bank requesting him to call there for a few minutes. When he arrived he was told by the teller that the president wished to see him in the office. When he entered Stover shook hands with him and asked him to be

seated. The door was open into Ruth's office and she had seen Harold enter. Stover stepped to this door and closed it. Ruth was writing on the typewriter.

"Mr. King," said the banker, "I had the teller 'phone you to come down because I wished to have a little private conversation with you. You know, Mr. King, I have been keeping my eye on you since you designed Simpson's cottage. That is an artistic and well arranged home. I said when I looked through that house that you had ability. I have been expecting ever since to see some big building constructed that you had designed, but I have been disappointed. Of course I recognize that a man in your profession needs more than ability—he needs some influential friends."

"One must have the ability if he makes good, but I realize the value of influential friends," Harold remarked.

"Yes, you must have them if you get on in this world, especially if you are short on capital. I think that you realize, Mr. King, that I have influence with the city administration."

"I am sure that you have."

"Yes, what I say usually goes. Now, Mr. King, I would like to see you get the contract to do the architectural work for the new city building."

Ruth, writing on the typewriter in the other room, heard the sound of the men's voices. She was anxious for Harold. She wondered if Mr. Stover was going

to give him the chance today. If so, she hoped the terms would be such that he would accept. She did not want to hear, and pounded unusually hard on the typewriter.

"I thank you, Mr. Stover. To be sure I want the job."

"I have already talked to the mayor and commissioners in your interest."

"I certainly appreciate it."

"I thought you would. If there is anything that gives me pleasure it is to help a young man get a start. I'm a self-made man, Mr. King. I started to work in a bank at thirty-five dollars a month. It took me a long time to get a start. If I had had a few influential friends to back me I might have established myself ten years sooner than I did. Whenever I think of those long years of hard struggle I make a new resolution to help some young fellow to get a start. Harold, I have helped lots of them along the road to success. What I am going to say to you is in the spirit of a father to a son. (He placed his hand on Harold's shoulder and smiled on him affectionately.) I want to give you a little advice."

"I am willing to hear it."

"The city officials like your perspective drawing, but they say that you have had very little practical experience."

"I have not had a great deal of experience since I opened an office of my own, but before coming here I was employed in an architect's office and worked on drawings for expensive buildings. I drew up most of the plans and specifications for one building that cost a million dollars."

"Understand, I am not doubting your ability, but the mayor and commissioners must be convinced or influenced. I am quite sure I can overcome this objection without any trouble, but there is a more serious matter."

"What is it?"

"They know that you are a Ku Kluxer." The banker had partially turned his face from Harold as he made this statement but gave him a side glance for the purpose of noting the effect and was disappointed that Harold did not appear surprised or alarmed.

"How do they know that?" he asked with apparent unconcern.

"It doesn't make any difference how they found out. The fact is they know it."

"If it be true, what has that to do with this architectural work?"

"It may not have anything to do with doing the work, but it has a lot to do with getting the job. You see they don't want to give this fine job to a man who is identified with an organization that is so highly objectionable."

"You are personally opposed to the Klan?"

"Yes, very much. You see, I am going to advise you the same as I would if you were my son."

"What are your objections to the Klan?"

"They are many; but one of the principal ones is that they hide behind masks. If they want an organization let them take off those masks and come out in the open. It's cowardly for men to hide behind masks, besides there are too many of them who take advantage of their concealed identity to get out and whip somebody."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Stover, the members of the Klan are not permitted to wear their masks except in the lodge or Klan meetings for the purpose of doing guard duty or putting on ritualistic work, when doing deeds of charity or in peaceful parades."

"Well, if they want to put themselves right before the public let them publish a list of their members."

"That would destroy the value of the organization as a law enforcement body. How would it do, Mr. Stover, for the secret service men of the government to publish their names when they come into a community and let everyone know just who they are?"

"We don't need the Klan to enforce the laws. We have officers for that purpose. The Klan has no right to take the law into its own hands."

"The Klan does not take the law into its own hands. The Klan assists the officers in enforcing the law by

furnishing evidence. If the officers refuse to act it is the purpose of the Klan to have them recalled or voted out at the election and others put in who will act. It is the duty of all good citizens to help enforce the laws."

"Our officers enforce the laws—we don't need the Klan."

"Our officers enforce the laws in Wilford Springs against the uninfluential violator, but fellows like Hennesy are permitted to operate."

"Well, young man, you had better not line up with a bunch who are in disfavor with the public. The last election showed what the people of Wilford Springs thinks of your Klan organization. Now to get down to business. It's of a great deal of importance to you that you get this city building job. If you will follow my suggestions I will get it for you. You know that, don't you?" Ruth had finished her typewriting and the men were speaking so loudly that she could not help but hear now.

"I have every reason to believe that you can."

"Very well." The banker began to rub his hands together. "What I have to propose is this, you withdraw from the Klan and make a public statement that you have done so because it is a lawless organization, and I will see that you get the city job."

"Would you have me make this statement in spite of the fact that all I personally know of the Klan is to the contrary?"

“Well, you have read of enough outrages being committed by the Klan other places that you could conscientiously make that statement even though you do not have personal knowledge of law violations by Klansmen.”

A fifteen thousand dollar job was at stake. He wanted it as he had never desired anything before, but his virtue never wavered. In a flash he remembered the parting admonition of his mountain mother when he left the mountain home to make a place for himself in the world. She had said, “Son, when you are sorely tempted to do wrong say, like your Master, ‘Get thee behind me Satan.’” He also remembered his obligation as a Klansman.

He sprang to his feet and towered like a Hercules over Stover who sat at the table rubbing his hands nervously. “Stover,” he said, “if you think for a minute that you can bribe me with a fifteen thousand dollar job to betray the best interests of my country and community and violate my sacred obligation as a Klansman you have another think coming. I tell you and you can repeat it to your henchmen that you can take the job with which you have attempted to bribe me and go straight to hell with it.” King turned on his heels and left the room. When he had finished this speech Ruth clasped her hands together in joyful admiration and exclaimed, “Good, good!”

Chapter XI

RUTH was proud that her friend, Harold King, had courageously turned his back on the proposition that would have meant the prostitution of his manhood. She was not altogether happy—it is always a great shock to discover a lack of principle in one in whom you have had great confidence. Ruth had regarded Stover not only as a friend but as a man of exceptional honor. To say that the discovery that he would try to bribe a man to do a dishonorable thing shocked her, is to put it mildly.

When she next saw Harold she said, "I tried not to hear your conversation with Mr. Stover, but you both got to talking so loudly that I could not help it. Harold, I am certainly proud of you."

"I would have liked to have had the job but not at the price they asked. I will get along some way. If I can't make a living as an architect I can go to work on the railroad section."

"I have faith that you will succeed as an architect, but I would much prefer to have a friend of mine an honorable section hand than a dishonorable architect, no matter how successful he might be in his profession."

"Ruth," he said, "it is good to have a friend like you. You are different from so many girls who think so

much of display and veneer. You think more of the things that are really worth while."

"I feel that I do not deserve all that, Harold. My father deserves a great deal of credit for whatever views of life I have that enable me to appraise people by a better standard than bank accounts, automobiles, clothes, painted faces, and dance steps. He has always laid great stress on the value of character. Often I have heard him say, 'The real gold of life is not to be found in mines or at the end of the rainbow but in hearts that are true to friends and loyal to the best interests of life.'"

"That is certainly a noble sentiment. How is your father?"

"I don't see much change in him. He worries so much because he can't remember the man who stole his money. Ever since he had that dream he really believes that some man in whom he had confidence and to whom he had shown the combination of the safe really robbed him. (Of course it is only a delusion.) His bank stock, the only property he had except the home, was turned over to satisfy his debts."

"Ruth, in whom did your father have a great deal of confidence?"

"Do you mean in a business way? Well, there were a number of men in Zala for whose honesty and ability he had great respect. Of the men out of town with

whom he had business relations, I believe he trusted Mr. Stover more than any other."

"Ruth, who was the cashier of the bank in which your father was president?"

"His name is Dick Watson."

"Where is he now?"

"I don't know. He left Wilford Springs when Mr. Stover bought my father's interest, and I have not heard of him since."

"Do you suppose that it is possible that Watson defrauded your father?"

"No, my father's account at the bank tallied with his personal pass book. His bank stock was sold to Mr. Stover, as you know."

"What did Watson do with his stock?"

"He owned only a small amount of stock, and it also was purchased by Mr. Stover."

"What kind of a looking fellow is this man, Watson?"

"He is fairly good looking."

Harold laughed. "When you ask a girl about a man's looks she answers: 'Handsome, good looking, fairly good looking, homely, ugly or ugly as a mud fence.'"

"That's because we think so much of looks, I presume," she said, laughing, "or it may be because we are so limited in descriptive powers, but since you do not like my general statement I will try to be a little more

specific. He is about five feet nine or ten inches in height, has light brown hair and dark blue eyes, his nose is rather prominent, when he smiles he displays a row of exceedingly white, even teeth. Is that sufficient?"

"Very good. I believe you will be able to develop your descriptive powers."

"Why should I?"

"Well you may want to write novels some day."

"If I do I will have you for one of the characters. You will be my hero."

"I see that you will not succeed as a novelist."

"Why?"

"You have already shown sufficiently poor judgment in selecting a character to condemn you as a novelist; however, you might succeed as descriptive writer. I will test you a little farther. Did the man Watson have any peculiarities?"

"Nothing that I remember, except he lisped slightly."

"Speaking of descriptions," he remarked, "there is a scene that I would like to have descriptive power to describe."

They were walking through the City's Natural Park and had come suddenly upon a little lake surrounded by wooded hills. It was the first of October, and nature's artist had tinted the foliage a rich golden hue. Two couples in row boats were rowing along the shaded side of the lake while shimmering light was reflected

from the opposite side. The deep green of the grass which bordered the lake, the gold of the tree foliage, the blue of the sky above and the passing clouds mirrored in the water blended in a harmonious picture that no lover of beauty could fail to admire.

"Isn't it beautiful!" Ruth exclaimed.

"Yes, as Riley says, 'A picture that no painter has the colorin' to mock.'"

They walked on down a winding road, through the woods and around the hills. Ruth began humming, "There's a long, long trail a winding into the land of my dreams."

"That song has a lot of truth in it," he remarked. "The road is often a long one, and the night seems so long while waiting."

"Yes, but the song also expresses the pleasure that many enjoy while pursuing the dreams and traveling with 'you.' It depends a lot on who the 'you' is."

It was a pleasant October afternoon and there were many people riding and strolling through the park. Harold was thankful that it was cool enough for him to wear his light overcoat.

A car honked behind them and they stepped out of the road. Golter drove past. He lifted his hat and spoke very distantly. Ruth had declined an invitation to go riding with him that afternoon.

"Your special friend," Harold remarked.

"Don't put too much emphasis on the special if you would be exact in your expression," she replied.

As they were leaving the park they met two young ladies.

"Why, Ruth, for the land sakes! I haven't seen you for a coon's age."

"Mable, I certainly am glad to see you! What are you doing here?"

"I am visiting my cousin. Miss Babcock, my cousin, Miss Welty."

"And allow me to introduce my friend, Mr. King."

After the formal recognitions of the introductions, Ruth said, "Mable, I haven't seen you since you moved to the capital."

"No. This is the first time I have been any place."

Mable Finch and Ruth had been friends at Zala. Soon after Ruth came to Wilford Springs, Mable had moved with her parents to the state capital.

"How are your folk?"

"They are well. Father sticks right to business. Mother and I tried to get him to go to the Shriners' convention this summer, but he thinks that the business wouldn't run if he were away."

"Is your father still in the hotel business?"

"Yes; you couldn't get him to do anything else. He is planning to build the largest and finest hotel in the city."

"Will he build soon?"

"Yes, he expects to consider plans at once."

Harold and Miss Welty had walked a short distance away to look at a petrified tree that had recently been donated to the park and were out of hearing.

"That's a swell looking beau you are with," said Mable.

"He is a splendid fellow and a very dear friend."

"He certainly looks good."

"Mable, I want you to visit me while you are here."

"I wish I could, but it will be impossible. I just ran down for the week-end with my cousin, but I'll tell you what I want you to do. Will you do it?"

"Well," said Ruth, "it will depend just a little on what it is."

Both girls giggled.

"I want you to go home with me for a visit. This week we are to have our fall musical festival."

"I am going to surprise you by accepting the invitation. That is, provided I can get off at the bank where I work."

Harold and Mable's cousin now rejoined them and the four left the park with the crowd that was now homeward bound.

Chapter XII

A GROUP of white robed figures were gathered on the summit of White Eagle mound. A great fiery cross was visible for many miles. Many of the citizens of Wilford Springs who had recently read in The Journal that the Klan was dead beheld with amazement the fiery emblem—got into their cars and drove along the road near the mound that they might get a close-up view of the cross and if possible gain some idea of the number of Klansmen who were assembled. The reports that circulated on the street the following day varied greatly, the numbers ranging from five hundred to a thousand.

It was an important meeting and a large per cent of the members of Wilford Springs Klan (which now actually numbered eight hundred) were present, together with a few visiting Klansmen from neighboring Klans.

It was an impressive sight for the occupants of the cars on the road when the white robed figures on the mound kneeled in a circle around the fiery cross. The Reverend Benton led the prayer. The minister, clad in the white robe which symbolizes purity, kneeling there beneath the star-lit heavens in the flickering light of the fiery cross (that signal for gathering and emblem of militant Christianity) poured out his soul

in earnest supplication to Him, the all wise and loving Father:

“Lord, we bow before Thee in humble recognition of Thy power and goodness. We thank Thee, as citizens of a great republic, for the blessings and opportunities that Thou hast granted us. We thank Thee for our country; for our churches; our homes; our free schools; and our pure womanhood.

“Dear Heavenly Father, we thank Thee above all else that Thou didst send Thy Son Jesus Christ into the world ‘to give life and to give it more abundantly.’

“Lord, help us to stand courageously for our country, its institutions and laws. Teach us our duty to our fellow man. Lead us into larger fields of usefulness and in the great conflict of righteousness against sin may we be dedicated to Thy cause in body, in mind, in spirit and in life.

“All wise Judge, as we are called upon to pass judgment on our fellow man, may Thy spirit of love prevail, and in our decisions may we be guided by Thine unerring judgment.

“Lord, we pray Thee to bless this group of men and the homes of our community. We humbly beseech Thee to be with us as we pray together in the language which the Christ who died for us taught us to pray:

“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

As the seven hundred men on the mound united their voices in the Lord's prayer the people in the cars heard and many were filled with awe and wonder. Many who had honestly believed that the Klan was an organization of undesirables were astonished.

Mr. Henry Agnew, a Catholic, who was an exemplary citizen and highly respected, remarked to his wife when the “amen” had been pronounced, “Mary, my suspicions and fears that the Ku Kluxers are a menace to the community is considerably lessened since seeing that large body of men kneel in prayer.”

The prayer concluded, all stood. Judge Rider, the exalted Cyclops, said: “Klansmen, we have an important matter to come before the Klan tonight. You will each be called on to render an important decision and I ask you to listen attentively to the proceedings and render your verdict according to the evidence. Klaliff, you have some important matters to present.”

“I have, Your Excellency.”

“You may present the matter to the Klan.”

“The Kladd will present Klansman Tom Glynn at the Exalted Cyclops station.

When the Kladd brought Glynn before the Exalted Cyclops, King, the Klaliff, said: “Klansmen, some

time ago it became known to your Klaliff that the identity of Klansmen was being made known to men not Klansmen. The matter was reported promptly to your Exalted Cyclops. A secret investigation was made, and the movements of a number of Klansmen were closely observed. Klansman Glynn was seen to go directly to a room after a number of Klan meetings and confer with Pat McBryan. Will Klansmen Sam Bronson and Ned Fields come forward?" The two Klansmen came forward and testified to Glynn's conferences with McBryan. "The next morning after these conferences McBryan and other men were known to be in possession of information of inside affairs of the Klan.

"One day when slips were passed to Klansmen giving some valuable information a photographer succeeded in taking a very interesting snapshot. I will ask a number of Klansmen to look at the picture and write on a slip of paper what you see without conferring with each other." Six Klansmen who were designated for this purpose examined the picture carefully and then wrote their observations. Four of them stated that the two men in the picture were Glynn and McBryan and that they were consulting a Klan information slip. The other two stated that one of the men was Glynn, that they did not know the other man and that they were looking at the Klan information slip which Glynn held in his hand. The Klaliff read these reports and

then said: "Your Excellency, that is all the evidence we have to offer."

"Klansman Glynn, do you wish to offer a defense or make a statement?" the Exalted Cyclops asked.

"I have nothing to say except that I gave the information."

"Why did you do this?" the Exalted Cyclops asked.

"I did it to help the Holy Catholic Church."

"Are you a Catholic?"

"I was raised a Catholic. I do not now consider myself a Catholic, but I believe in The Holy Roman Church and am glad to serve her."

"Glynn, who asked you to do this?"

"I refuse to answer."

"Klansmen, you have heard the charge and the evidence and Klansman Glynn's confession of guilt. What say you, shall Tom Glynn be expelled from this organization?"

The vote was unanimous for expulsion.

"Tom Glynn," said Cyclops Judge Rider, "you were received into this organization in good faith. You pretended to act in good faith. You took a sacred and solemn obligation to support the principles that all Klansmen are obligated to support. On the open Bible and before God you promised loyalty to Klansmen and the organization. You have confessed to violating that oath and give as a reason that you did it to assist the Catholic Church.

“It must be a strange religious conscience that will permit one to hypocritically take the obligations of a patriotic and benevolent organization for the purpose of assisting the church of his choice. The information you furnished was of value only to law violaters and designing politicians, and could not possibly be of any value to a church that has no other motives than to spread the religion of Jesus Christ.

“You are now clad in the white robe of a Klansman. This robe was made white to represent purity of thought and actions, which it is the purpose of the Klan to promote. You, Tom Glynn, have disgraced this robe by your act of perfidy. You will take it off.”

Glynn removed the robe and handed it to the Exalted Cyclops.

“No true Klansman would want to wear this robe that has been disgraced by you, consequently I consign it to the flames.” A Klansman applied a lighted torch and no one spoke as the robe was being consumed by the flames. When it had been reduced to ashes, the Judge continued. “As the robe which you might have worn in honor has vanished so your relationship to this organization has ceased.

“If perchance in the future you behold upon some hill the fiery cross may it say to you, ‘That they who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth.’

“Guards, you will escort the expelled member to the public road.”

So Tom Glynn was conducted out of the presence of the seven hundred Klansmen and was no longer a member of the Invisible Empire.

Chapter XIII

AS the fall election drew near when county and state officers were to be elected, a tremendous effort was being made by all opposing factions to defeat those candidates that the Klan was said to favor. The wildest stories were circulated as to outrages having been committed by the Klan. The fear of the negroes was again played upon.

Rastus Jones was airing some of the church troubles of the Union Avenue Baptist Church in the Wilford State Bank one morning and the bank force who had time to listen were greatly interested in his recital.

“You sees it wa’ jest like this. I’s elected deacon and so’s that rascally niggah, Sam Jenkins. I se’s I ain’t gwine to act as no deacon if that low down niggah is goin’ to be deacon. It’s not in accordance wid my exalted opinion of the dignities an duties of the impo’tant and splendiferous office of chu’ch deacon.”

“I guess that’s right, Rastus,” remarked the bank teller.

“Yes, sah; dat is right. Well, when we’d been instituted in ouh offices——”

“You mean installed, don’t you?” Ruth asked.

“Yes’m, dat’s it, installed. The fust Sunday we ’ficiated aftah de duties and sponsibilities had become incumbent upon us dat impudent niggah looks at me

and says, 'Rastus, do you presume that you has the qualifications requisite to serve as deacon?' It was lucky for that niggah that I didn't have my razzar with me. I jumps up befo' the entire boad of deacons and says, 'I moves that Sam Jenkins is disqualified to occupy the high and exalted position of deacon of The Union Avenue African Church.' Maybe you don't tink that brought on a battle. About half took sides wif me and tothah half wid Sam. Dar ware some langwage bein' used what wouldn't sound good in a pulpit when the Reverend George Washington Bascom entered and ast what all de argument was about. Well, Sam splained and I splained; but Sam splained moah than I did, an the Reverend George Washington Bascom decided that Sam could remain a deacon. I'd done said that I ain't gwine to serve with no sech a low down niggah so I takes my hat and walks out, and I ain't gwine to pay no moah of my ha'd earned money to a prechah what ain't got no mo' discriminatin and amplyfien powah than to side in with sech a wuthless niggah. I'se done stopped payin' and I reckons the Reverend is gwine to miss my thuty cents what I'se been takin' evah Sunday."

"You better watch out," warned the cashier. "The Ku Kluxers may visit you."

"Ain't nobody gwine to scah me with no Ku Klux talk. If I'se some if these niggahs what's a shootin' craps and liftin' othah people's chickens of' de roosts

I might be scahed, but I'se a Christian, I is, and I jest like to know why the Kluxer would botheh me."

"They might get you for going back on the preacher."

"He done went back on me and de best interests of the chu'ch when he saved that onry low-down niggah from my just wrath and indignation."

"The Klan may not look at it that way," said Ruth.

"Go on, you all ain't gwine to scah me with no Ku Klux talk, you ain't."

The bank clerks continued their work and Rastus busied himself about the bank. Several times during the morning his questions about the Ku Klux Klan showed a grave apprehension.

"Rastus," said Stover, "I think you had better mop this evening after banking hours."

"Yes, sah; I'll mop it tonight. I'se janitah at one of the school buildings and have to do the work there right aftah fo' o'clock."

"Well, I don't care when you do it just so you get it done," Stover replied.

That evening after dinner at the Babcock home Ruth announced that she was going back to the bank.

"I'm sorry that they want you to come to the bank and work at night," said her father.

"This work that I am going to do tonight is a little work I want to do for myself. Mr. Stover did not tell me to do it."

"I hope you will not be out late."

Before going, Ruth went to her room and secured a pillow slip and a sheet; in the pillow slip she cut eyes and a mouth vent for breathing. She wrapped the pillow slip and sheet in a paper which she carried under her arm.

When she reached the bank she locked herself in her office and waited for the arrival of the janitor.

It was eight-thirty when he came. Ruth could hear him talking frequently to himself as he worked. Once she heard him say, "Who's afeared of them Kluxers, anyway. I'm mighty shuah I ain't."

Ruth put on her robe and mask and viewed herself in the mirror. She suppressed a laugh. When she heard Rastus emptying the water she went out of the door that opened directly into the corridor and waited behind the elevator cage which was standing at the bottom of the shaft.

Soon Rastus came out and when near the elevator Ruth stepped from behind it.

