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WHOSE COUNTRY IS THIS?

by

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THE QUEEN'S WORK

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Whose Country Is This?

AS they got into their golf clothes in the dressing room of the country club, Tom Floyd noticed the Shriners' pin on the coat lapel of his golf partner, the one stranger in the group. He had come with the best of introductions from Frank Hutchinson, of Oklahoma, a friend of Floyd's. So Floyd had arranged the four-some, and now was glad that he had brought along one of his Mason friends.

"In Oklahoma all your life?" Floyd asked as they ambled out to the first tee.

"Nobody in Oklahoma has been there all his life," Overman, the newcomer, replied. "But I've been there for about twenty years, and that makes me practically a native son."

"Hutchinson seems to think a lot of you."

"Yes. We've been good friends for years. Grand chap and honest as the First National Bank."

"Doubtful compliment if I know some First Nationals," put in Stevens, the other Mason.

"And do you know," continued Overman, "I never had the slightest idea he was a Catholic till he came back from one of his trips. All of a sudden he started going to church and even talking religion to the boys, and it knocked me flat. A Catholic! My stars! I thought all Catholics were Micks or Dagos."

A quick but furtive kick in the shin prevented Kelley, the other Catholic in the foursome, from reaching for a heavy iron.

Un-American

"No," said Floyd mildly; "there are a few Catholics who are native-born Americans."

"Oh, I suppose so. But I've lived in Oklahoma long enough to know that good Catholics can't be good Americans. And though I'm a Democrat, I worked as hard as I could to keep Al Smith and the Pope out of the White House."

"And put Hoover and depression in?" demanded Kelley, who avoided Floyd's warning look as he shot his shaft.

"Of course," Floyd said quietly, "you didn't honestly think that the election of Smith meant the transfer of the Pope from the Vatican to Washington, did you?"

"Not exactly," Overman agreed. "But in national office we want men who are thorough Americans, without divided allegiance, who have no loyalty to any foreign power, who believe in American institutions and support them, and whose history proves their patriotism. And that lets Al Smith and the Catholics out."

Postponed

They had reached the tee, and Stevens, who had walked more rapidly than the others, proceeded to do the honors for their guest. Under cover of the preliminaries Kelley almost hissed to Floyd:

"Are you going to let that guy get away with that stuff?"

"No. But let's play our round. We'll get the subject on the table during dinner."

"I'd like to take a poke at his nose."

"Which is just the sort of argument we Catholics are accused of using. Keep your jacket on, Bill. He's just saying what he's heard and read a hundred times. We'll thrash it out while we're eating."

As the first white ball sailed in a long, beautiful parabola toward the first green, conversation lapsed into intense concentration on the game.

Dinner for Four

The table was set in a corner of the hotel veranda opening off the main dining room. Cool breezes blew across the green links and rustled the decorations, hung in preparation for a party; the men sat back in complete relaxation. Four glasses were held in four lazy hands; the white mist that covered them added to the delightful sensation of coolness and rest. The waiter, order carefully noted, had disappeared, and conversation, which had leaped from hole to hole in postmortem discussion of important plays, lapsed.

Though Kelley had admired the guest's exceptional golf, his casual comments about Catholics still rankled. So Kelley looked at Floyd appealingly in the hope that the subject would be resumed. Floyd caught the appeal and adroitly turned the conver-

sation back to the subject of Catholics and patriotism. But he reached it over a long bypath.

Ghosts and Lies

"Another election," he said, almost as if to himself, "and gosh, how I dread it!"

Election time is always rotten for business," agreed Overman; "if even an election could make business any rottener."

"I wasn't thinking of business," said Floyd. "What I dread about national elections is the rattling of old skeletons, the half-forgotten lies, the slanders and brutal attacks, and the mud-slinging and incriminations that go along with it."

"Oh," Stevens put in, "we're over much of that sort of thing in American politics."

Floyd shook his head. "I should say not," he said. "And we never shall be as long as we have groups of men who make a business of arousing hatred among their fellow men. We are going to have some months of dirt-and-ink slinging. Like an ignorant nursemaid frightening children with stories about the goblins and ogres who eat little boys and girls, the professional sower of hatred will tell his horrific yarns, strut his stock scandals, and use a time of national excitement to stir up suspicions, enmities, and distrusts."

