

## Crusade in America against the Ku Klux Klan

A remarkable crusade has been launched by the New York *World*, against the Ku Klux Klan, which that newspaper characterises as a "grotesque menace and an anachronism in free America" (writes the New York correspondent of the *Argus*, under date September 15). Notable for many, many crusades in its history, the *World* seems to be voicing a rising feeling throughout the country against a lawlessness and lynch law activity in many States attributed to individuals who boast membership in the far-famed secret order. The newspaper is gaining visible support from day to day, and with each of its revelations is arousing more and more interest in various sections of the nation.

It must be made clear that the present organisation is not a lineal descendant of the old Ku Klux Klan of Civil war days, although it has appropriated its name, and adopted its methods. The original order appears to have been founded in 1866 by a group of young men in Tennessee, who intended to have some fun. The original name was the Ku Kloi, a variation of the Greek word "kuklos," meaning circle, ring, or band. After the Civil war, when the Governments of the Southern States were disrupted by a group of exploiting "carpet baggers" from the north, the Klan came to thrive for a different purpose. These "carpet baggers" were so called because of the luggage with which they came south. They carried satchels faced with carpet, then in vogue. In the Southern States they organised the negroes, caused the virtual disenfranchisement of the resident white men who had all fought in the Confederate Army, and proceeded to reap the benefits. The men who had dared to face death for the principal of secession were, however, far from being long-suffering. They took over the regalia and the name of the Ku Klois, altered the latter to the more euphonious Ku Klux Klan, and by well-organised raiding parties, employing divers methods calculated to be anything but soothing to the superstitious negroes, put the fear of slave days back into the hearts of these former bondsmen. When the Federal troops were withdrawn from the defeated States, the Klanners also whipped, tarred and feathered, and rode the "carpet baggers" out of the south on rails.

After reconstruction in the south, the Ku Klux Klan died out, becoming merely a memory. However, on October 26, 1915, says the *World*, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, incorporated was organised in Atlanta, Georgia, by William Joseph Simmons, who at one period of his life had been a Methodist minister. "On that date, continues the newspaper, "Simmons and thirty-three of his friends signed a petition for a charter as a standard fraternal secret order, which charter was issued by the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia, on July 1, 1916. Now the organisation is active in every State of the Union but three. It has a membership of more than 500,000—of 650,000, according to the boasts of its leaders. When it was organised its founders claimed that it was a revival or legitimate rebirth of the old Ku Klux Klan of the reconstruction period of the South, and, like the original Klan, its slogan was "White Supremacy." It was directed against the negro. Now the negro has become a side issue with it. To-day it is primarily anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, anti-alien, and it is spreading more than twice as fast through the north and west as it is growing in the south. How has it managed to spread out so widely and rapidly? First, by appeals to local or sectional prejudices and hatreds. On the Pacific coast it has beckoned to Japophobes, and whispered in their ears that the yellow man is plotting to incite the black man in America to rise against the white man. In the cities of Central West it has pretended to devote itself to stamping out radicalism. On the Atlantic coast it has preached that an alien-born man or woman, even though naturalised, has no place in America. Everywhere it has banned Jews from membership, and made anti-Semitism one of its many missions. Everywhere also, no less positively but not as frankly, it has barred and attacked Catholics. Wherever a prospective member lives, he has been promised that his pet aversion will be made an object of Klan action. Second, it owes

its growth to the employment of a large number of professional salesmen, who net the country in sales organisation on a basis of four dollars for every member taken into the Klan."

The *World*, and along with the *World* there are a large number of other newspapers throughout the country participating in the exposure charges that the organisation is furthered by its leaders for the monetary profit involved. The journals declare that the Klan manufacture the peculiar regalia of the organisation—a cotton robe and hooded cap—and sells it for more than five times what it cost to make it. During the last five years at least 5,000,000 dollars have been realised through dues and the sale of costumes. It is asserted by the newspapers that there are no less than sixty-four persons whose legal rights have been violated by masked mobs wearing the Ku Klux Klan garments; that twenty-one cases of tarring and feathering are attributed to individuals using the Klan regalia; that twenty-five persons have been beaten and kidnapped, and two women have been stripped and maltreated. One person has been killed as a result of these extra-legal proceedings, while two Klanners were put to death by their intended victims. The *World* has counted eighteen instances of general and specific warnings issued to individuals or communities in the name of the Ku Klux Klan to enforce moral censorships. The newspapers point out that the governors of three States, the mayors of five cities, the legislatures of two States, and the prosecuting attorneys of three others have embarked upon investigations of, or have taken immediate steps to combat, the violence to life and property threatened by the Klan.

The leaders of the Ku Klux Klan have declared the *World's* statement to be false, but have refused the offer of the newspaper's editors to throw open its columns to them. They have threatened libel suits which as yet have not been begun. In the meantime, the *World's* daily mail has brought occasional threats against the lives of the editors, and hundreds of letters from persons praising the action of the newspaper. Editorial comment in every part of the country emphatically endorses the expose. Public sentiment is distinctly with the crusaders.

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Those spiritual lights have the purest radiance which are the least conscious of their own brightness; those divine flowers diffuse the sweetest fragrance which make the least display.—Krummacher.

## For the Greater Honor and Glory of God!

CATHOLIC CHURCH, HOKITIKA.

Not only for the adornment, but also for the preservation of the new Church at Hokitika, it is necessary to undertake at once the work of plastering the building. In a damp climate the fine new church would in time be ruined if not protected. Therefore the parishioners have decided to co-operate with their pastor in undertaking the necessary work at the beginning of the new year.

The parishioners return heartfelt thanks to the Sisters of various communities, within the diocese and beyond it, who have already sent them valuable gifts in aid of the bazaar. They appeal to their friends throughout New Zealand, and especially to old residents of Hokitika, to help on the good work. The faith of many a family throughout the Dominion has its roots in Hokitika, which was indeed among the nurseries of Catholicism in the South Island. Bonds of hallowed memories and of old friendships unite the children of the West Coast, no matter where they roam. The centre of all these memories and friendships is the Faith of Our Fathers that spread forth from the tabernacle of the church at Hokitika. To make the church beautiful and enduring is, therefore, a labor of love, in which all whose affection for the Coast is a reality, will esteem it a privilege to join in.

Donations will be duly published in the *Tablet*, and may be sent to the—

VERY REV. DR. KENNEDY,  
Catholic Presbytery, Hokitika.