Rastus threw up both his hands and exclaimed, "Lawd, Lawd!" and began to back off. The white robed figure wearing a white mask slowly followed him. One arm under the robe was lifted toward him. He was sure the Klansman had a revolver in his hand, as he backed away from the approaching figure he said, "Please don't shoot me, I ain't done nothin', Mistah Ku Klux—honest to Gawd, I ain't."

"You have refused to support your pastor." The white robed figure spoke in a sepulchral voice.

"I'se only missed payin' one Sunday and that's a fact. If you will let me go this time I'll pay evah Sunday."

"You may have one more chance. Now face the wall and don't look around until you have counted three hundred. My final warning to you is beware, beware, beware!"

The negro, as directed, faced the wall and began to count. Ruth removed her robe and mask as she passed through the outer entrance to the corridor and hastened to the street intersection where she caught a car.

The next morning it was ten o'clock before Rastus made his appearance at the bank.

"Rastus, you are a little late," said Stover.

"Yes, sah, Mr. Stover, I'se late. I had a terrible sperience last night that's kinda made me feel flobbergasted."

"What was the trouble, Rastus?" asked Stover.

"I was visited by the Ku Klux Klan."

"What, are you telling the truth?" Stover asked with interest.

The bank employees all left their work and gathered around Rastus.

"Honest to Gawd, I'se tellin' the truf. I'd jest finished moppin' and sta'ted home, when out from behind the elevator stepped one of them Ku Kluxers."

"Did he have a mask on?" someone asked.

"Yes, sah; he had a mask on."

"Was there just one?" the cashier asked.

"Jest one in the hall, but I heard a lot of 'em outside the doah."

"What did the Klansman say to you?"

"He said I hadn't been payin' our preachah. I spec dat skunk of a Sam Jenkins done set 'em on me."

"What did they do?"

"This big spook done say he give me one moah chance."

"Why didn't you grab him an lift his mask?" Golter asked.

"He was too big and powahful."

"How big was he?" asked Ruth.

"He must have been seben feet tall."

"You thought he was too big for you to grapple with?"

"Yas, ma'am, he was too big—besides he threatened me with a gun."

"Are you sure he had a gun?" she asked.

"Yes'm, I'se shuah. I didn't see the gun itself. He kept it covered with his robe, but he shuah nuf pointed it at me."

"This is no more than I have been expecting," Mr. Stover remarked, and the clerks resumed their work.

All day at irregular intervals Ruth shook with suppressed laughter. That evening when she reached

home and saw a copy of the Journal she gave full vent to her mirth. Springer had made the most capital possible out of the incident. This was a consequence that Ruth had not foreseen. When she saw the article she was thoroughly amused at the exaggerated garbled report of it, but after reflecting on the article she regretted that she had staged the affair. She had never once thought of the incident's being used to the detriment of the Klan. She re-read the article:

KU KLUX KLAN MOB NEGRO

His Life Threatened

“The very thing that was to be expected of the Ku Klux Klan has come to pass in Wilford Springs. Last night about 9 p. m. a dozen or more members of the Ku Klux Klan went to the main entrance of the Central State Bank of Wilford. One of their number, wearing a robe and mask, entered the corridor and waited for Rastus Jones, the janitor of the bank, who was doing some work on the inside. When he had finished his work and was walking through the corridor leaving the building a man in a white robe and wearing a mask suddenly stepped from behind the elevator and forced Mr. Jones into a corner at the point of a revolver. The Klansman threatened the life of Mr. Jones if he did not agree to do something that was contrary to the dictates of his conscience. The white robed and hooded ruffian then flourished the gun in the face of Mr. Jones and

warned him that he would be given only the one chance. Mr. Jones was then forced to face the wall and was told to count to three hundred before looking around. When he had counted the required number and reached the street, the Klansmen were gone. The robed Klansman is described as a very large man with an exceedingly heavy voice.

“It seems that Mr. Jones had had a little trouble with another colored man, and he is of the opinion that this man secured the assistance of the Klan. This seems plausible as Mr. Jones is a highly respected colored man, honest and industrious. This hooded organization has been known before to act as an agent to punish someone through personal spite.

“The Klan movement in Wilford Springs has been discouraged by the best citizens of the community. The organization here at present is small and, as it is elsewhere, composed of the derelicts of society, together with a few foolish individuals who are easily influenced to part with their money to enrich Klan promoters, not knowing the real nature of the organization.

“This incident should arouse all good citizens to do their utmost to oppose the Klan.”

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Saturday evening when the employees of the bank were receiving their pay Rastus Jones said to the

cashier, I wants some change fo' my chu'ch envelope tomorrow."

"I thought you had quit paying to the church."

"I done quit but I'se gwine to sta't to payin' agin. I don't believe a Christian should quit payin' the preachah jest 'cause he don't like all the preachah does. I wants the change so's I can get sixty cents out of it fer my envelope."

"All right, here you are, but I thought you said that you only gave thirty cents."

"Yas, sar, dat's all I gives regular, but I didn't pay las' Sunday, so I'se gwine to make up fer it this time."

The following Sunday evening the Reverend George Washington Bascom discussed "The Questions of the Day." The Union Avenue African Church was well filled. Many of the members of this church were among the best colored people of the town, but of course the Union Avenue Church also had its share of the other kind.

The major portion of Reverend Bascom's address was devoted to the coming election. He discussed the issues of the campaign and then he aroused tremendous interest when he said:

"They tell us that the Ku Klux Klan is a factor in this campaign. They told us in the city election that if we did not line up for certain candidates that the Klan would get so strong here that no negro would be safe in the pursuit of his happiness. Now if there is

any nigger here whose pursuit of happiness leads him to the chicken coop of his neighbor he ought not to be safe in that pursuit.

("Dat's right, dat's right," came from a number of his auditors.) "Now they are trying to scare us with that bogey man, the Klan.

"Now the Klan may go out and do unlawful things and then again it may not. ("I know it does, came from the pew where Rastus Jones was seated. "Amen," shouted Sam Jenkins.) As I was a saying, the Klan may sometimes whip a nigger and then again it may be some folks who have no connection with the Klan, but if the Klan does do it I want to tell you that it isn't any more than some of you rascally niggers need."

("Amen, amen; dat's right, dat's right," came from various parts of the house.)

The Reverend Bascom ceased to speak. His mouth dropped open, his eyes, fixed on the door in the rear of the room, protruded from his head.

The congregation turned and looked to see if their minister had suddenly seen a ghost. There in the doorway, clad in white, his face concealed by a mask, stood a Klansman. Some of the women screamed. The man in white started down the aisle, and other white robed and masked figures entered, and as fifteen or twenty of them pressed down the aisles the greatest excitement prevailed. "Lawd have mercy on us!" some of

the women ejaculated. One or two negroes crawled under benches and one man, of whom it was reported that he had been paying too much attention to another man's wife, jumped through a window and never quit running until he reached the woods a mile and a half from town.

As the white robed figures neared the front of the room the pastor clutched the pulpit with both hands. Rastus Jones, who was seated on a front seat, called out, "Mistah Kluxers, I'se done paid up my chu'ch dues. You kin ast de treasurer."

When the two Klansmen in front halted in front of the pastor one spoke in a clear voice that could be distinctly heard all over the room: "Reverend Bascom, the Wilford Springs Klan has heard of your good work as pastor of this church. (The preacher breathed easier.) The Klan is ready to help you and back you up in every good work. Here is an envelope containing an expression of good will from our organization."

The spokesman handed the envelope to the minister who, with trembling hands, tore it open. It contained three hundred dollars and a note which read: "Fifty dollars of this money is a personal gift to the Reverend Bascom and the remaining two hundred and fifty dollars is a gift to the church to be applied on the church indebtedness."

Whatever fear that the pastor had entertained up to this moment now vanished. A broad grin overspread his black face.

“Members of the Ku Klux Klan,” he said, “in behalf of myself and this congregation I thank you for this gift. I wish your organization success in its efforts to uphold the laws and promote good citizenship. Again I thank you.”

The Klansmen then left the room in silence. After the last one was out the pastor read the note just received and a chorus of hallelujahs followed.

“Hallelujah! “That’s right, brethren,” said the Reverend Bascom, “I believe it would be a fine thing to close this meeting with a hallelujah song.” And they did and sang it with a will.

Chapter XIV

“WHAT are we going to do, mother?” asked little ten-year-old Grace Armstrong. Mrs. Armstrong wiped away a tear and answered, “I don’t know what, but I think God will help us find a way.”

Mrs. Armstrong was a widow; her husband had died three years before and left her with three small children. When the doctor bills and funeral expenses were paid there was very little of the thousand dollars of insurance left, and she found herself confronted with the problem of earning a living and caring for the three small children. She went heroically to work taking in washing and succeeded fairly well until one of the children became ill and, after a lingering illness of four months, died. During the time of the illness of the child Mrs. Armstrong’s earnings were considerably decreased, as a great portion of her time and energy must be given to the nursing of the little invalid.

Doctor bills and funeral expenses and decreased earnings were responsible for the piling up of considerable debts.

Grace was the oldest of the children, and the mother often talked things over with her as she had no older person with whom to counsel.

This question was occasioned by a letter which notified Mrs. Armstrong that unless the house rent were

paid by the first of the next month she must move out.

“We might find another house, although vacant houses are scarce, but everybody would want a month’s rent in advance. We have only three dollars in the house, and we must keep that to buy bread. You know I had to give up two of the family washings during little Jimmy’s sickness, and I have only been able to get one in place of them. I’ll go down to the bank and explain to Mr. Stover why I haven’t paid the rent.”

“Do you think if you explain it to him he will let us stay?”

“Yes, I think so. You peel the potatoes for dinner while I finish this washing, and then after dinner I’ll go see him.”

That afternoon Mrs. Armstrong called at the Central State Bank and asked for the president. She was informed that he was busy. “Would she wait?”

She sat down on the bench and watched the people coming and going; some to deposit and others to draw out. Some with large sacks bearing many coins, others with only a few dollars to add to their accounts. She had neither money to deposit nor money to withdraw. She noticed the large stacks of money behind barred windows and thought of the inequalities of life, and wondered not a little why it should be so.

After a wait of half an hour she was informed that Mr. Stover could see her. It was with a great

deal of trepidation that she entered the president's office.

"I am Mrs. Armstrong," she explained. "I have come to talk with you about the rent."

"Yes, let's see, I sent you a notice, didn't I?"

"Yes, you told me to pay by the first or get out. I thought if I explained to you why I was behind with the rent you might let me stay, and I will pay."

He opened his desk and took out a large book and turned to his list of tenants. He owned ten business houses and fifty residences which he rented. "I find," he said, "that you will be three months behind the first of next month."

"I am very sorry that I am so much behind. My little boy was ill so long that I couldn't earn much and then there were the funeral expenses."

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Armstrong. I would like to let you remain in the house regardless of whether you could pay any rent or not if I consulted my feelings alone," the banker rubbed his hands together and smiled benignly, "but the fact is, Mrs. Armstrong, that if I get fifteen dollars a month, which is the amount you have been paying, after paying taxes and paying for the upkeep of the property, I am losing money. I would like to give you the free use of this house if I could afford to do so, but I simply can't afford to let you have it any cheaper, as I am now renting it to you

at less than cost, if I figure any interest on my investment."

"I am not asking you to rent it any cheaper. All I am asking is that you give me a little more time to catch up. I will pay you every cent I owe you if you will just give me time. It's pretty slow work catching up when you have a family to support and no way to make money except by taking in washing."

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Armstrong, but really believe that for your own interest you should get a cheaper house. I really feel that I am advising you for your own benefit when I tell you that if you find that you can't raise the back rent I will have to insist on your vacating. Good afternoon, Mrs. Armstrong. I am always glad to advise you. When you wish to consult me, feel free to call." He bowed her out.

She must try to find another house, as there was no possibility of her earning the amount of money necessary to pay the back rent by the first of the month.

She went to Charles Wilson's office to inquire about a house. The fat real estate man was so jovial and at the same time so sympathetic that (though she had intended to tell him only of her inability to pay but a part of the month's rent in advance, in case she could find a house) she told him of her financial difficulties and of the notice from Stover to vacate.

"You say that Stover told you that you must pay up by the first of the month or vacate?"

"Yes, he said that he would like to let me have the free use of the house if he could afford it, but he could not afford it as he was losing money on it at fifteen dollars. To be sure I do not want the free use of his house or any house. All I want is a little time until I can catch up."

"Did he say he was losing money on that house you are living in?"

"Yes, he said he was if he figured any interest on the capital invested."

"Well, you know Stover is used to figuring a pretty high rate of interest on the money he has invested. Let's see, are there three or four rooms in that house?"

"Three."

"It isn't modern, is it?"

"No."

"I didn't think the water had been put in on that street."

"The closest city water is on Sixteenth Street, three blocks away."

"Mrs. Armstrong, I have a little three-room house listed here on Maple Street—a much better residence district than where you are living. I can rent you this house for twelve dollars a month and it is modern."

"That will be fine."

"If I were you I wouldn't wait until the first of the month to take this house, as it will not stand vacant long at that price."

"I want it but I can't raise even half of a month's rent before the first of the month."

"If you want the house, that part can be arranged all right."

"Thank you. I certainly want it and I will move right away. I intend to pay Mr. Stover just as soon as I can."

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"Klansmen, you have all read of the alleged Klansmen who threatened the life of the negro, Rastus Jones. We know that they were not Klansmen." (Judge Rider, the Exalted Cyclops, spoke with earnestness.) "True Klansmen do not take the law into their own hands. The man who does, not only violates his oath as a Klansman but acts contrary to the purpose and spirit of our organization. If it is proven that any member of this organization takes part in an affair such as was narrated in the Journal (you can't believe half that's in the Journal, someone interposed) he can expect to leave this Klan as Tom Glynn left it. I would like to see how many of you endorse this sentiment."

He paused while they voted their approval. The vote was unanimous. "I feel confident that no one who has taken the sacred and binding obligation of a Klansman took part in that affair, yet it is going to hurt the organization. Let me remind each of you that the mask is only to be worn in regular Klan ceremonies, when in peaceful parades and when doing charitable

deeds. It may be that occasionally some misinformed, or misguided Klansman may think it his duty to check some unlawful act by the commission of some other unlawful act. We cannot expect three million men all to keep implicitly the rules of the organization. Breaches of the peace are sometimes committed by soldiers in the army, by members of fraternal orders and churches. Even Peter denied his Master thrice, and there was a Judas among the twelve. But you who are strong must help to strengthen the weak, and when you see a brother acting in a manner unworthy of a Klansman remind him of his obligation.

“Fortunately, selected as our members are from the best citizens of the community, we have a right to expect only a small amount of misconduct.”

When Judge Rider had finished his talk, he asked if there were anything to bring before the Klan.

“I have a matter to present,” said Charles Wilson. “There is a widow in this town whose family is in need.” He then told them how Mrs. Armstrong had been left a widow without means, how she had labored to support her children; of the death of her little boy; and that she had gotten behind and could not pay her rent and unless it was paid up in full, Stover had ordered her out of the house.

“What do you wish to do in this matter?” the Exalted Cyclops asked.

A Klansman moved that a special collection be taken for the relief of Mrs. Armstrong and her children.

When the collection was taken Judge Rider remarked: "Klansmen, we can do no better work than this. I believe it was the Apostle James who said: 'Pure religion and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.'"

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Mrs. Armstrong had risen early to get an early start at the washing. The children were asleep. She liked to let them sleep as long as possible of a morning. She hoped to get an extra washing during the week as she would have the added expense of moving.

There was a knock at the door. Who could her early caller be, she wondered. She slipped a clean apron on over her dress and hurried to the door, but not until the impatient visitor had knocked the second time.

When she reached the door she found a stranger there waiting. Another man whom she did not know was waiting in a car in the street.

"Is this Mrs. Armstrong?" the man at the door asked.

"Yes, I am Mrs. Armstrong."

"Here is an envelope that I was requested to hand you." He gave her a large envelope and without another word hurried to the car. Mrs. Armstrong, won-

dering at his brevity and haste, watched them drive out of sight around the corner before she opened the envelope which he had handed her. Imagine her surprise when she found that it contained bills. She looked at it carefully—yes it was real money. There was some mistake. They must have been mistaken in the address where they were to take the envelope. She counted the money. There was two hundred dollars. “If this money were really mine,” she thought, “how much it would help me. Sixty or seventy dollars would pay all my debts, and I could go right to town and buy some school clothes for the children, which they are needing so badly.” She happened to look into the envelope and saw a piece of paper on which was written in a large bold hand:

“The Wilford Springs Ku Klux Klan commends you for keeping your children in the public schools and Sunday School and for all your efforts to raise them to become good citizens. In appreciation of your services to your family and community we send you a little gift which we trust will be accepted in the same spirit in which it is sent.

“WILFORD SPRINGS KU KLUX KLAN.”

“Thank the Lord for the Klan!” exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong and then hurried to call the children that they might share the joy with her.

When the morning meal was over and the washing on the line she went down to the Central State Bank and asked for Mr. Stover. The bank president was surprised when she told him that she had come to settle the back rent. When he saw her he supposed of course that she had come to beg for more time. When she said, "I have come to settle with you," he could scarcely believe his ears.

"Are you ready to pay all?" he asked.

"Yes. I will settle with you and move out tomorrow."

"If you settle, Mrs. Armstrong," he said, smiling, "you don't need to move out."

"I want to move out. I have found a modern three-roomed house for twelve dollars a month."

"There must be something wrong if you get a modern, three-roomed house for twelve dollars. You had better be careful. It must be in an undesirable locality, and you know, Mrs. Armstrong, you can't afford to take your children into an undesirable neighborhood."

"This house is on Maple Street."

"There must be something wrong."

"I am going to move out of your house tomorrow. I owe you for two and a half months."

"You owe for three months. When you remain in a house you owe for the entire month."

“Very well, Mr. Stover. Here is your money. I was visited this morning by a stranger who gave me an envelope containing two hundred dollars—a gift from the Wilford Springs Ku Klux Klan.”

Stover’s countenance fell when he received this information.

“That’s a very bad organization,” he said gravely. “Didn’t you read in the paper how they mistreated my janitor?”

“I don’t know anything about what they did to your janitor, but I do know they helped me and that I am thankful,” she said, smiling.

That afternoon Stover rented his residence which Mrs. Armstrong was to vacate the next day and secured a month’s rent in advance. He did not deduct to the new tenant the half month’s rent the widow had paid, neither did he give it back to her. He was at a loss to know why within a week from this time two hundred thousand dollars were withdrawn by depositors.

Mrs. Armstrong went directly from the bank to the home of the Reverend Earl Benton.

“Reverend Benton,” she said, “I have heard that you are a member of the Ku Klux Klan.”

“I am,” he replied. “I do not hesitate to let the public know that I am a member of this great organization, as my work for the organization is in the lecture field, but if the membership as a whole would permit their identity to become known it would destroy in a

large measure the efficiency of the organization. Nothing would please law violators better than to know the identity of these men who are assisting officers as special detectives."

"What I wanted, Reverend Benton, is to ask you to thank the Wilford Springs Klan for the wonderful present they sent me. Tell them I certainly appreciate it. It came at a time when I was in dire need."

The day following the gift of the two hundred dollars to Mrs. Armstrong, Willard Jackson, who owned a large clothing store and was considered one of the most conservative men in town, met Springer, the editor of the Journal.

"Say, Jackson," said Springer, "wasn't that incident that happened the other night a disgrace to our city?"

"To what affair do you refer?"

"The mobbing of that negro by members of the Ku Klux Klan."

"If the facts were as stated in your paper it was an incident to be regretted, and if the Klan is responsible for it, it is to be condemned."

"There's no question about the facts as reported in the Journal, and no queseion but what it was done by the Kluxers."

"Did they say they were Kluxers?" Mr. Jackson asked.

“No; they didn’t say so, but the one who threatened the negro with the gun wore the Ku Klux robe and mask.”

“Springer, I do not consider that any proof at all. Anyone could have put on a white robe and mask.”

“Well, when the Klan insists on wearing those masks they should be willing to take the blame for all damage done by masked parties. If they are not directly responsible for all the depredations committed by masked ruffians they should take the blame for wearing the masks.”

“Did you ever stop to think that there were more whippings and applications of tar and feathers by masked men before the Klan came into existence than there has been since? Reverend Benton stated in his lecture that it is the purpose of the Klan to prevent lynchings.”

“That’s not true,” said Springer, getting excited. “The Klan practices lynching and encourages mob violence.”

“I noticed in the Eagle that the Klan gave the Union Avenue Colored Church a two hundred fifty dollar donation to apply on the church debt and the pastor a donation of fifty dollars, but I never saw any mention of it in your paper.

“I heard something about it, but it was not officially reported to me. It is the policy of the Journal not to

print rumors. We only print news from reliable sources."

"I heard today that the Klan gave the Widow Armstrong a donation of two hundred dollars. Now if that is true, it sounds mighty good to me. I don't belong to the Klan or know much about it, but I am in favor of giving everybody a square deal."

"The Klan never gave anybody anything. If the Widow Armstrong got a donation it is safe to say it wasn't from the Klan. The gifts to charity that are reputed to be from the Klan are not from the Klan at all."

"Who gives them, then?"

"The organizer does it for advertising purposes."

"I shouldn't think that he could afford to make so many gifts."

"This Klan business is a great money-making scheme. You see the organizer makes ten dollars on every member he secures."

"How much does it cost to get into this organization?" Jackson asked.

"Twenty-five dollars," the newspaper man replied.

"That's news to me."

"I can tell you something else that perhaps you do not know. The Klan oath is in direct violation of the Constitution of the United States. The Klan members are obligated to support the Klan regardless of how

the interests of the Klan may clash with the government of the United States.”

“How do you know, Springer, did you ever take this oath?”

“No.”

“Did you ever see it?”

“No.”

“How do you know, then?”

“I am in the newspaper business, and I have ways of getting information that the ordinary person does not have,” declared Springer with an air and tone of great importance.

Two Klansmen, standing near, heard this conversation. Each one had contributed to the funds for the colored Baptist Church and the Widow Armstrong donations; they had each paid only ten dollars initiation fee and knew that the organizer received only a small part of that; they had each taken the solemn obligation of a Klansman binding himself to support to the full extent of his ability the Constitution of the United States. As they moved away one remarked, “Springer is certainly a malicious liar or an ignoramus.”

“‘Verily, he hath his reward,’ ” the other remarked.

“Pray tell me what it is.”

“I have heard that Aesop once said that there is a compensation for everything. A friend said, ‘You are wrong! What compensation hath the fool?’

“Aesop replied, ‘The fool has the joy of being wise in his own conceit.’ If Aesop is correct, Springer should experience a great deal of joy.”

The two men laughed heartily.

Chapter XV

HAROLD KING was walking in the clouds. He had received a letter from J. C. Welty asking him to come to the capital at once. He stated that he was going to build a large hotel, work to begin as soon as the plans were drawn, and that King had been recommended to him as an architect.