"But nobody really takes it seriously," Stevens protested. In a few months the excitement and yarns are all forgotten."

"Perhaps you wouldn't think that way about it if you happened to be a Catholic yourself," said Floyd.

Overman turned about in his chair as if he had been hit.

"You're not a Catholic, are you?"

"Why, yes. Both Kelley and I are Catholics."

Overman came as near blushing as a man could under so well entrenched a tan.

"I'm sorry for the things I said when Hutchinson's name came up."

With Aversion

"Oh, that's quite all right," said Floyd, to Kelley's intense disgust. Kelley had been hoping for a complete and abysmal apology. "In fact I'm glad the subject came up. We Catholics are used to all sorts of accusations. When election time comes around, we find ourselves regarded with suspicion and sometimes people avert their faces as they pass us in the street.

"Election days are not particularly happy days for us. If a Catholic is running for office, he finds himself fighting, not a rival party, but a whispering campaign that touches his religion and his home life. If the candidate is a non-Catholic, the professional bigot works with twisted zeal to link him in some damning connection with Catholics or Catholic influence. You know the sort of thing: 'His secretary is a Catholic'; 'His wife's first cousin married a Catholic'; 'Once he was present at a banquet where the guest of honor was a Knight of St. Gregory'; 'He plays poker with a Catholic friend'; 'He contributed once to a Catholic charity'."

The waiter was beginning to serve; so Overman hid his embarrassment in devoted attention to the chilled bouillon. He was an honest, sensitive person at heart and he was honestly vexed at himself for having hurt the feelings of two of his hosts.

What's the Charge?

"I hope you won't think me persistent," Floyd went on, being most persistent even in his apology, "but would you mind thrashing this out with us? Kelley and I are Catholics. We like to think we're decent, fairly patriotic citizens. We love our country and are deeply grateful for what it has done for us. Just why is it that our Catholicity is supposed to be a taint on our Americanism? Why does it suggest incapacity or ignorance, a spirit opposed to American life? Would you mind telling us?"

"Personally," almost growled Kelley, "I don't like to think I'm a marked-down American, decidedly below par. And I'm doggoned if I can see why a man, just because he happens to be a Catholic, isn't quite fit for public office."

Overman looked appealingly at his masonic friend. But Stevens waved the appeal aside.

"You started this." He grinned. "Go ahead and tell 'em what's been bothering you. They took your licking gamely out on the course. Sail into them now and tell 'em why down in Oklahoma they don't think Catholics are real Americans."

"Well," said Overman, almost defiantly,

"I'm going to hurt your feelings. But blame yourselves. I'm convinced that Catholics can't be one-hundred-per-cent Americans. They have an allegiance to the Pope, who is a foreign potentate. They are opposed to institutions that are essentially American, like the public-school system and divorce. American history is essentially Protestant, not Catholic. The outstanding heroes of America have been Protestant. I don't for a minute doubt that you and Kelley here are good citizens and ready to defend your country." (Kelley thought, almost ruefully, of the deep wound in his thigh which would always be with him to remind him of Chateau-Thierry.) "But I doubt that Catholics as a body and on principle can be one-hundred-per-cent Americans. Your traditions, doctrines, attitudes are against it; and you are living now, not in Spain or Italy, but in America, which is firmly and historically non-Catholic."

Frankness Among Friends

It was quite a speech, and they all listened intently. Stevens felt that what his fraternal brother said was substantially true. He liked his Catholic friends, but he frankly distrusted their church. He had found them in the main honest and straightforward and clean, but there lurked in the dark places of his mind vague ideas about the Inquisition, the ghosts of St. Bartholomew's night, and how Catholics believed that all non-Catholics roasted eternally in hell.

Kelley, whose one method of defending

his faith was to support the Church Militant with his fists, was utterly and deeply indignant. Overman was glad he had it all out of his system. Floyd was the only one who regarded the whole matter smilingly.

"Thanks," he said. "I really appreciate your frankness. Do you mind if I take up the charges?"