Harold decided that in order to make the right kind of impression he must have some new clothes, consequently he waived his objections to going in debt for clothes and that evening visited Jackson's clothing store where he was fitted out.

He had made the drawings and drawn up most of the specifications for a big hotel when he was an employe in an architect's office, and these he now got together. It was fortunate he had saved them. This done he called Ruth over the 'phone and secured her permission to call in the evening.

About three o'clock in the afternoon Golter entered Ruth's office. "Miss Ruth," he said, "don't you want to take a ride?" Ruth had declined many invitations to ride with Golter and refused many requests to call.

"I would prefer riding to pounding this typewriter this time in the afternoon, but the chances are I will have to continue to pound it until four o'clock."

"I am going to Zala and thought you might enjoy going along for the ride."

"I would like to go to Zala. I haven't been there for so long. When are you going to start?"

"Right away."

"I wouldn't want to ask to quit work early."

"I'll ask Uncle Jim for you, if you will go."

"I don't want to go if Mr. Stover needs me."

Golter stepped into the president's office and soon returned with the information that Uncle Jim said that she could go as soon as she finished the letter she was writing.

"How long will you be gone?" she asked.

"Oh, we should be back by six or six-thirty. You know it is only twenty-four miles from here to Zala, and it will only take a few minutes to attend to the business."

Ruth called her aunt and told her that she was going with Mr. Golter to Zala.

On the way going he asked, "What do you think of the Ku Klux Klan by this time?"

She replied, "It seems to be doing some good."

"Perhaps a little good but much more harm."

"How do you know that it's doing harm?"

"I know by what I read. Besides you can't expect anything but trouble from the class of people that belong."

“What do you know about the class of people who belong?” she asked.

“They are mostly crooks and ne’er-do-wells like that fellow King, who goes around with his coat frayed at the cuff.”

“Mr. King has more to him than a whole lot of fellows who are better dressed; but how do you know who belongs?”

“You see that that class of people have little principle and many of them give away their membership.”

“I don’t believe it,” she said with spirit. “I think that there are unprincipled people who work some of their bunch into the Klan for the purpose of giving it away.”

“It certainly ruins one’s standing in society when it is found out that he belongs to the hooded bunch. I wouldn’t want to associate with anyone who was connected with these midnight marauders.”

“I believe in the principles of the Klan; I believe that a good class of men belong; that they are doing many charitable acts, and in many places have created more respect for law and order. If I were a man I would join this order of real red-blooded Americans.”

Golter decided that he was not getting anywhere in the direction which he desired to go; he tried a new tack.

“I was reading a new book the other day, the title of which is, “The Quest for Happiness.”

“Is it good?”

“Yes. It is so much more practical than many books along that line. I suppose you would call the author a materialist, but then you know that everything in this world that has any value has a material basis.”

“I am not so sure of that.”

“Well, if you will read this book you will see that his philosophy is good common sense. He shows that no matter what enjoyment one seeks one must possess material wealth to secure the means of gratification. If one desires music, he needs money to attend the concerts or provide the instruments for himself. If he loves art he is all the worse if he hasn't money with which to buy pictures or visit art galleries. Man may develop an appetite for orange sundaes but he is miserable because of this fondness if he lacks the price. He knocked the doctrine of 'love in a cottage' into a cocked hat. He says, how absurd to think a couple could be happy in this day and age in a little stuffy cottage without any of the modern conveniences, unable to entertain, no automobile, no money to take a trip, etc. Isn't he right?”

“No, he isn't. Of course money has its place, and it might be very difficult to be happy in penury; but love is not dependent on rugs, furs, pianos and automobiles, which are all well enough in their place. Honesty and all of the Christian virtues are not dependent on material things. It is true that the one

with the artistic taste may desire fine pictures, but if he is a true artist he will not be more miserable with the love of the beautiful within him and no money with which to purchase pictures than he would be without the aesthetic talent. Quite the opposite. He can behold the beauties of the heavens at night, the wild flowers and the birds; he can appreciate the pink hue of the dawn and the golden glow of the sunset, and enjoy the forests and ferns that jack frost paints on the window panes. To be sure, nobody wants to starve, but I am of the opinion that love will flourish no better on roast turkey and maple syrup than it will on bacon and sorghum molasses."

Ruth visited with a few of her friends in Zala while Golter attended to his business. They remained in Zala a little longer than Ruth had thought they would.

When they started home Ruth remarked, "It is later than I had thought we would be here."

Golter looked at his watch. "It's only six o'clock. If we have no bad luck we will be home by seven. We could drive it in much less than an hour if it weren't for that five miles of bad road."

"I hope we can get home by seven," said Ruth.

"Anything of importance?"

"Yes, there is. I had a date with Mr. King tonight." Ruth was not only anxious to keep the engagement with her friend but was also anxious to show Golter that his slurs and innuendos had made no other impression on

her than to create a stronger desire to be more loyal to her friend. She was filled with a feeling of disgust for Golter.

This information was evidently not very pleasing to Golter. He became less talkative and the conversational atmosphere became rather chilly.

They had driven but a few miles when Golter stopped the car.

“What is the trouble?” Ruth asked.

“Something wrong with the engine.” He got out and worked for fifteen minutes. Ruth felt relieved when he closed down the hood. He got into the car and they started. They had not gone far when he stopped the engine again and remarked, “There is something wrong yet with the engine.”

“Oh, I wish I were an automobile mechanic for a little while so that I could know whether there is really anything wrong with that engine,” thought Ruth.

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Harold King's heart was singing a joyful melody as he went to the home of his friend, Ruth Babcock. He was happy because he had a chance at a big job. He felt more efficient because he was wearing a neat suit of clothes. There is a psychological value in clothes. A man who is poorly and shabbily clad may be ever so brilliant and honorable a man, but the shabby clothes detract from his confidence and power.

When Harold reached the Babcock home he was met at the door by Aunt Clara who informed him that Miss Ruth had gone to Zala with Mr. Golter. She did not know when she would be back but presumed that it would be late, as it was a long drive to Zala, and Ruth had so many friends there that she would want to see.

Harold was not in a pleasant frame of mind when he returned to his room. He threw himself down in a chair with a woe-begone look on his face. What a difference a half hour may make in one's spirits! How quickly the sunshine can vanish and darkness envelope us! Harold wondered whether or not Ruth really cared a great deal for Golter. He couldn't understand how a girl with the ideals and good sense that Ruth possessed could care very much for a snob like Golter. However, she must think a great deal of him when she broke her engagement with himself and went to another town with Golter.

He would not let her know that he cared, except to show her he was independent. He would leave on the five o'clock train the next morning for the state capital. She wouldn't know of his chance for this good job nor would she see him in his new suit. Every man desires to appear well before the woman he admires. "She owes me an explanation, and I shall stay away from her until she makes it," he thought. He was not only disappointed but his pride was hurt as well.

When Ruth reached home at 8:30 she was informed by her aunt that Mr. King had called. She went at once to the 'phone and called him up.

"Mr. King? This is Ruth Babcock speaking. I am very sorry that I was not at home when you called."

"If it will not inconvenience you I would like to have you come tonight."

"No, it isn't too late."

"I don't like to bother you if you are busy, but I would like very much to talk to you."

"Of course if you don't want to come——"

"I'll expect you in a few minutes."

She ate a lunch and was in readiness to receive him when he called. She noticed that he carried an injured air, and proceeded to explain at once why she was not back early as she expected. (After her explanation his feelings were considerably mollified.)

"Ruth," he said, "I am leaving on the four-forty train in the morning. I am going to the state capital."

"Will you be gone long?"

"Only a day or so. I have a chance for a big job there—a hotel. If I am fortunate enough to land it, I shall have to make several trips up there."

"I certainly hope you land it. You richly deserve to."

"Thank you."

"Pardon the intrusion," said Mr. Babcock, as he entered. "How are you, Mr. King? You are certainly

looking fine.” Ruth had thought so too but had not told him.

“I am feeling fine. I hope you are feeling better.”

“Not much change in my condition. I am reading ‘Macbeth.’ I just stepped in to get a commentary on Shakespeare. ‘Macbeth’ is a great play. Duncan and I had very bitter experiences with the man whom we trusted. Duncan was murdered by his kinsman, Macbeth, whom he had honored and in whom he had implicit confidence. I was robbed by a man whom I trusted and to whom I was foolish enough to teach the combination to my safe.”

When he had left the room Ruth remarked, “Poor, dear father, he tries so hard to remember. The other night when he was reading ‘Macbeth’ he looked up from his reading and remarked, ‘It seems to me I have read this play before.’ He was only in the second act then and he laid the book down and spent the rest of the evening trying to recall the remainder of the play. He worried about it and I had a hard time to persuade him to give it up and retire at eleven-thirty. I am so anxious to take him to Dr. Lilly, and it’s only going to be a little while until we can go. I have two hundred dollars in my special fund now, and when I save fifty more I am going to take him.”

“I sincerely hope Dr. Lilly can help him.”

“Don’t you think he can, Harold?”

Harold had but little hopes of Dr. Lilly's being able to help her father and feared Ruth would be disappointed in the end, yet her heart was so set on it that he did not have the heart to discourage her. "It may be he can. I have read of some wonderful cures he has made," he replied.

"What do you think of the coming election?" she asked.

"I think that the Klan is going to be an important factor. It will not have as much influence as it would have had if that Rastus Jones affair had not happened."

"You think that negro affair is hurting the Klan's influence?"

"I am sure it is. I heard a good man say the other day that he intended to vote for Dan Brown, the Klan candidate for sheriff, until this affair came up. I am convinced that Klansmen did not have anything to do with it, but it is hurting the Klan influence, nevertheless."

"I am certainly sorry if it does hurt the Klan," she said, her conscience smiting her.

"There is no question about it hurting; it has already hurt. You see there are so many who want to believe things of that kind about the Klan, and they use this episode to work on the fears of others."

"Excuse me a moment, please." She left the room and soon called him to come into the dining room. "I

ate a lunch very hurriedly tonight and am hungry; won't you eat a lunch with me?"

"With the greatest of pleasure."

They sat down to the table together, and while they ate Harold did most of the talking. Ruth's mind was preoccupied. When they had finished eating Ruth picked up the wish bone and held a prong of it toward Harold. "Let's wish," she said, "the one who gets the biggest piece wins, and gets his wish."

"All right," he replied, taking hold of the prong.

"I tell you, let's have it that the one who wins shall have his three best wishes."

"Could one little chicken wishbone secure so much desire?" he asked.

"Yes, if we both agree to it, it can."

They both pulled and the bone broke close to his fingers. "There, I won. I'll get my wishes!" she exclaimed.

"Tell me what you wished?"

"Oh, no; they wouldn't come true if I were to tell."

"Won't you ever tell me?" he asked.

"Yes, when they come true."

When he had told her good-night she called after him, "Good luck on the trip."

His spirits were all together different when he entered his room for the second time that night. He set his alarm so that he might not miss the early train. Harold had a habit of reading something every night

before retiring. He picked up a volume of "The Rhymes of Ironquill" and read a few short poems, selecting them at random. He turned to Ironquill's version of Aesop's Fables. He read "The Swell," Fable No. 9.

"On the walk a hat did lie,
And a gallus chap sailed by,
And he cut a lively swell—
He was clerk in a hotel.

"So, he gave that hat a kick,
And he came across a brick—
Now upon a crutch he goes,
Minus half a pound of toes.

MORAL.

"When you see a person thrown
By misfortune or by vice,
Help him thrice or seven times thrice;
Help him up or let alone.
If you give the man a kick
You may stumble on a brick,
Or a stone.

"Fate is liable to frown,
And the best of us go down;
And in just a little while
She is liable to smile.

And the bad luck and the vice
Seem to scatter in a trice,
And to hunt their holes like mice.
 And the man you tried to kick
 Now has changed into a brick."

"I believe Fate is beginning to smile," he mused, "and here's hoping that the bad luck will scatter in a trice, and it may be that some of these fellows will find some day that the man they tried to kick has turned into a brick." With this pleasing thought on his mind he retired and was soon fast asleep.

Chapter XVI

SHE was a slip of a girl—not more than sixteen years of age. She had boarded the early morning train at a little station and took a seat on the east side of the coach where she sat looking at the first rays of approaching day, oblivious of the other passengers in the coach.

A man of perhaps twenty-eight or thirty years walked through the coach several times looking attentively at the women passengers. He was well dressed and of medium size. The bill of his cap was pulled well down and shaded his weak eyes. There was a narrow, pinched look about his mouth and chin.

After several trips up and down the aisles he stopped in front of the seat in which this young girl was seated and asked, "Miss, is this seat taken?" The girl turned her face suddenly from the window and hesitatingly replied, "No, it's not taken." The man sat down. He at once proceeded to engage the girl in conversation. At first she was very shy, but gradually her timidity wore off and she talked freely.

She told him that she was an orphan, her mother having died when she was five years old. She had been raised by her grandmother in a little country town. Her grandmother had recently died and left her without any living relatives. She had worked for

two weeks in the restaurant in the little town and had decided to go to the city to seek employment.

"Do you know where you are going to work?" he asked.

"No, I don't."

"Have you any acquaintances in the city?"

"No, I do not know anyone there. I am afraid I will feel pretty much alone."

"A pretty girl like you ought not to be long in getting some friends."

"I never was in a city and I am a little afraid."

"I live in the capital city," said the man. "I am well acquainted there. I can help you get a job. Not long ago I helped a girl who was a stranger in the city get a good job. I landed it for her the next day after she arrived. She thinks I'm the 'hot stuff' and she's a cute little dear—just about your size but not so pretty as you are. Say, girlie, it's lucky you met me, for I can sure land you a good job."

"Oh, thank you! I am so glad, for I have money to keep me but a short time without working."

"Do you know where you are going to board?"

"No, I want to get a good clean place that is not too expensive."

"There is a good room vacant where I board. It's the best place in the city for the money."

"How much is the board per week?"

"Seven dollars a week for both room and board."

"That's cheaper than I hoped to get it."

"I tell you there is not another place like it in the city."

"Is it a respectable place?" she asked.

"Oh, yes; it's the finest kind of a place. The landlady is very particular whom she takes in. I'll recommend you and you'll get in all right."

She felt more comfortable now that she had found someone who was acquainted where she was going and would help her.

He talked to her of the city and the things of interest. Especially did he dwell on the attractiveness of the cabarets and the public dance halls. After a half hour of this talk intended to inflame her imagination and stimulate a desire for the amusements of the city, he said, "Do you know I never before met a girl I thought so much of in so short a time. It's a case of love at first sight with me, dear." He took her hand in his. She drew it away gently.

In the seat behind them was a young man who had heard the entire conversation. This young man was a very different type from the one in the seat in front of him with the girl. He was of a stronger build, his face more refined and intellectual. His eyes were not dull and lids drooping, as were the other's, but wide open and bright. This young man was clean of mind and attractive in appearance. He had one sister who was about the age of this girl when he last saw her. (That

had been several years ago.) He remembered that his mother had said, "Son, remember to treat every girl like you would want your own sister treated." A man never gets entirely away from the influences of a Christian home and the teachings of a good mother. This young man had recently had another experience that had made a profound impression. He had taken a solemn and sacred obligation to protect pure womanhood. Kneeling beneath the starlit heavens his life had been dedicated in prayer to the service of Christian civilization, and among the things enumerated to which he dedicated his life was the protection of women.

Harold King, the Klansman, spoke, "Young lady, do you know this man?" The man in the seat with the girl turned and cast a side glance at Harold from under the bill of his cap.

"No, sir," she answered.

"Never saw him or heard of him until he sat down beside you?"

"No, sir."

"Then my advice to you is to let him alone."

"I'm jest wantin' to help the girl," the man in the seat with her drawled.

"Young lady, my advice to you is that when you get to the union station you place yourself under the protection of the police woman and ask her to see that you get to the Y. W. C. A. headquarters. The secretary

of the Y. W. C. A. will help you find a boarding place and secure employment.”

“Thank you.”

Harold leaned back in his seat and there was silence in the seat ahead. After a time the man with the girl whispered something to her that Harold could not hear, and got up and went into the smoker. The news agent came through the car calling the morning paper. Harold purchased one and was soon absorbed in its pages and thought no more of the girl and the man who had the looks and used the methods of the procurer.

When the porter called the union station the girl was soon out of her seat and well down the aisle so that when Harold stood to leave the car there were several people between them.

When Harold stepped off of the coach he saw the weak-eyed, pinched face man, who had been one of the first off the smoking car, approach the girl and offer to take her grip. She informed him that she could carry it, but he took hold of it and fairly pulled it away from her. With the other hand he took her by the arm as he said, “Come on, dear, you mustn’t try to get out of here alone. I will take care of you.” She pulled back and he was pleading with her to go with him when Harold interfered. “You let go of that girl and hand her back her grip at once,” he demanded.

The man dropped the girl’s arm and faced Harold. “Is this any of your damn business?” he asked.

"It certainly is, and my advice to you is to go while you are all together and have your freedom of action." Harold spoke in a voice that convinced the offender that he meant business. He glanced at Harold's athletic proportions, then turned and hurried down the gangway.

Harold conducted the girl to the station police woman in whose charge he left her after being assured that the police woman would see that she had a safe escort to the Y. W. C. A.

Harold found Mr. Welty an affable business man, and he had not conversed with him long until he had gained his confidence. Mr. Welty was pleased for the most part with the plans which Harold submitted, but asked that some changes be made. Harold went to his room at the hotel and went to work. The next day he had completed floor plan drawings according to Mr. Welty's directions. When he showed him the revised drawings, Mr. Welty was greatly pleased.

"That's fine, Mr. King; there are just one or two minor changes to be made and you can do that when you get up the complete plans. Now if we can get together on terms we are ready to build a hotel."

When Harold King boarded the train for home that night he was happy. He had landed a job that would pay him twelve thousand dollars, and on the trip had rendered protection to a friendless girl. He felt the joy that comes to one who has acted honorably from

unselfish motives. The Klan motto, "Non Silba Sed Anthar" (Not for self but for others), was growing in its significance for him as mottoes and principles always grow as they are worked out in acts.

"When Harold got off of the train at Wilford Springs he met the Reverend Earl Benton. "Hello, Harold, how are you?"

"How are you, Doctor? I am feeling fine. Just had some good luck."

"Is that so? I am mighty glad to hear it."

"Yes. I just landed a big job. I am going to do the architectural work for a big hotel in our capital city."

"Fine, fine! Allow me to congratulate you." The minister wrung his hand earnestly. "Are you just returning from the city?"

"Yes, I have been gone a couple of days."

"Have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"The facts about the mobbing of Rastus Jones."

"No; what about it?"

"It was nothing but a prank pulled off by a girl."

"How do you know?"

"The young lady made an affidavit stating that she was the perpetrator of the joke and published the affidavit in The Eagle."

"Who was the young lady?"

"Let's see. I don't recall her name just now. She works in the Wilford Springs Central State Bank."

"It surely wasn't Miss Babcock?"

"Yes, that's the girl—Ruth Babcock."

Harold felt a dizzy sensation. Could it be possible that Ruth had been the one who had subjected the Klan to all this criticism. He couldn't believe it.

"There must be some mistake," Harold ventured.

"No, there's no mistake. It has made Springer the laughing stock of the town."

"What do—the—the Klansmen think of Ruth, I mean Miss Babcock?"

In this last question Harold revealed anxiety, and the minister's quick perception told him that there was an interest, other than his interest in the Klan, back of the question.

"Oh, the boys think that it is great of her to have the courage to come out in the paper and put the Klan in the clear."

"But what about her having pulled this stunt in the first place and thereby brought reproach on the Klan? Do they criticize her for that?"

"No. Everybody knows that she did not do it for that purpose."

"Where can we get a paper?" Harold asked.

"There's a news stand in the middle of the next block."

When they reached the news stand Harold asked for the Eagle of the previous day's issue. The news dealer informed him that he was sold out, that he could have

sold twice as many Eagles of the issue asked for if he had had them.

"Let's go into this jewelry store and see if they have one," said the minister.

"Have you a last night's Eagle?" Harold asked.

"I believe there is one around here some place," the jeweler replied.

After a brief search he found it. The article read:

"A circumstance which occurred recently has been erroneously reported by the press, and an organization which is in no sense responsible for this incident has been blamed. Being in full possession of the facts in the case and not wishing to injure a worthy organization or the public, I feel it is my duty to tell under oath the facts concerning the Rastus Jones affair which occurred on October 3, 1922.

RUTH BABCOCK.

Then followed the oath:

"Ruth Babcock appeared before me, a notary public, and first being duly sworn, deposes and says:

"On the night of October 3rd, 1922, I hid behind the elevator in the Wilford State Bank for the purpose of frightening one Rastus Jones, a negro. I was clad in my usual attire with the addition of a sheet wrapped around me and a mask made of a pillow slip over my face. When Rastus Jones came down the corridor and was near the elevator I stepped in front of him and he

uttered an exclamation and began to back off. I followed him. I was not armed with a revolver or any other weapon. I did point my finger at him under the sheet. I did not threaten his life. I referred to some church trouble of which I had heard him speak. I told him I would give him one more chance but did not threaten to injure him in any way. I was entirely alone. My only motive was amusement. No one but myself was directly or indirectly responsible.

RUTH BABCOCK.

“Subscribed and sworn to before me, a notary public in and for the County of Rush, this 12th day of October, 1922.

JOHN P. SNIDER.

“My commission expires January 1st, 1924.”

When Harold had finished reading, Reverend Benton remarked, “That certainly puts the Klan in the clear.”

“I should say so,” said the jeweler, “but it gives Springer a black eye as a news agent.”

“His report of this incident was just about as reliable as most of the news reports found in his paper,” Harold remarked.

Isaac Goldberg, whose place of business was next door to the jewelry store, had dropped in about the time Harold was through reading the affidavit. “I tell you vat I dink—the Klan or some von hired that girl to make the affidavit?”

Harold whirled around and faced the Jew, his face flushed and an angry light flashed from his eyes. He felt a strong desire to knock him down, but he controlled himself, and looking the little Jew straight in the eye, said, "Goldberg, I know this girl, and there isn't any man or group of men who could bribe her to make an affidavit to an untruth, and I warn you that you better not make a statement of that kind in my presence again or where it reaches me."

"Oh, of course I knows notings, notings at all about the young leddy. I shust think there is sometings wrong." The Jew gestured excitedly with both hands.

"You are like a great many others who speak from prejudice and not from knowledge," said Harold.

"No, no, no," said the Jew, "I have not prejudice." Turning to Reverend Benton, he said, "You are a Klansman. I shust like to ask you von question."

"Very well. What is it?"

"Vy have you this Klan that won't admit Jews?"

"Before I answer that I want to ask you one. Why have you Jews the B'nai B'rith organization that does not admit Gentiles to membership?"

"The B'nai B'rith is a strictly Jewish fraternity."

"And the Ku Klux Klan is a strictly Gentile organization. It is necessary to be a native born American Gentile who believes in the tenets of the Christian religion to become a member of the Ku Klux Klan, just as it is necessary to be a Jew in order to join the B'nai

B'rith, a Roman Catholic to join the Knights of Columbus, or a negro to join the African Brotherhood."

"I must go back to mine store," said the Jew, and he hurried out.

"Harold," said the minister, as they stepped out on the street, "this affidavit is going to be a great help to us in the approaching election. A lot of good people will have their suspicions removed by that affidavit."

"There is no doubt of it," Harold replied. "I turn off here. Good-night, Doctor."

"Good-night."

Chapter XVII

WHEN the Reverend Benton crossed under a street light soon after saying good-night to Harold King a large car stopped, the driver opened the door and asked, "Reverend, are you going home?"

"Yes."

"Come and ride with me."

"Thanks." The minister got in the car and seated himself beside Agnew.

"It is a fine evening, Reverend."

"Yes, the air is just cool enough to be bracing."

"The autumns in this Western country are certainly fine. I believe they are the most delightful seasons of the year."

"I quite agree with you."

"It is not going to be long now until the election. There is certainly a great interest being taken. There is a great deal of speculation as to what the Klan influence will be. The Governor has come out strong against the Klan, condemning it as a lawless organization. While I am a Roman Catholic and naturally not a supporter of the Klan, I do not agree with the governor when he states that it is a lawless organization. I have for several years been reading of charges that the Klan had been guilty of mob violence and various outrages, but I have never seen where one of these

charges has been substantiated. The Journal made a big to-do about this Rastus Jones affair, and now it turns out that it was only a prank played by a girl. One of my own girls might have done the same thing. I am now of the opinion that the Klan as an organization does not take the law into its own hands."

"I am glad you have come to this reasonable conclusion, Mr. Agnew."

"Reverend, I am trying to be fair. The good Book teaches that we should judge only as we expect to be judged, and, Reverend, I am trying to be careful of my judgments."

"That's not only commendable but safe," the minister replied.

"Some of our people condemn the Protestants for creating a secret organization that is exclusive, but I do not. We Catholics have our Knights of Columbus and I am willing that the Protestants should enjoy the same privilege, but I think the Klan has a mistaken view of the attitude of Roman Catholics on many questions."

"Will you please cite an incident in which the organization is mistaken in this respect?"

"Well, in the matter of education. I have heard a number of lecturers for the Klan assert that the Catholic Church is unfriendly to education in general and antagonistic to the public school system in particular."

"Isn't that true?"

They had now reached the minister's residence. "If you are not in a hurry we will sit here in the car and discuss this question in a friendly way."

"I will be only too pleased to do so, and if we cannot discuss our differences in the right spirit we had better not discuss them at all."

"The history of the Catholic Church would lead us to the conclusion that it is not friendly to education. It has opposed scientific investigations and everywhere erected barriers to intellectual progress."

"Reverend Benton, you have made an assertion, but assertions are not arguments."

"I am aware of that. I simply wanted to make the general statement first and then give the facts. Copernicus, a German astronomer, lived from 1473 to 1543. He was a great student of the heavens and advanced the theory that the sun is the center of the solar system, reducing the earth to the position of a planet (Ptolemies and Brahe had placed the earth in the center of the universe) and declared that the earth and other planets revolved around the sun. The essential features of the Copernican theory are accepted at the present time."

"Copernicus was not punished or in any way interfered with by the Catholic Church for advancing this theory, was he?"

"No; he dedicated his book to the pope, and it is said that the first copy of the book in which he submitted

his findings to the pope came from the printer the day that Copernicus died.

“His proofs were not accepted by the church. Copernicus’ theory was outlawed by the Jesuits.

“Galileo, an Italian astronomer, who lived from 1564 to 1642, was an inventor as well as an astronomer. He invented the barometer, the thermometer, discovered the laws of the pendulum and hydraulic machines, the compass, the telescope and the microscope. Looking up at the skies Galileo discovered that the milky way is a host of stars. Looking at Jupiter, he saw that it was attended by small stars. He saw the rings of Saturn. In a book, ‘A Message from the Skies,’ he stated his discoveries, which substantiated the theory of Copernicus that the sun is the center of our planetary system, that the earth turns on its axis and revolves around the sun.

“The Catholic Church taught that the earth was the center of the universe and that the sun and stars revolved around it. The church taught that the stars were in all probability spiritual lights. The church held that the scriptures taught these doctrines and that the popes alone had the right to say what the scriptures taught. Those who agreed with Galileo were declared to be heretics.

“Galileo was summoned to appear before the grand inquisition in Rome and was advised, on the penalty of imprisonment, to assert that he did not believe in the

Copernican doctrine and that he would abide by the teachings of the church. He promised to obey. Later he yielded to the urgings of the truth that was within him and published his ideas. He was again summoned by the inquisition to appear at Rome. On his knees he was forced to abjure the doctrine that the earth moves.

“Bruno, an Italian philosopher, was burned at the stake at Rome by the Catholic church because his philosophy was declared by the church to be heresy.”

“Reverend Benton, that is all true, but that was many years ago. The Catholic Church has changed. It does not now teach that the sun revolves around the earth.”

“No, the Catholic Church does not teach that now, but it does teach that the pope is infallible in all matters of faith.”

“Yes, the pope is infallible in all matters of faith.”

“Then if a scientist makes a discovery that the pope thinks is in conflict with his interpretation of the scriptures, it would be the duty of the Catholic Church to oppose that scientific discovery and for any Catholic to believe it would be heresy.”

“Yes.”

“Isn't that placing the human mind in chains?”

“No, because the pope is infallible. His statement would be correct.”

“But popes who were thought to be infallible taught that the earth was the center of the universe and the stars were spiritual lights.”

“But, Reverend, that was long ago and the popes do not teach that now.”

“Then there have been popes who were not infallible or the popes now are not.”

“Your argument would make it appear so. While there may have been a time when the Catholic Church opposed scientific discoveries it is now highly in favor of education.”

“Mr. Agnew, what system of education does the Catholic Church favor?”

“We support the public school.”

“I know you do in this country; you are taxed to support it.”

“I believe in the public school system. I educated my children in the public schools, and two of my daughters are teachers in the public schools.”

“I do not doubt that you do believe in the value of the public schools, and undoubtedly there are many other Catholics who think as you do, but what system of education does your church as a church encourage?”

“The Catholic Church favors parochial schools.”

“Then if the Catholic Church could control America we would have parochial schools as the only means of promoting general education.”

“I don’t think so—in America. I think the church would continue the public school here if she had the power to dictate the system of education in this country.”

“Would I be warranted in assuming that what the leaders of your church say is the policy of the church?”

“Yes, if the leaders you refer to are officially recognized by the church.”

“Pope Pius IX said, ‘Education outside the Catholic Church is damnable heresy.’ Cardinal Gibbons refers to our system of public schools as ‘A vicious system of education that undermines the religion of youth.’ Cardinal McCrosky says, ‘We must take part in the elections, move in solid masses in every state, against the party pledged to sustain the integrity of the public schools.’ I do not think it’s necessary to quote more of the statements of your leaders. Do you wonder that some of us believe that the public schools would not fare well in the hands of Catholics?”

“Reverend Benton, I do not wonder at it. I think you have reasonable grounds for your suspicions, but what I think these men mean is that parochial schools under the supervision of the Catholic Church would be a better system. Personally, I do not agree with them.”

“Nor can any other man who knows the facts. In Italy, which has been the home of the Papacy since the fourth century, 37 per cent of the population is illiterate, and America, with her free public schools, has only

7.7 per cent. Spain, the most Catholic country in the world, has 58 per cent of her population illiterate, while Protestant England has only 1 per cent. These show a fair average of the difference of illiteracy in Catholic and Protestant countries."

"I suppose these church leaders are thinking of the spiritual and character side rather than the intellectual."

"Do you suppose the citizens of these Catholic countries, with their high per cent of illiteracy, are more kind, honest, industrious, and law-abiding than the people of the Protestant nations, where there is a lower per cent of illiteracy?"

"No, I don't think they are. Understand, Reverend Benton, I am for the public school system."

"I am sure you are, as you have always shown yourself to be a progressive citizen."

"I thank you for the ride home," said the minister as he got out of the car.

Agnew drove away thinking as he had never thought before.

Chapter XVIII

“RUTH, I am surprised at you! What did you mean by publishing that affidavit?” asked Stover the next morning after her affidavit appeared in the paper.

“I meant just what my statement said,” she replied.

“Didn’t you know that you were doing a very wrong thing?”

“I just did it for fun. I did not think that it might injure the Ku Klux Klan.”

“I don’t care how much it injured the Ku Klux Klan; it deserves all the criticism it gets. What I dislike about it is that it causes comment about one of my employees and subjects my friend Springer to ridicule.”

“Oh,” she said, laughing, “I’m not shedding any tears over Springer. He should be a little more accurate in his reports. If he had reported the incident accurately and without prejudice he would not have been embarrassed by the exposure.”

“Don’t let anything like that happen again around here.”

“I promise you I’ll not.”

Rastus tried to avoid Ruth. Next to Springer he was the worst beat man in town. When he saw Ruth enter one door of the president’s office he would go out the other door. If he was in the banking room near

the part of the room where she entered he immediately had business over on the other side of the room. It was almost noon when she met him face to face in one of the doors. "How are you, Rastus?" she said and then added, "Haven't been visited by any more Kluxers, have you?"

"No'em, I ain't. You all thought you had a good joke on me, but I ain't sech an ignoranimus as what you all might think. I spicioned all the time that it was you, Miss Babcock."

"If you suspected all the time that it was I, why did you become so frightened?"

"Me sca'ed! Well, I guess not. When you all stepped out from behind that elevator I says to myself that's Miss Babcock tryin' to play a joke on me and I says I'll have to hep her to have a little fun, so I jest 'tended like I'se sca'ed, jest to please you, Miss Ruth."

"Is that so, Rastus?"

"'Deed, it is. I'se a good spo't, I is."

"I thank you very much for the pleasure afforded me," she said, laughing.

"Yas, 'em, you's welcome, but I ain't gwine to give you sech pleasure no mo'."

"That's all right, Rastus. I consider that you have made your full contribution."

It was the middle of the afternoon. Ruth had not been busy for a half-hour. She had been reading a novel. It was a story of a girl who was about to marry

a man who was in every respect a cultured gentleman—intelligent and refined in thought, dignified in manner, and of magnetic personality. A few weeks before the date set for the wedding the girl received a shock. She was informed that the man whom she was about to marry was one-sixteenth negro. She was furious and could scarcely restrain her hands from clutching the throat of her informant. "It's a lie, it's a lie!" she shouted. She was sure that the story had been invented by a jealous rival who wished to torment her. The next time she was with her lover she could not but think of this. She thought that she saw a slight olive tint to the skin, that there were dark circles at the base of his finger nails and that his nose was slightly flat and nostrils a little broad. Surely she imagined these things. She continued to worry until the man persuaded her to tell him the cause of her distress. The man admitted that it was the truth and offered to release her from the engagement. The author then shows a great conflict in the mind of the girl between social standards and love. In the end love triumphed and the girl married the man with the strain of colored blood in his veins.

When Ruth reached this point in the story she threw the book violently on the floor and exclaimed, "Rot, rot, that makes me sick!"

"That's treating the book rough." She turned and saw Pearl Gardner, one of the bookkeepers, standing in the door.

"Come in, Pearl, and have a chair."

"I wasn't busy and thought I would come in and see what you were doing. I arrived just in time to see the demonstration. I didn't know that you ever struck fire like that, ha, ha, ha."

"Now, you quit laughing at me. I got so disgusted at that story."

"What was it?"

"A girl was in love with a man, and just before their marriage she learned that he was part negro."

"Did she give him up?"

"No, that's the disgusting part of it. She married him."

"He must have been pretty white if she didn't know it."

"He was only a sixteenth negro."

"I don't blame her then if she loved him."

"What! You don't mean to say that you would have had her marry a man with negro blood in his veins, do you?"

"Why not, if she loved him? Isn't love the greatest thing in the world?"

"Yes, love that is rightly directed, is the greatest thing in the world; but love that violates the great racial instincts, that runs counter to the experience of

mankind, that does violence to the highest social standards—is love run wild and does not lead to the greatest good.”

“I don’t see that it would do any harm if the man was so white that the girl did not know it when she fell in love with him.”

“It would violate the racial instincts within her as well as the social standards of the race. The white race, even if it desired to do so, could not absorb the negro race in the United States through intermarriage. There is an inevitable reversion to type. If you had a race seven-eighths white and one-eighth negro you would have a race that was essentially negro in its physical structure and racial tendencies.”

“Ruth, I believe you must be getting ready to become a lecturer on the race question. Of course, I don’t believe intermarriage would be a good thing for the country, but I don’t think we should try to keep the negro down. I heard my father say last night that one objection he had to the Ku Klux Klan is that one of its purposes is to oppress the negro.”

“The Klan advocates the supremacy of the white race. I do not understand that that means to oppress anyone that is a member of another race. I recently read a good article on ‘The Necessity of Keeping the White Race Supreme in the Affairs of the World.’ Anyone of average intelligence who would read that article would certainly believe that there is need of the

white race presenting a solid front against the rising tide of the dark skinned races. This article stated that in insisting on the maintenance of white supremacy the Klan is insisting on the preservation and propagation of the ideals and institutions that experience has shown to be the best for the race. Democracy is born of the white race. It has found its greatest advocates among the Anglo-Saxon peoples. It has reached its greatest development in America. It was spread to Europe, dethroning kings, and is now making inroads into the caste system of Asia. The great mass of the dark skinned races are subservient to kings and emperors and are of such a temperament that autocratic governments have flourished among them, consequently we cannot trust our democratic institutions in their hands. He states that white men should rule in democracies because they have shown the greater capacity to govern themselves and establish democratic institutions. The American home is a home that is based on the love of one man for one woman and requires a freedom of choice in marriage which is seldom found among the dark races.

“Christianity was born of the white race and promoted by them, and while it is destined to become universal, yet if the institutions which support it should be controlled by pagan people the source of the supply of missionaries and Christian teachings would be destroyed.

“The white race has aims and ideals that are different from the other races, as we believe, superior; and when the Klan declares for white supremacy it declares for the preservation of those ideals and institutions that have been found the most helpful in the development of life. That these should survive will, in the end, prove advantageous to all races.

“Pearl, he made plain to me that the Klan is not wanting to oppress inferior races but to help them to a higher development; but in order to do that the white race must protect itself. If I can find that article I would like to have you read it. I am not sure whether I kept the paper or not.”

“Don’t go to any trouble to find it. I’m not much interested in such questions. I’d rather read a wild-west story or a good love story. Say, Ruth, what do you think! Last night I was out riding with Mr. Golter and he said that he had a letter from his sister that had just returned from New York, and she said that they are beginning to wear the skirts longer. Of course if they are wearing them longer in New York it will only be a short time until they wear them longer here.”

“I wouldn’t object to their being a little longer, but I hope they won’t go back to the long skirts that swept the streets,” Ruth remarked.

“I hope they won’t get them down to the heels, but

if it gets to be the style what can you do but wear them? One mustn't be out of style."

"One does not need to wear the extreme styles in order to keep from looking odd. You see I do not wear them to my knees, neither do I intend to wear them sweeping the streets. I am going to dress, so far as possible, so that I will not appear odd nor be uncomfortable either in mind or body."

"I don't agree with you. You'd just as well be dead as out of style. Say, girlie, I had some ride last night. We rode about fifty miles and did some real speeding. Mr. Golter's a real man and has a real car. You know he's been wanting to go with me for some time."

"No, I did not know that," said Ruth.

"Well, he has, but somehow I couldn't bring myself to believe that I wanted to go with him. Last night I consented and found him better company than I had expected. Today I had to go to his desk for some records while he was out of the room and I saw a letter which he was writing to his sister. I saw my name, and I didn't do a thing but look. Oh, boy, he was sure writing some nice things about me. I think that's a pretty good way to find out what a fellow thinks of you, don't you?"

"You might find out that way if you were sure he hadn't left it there on purpose for you to see."

"Oh, I'm sure he didn't intend for me to see it."

Mr. Stover called Ruth to take dictation, and the conversation came to an abrupt close.

That evening as Ruth was leaving the bank Golter stopped her and asked the privilege of taking her to dinner and to the opera. She made as polite an excuse as possible. While she was conversing with him, Pearl Gardner was watching them closely, endeavoring to catch every word.

Chapter XIX

WHEN Ruth reached her home she found her father worrying a great deal because of his inability to remember past things. "Ruth," he said, "it's a shame that you have to work so hard to support Clara and me and I can't do anything to help, can't even remember who it was that stole my money."

"Don't worry, daddy, I will soon have money enough to send you to Dr. Lilly—I have about an hour's work to do tonight, and you know that every cent I earn from this extra work goes into the fund to send you to the specialist."

He placed his arm about her and she pillowed her head on his breast. "Ruth," he said, "you are one of the best daughters that ever lived, and your daddy appreciates what you are trying to do for him, but don't build on it too much, for the doctors here say there is no hope for me."

"They don't know everything, and Dr. Lilly has made some wonderful cures. I can't help but believe that he can do something for you."

Aunt Clara announced dinner, and they went into the dining room. "I am glad you are having dinner early, Aunt Clara," said Ruth.

"Are you hungry, Ruth, or have you an engagement with that Mr. Golter?" her aunt asked.

"I am not very hungry and I haven't a date with anybody, but I have some work to do."

After the meal was over Ruth worked for an hour and a quarter. After her work was finished she went out alone for a walk. She had walked about half way to the business section when she was agreeably surprised to meet Harold.

"Well, when did you get back?" she asked.

"Just got in, and was coming out to call on you."

"I was just taking a walk. Will you walk with me, or shall we return to the house?"

"I would just as soon walk. I have been riding on the train so long that I need to stretch myself."

"How was the luck?" she inquired.

"The finest kind. I got the job, and now it's up to me to make good."

"I am sure you will do that," she said.

"Ruth, it helps a lot to have someone who has confidence in you. Especially when that someone is one in whom you are interested—someone whom you think of as a real friend."

"I am glad on your account that you landed this big job, and I am pleased that you will show Mr. Stover and McBryan that you can succeed without any of their help and in spite of them."

"Ruth, I received a shock when I got off the train tonight."

"Did you touch a live wire?"

"No, worse than that. I heard of your affidavit in the paper, and I couldn't believe it until I got the paper and read it."

"You shouldn't be shocked at a little thing like that."

"I was afraid that you would be subjected to adverse criticism and that Stover would make it unpleasant for you at the bank."

"He wasn't any too well pleased. He wanted to know why I did it. I told him I did it for fun; that I had no intention of injuring the Klan. He said that he did not care how much it hurt the Klan."

"Oh, he didn't! That shows a lack of principle at which I am not surprised."

"Mr. Stover has been good to me and was always a good friend of father's, but he has certainly done and said some things of which I cannot approve. These things have caused me to lose confidence in him to some extent, but, Harold, I can't help but believe that he thought that the only chance to secure the city job for you was to induce you to give up the Klan and that he really believes that it is a bad organization."

"I think you are mistaken. I am of the opinion that Stover is just what he showed himself to be in his attempt to bribe me to turn traitor to the Klan and in this statement he made to you—a crook."

"I don't think that. But—well, I don't know just how to explain it."

"What did he object to about the prank that you played on Rastus?"

"He said that he did not like to have one of the bank's employees the subject of comment and his friend Springer subjected to ridicule."

"He's very solicitous about Springer's feelings."

"I told him that I was not going to shed any tears over Springer; that if he had given an accurate account of the incident without prejudice he would not have been caused any embarrassment by my affidavit."

"Good for you! I hope he tells Springer what you said.

"Mr. Stover told me not to do it again and I promised that I wouldn't—but, say, it was lots of fun."

"Tell me about it."

She gave him a full account of the escapade and of the negro's declaration that he was feigning fright to please her. They both enjoyed a good laugh.

After a walk of half an hour or more they returned to the house and he requested her to play and sing. She went to the piano and ran her fingers lightly over the keys and then, turning to him, asked, "What do you prefer?"

"Oh, you know that I like the old Southern melodies. These present-day songs have so little to them."

She had a good soprano voice, and as she sang the songs of the Southland for him, he drifted out on the

beautiful sea of finer sentiments. When she had finished singing he walked over to her and took one of her hands in his. "Ruth," he said, his voice vibrant with emotion, "I love you and if you can give me your love I will be the happiest man in the world."

"Harold," she replied, "we have been such good friends that I am afraid that we may destroy that relation in a desire to establish a more satisfactory one. I have heard that friendship is above love. Our friendship has been such a beautiful thing that I would not want to mar it by——"

"You don't believe that stuff even if such a noted philosopher as Plato did say it, do you Ruth? I know that it isn't true. My heart tells me it isn't true. You don't believe it, do you?"

"Plato was a very wise man," she said, and then dropped her eyes. With the disengaged hand she began to toy with the lace on her dress.

"Ruth," if you would only tell me that you love me I would be thoroughly happy." He spoke with great earnestness.

"You should be very happy anyway. A young architect who has just landed a twelve thousand dollar job certainly should be happy."

"I am delighted to have the job, but my heart craves a greater happiness. If you will only——"

The door between the dining room and living room

was thrown open and Aunt Clara entered. Harold dropped Ruth's hand and blushed profusely.

"Good-evening. I hope you will pardon the intrusion. I have just been reading an article, and I wanted to ask Mr. King what he thought about it. It was on 'Intolerance in the United States.' The writer went on to say that the Ku Klux Klan is fighting religion. Don't you think it is terrible, Mr. King, that we have an organization in the United States that fights religion?"

"That would be unfortunate if it were true. Did he state what religions the Klan is fighting?"

"Yes, the Jewish religion and the Catholic."

"I am sure the author of that article is wrong. There are a great many people who are making similar statements. No doubt some are misinformed but others desire to misrepresent the purposes of the Klan in order to impede its progress."

"My Catholic neighbor gave me one of her papers to read the other day, and I am sure that the Catholics believe it is an intolerant organization."

"I suspect that's because they can't join it, Aunt Clara," said Ruth.

"The Klan is not anti-Catholic, anti-Jew, anti-negro, or anti-anything else. The Klan is pro-Christian, pro-public schools, pro-America. If the Catholics take offense because the Klan insists on the maintenance of our public schools, the separation of church and state, and allegiance to the United States over and above any

foreign allegiance, then so far as I am concerned they will have to be offended. If the Jews construe the adherence to the principles of Christ as an attack on their religion and desire to suppress the organization that adheres to these principles, then it is plain to see that the Jews are most intolerant.”

Aunt Clara had made up her mind that the Klan was an undesirable organization, and when she had once made up her mind to anything, like many other folk, she was hard to change. “Members of the Klan wouldn’t vote for Catholics for office, would they?” she asked.