"Not at all," Overman replied, decidedly relieved that the two Catholics had not got up and left the table. "I'm an open-minded and, I hope, fair-minded man. (We Protestants pride ourselves on our tolerance.) And though I think I see the problem more impersonally than you can, I'd be glad enough to hear your side."

"Thanks," said Kelley ironically.

"Thanks," said Floyd sincerely.

The waiter made a deft transfer of dishes and the conversation was resumed.

Catholic Roots

"To begin with something simple," said Floyd, "I'll take up your statement that America is firmly and historically non-Catholic. On the contrary, no country in the world is so thoroughly Catholic in its roots and origins."

"I don't see where you get that," flared Overman.

"Every great discoverer who touched the shores of America and brought back to the Old World word of the vast new continent was a Catholic in faith and tradition. Amer-

ica, please remember, was discovered and largely explored before there was such a thing as a Protestant Church. When the Catholic Columbus, backed by a Catholic king and queen, touched our shores, the date was 1492; Luther began Protestantism in 1521."

"Of course," said Overman, waving this aside, "Columbus was a Catholic, but the Cabots sent out from England—"

"—were Italian Catholics. They were sent out and financed by an English Catholic king, Henry VII. And so were the entire group Catholics sent out by a Catholic king: Cortez, Balboa, Magellan, and others who gave America to the world."

Stevens shook his head in disagreement.

"History has pushed the discovery back long before Columbus," he said. "If Leif Ericsson was not the discoverer, then the Welsh seamen of an even earlier date were."

Anti-Catholic Laws

"And"—Floyd turned to face him—"Leif Ericsson was a Catholic; and so were those early Welsh fishermen—if they really came at all. Catholicity came to America certainly years, perhaps centuries, before Protestantism was established. There is something tragically ironic about prejudice against Catholics in a land discovered, charted, explored, and given to Christendom by Catholics."

"I'll grant you the discovery," said Overman. "But the real development of the

country was essentially Protestant. It was the English Protestants, Puritans and Episcopalians and Congregationalists who established the Colonies and at the same time laid down our modern principles of American freedom."

"And I'll grant you," agreed Floyd, "that the narrow strip along the seacoast was, from the year 1600, predominantly Protestant. But I very much question the wide and modern freedom established there. When the colonists came from England they built their villages and at the same time enacted their laws against Catholics, Quakers, and all those who did not agree with their particular type of religion. Freedom was not the only consideration; anti-Catholic laws were enacted at the same minute that freedom of conscience was granted to those whose consciences agreed with their ideas. Practically every colony had fines, prison, and death for Catholics and their priests. Priests had a price set on their heads. Mass was forbidden under terrible penalties. Catholics were halted on the fringes of the Colonies and turned away to the often more hospitable Indians, or to Canada."

Freedom in Maryland

"Why," said Stevens in surprise, "I thought liberty of conscience existed from the start!"

"It did," Floyd replied, "in one colony, and only one colony—the solidly Catholic colony of Maryland. There the Catholic

governors of a Catholic population enacted, for the first time upon the soil of our country, laws permitting freedom of worship. Maryland, solidly Catholic, was first in America to put in practice the principle that a man may worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. And as soon as Maryland came under Protestant governors, those laws were revoked as far as Catholics were concerned."

"I didn't know that before," said Overman, honestly.

Pioneers

"Yet I'll wager you've been told it a dozen times. At any rate, while Protestantism was holding tight to the sea coast, Catholic priests advanced into the wilderness beyond the Alleghenies, into Florida and Canada and what was to be the Louisiana purchase, in the hope of bringing Christianity and civilization to the Indians. In the Everglades and the forests of Maine and northern New York, along the water routes of the Midwest, the Indians were hearing the voice of the priest at mass; and for preaching Christ's name to hostile savages men were dying frightful martyrs' deaths. The only pure Americans are our Indians; the Catholic Church gave its best efforts to saving them from war and savagery and the extinction desired for them by the first colonists.

"You said that America is from its beginning Protestant. Well, just follow the footsteps of the Catholic pioneers across

faint Indian trails or down unknown rivers far from the relatively safe settlements of the coast. Father Marquette and Joliet, Champlain and DeSoto, Frontenac and Bienville were the advance guard of civilization. They had a vision of a country vastly bigger than the narrow ribbon along the Atlantic.