“It’s the privilege of every American citizen to cast his ballot as he sees fit, and he should always vote for what he believes to be the best interests of the public. If a Klansman or any other citizen believes that a candidate for office would not stand for the best interests of our American institutions, what is his duty as a citizen?”

“Why, to vote against him, to be sure.”

“If you vote against a Methodist, a Baptist or a Catholic in the next election because you believe that he is not in harmony with Americanism; that vote could not reasonably be construed as interfering with his freedom of worship, could it?”

“Certainly not, but I think it’s a bad thing to arouse so much bitter feeling.”

“It isn’t pleasant to have bitter feelings aroused, but if standing for things that are essentially American incurs the enmity of groups of individuals we had best arouse such opposition and resist it. I am not in favor of ‘peace at any price.’ ”

“I was talking with Mr. Golter when he called for Ruth a short time ago, and he says that while the principles of the Klan sound well enough the character of the men who belong are such that it is the duty of all good citizens to oppose them.”

“The Klan requires that those who become members of the organization be of good moral character. Of course an organization whose members number three million will, in spite of all precaution, get some unworthy members. Whenever a member commits any serious offense he is expelled from the Klan. I am safe in saying that there is no other secret organization in the world with a better personnel of membership than the Klan. The membership is made up from all walks of life—laborers, farmers, doctors, ministers, judges, small business men and big business men.”

“If what you say is true, why all this opposition? We scarcely pick up a paper but there is something against the Klan.”

“Every great movement has had its opponents, Aunt Clara. You know the early Christians were persecuted, and the Masonic order in the early history of its

growth met with just such opposition as the Klan is meeting now," remarked Ruth.

"What you say is quite true," said Harold, "and the opposition to the Klan, in addition to the Catholics, Jews and negroes, consists of the law violators, denizens of the underworld, politicians, misinformed individuals and newspapers that are subsidized by some opposing factor or that are edited by politicians."

"Well, the Klan may be all right, but I have my doubts." The Klan was now dropped and Harold hoped that the aunt would soon retire from the room, but she enjoyed conversing and brought up the subject of Coue's theory and discussed it at such length that Harold excused himself and went home. One statement made by Aunt Clara stuck in Harold's mind and kept him awake the greater part of the night. He tried to dismiss it, but the statement, "When Mr. Golter called for Ruth a short time ago," would not down, but shouted itself in his ears whenever he tried to find sleep. The statement from the aunt, he was quite sure, explained why Ruth could be only a friend to him. This thought tormented him until the light of day broke in the east and Morpheus brought relief.

Chapter XX

STOVER called a caucus of the faithful. They met in the rear room at Hennesy's place. The curtains were drawn on the two windows next to the alley. Stover, Hennesy, Goldberg, McBryan and Springer were present. Stover was elected to act as president of the caucus. They did not intend to keep a record of their proceedings, consequently they did not need a secretary.

"Hennesy," said McBryan, "since you are the host here, wouldn't it be in keeping with the rules of good society if you were to serve refreshments?"

"You can have anything you want. Nothing would please me better than to 'liquor up' my friends. What will you take?"

"Whiskey for me," said McBryan. "I believe I'll take a leetle whiskey, too," Goldberg chimed in. Springer ordered beer. Stover remarked, "Boys, you know I never drink." Hennesy then stepped to the door connecting the bar room with the rear conference room. "Jim," he called to his porter, bring two whiskeys and two bottles of beer."

After the liquor had been consumed they were ready for business.

"Boys," said Stover, "something must be done or we are going to lose this election."

"Vat make you tink so?" asked Goldberg.

"There is no getting around the fact that the Klan is strong in this county and section of the state. They have strong candidates. You stand out on the street any day and listen to the conversations on political matters, and about two out of every three men who express themselves are for the Klan candidates," Stover replied.

"You are right," said McBryan. "I heard a bunch of fellows talking down at Zala the other day, and it's the same thing down there."

"I thought you tell us in the Journal there was only a few Klansmen. Hey, Springer, vat you say?"

"Goldberg, you don't suppose I would add to the influence of the Klan by telling the public through my paper that there are between eight hundred and a thousand Klansmen in Wilford Springs."

"You have brains, Springer, almost brains; that would have been poor bezness, very poor bezness," exclaimed Goldberg.

"There are a lot of people who want to be on the winning side, and if they thought that the Klan had any strength they would line up with them. Keep on telling the people that there are only a few of them here," remarked McBryan.

"Stover," said Springer, "you want to see to it that the mayor doesn't allow the Klan to pull off a parade here. It makes too much of an impression on the pub-

lic for a thousand of those masked devils to march through the streets," said Springer.

"I'll 'tend to that," replied Stover, "don't you worry for a single minute about the Klan's having a parade or a public speaking within the city limits."

"If those 'night gown boys' with the pillow slips over their heads get to parading here some of us had just as well shut up shop. A lot of our men are scared now. If you want to throw a scare into the average bootlegger all you have to do is mention Kluxers," Hennesy remarked.

"Well, boys, now is the time to get rid of this foolishness, and if we whip these midnight riders right good in this election we will have gone a long way in checking them. On the other hand, if they succeed in electing a majority of their candidates they are going to be wonderfully strengthened, and it is liable to be very unpleasant for certain lines of business." As Stover delivered this speech he rubbed his hands together, as was his custom when anything of importance was being discussed.

"Vat have you to suggest; vat will help mit the electshun?" Isaac Goldberg asked.

"I believe it would be a good plan," said Springer. "if we would get Governor Slydell to make a speaking tour in this part of the state. While the Governor is not himself a candidate, he is backing Perdue strong

for governor, and Perdue has announced that he will carry out Slydell's policies if elected."

"I am of the opinion that your suggestion is a good one, Springer. Sam Slydell is a good campaigner, and he is strong against the Klan. He will do us some good if we can get him to make half a dozen speeches in this part of the state, but that isn't enough—we must do something more than that if we win," remarked McBryan.

"Can't you get Father Rossini busy lining up all Catholic voters whom you cannot reach through the Knights of Columbus?" asked Stover.

"Father Rossini is already busy," replied McBryan. "Last week the bishop called all the priests in this diocese together for a conference. Here are the candidates they endorsed." McBryan reached in his pocket and drew out a slip of paper. "Every one of them is anti-Klan and five of them are Catholics. Father Rossini says that all of the priests went home from the conference enthusiastic for these men. You can count on the solid support of all Catholics. What we do not get through the Knights of Columbus the priests will look after."

"Goldberg, what plan have you for lining up the Jews?" Stover asked.

"That's easy, easy, Mr. Stover—we have the B'nai B'rith organization. In twenty-four hours I gets in touch wid every Jew in the state. In forty-eight hours

every Jew in the United States can be informed of any matters our great organization wish to put before them. I will see that every Jew in this congressional district receives instruction tomorrow. I tinks that you can't work any faster through your Knights of Columbus than that." He directed this last remark to McBryan.

"That's all well enough," said McBryan, "but you must remember that this Ku Klux Klan is a powerful organization. It's an un-American organization purposing to control politics and keep Catholic and Jews out of office. I feel that we would be warranted in using extreme measures to defeat them."

"Have you anything else to suggest?" Stover asked.

"I think we should do something to cause the general public to turn against the Klan. The mayor of Freeburg is a Catholic. What would be the effect if between now and election a number of Kluxers would take him out and whip him?"

"That would make bezness goot for our candidates," said Isaac.

"What do you mean, McBryan?" asked Springer.

"I mean—just suppose some Klansmen would take Mayor Krouse out and whip him, what would the public say?" asked McBryan.

"The public would say that it was a damned outrage," said Springer.

"Can it be arranged? Would Krouse stand for it?"

"Of course he will. He is a Catholic and a fourth de-

gree Knight of Columbus. I can arrange it with him all right," assured McBryan.

"It will not be necessary to actually whip him," said Hennesy. "A few stripes made with a little paint across his back and a photograph made by Croskey and the witness of a few of the boys whom we can trust, is all that we need."

"Fine! Hennesy, your head is working," said Springer.

"That's a fine idea. Krouse being a foreigner and a Catholic, the public will never question that the Klan did it. Mac, you make the arrangements with Krouse. When this thing has been pulled off, Springer, you will have a chance to tell the public of the outrage. I will ask Governor Slydell to make a speaking trip through this part of the state. Hennesy, you must look after the dealers in 'wet goods.'" As Stover spoke his skinny hands were busy with each other and his most assuring smile played about his mouth.

"I'll have no trouble with the liquor fraternity. They know that if the Klan candidates are elected their 'cake is dough,'" Hennesy remarked.

Hennesy ordered whiskey and all but Stover drank to the success of the campaign, before separating.

Chapter XXI

GOLTER entered the banking room attired in a natty business suit. There was nothing unusual about Golter's being well dressed. He was always neatly attired. The unusual thing about Golter on this particular morning was that he carried a bouquet of rosebuds in his hand.

Pearl Gardner did not see Golter when he entered the room, but was soon conscious of his presence. (Lately she was constantly conscious of his presence if he was anywhere around.) She looked up from her work and gave him one of her sweetest smiles. "Good morning, Mr. Golter."

"Good morning, Miss Gardner," he responded.

She was at once interested in the bouquet which he carried. Surely, she thought, he intends those rosebuds for me. I do not see why he doesn't give them to me at once. He placed the roses on his own desk. Perhaps, she thought, he is waiting until we are alone to give them to me. A number of times both the teller and cashier had stepped out, but the roses still remained on Golter's desk. When Pearl returned to work after the noon lunch they were gone. Later in the day she located them on Ruth's desk. During the rest of the afternoon things did not go well with her—she got her figures muddled and had to work an hour

overtime that evening to get her books to balance. Before leaving the bank she stepped into the office of the president.

"Mr. Stover," she began, "I have a matter I wish to speak to you about, that is, I feel that it is my duty to speak to you about it. I don't like to tattle on anyone, but there are some things that are of such importance to your employer that I think it is one's duty to tell, even though it exposes a fellow employee."

"Certainly, Miss Pearl, certainly. If you are in possession of any information that your employer should have it is your duty to inform him. What is it?"

"Did you know that you have an employee who is a Klan sympathizer?"

"I did not. Who is it?"

"Ruth Babcock."

"Is that so! What does Ruth say about it?"

"She has a lot to say in favor of the Klan. She makes a regular lecture on white supremacy. She's strong for the Kluxers."

"Thank you, Pearl. I'll take care of Miss Babcock. No one can work in this bank and talk in favor of that bunch of outlaws."

Pearl started to leave the room and then turned back. "Mr. Stover, I wish that you would not mention my name in connection with this."

"No. I'll not say anything about where I got my information."

When Stover entered the bank room after this information had been imparted to him he found his nephew, Chester Golter, preparing to leave.

“Just a minute, Chester, before you go. I wish to speak to you.”

“All right, Uncle Jim.”

“I just heard that Ruth Babcock is talking in favor of the Klan. Have you ever heard her say anything that would indicate that she is a Klan supporter?”

“Yes. I have. I heard her say that if she were a man she would be a Klansman.”

“Did she say that?”

“She certainly did.”

“You know that I informed the men of this bank long ago that I would not retain in my employ any man who joined the Klan. Now, I will not retain a man or woman in my employ who talks in favor of the Klan or lends his influence to it in any way. Ruth will have the pleasure of looking for another job.”

“Uncle Jim, I don’t believe that Ruth is to blame so much as is someone else.”

“Who?”

“Harold King.”

“What has King to do with it?”

“Ruth runs around a great deal with King, and you know that he is a Klansman.”

“Yes, and I know that he is an impudent puppy, too.”

"I am satisfied that Ruth is influenced by King. If she would quit associating with King I believe she would be all right."

"I'll fix King. I have just been waiting for a chance to land on that young upstart."

"I wouldn't like to see Ruth lose her job," Golter remarked.

"I'll give her a chance."

"Thank you, uncle."

Ruth had scarcely removed her wraps the next morning when Stover called her into his office

"Ruth," he began, "I have tried to be a friend to you."

"Yes, I think you have, Mr. Stover."

"I wouldn't give you wrong advice any sooner than I would my own daughter, and what I shall say to you now is for your own good." He spoke in his most paternal voice.

"I am always glad to receive good advice."

"I thought you would be or I would have dismissed you without saying a word." (Ruth's eyes opened wide and the color left her cheeks.) "I thought you would be sensible." He laid his hand in a fatherly way on her shoulder. She shrank from his touch.

"I have heard that you are talking in favor of the Klan?"

"I have said some things in favor of the Klan."

“And you know that I am unalterably opposed to these midnight riders.”

“I know you are opposed to the Klan.”

“And yet you talk in their favor?”

“If I want to I do. This is a free country, and I, with the Klan, believe in the freedom of speech.” She spoke with spirit.

Matters were taking a turn that he had not anticipated. “Of course, of course you have a right to say what you please about this matter, but you understand that I have a right to employ whom I please.”

“Certainly, and if you do not want me in your employ I am ready to quit.”

“Now be reasonable, Ruth. You know that I am an old friend of your father and want to do the right thing by you. At the same time I do not want to injure my business. You see that I have a great many customers who are opposed to the Klan. If you are talking in the bank in support of the Klan you are liable to injure the bank’s business.”

“I don’t think I have been discussing the Klan in the bank. The only thing that I remember saying here was in a conversation with Pearl Gardner, in which I was telling her of an article that I read and indorsed that explained the Klan’s position on the race question. If you do not want this question discussed in the bank I agree not to do so, but I reserve the right to discuss

this question or any other when off duty and hold to whatever opinion I please.”

“I grant that you have that right, but it would be good policy for you to refrain from saying anything commendable of the Klan any place. You see I’m interested in you, Ruth. Now there is a more serious matter that it is my duty to speak to you of. I understand that you keep company with Harold King.”

“Yes. Mr. King is a friend of mine.”

“As I said to you a moment ago, I am going to advise you as I would my own daughter. You can’t afford to receive attention from a man like King.”

Ruth was dumbfounded. For an instant she sat and stared at Stover. When she had partially recovered herself she asked, “What do you mean? What is wrong with Mr. King?”

“Well, he is a young man of poor judgment. He has a habit of being insolent to men who are his superiors and who are in a position to help him and who would help him if he had sense enough to be courteous to them. (Stover was now rubbing his hands together.) King has no standing in the community. I wouldn’t loan him a dollar. He has also branded himself by joining the Klan. Now I wouldn’t think of allowing one of my own daughters to associate with King. If you retain your position in the bank it will be necessary for you to discontinue your relationship with this man.”

“Do I understand that I must quit going with Mr. King or give up my position in the bank?”

“Yes, that’s it. I am acting for your good. If I wasn’t an old friend of the family I wouldn’t give you this chance. I have always dismissed my employees at once when I discovered that they were keeping bad company.”

“Right here is where I quit,” she said, her eyes flashing.

“Now, Ruth, don’t be foolish. You have your father to think of.” She stood before him a type of noble womanhood. Her chest raised, her little hands clenched and thrown down and back of her body line, she looked Stover in the eyes and defied him.

When she spoke her voice was full of resentment and determination, and her words were words of courage and loyalty:

“I will take care of my father who, I am sure, would not want to have me stay here on the terms that you have named. As to Harold King—I wish to inform you that he is a gentleman of noble mind and heart. He refused to sell his honor to you, and you, whom I am now beginning to think have no honor, call him insolent. You say he has no credit with you, and I tell you he has a twelve thousand dollar job and needs none. You say he is branded as a Klansman. If he is a Klansman that is evidence that the organization is composed of good citizens, for Harold King would not belong to an or-

ganization that was not." She stepped into the stenographer's office and secured her coat and hat, and without waiting to put them on, walked out with her head held high.

Ruth spent the rest of the day trying to find employment but was unsuccessful. It was a difficult thing for Ruth to inform her father that she was out of employment. He was worried, as she knew he would be, and she did her best to comfort him. "Don't worry, daddy; I'll soon find other employment."

"I'm not worrying on my own account, but I am sorry, Ruth, to have you worried about getting a job. If I had the money that man took from my safe we wouldn't need to worry, or if my head would only get right so that I could work I wouldn't care so much about the loss of the money."

When Ruth saw Harold she told him that Stover had discharged her or, rather, had asked her to consent to terms which she could not accept, if she remained. She told him that Stover objected to some remarks she had made favorable to the Klan. She did not tell him that Stover had demanded that she break off her associations with him.

Chapter XXII

"PAPER. Morning paper! All about the whipping of the mayor of Freeburg, by members of the Ku Klux Klan," shouted the newsboys in the ears of the business men as they went to their offices and stores one morning in the latter part of October. The papers sold rapidly, and men devoured the account of the reported whipping with great avidity. All day men gathered in groups on the streets of Wilford Springs and Zala discussing the account of the alleged whipping of Mayor Krouse. Usually the first sentiment expressed by those not Klansmen was a condemnation of the Klan. However, on second thought, the more conservative began to question whether it was reasonable to suppose that the Klan had committed this crime on the eve of election. Perhaps it was a frame-up. Politically the Klan would have nothing to gain and everything to lose by its commission, they reasoned, while the opposition might believe that they could create in this way a stampede from Klan candidates.

When the Wilford Springs Klan assembled it voted to offer a reward for evidence that would lead to the arrest and conviction of the parties who whipped the mayor. Judge Rider, the Exalted Cyclops, said: "Klansmen, the Klan is an organization which stands for law enforcement. It is opposed to all forms of

lynchings. If it is found that members of this organization committed this offense against the peace of this man and the laws of the state they will be banished from this organization or I will withdraw at once."

Governor Slydell made the speaking tour through the section of the state known as the stronghold of the Klan. He denounced that organization in scathing terms. The principal part of his speeches was devoted to a denunciation of the Klan and the remainder to extolling the virtues of Perdue. He would wave his arms frantically when denouncing the Klan, telling the audience that he would soon arrest Klan officers. He boastingly told how he had prevented the Klan from holding a parade in one town. He positively stated that the Klan had whipped Fritz Krouse, the mayor of Freeburg; that he had put his detectives on the job, and when sufficient evidence was secured the offenders would be severely punished.

When the governor spoke at Wilford Springs he faced a large audience of representative citizens. The audience gave the best of attention during his introductory remarks and while he praised Perdue and told the people that if elected Perdue would carry out his policies. When he launched his tirade against the Klan, about two-thirds of the audience arose and quietly passed out.

The general feeling was that the governor's speeches condemning the Klan as a lawless organiza-

tion and not furnishing one fact to prove that the Klan had committed a single act of violence was making votes for Dawson, whom the Klan was supporting for governor.

A few days before election a traveling salesman who had recently visited the towns in which the governor had made speeches was eating at the same table in a hotel with Frank Perdue, candidate for governor.

"Perdue," said the traveling salesman, "do you expect to be elected governor?"

"Yes, sir, I do," Perdue replied.

"If you expect to be elected, in order that you will not be greatly disappointed, you had better take Governor Slydell by the nape of the neck and the seat of the trousers and pitch him into the river."

"Why so?"

"Every time the governor makes a speech he is making thousands of votes for Dawson."

"I would rather the governor would not make speeches for me, but when Slydell wants to talk you can't stop him."

Election day dawned bright and fair. There was an unusually heavy vote cast. When the polls were closed both parties were claiming the election. The following morning the administration papers conceded the election to Dawson by a plurality of 20,000 over Perdue, who had the support of the administration. Dawson was the only member of his party who was elected to

a state office; thus the effect of Governor Slydell's speeches was shown. The candidate for Congress in the district in which Wilford Springs is located won by a large majority. All county officers endorsed by the Klan in Rush County were elected by overwhelming majorities. In analyzing the vote, Springer, in the Journal, stated that certain local matters had a big influence on the county and district election. He quoted Governor Slydell as saying that his attack on the Klan was not responsible for Perdue's defeat, but that the people were restless and desired a change.

The evening after election Harold called Ruth over the 'phone. "Bring your father and aunt uptown about eight o'clock this evening," he said.

"Why, what is going to happen?" she asked.

"There is going to be an election jollification."

There were no bills put out announcing the celebration, neither did the papers carry any notice, but about seven o'clock the streets were jammed with people. Every available parking space in the business section was occupied by a car. Everywhere there was an air of expectancy. No one could or would give any information as to why the great crowd had gathered. Such questions were common: "Why all this crowd?" "What's going to happen?" "Why are all these people coming to town?" Occasionally someone would state that he had heard that there was to be an election celebration. One old colored woman exclaimed, "Fo' de

Lawd sake! Am all the peopel in de world a comin' to Wilford Springs?"

At eight-fifteen, "There they come," "there they come," was passed along the front ranks of those who lined the street pavements. Around the corner at the intersection of Market and Broadway came a white robed figure carrying the stars and stripes. Just behind him came two others carrying a fiery cross. Behind these came others marching eight abreast—all wore white robes and were masked. There were thousands of them. There was no interference by the police. The first five hundred marched through the crowds on the street without any demonstration from the onlookers. Finally a banner carried by the marchers bearing the words, "The Klan Stands for 100 Per Cent Americanism," brought forth an applause from the crowd. Another banner which read, "Mr. Bootlegger, Your Days Are Numbered," was lustily cheered. A float representing a school house had a banner on each side with the inscription: "The Hope of America. We Want Protestant Teachers in Our Schools." This float was roundly cheered by the Protestants, who composed ninety per cent of the crowd. The banner which provoked the most mirth was the one carried at the rear of the procession. It read:

"Someone page Governor Slydell."

"Pat McBryan needs the smelling salts."

The crowd went wild. Hennesy had stood in the

door of his place of business and watched the entire parade. When the last of the white robed marchers had passed he took out his handkerchief and wiped the cold sweat from his face. Two negroes who had watched the parade from the alley walked farther down the alley from the lights and engaged in earnest conversation. They were bootleggers and for years had been doing a thriving business, carrying their goods on their hips. "Mose," said Pete, "what you all think of these damn Kluxers?"

"Pete," replied Mose, in a suppressed tone, "you's mighty ca'lass of that isthmus of youse."

"Niggah, what youse mean by 'isthmus'?"

"Ma go'graphy sa'd that an isthmus is a narrow neck connectin' two la'ger bodies."

"Well, what you mean 'bout me bein' ca'less of my isthmus?"

"I means dat youse stands a mighty good chance of gettin youah isthmus stretched when youse refers to dem gente'mens as 'damn Kluxers.' When I speaks of dem gente'mens I's gwine to say Mistah Kluxers. You get me, Pete?"

"Yes, I duz, and I 'spects it's goin' to be pow'ful unhealthy round heah for gente'men of ouah profession. If them damn—I means 'Mistah' Kluxers would jest take them masks off we'd know who to keep away from."

“Youse right, Pete. The legislater an govenah shuah ought to make ’em take them masks off, and then we’d know who to stay way from when we’s transactin’ ouah bizness.”

“Youse right, but Govenah Slydell’s man wa’n’t elected, so we can’t count on that.”

“Well, Pete, what’s you gwine to do?”

“What’s I gwine to do? Well, suh, I’se gwine to leave on that twelve o’clock train tonight.”

“And I’se gwine with you less—less——”

“Less what?”

“Less thar’s a train goin’ fo’ that time.”

Chapter XXIII

RUTH watched the want ads in the papers and made many inquiries in her effort to secure employment. It was now three weeks since she had quit her job at the bank, and she had not as yet secured a position. She did all the public stenographic work she could secure but was unable in this way to earn enough to provide for the current expenses of the family. She was forced to draw on the special fund that she had been so carefully guarding in the hopes that her father might become a well man. Now she was forced to use some of this money—they must have fuel and provisions. Every time she took a dollar from this her heart ached, because she felt she was giving up her father's chance to regain his health.

Ruth, who was naturally optimistic, at times became quite despondent. She frequently cried herself to sleep. Harold King was now prospering in his profession. He had, since securing the big job at the capital, secured two other jobs in Wilford Springs. He now employed a draughtsman in the office. He offered Ruth a position as his stenographer. She knew that he did not need a stenographer and declined.

One day Ruth saw an ad in the paper asking for a stenographer. The ad had been inserted by the R. G.

Wing Mortgage Company. She lost no time in going to their office.

She found Mr. Wing a very pleasant appearing man.

When he entered the room where she was waiting she introduced herself and made the object of her visit known.

He was in need of a stenographer. Had she had experience? She informed him that she had. When he asked where she had formerly worked she hesitated slightly before telling him that she had worked for the Central State Bank of Wilford Springs. He dictated a letter and had her transcribe it on the typewriter. He was well pleased with the test. It was entirely satisfactory.

“Would you be satisfied with a salary of one hundred twenty-five dollars per month to start with?” Mr. Wing asked.

“Yes. That would be all right.”

“I will let you know tomorrow. I think I shall want you.”

Ruth left with a lighter heart than she had carried since she had lost her place at the bank.

That afternoon Mr. Wing was transacting some business at the Central State Bank. “Stover, you had a stenographer here by the name of Ruth Babcock?”

“Yes, she was my former stenographer.”

“Is she competent?”

“Yes. She’s a good stenographer so far as her ability is concerned.”

“Why did she quit you?”

“I discharged her.”

“What’s wrong with her?”

“Ruth is all right so far as doing the work is concerned, but she would get out and run around with a disreputable young fellow. I gave her a chance to quit going with him and retain her job, but she refused to stay away from him. While I would like to have helped her I could not afford to keep a girl in the bank who was keeping questionable company, especially when she absolutely refused to promise to quit him.”

“Well, I’m glad you told me that. I do not want a girl whose reputation is bad or who is conducting herself in a way that it is likely to become bad.”

The following morning when Ruth received the mail her eye at once caught the R. G. Wing Mortgage Company in the upper left hand corner of one of the letters. Eagerly she tore it open. Disappointment, black and hideous, rose from the ruins of a shattered hope and obscured the sunlight with a cloud of despair. How could she ever stand so much ill fortune! She was almost driven to desperation. The note read:

“Dear Miss Babcock:

“I regret to inform you that I cannot use you as stenographer. “Yours truly,

“R. G. WING.”

Ruth rushed to her room and her tense and overwrought nervous system found relief in tears—nature's safety valve.

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Charles Wilson went to the office of R. G. Wing Mortgage Company for the purpose of securing a mortgage for one of his clients.

"How are you, Mr. Wing. How is business?"

"I am very well, Mr. Wilson, but I am away behind with my work. My stenographer quit a week ago and the work has been piling up ever since, waiting for her successor, whom I have not yet been able to find. I thought the other day that I had found a peach of a stenographer, but later I learned that she isn't just what she should be."

"Character bad?" queried Wilson.

"If it isn't bad she seems to be doing all she can to make it bad. I understand that she keeps bad company."

"Who is the girl?"

"Her name is Babcock. She used to be the stenographer at the Wilford Springs Central State Bank."

"I had her do some work for me once when my stenographer was gone and she did good work."

"I'm satisfied that she can do the work all right, but you see I can't afford to have a girl in my office whose reputation is bad or whose associations are questionable."

"I hadn't heard anything wrong about the girl. Are you sure that there isn't some mistake about this?"

"I got it straight. Stover told me himself."

"Did he tell you who her evil associates are?"

"No. I didn't ask him. He said a disreputable fellow."

When Wilson returned to his own office he rang Central.

"684," he called.

"Hello, is this Harold?"

"Can you come over to my office for a few minutes?"

"Yes. It's important."

In a few minutes Harold King arrived.

"Haven't got a thousand dollar check for me?" he asked as he came in.

"I am sorry to say I haven't, but I heard something a little while ago that I thought you should know. I was over at the office of the Wing Mortgage Company and Wing told me that his stenographer has left him and he is having trouble finding another."

"I'll tell Miss Babcock."

"She has already applied, but someone has been doing some knocking."

"If anybody has been knocking on Ruth it is that whelp of a Stover."

"Evidently you are not in love with Stover," Wilson commented.

"Could you love a rattle snake?" Harold asked.

"I didn't call you over here to discuss Stover. I called you to tell you what is between Miss Babcock and the job."

"What is it?"

"You."

"Me? What do you mean?"

"Wing has heard that she is keeping company with a disreputable fellow. You are the fellow, aren't you?"

"Yes," answered Harold as he started for the door.

"Wait a minute. Where are you going?"

"I'm going down to 'mop up' on Stover."

"Just hold on a little bit. I haven't told you that it was Stover who told Wing."

"It was Stover, all right. I recognize his hand."

"Very well, it was Stover; but he did not say it was you."

"He meant me, all right."

"Maybe this girl has been keeping company with some other fellow."

"I am the only man she has kept company with since she came to Wilford Springs except she has been with Golter, Stover's nephew, a few times."

"You'd better make sure of that."

Harold picked up the 'phone and placed the receiver to his ear. Central did not answer promptly and he rang impatiently.

When he at last got Ruth on the line he said, "Ruth, this is Harold. I want to ask you some very personal

questions. I am sure you will understand that I have some good reasons for asking or I would not do so."

"All right, Harold, if you do not ask my age, I probably will be willing to answer," she replied.

"How many times have you gone with Chester Golter?"

"Oh, I suppose about a thousand." Then came a rippling wave of laughter over the wire.

"Ruth, I am not joking, I really want to know."

"Maybe Golter would like to know how many times I have been with you."

"I have a good reason for asking. It's to your interest to answer me seriously."

"Well, if I must be serious and confess to my father confessor, it was five times."

"Have you since coming to Wilford Springs ever gone with anybody else?"

"No other young man."

"That's what I mean. Girls don't count."

"Oh, thank you for the information that girls don't count," she said with a tone of injured pride.

"Then Golter is the only man you have kept company with in Wilford Springs besides myself and you was with him only five times?"

"Yes, that is true, but why do you ask?"

"I have a good reason for wanting to know. I will tell you all about it later."

He hung up the receiver without the customary "good-bye" and rushed from the room with Wilson shouting after him, "Be careful what you say and do."

Harold lost no time in getting down to the Central State Bank. Stover was in the banking room when Harold entered. Harold informed the cashier that he wished to speak to Stover. The cashier called Stover, who came to the cashier's window. "Stover," said Harold, "I want to talk to you in private, and I want to talk to you right now." There was no mistaking the anger and determination in his voice.

"This is private enough if you speak low," said Stover, as he put his face close to the bars that protected the window.

"All right, if it's private enough for you it is for me. What I want to know is what you mean by telling Wing that Miss Babcock keeps bad company?"

"Well, young man, I don't know that this is any of your business, but, if you would like to know I will tell you that I meant exactly what I said. I discharged her from my employ for that reason."

"Stover, do you mean to call me disreputable?"

"I didn't say anything about you to Wing."

"You said that she associated with a disreputable young man. You didn't mean Golter, did you?"

"No, sir; I didn't."

"Then you must have meant me, because Golter and myself are the only young men Miss Babcock has kept company with in this town."

"Well, King, I did object to this girl working for me and continuing to keep company with you."

"What are your objections to me?"

"Well, you're not my kind."

"Thank God for that."

"You belong to the Ku Klux Klan and that's sufficient to condemn you. I won't stand for an employee of mine associating with one who belongs to those cowardly midnight riders who hide behind a mask."

"Stover, I dare you to come out from behind those bars and say that."

"I don't have to come out."

"No, you are too cowardly. You talk about men hiding behind masks and you hide behind iron bars when your opponent stands before you unmasked. You dirty cur, how can you have the face to talk about cowards and at the same time try to whip me over the shoulders of a defenseless girl?"

"I'll not talk to you any longer; my time is valuable." He turned away from the window as Harold said, "Stover, I warn you from now on to keep your dirty tongue off Ruth Babcock." Without replying, Stover went into his private office and closed and bolted the door after him.

Harold went directly from the bank to the office of R. G. Wing. He found Mr. Wing alone in his office. "Come in, King, and have a chair," said Wing when he saw Harold in the door.

"Mr. Wing, I just learned this morning that a Miss Babcock, who was formerly employed at the Central State Bank, has made application to you for employment."

"Yes."

"I also heard that Stover told you that she associates with a disreputable young man."

"Yes."

"I'm that disreputable young man."

"You? What are you talking about, Harold? Have you suddenly lost your mind?" King and Wing were well acquainted with each other. They were both members of the Klan, and of the Masonic Order. They both attended the big Bible School class taught every Sunday by Judge Rider. Wing had often referred to Harold as one of the finest, clean-cut fellows in the city. "What kind of a joke are you trying to pull on me, Harold?" he asked.

"None whatever. Stover meant me."

"He didn't say you."

"No, but this young lady, who is as good as gold, has not kept company with any young man in Wilford Springs except myself and a few times with Golter, who is Stover's nephew. There isn't the slightest

doubt but that he meant me. In fact he practically admitted it to me."

"Well, what is the matter between you and Stover?"

Harold told Wing of his trouble with Stover, beginning back with his application for the position of architect for the city building. He went fully into detail. When he had finished Wing brought his fist down on the table. "I'd like to thrash him, the dirty hound."

"He would have got the thrashing, all right, if he had stuck his head out from behind those bars," said Harold.

"I don't doubt it and he certainly richly deserves it."

.
It was the middle of the afternoon. Ruth's mind had been greatly perturbed since the mail had brought her the disappointing letter. Since Harold had called, her disappointment vied with curiosity for the mastery.

"Ruth, you are wanted at the 'phone," said Aunt Clara.

"Oh, dear, I wish they wouldn't bother me when I feel so bad."

"Hello!"

"Is this Miss Ruth Babcock?" It was a man's voice.

"Yes. This is she."

"This is R. G. Wing speaking. If you have not yet accepted a position you can come to work for me in the morning. I have changed my mind since writing you."

"Thank you, I will be on hand in the morning."

Ruth's heart leaped for joy. The clouds of gloom were dispelled. The remainder of the afternoon the tasks she performed about the house seemed light. Frequently she hummed some joyous air.

Chapter XXIV

THE night following the election jollification the Stover-McBryan machine gang met in their consultation room where they were in close touch with Hennesy's beverages and where they had the greatest secrecy. In addition to Stover, McBryan, Hennesy, Goldberg and Springer, McMichael, an attorney and special political advisor of McBryan, was present.

"What's to be done now? What's the next move?" asked Springer.

"About what?" asked Hennesy.

"About the election and the Klan," Springer explained.

"Well, the Klan won the election and it looks to me like my next move had better be to some locality where the night gown devils have not yet made their appearance."

"What's the matter, Hennesy? Gettin' cold feet?" asked Stover.

"Well, prospects here in Wilford Springs are not looking any too bright, I'm frank to admit," Hennesy replied.

"Don't give up and quit the game. Stay with us and we'll whip them yet," McBryan assured him.

"Well, I've a good business here, as you all know, and am perfectly willing to stay if there is any chance to

win; but with Dan Brown, a Klansman, elected sheriff, and C. M. Stanton, another Klansman, elected county attorney, it looks mighty bad for my line of business.”

“We’ll drive the Klan out of business, and when the sheriff and attorney find themselves without the support of hundreds of Klansmen whom they are expecting to back them when they take office, they will become tame enough.”

“But how are you going to destroy the Klan? It’s growing stronger every day,” said Stover. “I don’t see why people are such fools,” he added.

“I had a little talk with our friend here, Mike McMichael, and he has a plan that I think will be a winner if it is carried out. I asked Mike to come down tonight and explain it to you,” said McBryan.

McMichael rose, spread his legs apart, and clasped his hands behind him. (A favorite position when addressing a jury.) “Gentlemen,” he began, “The situation is serious. Something needs to be done and done quickly. You boys laid a plan and executed it in an effort to carry the election. The plan seemed feasible enough, but it did not work. It was bungled in several particulars. I am attorney for Krause in the damage suit in which he is suing the county for permitting mob violence, and it’s doubtful if you fellows have furnished enough evidence to make it stick. It was a mistake to paint his back instead of whipping him. A light whipping wouldn’t have hurt that husky Dutchman. At any

rate, he should have been willing to submit to a mild whipping for the good of the cause.”

“I think he would have submitted to it if we had asked it, but we were of the opinion that painted stripes would do just as well,” McBryan, interrupting him, explained.

“Yes, and there’s where you ‘pulled a bone-head.’ If the stripes on his back had been actual bruises you could have called in men who are not in our gang to see them who would have served as witnesses; as it is, we are going to have a hard time to convince a jury that he was actually whipped, unless we are very successful in selecting a jury.

“Now whatever is done from now on must be more regular. Mr. McBryan referred to a conversation we had in which I suggested a plan to eliminate the Klan.

“What I propose is this: The governor has an opportunity to do something before the close of his term. We will get him to start a suit to oust the Klan from the state. This can be done on the grounds that the organization is inimical to the peace and safety of the state, or that it is an organization doing business in the state for profit without a charter. We will have the governor and attorney-general hold inquisitions in those localities in the state where the Klan is strongest. These inquisitions will not only serve to get evidence of use in the ouster suit but will be the means of expos-

ing some of the fellows who are hiding behind a mask and wielding a powerful influence."

"Like Judge Rider and Harold King," said Stover.

"Exactly so," continued McMichael. "I want to see them give this young Judge the third degree."

"That sounds goot, very goot, but suppose the governor won't act. Vat den?" Goldberg asked.

"He'll act, all right, if it is put up to him stong. He wants to run for senator, and he knows that he won't stand a ghost of a show unless the Klan is gotten rid of."

"What do you think of this idea, Stover?" Springer asked.

The banker rubbed his skinny hands together for a moment before replying.

"I think it would be worth the effort just to expose Judge Rider and that young upstart, Harold King. If the ouster suit does not come to trial soon it will have a good effect on the public while it is pending. There are a lot of folks who won't have anything to do with an organization which is being sued."

"I suggest that Stover and McMichael act as a committee to go to the capital and lay this plan before Governor Slydell." This suggestion from Hennesy met with unanimous approval.

"And tell 'em to get beezy to vonce," said Goldberg, "for ve have no need of Kluxers, the B'nai B'rith and

Knights of Columbus can take care of everytings. Ain't that right, McBryan?"

"Sure, it is right," affirmed the Irish politician.

McMichael and Stover left on the early morning train for the capital city.

Governor Slydell, smarting under the defeat of his candidate for governor, was only too glad to act on the suggestion of Stover and McMichael. An ouster suit was filed in the Supreme Court and an inquisition, the first of a series, was arranged to be held in Wilford Springs the following week.

When the day for the inquisition at Wilford Springs came, a large crowd packed the court room. The interest was like to that of the old Roman populace when they assembled at the arena to witness the throwing of some Christian or enemy of Caesar to the wild beasts. On this occasion there were those present who hoped to see some prominent Klansman devoured.

Judge Rider was the first witness called. The examination was conducted by the attorney-general, who was assisted by the governor.

"You may state your name," directed the attorney.

"Clarence C. Rider."

"What is your vocation?"

"Attorney-at-law. At present I am judge of the district court."

"Are you a member of the Ku Klux Klan?" There was a death-like stillness in the room as the eager listeners waited for the judge's reply.

"Yes, I am," came his reply in a firm voice. There was applause from the Klan supporters, and the attorney rapped for order.

"Do you hold any official position in the Klan?"

"Yes."

"You may state what that position is."

"I am the Exalted Cyclops of Wilford Springs Klan."

"How many Klansmen belong to the Wilford Springs Klan?"

"Thirteen hundred fifty."

"Thirteen hundred fifty! No wonder this county turned up a big majority against Perdue!" the governor exclaimed. Uproarious laughter greeted this outburst of Governor Slydell. The attorney-general again pounded for silence.

"Is not this organization of which you have testified that you are the head given to acts of lawlessness?"

"No, sir."

"Isn't one of its purposes to take the law into its own hands?"

"No, sir; just the opposite is true. One of its aims is to prevent lynchings, whippings, tar and feather parties and all such unlawful acts.

"You know that members have committed acts of violence."

"I know nothing of the kind."

"The members of the Klan wear masks."

"Klansmen are permitted to wear masks only in ritualistic work and with the consent of the Grand Dragon or Imperial Wizard when on peaceful parades or when doing acts of charity."

"Won't the wearing of masks, even in this way, encourage the wearing of masks by either members or non-members when wishing to commit crimes?"

"I don't think so. Masks have been worn by men in the commission of crimes ever since there was a law."

"I would like to ask the Judge a few questions," said Governor Slydell.

"All right, governor. I'll turn the witness over to you," the attorney-general replied.

"Judge, you know that the mayor of Freeburg was whipped by masked men, don't you?"

"No, I do not. I know that the Journal stated he was whipped. Do you know that he was whipped by masked men, governor?"

"Yes," the governor answered.

"How do you know it?"

"By the evidence of Mayor Krause himself and such honorable and credible witnesses as Pat McBryan, Springer and McMichael."

"Governor, do you know who did it?"

"No, or I would prosecute them."

"After you had had special detectives in Freeburg for three weeks and they had given up their investigations you made a speech in another state in which you said that the Klan did it."

"I believe yet the Klan did it."

"Yet you have no evidence on which to make arrests."

"No."

"Governor, did your detectives report to you that they could not secure any evidence or did they report that the whole affair was a frame-up?"

"I'm not on the witness stand," said the governor, coloring. The court room roared with laughter.

The attorney again pounded the table and announced, "If there is any more laughter or applause I will have the sheriff clear the room."

"What is the necessity for the members of the Klan concealing their identity?" the governor asked, now becoming the questioner again.

"In order that they may secure evidence to furnish the officers and thus assist in the enforcement of law. They have the same reason for concealing their identity that the secret service men of the United States have."

"Who asked the Klansmen to become secret service men?"

"It's the duty of every citizen to help enforce the laws. And he should use the method that will make him most efficient."

“Doesn't the Klan arouse race and religious hatred?”

“Certainly not, purposely.”

“Does not the very fact that Catholics, Jews and Negroes cannot become members arouse racial and religious prejudices?”

“It should not any more than it ought to arouse religious and racial antipathies for the Knights of Columbus, the B'nai B'rith and the African Brotherhood to refuse to admit white Protestant Gentiles to their organization. I have never heard that those who were excluded from these organizations ever objected.”

“Judge, isn't religious toleration one of the principles on which this government is based?”

“Yes, it is. The Klan believes in toleration. We believe that Catholics, Protestants and Jews have a right to worship God as they please; that the Catholics have a right to have the Knights of Columbus; the Jews the B'nai B'rith, and the Protestants the Ku Klux Klan.”

“The Klan advocates the further restriction of immigration, does it not?”

“Yes.”

“Does that not antagonize other races and nationalities? Were not our forefathers foreigners?”

“The Klan insists on further restriction of immigration in order to protect our American institutions, and not to arouse the opposition of other peoples. In America we have today twelve million of voting age who are foreign born. They came to America with

different ideals and standards of living than ours. In the last one hundred years thirty-four million foreigners came to America. Many of them settled in colonies where they preserved their language, customs and ideals. America is now a land of many alien tongues. The foreigners have been coming faster than we can assimilate them."

"Many of our most desirable citizens come from foreign lands."

"Yes, but there is a decided difference in the character of the immigrants of today and formerly. Edward Alsworth Ross, Professor of Sociology in the University of Wisconsin, who is perhaps one of the greatest sociologists in the world, states in his 'Principles of Sociology':

"A stream of immigrants may be representative, sub-representative or super-representative of the people from which it comes. Religious or political oppression is likely to start up a current of super-representative migrants because it is chiefly the superior who refuse to conform to the will of the powerful. The English Puritans, Quakers, Catholics, the Scotch Covenanters, the French Huguenots, the German sectaries who settled Pennsylvania and the refugee German liberals of 1848 were among the super-representative elements which came to America. Discrimination against a people or a race generally causes a representative outflow, *e. g.*, the Scotch Irish and the Scotch

Highlanders of Colonial days as well as the streams of Armenians, Syrians and Russian Hebrews which have come to us latterly.

“Subduers of the wilderness generally surpass in energy and venturesomeness their kinsmen who stay where they were born. It is the trout rather than the carp that find their way out of the pool into the swift water. The American pioneering breed had rare courage and initiative, and the European immigrants who came to settle in the Great West may well have topped the average of their people in these traits. Those who follow the lure of high wages in a foreign labor market will sub-represent their people in ability. The educated, the propertied, the established, the well-connected, having prospects at home, have no motive to submit themselves to the hardships of the steerage. The children of the successful abide in their fatherland; only the children of the unsuccessful migrate, and it is very unlikely that such a stream will constitute a good sample of the beauty, brains and initiative of the stock.

“Even the difficulties of a distant migration have a selective value. The first-comers from a people probably have more initiative than those who come later, after the channels of immigration are worn deep and straight and smooth. The poorest stuff is that which migrates in response to a ticket-selling campaign by steamship agents who go about and excite the ignorant

and gullible with fairy tales. Woe to the land which serves as a dumping ground for a commercialized immigration.'

"Governor," said the judge, leaning forward in his chair, "the United States is now that dumping ground."

"A very interesting discussion," commented the governor, who had apparently forgotten that the judge was on the witness stand.

"You remember, governor, that President Roosevelt warned the people of this country of the dangers of race suicide."

"Yes, I remember that," the governor replied.