“The exploration of the Great Lakes, the discovery of the Mississippi, the founding of New Orleans, the extensive colonization of mid-America, the opening of the Pacific Coast, the roads through the Southwest to Santa Fe and beyond, were the work of Catholic priests and explorers.

“Jesuits in northern New York and in Maryland and the far south, Franciscans from Santa Fe along the road lined by the missions of California, Lazarists in New Orleans and the Mississippi Valley, and the colonists from Catholic countries who followed them, opened up the vastly greater part of America. And you'll never be able to blot that record from our history unless the whole map of the country is changed. Study your railroad map sometime. Catholicity is written in the names of American cities from St. Paul to St. Augustine, from San Francisco and Los Angeles through Corpus Christi, Santa Fe, and St. Louis.”

Naturally Americans

The sun had been slowly setting back of the course and the sky was now laced with dull reds and yellows. A steward flashed on the porch lights, which seemed

gaudy and tawdry after the soft light of the sunset.

“What happened to all that Catholicity you claim was there when those sections of the country became American?”

“The Catholicity remained, though the colonists pouring in from the seaboard and from Europe soon, in most places, greatly outnumbered the Catholics. But as the United States absorbed section after section, though it was as solidly Catholic as Louisiana or the Southwest or Southern California, Catholics accepted American principles and ideals without the slightest reluctance.

“When General Clark came with his expedition to conquer the French colonies beyond the Alleghenies, he was welcomed with open arms, though the Frenchmen had little reason for liking the American colonists. No blood was shed and absorption was absolutely peaceful when we annexed Catholic Florida, Louisiana, Kentucky and California. These Catholics seemed to be Americans almost by instinct.”

History Pleads

“I’m afraid,” said Overman, “that you are a special pleader.”

“I think that history is doing my pleading,” retorted Floyd. “We Catholics are accused of weak patriotism, in charges founded on a vague understanding of our doctrines or on wild theories about them. History shows us to have been Americans

heart and soul from the start. Bigotry accuses us of treason; history shows not a single instance in which we have even attempted to betray our country. A misunderstood doctrine of double allegiance is thrown at us, when history shows us giving our wholehearted support to our country in every one of its crises.

“Now you’ll have to forgive me if for a moment I seem to boast. It’s really not boasting; it’s just the effort to give you the facts on the attitude of Catholics toward our country.

“When the Revolution broke out, Catholics along the Atlantic Coast were a handful, pitifully poor, living under laws that restricted their liberty and penalized their religion. These Catholics had fled to the Colonies in the hope of finding there the religious liberty denied them in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Instead they found exact copies of the laws they had hoped to escape.

“Yet, from the moment the Colonies broke with England, no voice dared for a minute to question the patriotism of the Catholic. A Catholic signed the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll, who added Carrollton to his signature to make it easy for the Redcoats to locate him if the Revolution failed.

Catholic Canada

“You probably remember that to the north of us were the very unfriendly French-Canadian colonists, who felt that

America had given them a shabby deal. The first Archbishop of Baltimore, another Carroll, made a personal visit to Canada and held the Canadians neutral at a time they were thinking of adding their attack to the attacks from England. Had Catholic Canada remembered its old grudge and sided with England, the Revolutionary War might have ended very rapidly and with far different results. Archbishop Carroll's Catholic influence with a Catholic people held them neutral and saved the Colonists."

"That is something else you probably didn't know," commented Kelley.

"You're right," agreed Overman and Stevens in a breath.

Traitor and Bigot

"There's one funny thing," Kelley continued, glad to be of some information, "that I happen to have read. Benedict Arnold was the outstanding anti-Catholic of his day. He made a fierce protest because there were so many Catholics in the Continental Army."

"Incidentally his complaint proved how many Catholics must have enlisted under Washington," supplemented Floyd.

"But isn't it funny," persisted Kelley, driving home his point, "that the country's greatest traitor should be the man who objected to the presence of Catholics in the army?"

"It is," agreed Stevens.