"President Roosevelt did not tell the people of the sociological and economic causes of the great decrease in the birth rate among native stock. In this same work from which I have just been quoting Professor Ross says:

"'Bringing his own inherited low standard of living, the foreign born outbreeds his native competitor, whose standard of living reflects the better prospects of the newer country. The former will be ready to marry before the latter feels justified in doing so. The former will beget eight children while the latter does not see how he can do right by more than four. The higher standards of cleanliness, decency and education cherished by the native element act on it like a slow poison. William does not leave so many children as "Tonio" because he will not huddle his family into one

room, eat macaroni off a bare board, work his wife barefoot in the fields, and keep his children weeding onions instead of at school. Subjection to competition with low-standard immigrants appears to be the root cause of the mysterious "sterility" which has stricken in turn the Americans and each of the Americanized immigrant elements. Down to 1830 the Americans were as fertile a race as ever lived, and their decline in fertility coincides in time and locality with the arrival of the immigrant flood.'"

"How much have the native Americans decreased in fertility?" the governor asked.

"F. S. Crum in the 'Bulletin of the American Statistical Association' for September, 1914, gives the average number of children per wife, based on 'Twenty-two Genealogical Records of American Families.' 'Previous to 1700 the average number of children per wife was 7.37, 1800-1849 it had decreased to 4.94; 1870-1879 show an average of only 2.77 children per wife.'"

"'Have you statistics showing the relative fertility of the native born women and the foreign born women in America?'"

"Yes. I have it here in a note book." He took a small book from his pocket and read:

"In 1890 in American cities a thousand foreign born women could show 565 children under five years of age to 309 children shown by a thousand native women. By 1900 the contribution of the foreign born

women had risen to 612, while that of the native women had declined to 296."

The governor thrummed on the table with his fingers. "Judge," he said, "that is serious."

"Yes, it is serious, and what the Klan purposes to do is to influence the government to erect a wall to keep out this foreign flood."

The mention of the Klan brought the governor back to the purpose of the investigation. "Isn't your connection with the Klan likely to interfere with your duties as judge?"

"Not in the least."

"In case a Klansman should become a litigant in your court wouldn't you be prejudiced in his favor against the man who is not a Klansman?"

"There would be no more probability of my being prejudiced in his favor than in that of a Mason or a member of my Bible Class. In none of these organizations am I obligated to support my brother when he is in the wrong."

The Judge was now excused and Harold King was called. After King was questioned other men more or less prominent about town were called. The examination disclosed nothing that the public could not have known without an investigation except that it revealed positively who a few of the Klansmen were. When at the end of two days the investigations were brought to

a close the anti-Klan forces were disappointed with the results.

As the crowd left the court room after the close of the investigation, Springer asked Captain Smith, the commander of the American Legion, "What do you think of a judge being the head of a Ku Klux Klan?"

"I think it must be a mighty good organization with Judge Rider at the head of it."

The reply was not what Springer desired, consequently he made no reply nor asked any more questions of the captain, but hastened to his editorial den to write a modest request that since the investigation had disclosed the fact that Judge Rider was a Klansman he be requested to resign at once from his office.

Chapter XXV

WHEN Harold saw Ruth after she secured the position with the Wing Mortgage Company one of the first things she wanted to know was why he had asked over the 'phone as to her associations with men.

"I heard that you had been keeping company with a disreputable young man, and I wanted to prove that I was the man," he said.

"Who said I had been keeping bad company?"

"Your former employer."

"Stover?"

"Yes. I had just learned through my friend Wilson that someone had told Wing that you associated with a disreputable young man and that was the reason you did not get the job. I guessed at once that it was Stover. Wilson admitted it was he. I wanted to know if you had been with any other men so that I would know how to talk to Stover. When I talked to him he said that he didn't mean his nephew, so there wasn't anyone for him to mean but me. I went to Wing then and confessed that I was the disreputable young man."

"I just knew that you had something to do with my getting that job. Of course Stover spoke that way of you because you belong to the Klan."

"Yes, he pretends so; but the real reason is because he can't use me or bribe me. As I told you before,

Stover is a crook and one of these days I will prove it to you and to the world. I know why you lost your job at the bank. It was on my account, wasn't it?"

"I don't have to answer, do I?"

"No. I know."

"I want to thank you for helping me get the job and especially for setting me right in the estimation of Mr. Wing. I certainly appreciate it."

"It was a great pleasure to be of some little assistance to you, but I am the one who is indebted for a job. You are the one who secured me my chance. How can I repay you?"

"Who's been tattling?" she asked, laughing.

"Your friend, Miss Welty, told me the last trip I made to the capital."

"She's a piker; she told me she wouldn't tell."

"Well, she didn't exactly tell. I got her to admit it. She said that you talked like a professional salesman in selling me to her father."

"It wasn't difficult. You see I had a good article to sell. When your goods have real merit it isn't hard to make a sale."

"Ruth, I am leaving tonight."

"Will you be gone long?"

"I am not sure. At least four or five days. I have to go early to get ready. I did not want to go without having a little visit with you."

"Once before when you were leaving we pulled a wishbone."

"Yes, and you won and made three wishes. You haven't told me yet what you wished."

"No, they haven't all come true yet."

"You can tell me about the ones that have come true, can't you?"

"No, not yet. If I were to tell you now that would break the charm and the others would not come true. Say, do you want to pull another wishbone? I've got one in here, but there isn't any meat on this one."

"Well, we don't want the meat on it when we pull it. Come on, let's wish." She went into the kitchen and secured the wishbone. "This is a small one," she said.

"It should be good for two wishes," he said, "if the other was sufficient to carry three."

"All right, here goes for two wishes." He took every advantage in the hold that he secured and the quick twist that he gave it when she was ready. He won, and she said, "That wasn't fair; you cheated."

"You won the other time," he replied, "and it was my time to win."

He said he must leave, and she accompanied him to the front porch. He said good-night and took several steps down the walk, then turned back and talked a while longer. "Well, I must go," he said, but he remained ten minutes more. Finally he screwed his courage to the sticking point, leaned over and kissed

her cheek. She playfully slapped him, as she said, "You naughty boy." The combined effect of the kiss and slap sent him away happy.

After leaving Ruth, Harold had only time enough to pack his grip and make the California Limited.

The same day that Ruth had given Harold the description of Dick Watson, he sent the description to the heads of the Klan in every state in the Union. Within a week three million secret service men were looking for the missing bank cashier. This afternoon Harold had received a telegram informing him that his man had been located by Klansmen in Arizona.

Chapter XXVI

THE bookkeeper of the S & M mine had worked for an hour after the miners had quit work, balancing his books for the day. All of the other clerks had left the office. He had closed the big ledger and had drawn a sigh of relief. Just then the office door opened and a tall athletic young man entered. He approached the bookkeeper and extended his hand. "My name is King."

"My name is Watson." Are you stopping in the camp, Mr. King?"

"I expect to be here but a short time. How is the mining business?"

"Not much activity just now in this section. Some of the old mines are shut down and there is but little prospecting being done. Are you interested in the mining business?"

"No, not particularly."

"There is a small mine near here that could be purchased at a bargain. A couple of crooks got the old man who owns it in debt to them and took a mortgage on the mine. The old man is very illiterate and did not understand the contracts that he had with these men. He is forced to sell to save himself. If he loses all that he has in this mine it is quite likely that he will be

ruined for life, as he is too old to come back. I would be very sorry to see anything like that happen."

"It's a shame that there are individuals who will stoop to crookedness to beat men who are along in years out of the savings of a lifetime."

"Back in my home town——"

"What is your home town?" asked Watson, interrupting King.

"Wilford Springs. I was going to tell you about a man by the name of Babcock who used to own the controlling interest in a bank at Zala. (Watson gave a start and his face whitened.) This man Babcock was in some sort of a deal with a banker in Wilford Springs. One night the Wilford Springs banker, whose name is Jim Stover, went to Zala and had a conference with Babcock. The next day Babcock turned the bank over to him. That afternoon Babcock was injured in an automobile accident, and that night his cashier disappeared." (The bookkeeper became very nervous. He got up, poked the fire and then came back to his desk and sat down. He clasped his hands together to hold them from shaking.)

"Did Babcock recover from the accident?"

"Not fully. He suffers a great deal from a pain in his head at times, and he has no memory of anything that happened before the accident in which he was injured."

"You say he can't remember anything that happened before he was injured?"

"No, not a thing."

"Can he remember things that have happened since he was hurt?"

"Yes, that is the strange part about his condition. He can remember everything that has transpired since he was injured as well as the average person."

"Very strange indeed," Watson commented.

"When his daughter Ruth inquired about the business Stover informed her that he had purchased her father's bank stock. When she asked about the money she was told by Stover that her father had owed him an amount of money equal to the stock and he had taken it to help her father out."

"This Stover claimed that Babcock was indebted to him?"

"Yes. Babcock has been trying to remember what became of his money. He thinks that he has recalled the combination to the safe and that the man to whom he showed the combination robbed him."

"I must be going. My wife will be waiting supper for me. I would like to talk longer with you. Could you come back to the office later in the evening?"

"Yes, I can come any time."

"How will eight o'clock be?"

"That will be all right."

When Watson reached his little cottage at the edge of the mining camp, his wife, a slender, blue-eyed girl scarcely twenty years of age, met him on the porch. "Dick, you are late tonight. I have been waiting dinner for twenty minutes. Why, what is the matter?" she asked, noticing that he had a worried look on his face. "Are you ill?"

"No, just worried," he replied.

"What has gone wrong?"

"I will tell you after while."

"Come on in and get ready for dinner, then. Father is restless this evening. I think this damp weather is affecting him. It seems like he always breathes harder when the weather is damp."

The evening meal passed in silence except that John Hinds, Mrs. Watson's father, who was a consumptive, talked about the damp atmosphere and its unpleasant effects on his breathing apparatus and expressed thanks that there were but few damp days in Arizona. Watson answered his father-in-law in an absent-minded way. Mrs. Watson was worried because her husband could not eat, consequently she had no appetite.

After the meal was over John Hinds went into the living room, leaving Watson and his wife alone in the dining room. An hour later when Watson left the house his wife's eyes were red with crying. "It's awful," she said, "but I suppose it must be done."

When he reached the mine office he found King waiting for him at the door.

"Waiting for me! Am I late?"

"I think I am a little ahead of time.

"It's a little damp and chilly," Harold remarked, when they had entered the office and he had removed his top coat.

"Yes, and damp weather is rather unusual in this country."

"So I have been told."

The bookkeeper took a seat at his desk and Harold King seated himself opposite.

"I was much interested in the story you were telling me about that Zala banker," Watson began. "You say that Stover claimed that Babcock owed him and that he took the bank stock to settle the debt?"

"Yes."

Watson took a box of cigarettes from his pocket and offered the box to Harold.

"No, thank you, I do not use them."

"This is one of my bad habits," Watson explained, as he took a cigarette from the box and lighted it. "I usually smoke a package a day, and some days, when anything worries me, I use two packages. You spoke of the cashier's leaving the night of the same day that Babcock was injured. What is your opinion? Do you think that this cashier robbed Babcock or was an accomplice in robbing him?"

"No, I don't think that; but I think that this cashier can give some valuable information."

"Well, you are right. I am that cashier."

"I knew that. I came here on purpose to see you."

"You did! How did you locate me?"

"I located you by means of the eye of the Invisible Empire."

"What! You located me through the Ku Klux Klan?"

"Yes, I had three million secret service men looking for you."

"I have heard that there are some Klansmen here, but I do not know any of them."

"One never knows when the Invisible Eye is on him. Your employer, or fellow employee, may be a Knight of the Ku Klux Klan and you never suspect it."

"You have located me all right, what do you want?"

"I want the inside information of how Babcock was robbed."

Watson threw away the stub of his cigarette and lighted another, at which he took several strong pulls before he replied.

"I am going to tell you the whole story. I shall keep back nothing. I was employed in the Zala bank only a short time. I bought out my predecessor. I purchased his three thousand dollars' worth of stock in order to secure the job. I did not have quite enough money, and he gave me time on four hundred dollars. Mr. Babcock

and I got on splendidly together. In eight months I had paid off the indebtedness on my stock.

“Mr. Babcock was the leader of one political faction in Zala. The faction of which he was leader was victorious in the city election. Babcock was elected city treasurer. As treasurer he became the custodian of fifty thousand dollars, which he deposited in his own bank. The opposing political faction started a second bank and made plans to put Babcock out of business. They circulated the report that his bank was in a failing condition.

“When Mr. Babcock heard the report that was being circulated he attempted to counteract it. Every evening after banking hours he would get in his car and drive until nine or ten o'clock, talking with farmers, telling them that the report that his bank was in a failing condition was a malicious attack started on him by his political enemies. However, there was considerable alarm among many of the farmers who had money in his bank.

“Friday afternoon he said to me, ‘I fear that the farmers will make a run on the bank tomorrow. There are always a lot of country folk in town on Saturday. There are some of these farmers who are alarmed—fear spreads rapidly in a crowd. I must be prepared. You take my car and drive to Wilford Springs and borrow thirty thousand dollars from Jim Stover to tide us over.’

"I took plenty of collateral and did as directed. Stover pumped me as to the condition of the bank and elicited from me the information that Babcock had fifty thousand dollars of the city funds in his own bank unsecured in any way.

"After hearing my request for a loan, he said, 'I will go down with you this evening and fix Babcock up all right.' That evening he loaded fifty thousand dollars into his car and we drove to Zala. The conference lasted until a late hour, at the home of Babcock. Stover impressed on his mind again and again that with the small amount of cash that Babcock had on hand, if there were a run on his bank the following day, the bank would fail and with the city funds in his own bank it would be very embarrassing for him and might result in criminal charges being brought against him. Mr. Babcock was extremely nervous. 'What would you advise me to do?' he asked. 'Make an assignment to me. If a run is made on the bank I can show them that I have bought you out and placed all of my resources back of it,' Stover advised. Babcock agreed to this, and the next morning Babcock transferred his stock to Stover with the understanding that it should be re-assigned to him when the danger of a run had passed."

"Were you present when the transfer of stock was made?" King asked.

"Yes."

“Was anything said about Stover’s taking the stock in payment of money due him from Babcock?”

“Not a word. I am sure Babcock never owed Stover one cent. After the assignment of the stock Babcock showed Stover the combination to the safe.”

“Do you remember the combination to the safe?”

“No, I don’t believe I do now. I haven’t had any occasion to recall it.”

“Mr. Babcock tried so hard to recall the combination to some safe and finally said he had recalled it.”

“Do you know the combination as he recalled it?” asked Watson.

“Yes. Two turns to the right, to the left to forty, then to the right to thirty-two.”

“I believe that was it. I am pretty sure it was. Wait a minute, I have it in an old bank pass book. He opened a drawer and took out a pass book and read, two turns to the right, to the left to forty, then to the right to thirty-two. By George, he had it right!”

“Yes, and he had it right about the one to whom he taught this combination robbing him,” commented Harold.

“After showing Stover the combination Babcock left the bank. A run was made on the bank and several thousand dollars were drawn out. Stover convinced the depositors by the display of the fifty thousand and the statement that he had purchased the bank that there was no occasion for alarm. The run was stopped

and most of the money that had been withdrawn was returned.

“When I returned to the bank after eating my noon lunch I found a stranger there looking through the accounts. Mr. Stover introduced him as Charles Finch, the new bank examiner. I had just read a few days before of Mr. Finch’s appointment.

“This bank examiner found a note for thirty-five hundred dollars made by a prominent farmer that was sixty days past due. He called the farmer up and asked him to come to the bank at once and take care of it. When the farmer came he declared that he had never given the note. That evening Stover and Finch called me into the directors’ room. Finch showed me that there was a shortage of thirty-five hundred dollars. The note that was, according to the farmer, a forgery was shown me. Babcock and myself both loaned money. It was our custom when making a loan to put our initials on the margin to show who was responsible for making the loan. On the lower left hand margin were the initials D. W. I told Stover and Finch that I would swear before God that I had never seen the note before, but the strange part was that the note was written in my hand writing and the initials were exactly as I make them. The bank examiner showed me the entry of the three thousand dollar loan on the books; where the entry in the bills receivable book and the credit on the cash book were both in my hand writing. After this

forged note had been made the books still showed a shortage of five hundred dollars.

“Again and again I told them that I knew nothing of these things.”

“‘You’d have a hard time convincing a jury of that,’ the bank examiner told me.

“I was forced to admit that the evidence looked strong against me. Finally, when I was almost crazy, Stover said, ‘Young man, I will give you one chance. You pay the five hundred dollars that the books show the cash is still short, assign your stock over to me and I will take care of the three thousand dollar note. You leave the country tonight and never return.’

“I told him that that was impossible, as I did not have the five hundred dollars. Finally he told me how sorry he felt for me and how anxious he was to keep me out of the penitentiary and that he would pay the other five hundred and give me two hundred dollars to leave on. He then gave me some good advice as to my future conduct. I was perfectly innocent, but I had no friend in the West, except Mr. Babcock, and he had been injured in an auto accident that afternoon and his life was despaired of. In my excited imagination I saw the cold stern walls of the penitentiary loom before me. I accepted Stover’s offer. (During this recital Harold listened intently and occasionally made notes.)

“That night I left Zala on the midnight train. I went to Trinidad, Colorado, and remained there for

two months. I did not find a job that suited me there and decided to come farther west. I had not been on the train long when I noticed a pretty girl a few seats behind me. After several hours of loneliness I changed my seat directly across the aisle from her and engaged her in conversation. She told me that her name was Irene Hinds. She was from Indiana. She was on her way here to join her father. She told me that her father was tubercular and had come to Arizona for his health, two months previous. Before that he had spent several months in the Middle West but had not improved much.

“I became much interested in Irene and decided to change my destination and try to find employment here, where she was to make her home with her father. I secured employment the day I landed, as bookkeeper in this office. After I had been here a few days I asked permission to call on Miss Hinds. Imagine the shock which I received when she introduced me to her father, whom I recognized at once as Finch, the bank examiner. I was sure he recognized me, but he said nothing about our having met before. I was alarmed and at the same time curious as to why he was here passing under the name of Hinds. I was sure there was something wrong in his life or he would have forbidden his daughter to associate with me, whom he knew as a defaulter. Finally he did object when it became evident to him that Irene and I were in love. After a short

courtship we were married against his wishes. The night we were married he was very much agitated during the early part of the evening. When the minister and our young friends had left he made a confession to us. He said he had been for several months a guest in the Stover home at the time Babcock made the transfer of stock to Stover and Stover took charge of the Ranchman's Bank at Zala. My father-in-law, John Hinds, is a cousin of Jim Stover. He was for many years a bookkeeper for a firm in Indianapolis. He is a professional penman. For several years he fought against tuberculosis but continued to work. Finally the doctors told him that if he expected to live any length of time he must go West. He went to Stover at Wilford Springs. After several months there the doctors told him that he should come to Arizona. He was without funds.

"The day that Stover took charge of the Ranchmen's Bank in Zala he 'phoned to his cousin to come down. When he arrived Stover told him if he would do a little job for him he would give him a thousand dollars with which to go to Arizona to recover his health. After much persuasion and the painting of several graveyard scenes by Stover he consented. He impersonated the bank examiner, forged the note, and made the false entries in the books, imitating my writing.

"On our wedding night he insisted that he go back and expose his cousin so that I could clear my name and

recover the value of my bank stock out of which Stover had defrauded me. As I thought I was the only one wronged, Irene and myself refused to allow him to do so. I am sure that he would never have done what he did, Mr. King, if he had not thought it was to save to his life.

"I never knew until you told me this evening that Stover had robbed Babcock. I talked the matter over with Irene, and while of course it is a hard thing for a woman to consent to her father's taking a course of action which will send him to the penitentiary, and I never would have brought this anguish to her on my own account, yet she agreed with me it must be done."

"Have you talked to your father-in-law?"

"No. He wasn't so well as usual today, and we thought we would wait until the sun is shining when he is sure to be feeling better."

"Will he be willing to waive extradition?"

"I am sure he will. He has always told Irene and myself that he must go sometime and do what he could to right the wrong he had committed against me.

"I never intended to permit him to do it, but now that we need his confession in order to assist Babcock he must go even though it sends him to the penitentiary."

When the matter was presented to John Hinds the following day, he assured Harold that he would waive extradition and come to Wilford Springs whenever he was needed.

Chapter XXVII

WHEN the new officials of Rush County took their offices there was a great deal of anxiety among the law violators in Wilford Springs and not without reason. C. M. Stanton, the county attorney, and Dan Brown, the sheriff, were both Klansmen, who would now have the backing of fifteen hundred other Klansmen who would give them their loyal support in the enforcement of law.

The governor's investigations for the purpose of gathering evidence against the Klan had resulted in nothing of consequence except to inform the public as to the identity of a few Klansmen and to reveal a very few irregularities committed by some misguided Klansmen who had not understood the nature of their obligations as Klansmen. After spending a great deal of time and money in making these investigations the attorney-general and governor had not produced one iota of evidence to prove that the Klan committed acts of violence or took the law into its own hands. On the contrary, they found that the organization was doing much to assist the officers in the enforcement of law.

When Governor Slydell's term of office came to a close and he again joined the ranks of private citizens the ouster suit was still pending in the Supreme Court where it continued to be carried over from term to

term until finally dismissed. Meanwhile the Klan grew not only in Wilford Springs but throughout the state.

Two weeks after the new attorney and sheriff were sworn into office a raid was made on five houses where liquor was being sold. The raid was made by the sheriff's force, unbeknown to the mayor and chief of police. Much liquor was confiscated and destroyed, the proprietors arrested and the following morning given a speedy trial and a long jail sentence. When Hennessy found himself in jail he called for the county attorney and made affidavit that the mayor and chief of police patronized his place. Within two hours after this affidavit was made the mayor and chief were given a chance to resign or face ouster proceedings. They preferred to resign.

About one o'clock on this memorable day when Wilford Springs awoke to the realization of the fact that 'a clean-up' was on, Pat McBryan came to Stover's office.

"I guess we're in for it," he said.

"What's up now, Pat?" Stover asked, "nothing serious, is there? Nothing really to worry about."

"Hell's just broke loose, that's all. Of course, that's nothing to worry about."

"What do you mean?"

"I just heard that both Clark and Roberts have resigned."

"What's the matter with them?"

"Hennesy squealed."

"That's bad," said Stover, rubbing his hands together.

"Bad? It's hell."

"I'm going over to my office and write out my resignation as commissioner at once."

"Why so?"

"The chances are that there is going to be a lot of investigation going on around here. I am going to sell out and leave the country."

"Now, don't get scared and go to telling anything."

"I'm not telling, but I'm going to go while the going is good."

McBryan left the room. The sound of his footsteps had scarcely died away when the banker's office door opened and someone entered without knocking. The banker was surprised, and a cold chill ran down his spinal column, when he looked up and saw Dan Brown, the new sheriff, standing before him.

"How do you do, Mr. Stover?"

"Our new sheriff, I believe," said Stover, great drops of perspiration coming out on his forehead.

"Mr. Stover, I'll have to trouble you to come with me. I have a warrant for you."

"A warrant for me?" Stover was now rubbing his hands together violently.

"Yes, for you."

"What's the charge?"

"Forgery and obtaining money fraudulently."