"In those days the words Irish and Cath-

olic meant just about the same. So it is interesting to find General Robertson writing that half the Continental Army was Irish. Washington's secretary and aide, John Fitzgerald, was a Catholic. So was Stephen Moylan, adjutant general, quartermaster-general, and commander of the cavalry. At sea the United States Navy was being founded by Commodore John Barry, Father of the Navy. And you'll not find a trace of Toryism among the Catholics of the Colonies."

France Arrived

"History is full of 'ifs,'" suggested Floyd. "We always wonder what would have happened if Napoleon had won at Waterloo, if Pickett's charge had turned the tide at Gettysburg, if the French had failed at the Marne, if the old Greeks had not held the pass at Thermopylae. But there is one 'if' for which we have a pretty clear answer."

"What's that?" they asked, almost in a breath.

"We pretty well know what would have happened if Catholic France had failed to throw its army and fleet to the side of the Colonists. When the French transports and warships scraped hulls off our coast, the Colonists were in much the same state as were the Allies in the World War just before America began to pour its men into the trenches. Our backs were against the wall and our star was sinking fast.

"But the Catholics Lafayette, Rochambeau, DeGrasse, and their fellow Catholics

came to join with Catholic Kosciusko and Pulaski, who had already come from Poland. And with their coming the war was practically over and our cause won. It's amusing to remember that the Protestant Hessians fought against the Colonists, while the Catholic French sided with the Colonists. We ended the Revolutionary War deep in the debt of Catholic France.

"The beginnings of this country of ours were a great deal more Catholic than you were taught to believe. And—here's something interesting, too—when the national government was shifted from Philadelphia to Washington, a Catholic architect, Pierre Charles l'Enfant, was called in to make the plan for our national capital. We are governed from a city designed by a Catholic."

Where Have We Failed?

"The Revolution," said Overman, almost inaudibly, "was a long time ago."

"Yes," replied Floyd; "at the beginning of our present national life. And Catholics were in it heart and soul. But if I've spent a lot of time on the Revolution, it's just because what Catholics did then they have done every time there has been a national crisis. Bigots accuse us with the vaguest of charges. We answer simply: 'Show us a single time we have been traitors or failed as patriots. Never mind what *might* happen. Look at what actually has happened during the 150 years of our history.'

"The years before the Civil War were

often bitter ones for Catholics. The Know-Nothing Party made hatred of Catholics a national issue. Catholic convents and churches were burned and cannon were trained on a Catholic cathedral. It was not easy or pleasant to be a Catholic when hatred of Catholics flamed across the land, fed by the most unscrupulous agitators.

“But when the Civil War came, all that was forgotten. Catholics furnished, beyond their quota, men and money. Solid Irish-American Catholic regiments went out to war. General Meagher’s famous Irish Brigade had 4,000 killed in action. Forty Catholics attained the rank of general, with such men as Phil Sheridan and General Rosecrans at their head. And in the Confederate army General Beauregard stands out as the perfect type of fine officer and staunch Catholic gentleman.

First and Last

“The charge of a lack of patriotism is easy to make. The Ku Klux Klan, of which you may have heard down in Oklahoma, dared to make it after the Great War, in which one of the first three soldiers killed in action was a Catholic, Thomas F. Enright; the first officer killed was a Catholic, Lieutenant William T. Fitzsimons, and the last officer killed was a Catholic priest, Chaplain William F. Davitt.

“Almost 900,000 names of Catholics were listed in the army and navy. We had twenty-five Catholic generals, including General Robert Lee Bullard, commander of the

First Division, General Hugh A. Drum, chief of staff to General Pershing at St. Mihiel, and General James W. McAndres, in command of the General Staff College in France."

In Time of Peace

Overman looked up from his dinner long enough to enter a mild defense of himself. "I've never for a moment thought Catholics lacked courage. There were too many Catholics in my outfit in France to leave me any doubts about that. And I remember the K. C.'s with considerable gratitude. But I don't think that war is the supreme test of patriotism. The big question is, What does a group of people do for a country day after day, year after year?"

"We are certainly more than willing, we Catholics, to meet you on those grounds. As a group we think we do our share toward the peace and happiness of our country. Certainly, in proportion to our numbers, we are throughout America doing our share to relieve the misfortunes of our fellow men.

"Look around any city, large or small, in the United States and see the buildings marked with the Catholic cross. They are the foundling homes where babies without parents capable of caring for them are taken in and given a mother's love in the arms of Sisters. Orphanages carry boys and girls safely through youth into decent homes, honorable trades, or married life. We have built and maintain some of the

most magnificent hospitals in the country, and care for the mentally afflicted and the incurable. We have our refuges for the young woman who has fallen and does not know where to turn. We have homes for the aged. Our St. Vincent de Paul charity work and the work of our nursing sisters carry Christ's presence into the homes of the poor. Which of these things makes us the menace to the country we are sometimes supposed to be?

"A church cannot be much of a peril to a country when it holds up before its women the ideal of the Madonna and tells them to be pure as she was and devoted mothers after her example. It certainly does not harm the manhood of a land to hold up to men as their ideals those honest carpenters of Nazareth, Christ and Joseph, and the long line of saints who lived and died for God and humanity.

Sanity and Stability

"In these days of crack-brained theories and perpetual and dangerous tampering with everything sacred in human life, from marriage and home and children to the complete abolition of private property, it seems to me that the Catholic Church is making just about the most important contribution to the stability of our nation and our government."

"What do you mean?" demanded Overman.

"The Catholic Church keeps insisting with absolute authority on the sacredness of the

home and the sanctity of marriage. It keeps fighting for the right of little children to be born, when theorizers are demanding laws that would mean the falling of our birth-rate and the gradual elimination of our more cultured groups. It demands that employers treat their employees with justice and honesty, listing among the greatest of sins the crime of defrauding a man of his just wage. On the other hand it also insists that employees, whether in shop or factory, in store or office, give an honest day's work in return for their salary or wage.

“And in the confessional the priest must see to it that Catholics live up to these important elements that make for the stability and justice of a nation's life.

No Radicals Here

“You won't find Catholics in the ranks of socialists and communists, running up the red flag and declaring for the destruction of our constitution and a man's right to own anything. You won't find Catholics in the wildly radical groups, whatever the type of radicalism.

“And though we Catholics dread the thought of war and realize that war in the future, thanks to modern invention, will be terrible beyond imagining, you have not heard any Catholic going on record as saying that he would refuse to take up arms to defend our country if it were unjustly attacked. We love peace and are working for peace. But we have left to non-Catho-

lics the un-American attitude of refusing to defend our land even if the enemy were pounding with battleships at the doors of New York and San Francisco. And I'll call your attention to the fact that more than a few ministers of other denominations have said they would do just that."

Constitution Foreseen

There was a moment's pause as once more the waiters performed their feats of agreeable sleight-of-hand.

"Yet, surely, you cannot say," protested Overman at last, "that the Catholic Church, as a church, is friendly to American principles."

"If you will go back to Suarez, one of the greatest theologians of the Catholic Church, a man held in highest esteem by that church, you will find the principles that underlie our American government, its constitution and its democracy, laid down by him with prophetic approval. And he wrote two hundred years before the Declaration of Independence.

"You cannot find a line written by any Pope that has in any way thrown disparagement upon essential American principles. On the contrary the Catholic Church has never declared that any form of government was exclusively right. It has been equally at home in absolute and limited monarchies, in aristocracies and democracies, in empires and republics. So long as a government is justly established, the Catholic Church recognizes its right to govern.

And it is extremely slow to recognize the lawfulness of a revolution. Only the gravest and most serious reasons allow citizens to rise against a government justly established.

“For that reason the Church is one of the most powerful forces back of stable government. If it defends the stability of home and marriage and private property, it defends with equal vigor the stability of just governments. No state has the slightest thing to fear from the Church as long as it serves the best interests of its citizens and simple justice and right.”

Divided Allegiance?

“It seems to me,” said Overman, “that you are dodging the most important point in the charges against the Catholic Church. You are losing sight of the fact that a Catholic cannot be wholly devoted to his country. He must divide his allegiance between his country and the Pope, a foreign monarch. And if, once he is in public office, the Pope were to give him orders, he would be obliged to obey. He has no right to public office while such a possibility exists. Can a man be a fully loyal citizen when he has this divided allegiance?”