"Who is the complaining witness?"

"You come on and when we get to the court house you can go into the office of the clerk of the district court and read the entire charge."

About an hour later, after Stover had been released on bond, he called Harold King over the 'phone.

"Is this King?" he asked.

"Yes, this is King."

"I wish you would come down to my office. I want to see you."

"If you want to see me it will be necessary to come to my office." Stover hung up the receiver and muttered, "The insolent puppy." However, he grabbed his hat and started for King's office without a moment's delay.

When he reached the architect's office he announced himself by demanding in a loud voice, which was unusual for him, "You young upstart, what do you mean by making that absurd complaint against me?"

"Have a chair, Mr. Stover." Stover stared at him.

"Have a chair, I say," Harold indicated one with a gesture. Stover sat down. The sangfroid of this young fellow discomfited him.

"I want to know what you mean?" Stover asked when he had recovered himself.

"Mean about what?" Harold asked coolly.

"By those ridiculous charges you made against me."

"Have you read the complaint?"

"Yes, I have."

"Then you know all about it. I don't need to tell you anything."

"It's preposterous. Young man, you're making a fool of yourself. You can't prove anything, and in the end you will be laughed at."

"Stover, I can prove all I have charged. At any rate the jury will decide.

"What proof have you?"

"It will be time enough to present the proof when you come to trial."

"King, what do you and your friends want?"

"What do you mean?"

"This is simply a case of blackmail. How much do you and your friends want?"

Harold sprang from his chair and stood in front of Stover, a fire of anger flamed from his eyes, and he opened and shut his hands forcibly. Harold King, the Klansman, fought hard with himself. He could scarce restrain his hands from clutching Stover's skinny throat. When he had mastered himself he walked back to his chair and sat down. "Stover," he said, "don't repeat that unless you want them to try me for homicide in the district court, and unless you want an immediate trial by the Supreme Judge of the Universe."

Stover, now trembling and white, changed his attitude. "Mr. King," he said, rubbing his hands and

swallowing hard, "it may be that the girl does not understand the deal I had with her father. Babcock owed me twenty thousand dollars and I bought his interest in the Zala bank for that amount. I explained this to Ruth, but it is quite likely that someone has been misrepresenting the transaction to her. The girl has had a hard time. I feel sorry for her, and while I do not owe her a cent I will make her a present of five thousand dollars to help her out if you will have this case dismissed."

"Nothing doing. Stover, you are an unmitigated liar and crook. You robbed Babcock and Watson; you tried to bribe me to betray the Klan. Like the cowardly cur that you are you tried to fight me through your dirty attack on a young woman. You talk of being sorry. You haven't the capacity within your craven soul to be sorry for anybody but yourself. You see that door. Get out of it at once or I may not be able to keep my hands off you." Harold stood with his finger pointing to the door while Stover left without looking back.

Chapter XXVIII

THE next day after Stover's arrest the town was in a furore. The man who had for years been looked upon as one of Wilford Springs' most successful business men had been charged with a felony. Groups of excited people met on the street corners discussing the case. The Eagle stated the facts in connection with Stover's arrest without any editorial comment. The Journal stated that the arrest of "Jim Stover, Wilford Springs' most distinguished citizen, was spite work by Klan leaders and a girl who had been discharged from Stover's employ."

The Reverend Earl Benton had just finished reading of Stover's arrest when his door bell rang. Mrs. Benton went to the door and admitted a young lady who asked to see Rev. Benton. Mrs. Benton showed the young lady into the pastor's study.

"Rev. Benton, I am Pearl Gardner," she said by way of introduction.

"Have a chair, Miss Gardner. What can I do for you?"

"I wanted to talk to you about a certain matter. I came to you because you are the only person I know whom I was sure belongs to the Ku Klux Klan. I wanted to talk to a Klansman."

"I have stated in a number of public lectures that I belong to the Klan."

"I had heard that you said that you belong to the Klan and as I wanted to get the help of the Klan, I came to you."

"I will be pleased to carry your message to the Klan if it appears that that organization can be of any service to you."

"I think it can. I have been keeping company with a young man by the name of Chester Golter. We are engaged to be married but he refuses to keep the engagement."

"What did you want the Klan to do in the matter?"

"I thought if a letter were written to him telling him that if he didn't keep his promise to me he would be visited by Ku Kluxers that he would marry me."

"Has he actually refused to marry you?"

"Not in so many words. He used to keep company with another girl who worked in the bank. Her name is Ruth Babcock. Since we have been engaged I have seen a letter she wrote to him. I discovered by the contents of this letter that he had asked her for her company after he had told me that he did not care for her and would not go with her again. She told him in this letter very positively that she would not go with him. Of course I was offended and refused to go with him to a show the following night. Since then he has gone with another girl several times and has said that

he does not know whether we should get married or not; that he is afraid we are not compatible. He is afraid of the Klan and if he had a threatening letter from the Ku Kluxers he would keep his promise to me."

"My dear young lady," said the minister, "you do not understand the work of this organization. The Klan does not write threatening letters, nor visit anyone for the purpose of coercing them. That is a mistaken idea that many have. Not long ago a woman came to me asking that I get the Klan to chase her husband out of town. She said he was worthless and she wanted to get rid of him. A man came to me and told me that he thought that if the Klan would give his uncle a right good whipping it might improve his conduct. It isn't strange that so many people have this mistaken idea of the mission of the Klan. The newspapers have printed so much of alleged threats and punishments by Klans that many have believed them. The Klan is not a punitive organization except as it assists officers in the enforcement of the law by furnishing evidence and giving the officers its moral support. If this young man positively refuses to marry you, of course, you have recourse in the courts. You can sue him for breach of promise."

"Then the Klan won't write a letter to him threatening to visit him if he doesn't marry me?"

"I am sure it would not. Maybe a little more sweet-

ness and graciousness on your part would bring the young gentleman around all right."

"Well, I will be going. I thank you."

The clergyman walked to the door and as she passed out he said, "I trust your affair with this young man may terminate satisfactorily for you, but remember this: there can be no true marriage relation except two hearts are bound captive to each other with a golden chain of love."

After his caller had gone Rev. Benton informed his wife that he was going to town.

"Remember, dear, that you have to conduct a funeral this afternoon. You must be back promptly at noon for your lunch."

"I remember the funeral and will be here at twelve. These funerals are sad, gloomy occasions in the life of a minister."

"A funeral is always sad whether one is in the ministry or not, isn't it?"

"Usually, but a funeral service might bring a great deal of pleasure to a minister."

"What do you mean?"

"It would afford me a great deal of pleasure to preach the funeral sermon over the remains of some of the brothers who are continually knocking, or of the sisters who are always suffering from the 'hoof and mouth disease.'"

"Tut, tut, my dear," his wife replied, shaking her finger at him, "to hear you talk one would think you have some members in your flock whom you do not love."

"Well, to tell the truth," he said, laughing, "I have a few members who would be so much more lovable dead."

"What a boy you are." She lifted her face toward his and he kissed her fervently.

As she stood watching him walk down the street she noticed that his step was not quite so sprightly as it had been when they were married thirty-five years before and that his shoulders were beginning to bow under the burdens of life. She rejoiced that while his body was aging his heart and spirits retained their youthfulness.

As the minister passed Isaac Goldberg's place the little Jew called to him from his door. "Shust a minute, Reverend, I vonts to speak to you."

"All right, Mr. Goldberg. What is it?"

"I understand dat the Klan is going to build a beeg klavern. Is dat right?"

"Yes, the plans are all drawn and work will begin at once."

"How much the cost?"

"Ten thousand dollars."

"Vel, vel, dot is lots of money. If the Klan vants

to borrow some moneys Isaac has it to loan. And I shust ask only 10 per cent."

"Isaac, would you loan money to the Klan?"

"I loan money shust as quick to the Klan as to the Knights of Columbus."

"I thank you for the offer, but I am quite sure that the Klan will be able to finance this building without any outside help."

"Vel, remember Isaac has moneys to loan—on goot security, of course; always on goot security."

A little way farther down the street Rev. Benton met Mr. Jackson.

"Good morning, Reverend."

"How are you, Jackson?"

"Reverend Benton, what do you think of Stover's arrest?"

"Well, I have never had a very exalted opinion of Stover, but I had not suspected him of being a thief."

"It looks bad for him, but he may be able to come clear. I hope he does."

"Well, I do, too. While I have never been an admirer of Stover I would regret very much to know that he had robbed a man who has become an invalid and dependent on his daughter for support."

"If he did defraud Babcock and then discharged his daughter who was supporting her father and aunt because she was keeping company with Harold King whom he had a personal grudge against, as reported,

there aren't adjectives strong enough to use in condemning him." Jackson spoke with feeling.

"I know that he discharged the girl because she was keeping company with Harold King but, of course, I know nothing about the charges of fraud."

Springer now came by and Jackson stopped him with the question, "Springer, what do you think about this Stover affair?"

"I think just what I stated in the Journal, that Stover's arrest is a piece of spite work."

There was quite a crowd collected now and someone asked, "Who was the girl you referred to in the article in the paper?"

"Ruth Babcock who had been discharged by Stover."

"Oh, yes. Wasn't she the girl that published the affidavit in regard to the Rastus Jones affair?" another man asked.

"Yes, she has been playing into the hands of the Klan all along." Springer showed embarrassment in his voice and manner. His feeling was of the same nature as when that affidavit was published.

"Who is back of this prosecution?" another asked.

"Harold King," Springer replied.

"If Harold King is responsible for it you can rest assured that it is not spite work. Harold King is every inch a man, and while he may not be friendly to Stover he would not stoop to do a dishonorable act. If he was instrumental in causing Stover's arrest he has some

proofs." Rev. Benton spoke in a positive voice.

"Some of the other Klan leaders may have made him think that there was some evidence against Stover and used him as a tool. They have to make a goat of someone," Springer remarked.

"Harold King isn't the kind that they make a goat of," said Jackson, "he has a mind of his own."

"This is one of the consequences of that detestable Klan. It is causing trouble all over the country. I have repeatedly warned the people of this danger through the columns of the Journal."

"Springer, in just what way is the Klan causing trouble?" Jackson asked.

"Haven't you been reading in the paper about the riots that have occurred in many places where Klan meetings are held?"

"Yes, I have been reading of some attacks being made on Klan meetings and Klan parades. It seems that in every instance the Klan members were assaulted, and that the Klan did nothing to provoke the riots."

"Well, it doesn't make any difference who the aggressors were, the Klan is to blame; if they had not been holding meetings and having parades there wouldn't have been any riots and bloodshed. This Klan organization arouses such bitter feeling that the only sane and safe thing is for them to disorganize."

"Springer," said Rev. Benton, "if I understand

you correctly you take the position that the Klan antagonizes certain groups and for that reason the Klan should disorganize?"

"Yes. That is about right. This Klan movement stirs up so much bitterness that its very existence is a menace to the peace and safety of the country. It doesn't make any difference what the principles of the Klan are it stirs up strife and for that reason has no right to exist."

"Springer, I am surprised at you. You, who are supposed to be a leader of thought and a molder of public opinion in the community. It was the Rev. Benton who now addressed Springer. There were by this time forty or fifty men in the crowd and all listened attentively while the minister spoke.

"I want you men to see just how reasonable or unreasonable this argument of our friend Springer is. He says that the Klan should be disorganized because it stirs up bitter opposition. If this argument is good then the Christian Church should have been disorganized in the first centuries, as it was bitterly opposed by the pagans and the Roman government. Christians were burned at the stake and made to fight with wild beasts in the arena. The Masonic order should have been abolished in the days of its youth if Springer's argument is good, for certainly the Masonic order stirred up opposition. Then, there have existed various temperance organizations that should have been

suppressed because they stirred up bitter opposition from whiskey dealers and manufacturers. According to your argument all of the cats should go out of business because the rats don't like them to guard the pantry."

This last remark was greeted by uproarious laughter from most of the crowd. Hisses from a few. "Eat him up, preacher," a large man on the edge of the crowd shouted. "That's right, we're for you," came from a number.

Springer turned to Scripture to defend his position.

"I believe it's better to use love and forbearance. Didn't Paul say, 'If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend'; and didn't Christ teach the doctrine of non-resistance and say, 'Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also'? I believe in the policy of non-resistance in the spirit of love. Since the Klan gives offense to my brother—if I were a Klansman I would give it up." ("That's right, Springer, you've told it to him right," a fourth degree Knight of Columbus exclaimed.)

"I believe in the doctrine of love and forebearance, too, but I also believe in loyalty to principle. (The minister spoke in a well controlled voice but with great earnestness.) When Paul spoke of not eating meat if it caused his brother to offend he was speaking of meat

that had been offered to idols. It would give offense to some to eat this meat and would do no violence to the conscience of any Christian to refrain from eating it.

“When Christ said, ‘Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on one cheek turn to him the other also,’ he was repudiating the doctrine of ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ Nowhere did Christ or Paul teach that one should surrender principles of truth and righteousness in case someone became offended because of his advocacy. Christ knew that His principles would stir up bitter opposition and said, ‘Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword.’ Christ himself used force to clear the temple of the money changers, and I haven’t any idea that those grafters whose game was interfered with liked it. It is the fellow whose game is being interfered with by the Klan who is raising a big hullabaloo. I am a lover of peace, but if my advocacy of the tenets of the Christian religion, of the separation of church and state, free schools, pure womanhood, freedom of speech and the press, the upholding of the constitution of the United States is an offense to any individual or group of individuals—native or foreign-born—let them be offended. I repeat it—let them be offended.

“As a method of judging the genuine from the spurious, Christ said, ‘By their fruits ye shall know

them.' What are the fruits of this organization which you despise? It has done much benevolent work in the way of assisting individuals and worthy institutions. It is establishing hospitals and orphan homes. It has assisted in enforcement of law in many localities; it has created more respect for law and encouraged church attendance and——”

“Let me in here,” someone demanded. The minister stopped in the middle of a sentence and turned in the direction of the authoritative voice. He saw McMichael elbowing his way through the crowd to the center of the ring where his friend Springer and himself were facing each other.

“Benton, your damn Klan has played hell in this community.” The lawyer spoke in a loud, harsh voice.

“You seem to be excited. What is the trouble?” the minister asked.

“Trouble enough. Now that we have Dan Brown as sheriff, Stanton as county attorney and Rider as judge, all of them Klansmen, life and property will not be safe in Wilford Springs and there will be no justice.”

“You are mistaken, Mr. McMichael. Bootleggers and gamblers are objecting now because they are getting justice.”

“No one can get justice in a community where there are Klan officials. If I were governor of this state, do you know what I would do?”

"No, I don't have any idea what you would do as governor," the minister replied.

"Well, sir, I'll tell you what I would do. I'd put every town that has Klan officers under martial law until the people of the town forced the Klan officials to resign."

"Well, Mr. McMichael, said Benton, laughing, "if you were governor and should attempt to coerce the people and trample upon their sacred rights in such a despotic manner, I fear that you wouldn't long remain governor; but would soon join the ranks of the has-beens along with ex-governor Slydell and others who made fools of themselves." The crowd laughed and applauded and the minister made his way through the crowd and started for home.

As Rev. Benton and Mr. Jackson walked up the street together they met a dapper young man and a girl of the flapper type.

"That is Chester Golter, Stover's nephew," Jackson volunteered.

"I have heard of him but have never seen him to know who he was before. And who is the young lady with him?"

"Her name is Gladys Glendenning. She has been here for a few weeks teaching dancing lessons."

The following day Rev. Benton saw in the paper an account of the marriage of Gladys Glendenning to Chester Golter and a few days later notice of a breach

of promise suit brought against Chester Golter by Pearl Gardner who asked twenty thousand dollars as heart balm. Later he heard that the case was settled out of court for three thousand dollars.

"I wouldn't think that a heart that has been wounded through misplaced love could be repaired by payment of money," remarked Mrs. Benton.

"My dear, money can not heal a heart wound that is very deep," replied the minister, and then added, "a girl who would ask to have her fiance frightened into keeping his engagement is entirely lacking in true love upon which real homes are built and which binds hearts together through both sunshine and storm."

Chapter XXIX

RUTH BABCOCK was seated at the dresser curling her hair when her aunt entered the room. "Going out tonight, Ruth?"

"Yes, Mr. King and I are going to drive to Zala."

"Anything of interest going on?"

"Yes, a very interesting affair—rather private—only a select few invited, you know."

When her aunt left the room Ruth fell into a reverie. She thought of the past years of anxiety and hardship; they were behind her now. The last few months had removed so much of care and restored so much of the lightness of heart that she had known before her father was injured that she felt like a new creature.

Jim Stover had been convicted of fraud and forgery and sentenced from ten to twenty years in the penitentiary. John Hinds, who was the principal witness against Stover, was sentenced to a short term in the penitentiary but was paroled on account of his poor health. Babcock and Watson had recovered through civil suits the value of the bank stock of which Stover had defrauded them. Mr. Babcock had been operated on by Dr. Lilly and had fully recovered. He now remembered every detail of the transaction by which Stover came into possession of the bank. With the return of his money and restored health he again en-

gaged in business. As Ruth thought of the restored health of her father and the love of the strong young man who had been such a good friend and gallant suitor she felt that she had every reason to be thankful, and that there certainly never had lived a happier mortal than she.

It was seven o'clock when Harold called for her in his limousine. It was a balmy May evening. The breezes from the meadows and pastures were laden with the breath of wild flowers. Young rabbits hopped into the hedges along the way and occasionally a foolish one would get in front of the car and try to outrun it. A red bird in a hedge row was singing a blithe song. Harold stopped the car that they might enjoy the music. It was still light enough for them to discover the cause of his joy. He was singing to his mate, who as a good wife and homemaker, was on a nest nearby. As they rode past farm houses they heard the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. When they passed near a pond they heard a bull-frog with a basso-profundo serenading his lady love. What a night for lovers!"

"Harold," said Ruth, "you remember that I won the three wishes when we pulled the wish bone?"

"Yes, and I won the two."

"Mine have all come true."

"What were they? You told me that when they came true you would tell me."

"I wished that my father would get well; that you would land the hotel job at the capital, and that I would get an increase in wages. They all came true, but my increase in wages came from a different source than I had expected. Now you must tell me what your wishes were."

"Only one of mine has come true."

"What was it?" she asked.

"I mustn't tell until the other one comes true. You know you said that if one told before all of the wishes came true the unfulfilled ones would not come true."

"I know I did, but I believe that part of the wish charm is superstition. I don't think it will make any difference. Come on and tell me."

"Oh, no, young lady, you don't work me like that. I am not taking any chances."

When they arrived at Zala they drove at once to the parsonage where the old pastor who had preached Ruth's mother's funeral resided. A half dozen of Ruth's girl friends were at the gate to meet them. "We have been here waiting for almost an hour," one of the girls said.

In the minister's little study Ruth and Harold clasped hands, symbolizing the union of their lives in love, while their vows were being solemnized, which bound them—even unto death.

On the way home Harold said, "Now, Ruth, I can tell you the wishes; the other one has come true. I wished

that I might be able to help your father secure the money that had been stolen from him, and I think you can guess what the other was.”

“It must have been that you would get to Zala without having any engine trouble or puncturing a tire,” she said, laughing.

“You are very dense, my darling, my wife,” he said, as he put his arm around her and kissed her.

“Now be careful. You can’t drive with one hand. You will run the car into the ditch,” she cautioned.

They were about half way back to Wilford Springs when Ruth exclaimed, “Oh, look there, there’s a fiery cross!”

“It must be the Trenton Klan having a meeting.”

“Isn’t the cross beautiful and inspiring?”

“Yes, and it represents a wonderful movement. A movement that will mean a better citizenship.”

“Just what is the significance of the fiery cross? Of course I know that the cross is the symbol of the Christian religion, but why a fiery cross?”

“The cross was made red with the blood of the Savior, the great Sacrifice for the sins of the world. As we behold this fiery cross we see in it the symbol of the love of God for humanity and the suggestion for unselfish service. There is also another meaning attached to it. It has a militant significance. It is the signal for the assembling of the Klansmen.

“In the old days in Scotland, when any great danger threatened their nation and it became necessary for the Klans to assemble for the defense of their country, a cross was made of wood and set afire. The fiery brand was then quenched in the blood of a sacrifice. The chief commander then gave the symbol to a Klansman to carry and pass to another, who in turn should carry it, and so on, until it had been carried through the territory of every Klan. The Klansman carrying this fiery cross would shout the name of the muster-place. No true Klansman who saw the cross and heard the muster-place called would fail to be at the gathering. And he to whom the runner passed the emblem must carry it on.

“Scott in his ‘Lady of the Lake’ shows the loyalty of the Klansmen and the women of the Klan. He tells of this summons to the gathering being carried into a home where the master of the house lay a corpse. The Klansman, to whom the cross was to have been passed, is dead, but his son takes his place. If I can recall the lines I will repeat them for you. After a moment of silence he quoted :

‘All stand aghast: unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man’s bier he stood;
Held forth the cross besmeared with blood;
“The muster-place is Lanrick mead;

Speed forth the signal! Klansman, speed!"

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
 Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
 In haste the stripling to his side
 His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
 But when he saw his mother's eye
 Watch him in speechless agony,
 Back to her open'd arms he flew,
 Pressed on her lips a fond adieu—
 "Alas," she sobbed, "and yet begone,
 And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son."

.
 'He vanished and o'er moor and moss
 Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.'"

"Good," she said, "that makes this emblem mean so much to me now."

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 "Fred," said Aunt Clara, "it's almost eleven o'clock. Ruth should be getting home."

"She will be back before long," Mr. Babcock replied.

"I expect Ruth and Mr. King will be getting married some of these times. She hasn't had anything to do with Mr. Golter since she quit work at the bank."

"And what's more, Clara, I don't want a girl of mine to have anything to do with that kind of stock."

"Golter has money, and that means a lot these days," Clara commented, and then added, "but Mr. King has picked up wonderfully in the last few months."

“Harold King is a man,” said Babcock.

Footsteps were heard on the porch. “There they come, now,” said Clara.

The door was thrown open and Ruth and Harold entered.

“Well, Miss Babcock,” said her father, smiling, “you have returned.”

“No, she answered, “Miss Babcock has not returned and never will return. Allow me to introduce my husband.”

“What, you’re not married!” exclaimed Aunt Clara.

“Yes, didn’t I tell you that a very interesting affair was to take place at Zala tonight.”

Mr. Babcock stepped between his daughter and his son and placed his arm around her and a hand on his new son’s shoulder. “Children, he said, “I wish you the greatest of happiness, and may God crown your lives with his richest blessings.”

THE END

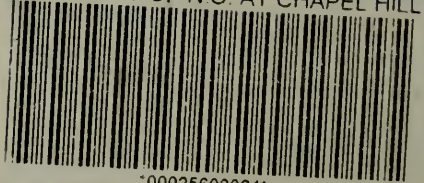
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