Floyd smiled at his questioner. “The first answer to that question is an answer of fact. The United States government has been in existence for almost 150 years. Tell me one instance in which Catholics have shown a divided allegiance between their country and their church. We have

had thousands of public officials in the United States, ranging from sheriffs to Chief Justices of the United States. Give me a single case in which any one of them has received an order from the Pope that in any way affected his office. Give me any single instance where Catholics have had to choose between loyalty to country and loyalty to Pope. Tell me one order issued by the Pope that even slightly weakened our patriotism."

Floyd looked around quietly. Both of his non-Catholic friends shifted in their chairs.

Not Once

"Well," said Overman at last, "I don't know history very well."

Floyd laughed. "Do you imagine for a moment that if a thing of that sort had ever happened you'd have to blow the dust off a history to find it? It would be shouted from the housetops. It would be blazoned in the headlines of every anti-Catholic paper. Franklin Ford and bigots of his lying type would scream it by radio. But they have nothing to scream, for in 150 years there has never been even a slight conflict and the Pope has never once issued an order that affected a United States official as an official. And if this hasn't happened for 150 years, we can be pretty safe for the future.

"Even when we fought Catholic Spain, American Catholics leaped to arms on the side of America, and the Pope issued no orders to us Catholic Americans as we went

out to smash the ancient fleets of the king known as His Most Catholic Majesty.

“But when you talk about a man being wholly devoted to his country, you’re talking nonsense. No man is. He divides his loyalty among a number of things. He is loyal to his family, to his fraternal organization, to his business and the partners in that business, to his college, to his friends. And he is loyal to his country because it makes safe his enjoyment of the other loyalties as well.

Freedom of Conscience

“But to insist upon a blind, exclusive loyalty to any country is simply to destroy the freedom of conscience of which Protestants were once so fond.”

“Now I don’t follow you at all,” said Overman.

“If exclusive loyalty to any country were essential, there never would have been any Protestantism. Protestants became Protestants by being flatly disloyal to their country and its laws.”

“That I deny.”

“Yet it is a fact. Catholicity was written into the constitutional law and the common law of England, Germany, France, the Scandinavian countries, all the nations of Europe. It was part of the civil code. Protestants could only come into existence by defying that law, changing it where possible, and utterly disregarding or escaping from it where it could not be changed.

“In England it was changed. But the Puritans set up a government that defied the Established Church, then Protestant Episcopal, of England. The Pilgrim Fathers left their country because they objected to the type of religion demanded of them by law. So did the Huguenots of France. Some Germans claimed that Catholicity should remain a part of the state law of the German nations; some Germans demanded that it be removed. They fought for thirty years to see which would prevail.

“If the Protestant reformers had in the beginning acted on the principle ‘My country, may she always be right; but right or wrong, my country,’ they would have stayed Catholic, since Catholicity was the law of the land. On the contrary, they demanded freedom of conscience, the right to do something their countries forbade; and where they did not succeed, they packed up and left for other lands.

No Tyranny Is Right

“No man is such a fool as to say, ‘I’ll obey my country and be loyal to it even if it turns into a tyrant and robs me of my constitutional rights.’ Right here on the table before us, I regret to say, is an assertion of our American love of freedom of conscience.”

Floyd picked up his more than half empty glass and motioned with it to the three other glasses on the table.

“The Constitution of the United States forbids me to buy or sell or use the con-

tents of this glass. You and I and millions of others, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, who don't approve of that law and think it hampers our rights as human beings, are exercising our freedom of conscience, rightly or wrongly, and drinking when and where we can. If that principle 'but right or wrong, my country' were a true one, we would all be the objects of the deep dislike of all real Americans."

Catholics Hold

The three other men laughed a trifle sheepishly.

"Let me tell you what the Catholic Church actually teaches about this divided allegiance, and you'll see that it is not a menace to American life but a positive protection of a man's highest privilege, the privilege of freedom of conscience."

They all looked at him intently.

"First of all, the Catholic Church insists that its members obey all just laws. It believes in Christ's principle, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.'

"Then the Pope has no right to give any command to us American citizens which does not bear upon faith or morals. If he tells me that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, I accept what he says. But if he tells me to elect Al Smith or Herbert Hoover or Cardinal Hayes President of the United States, I can simply ignore and would ignore his order. He has no rights there. I might regard his advice as I would re-

gard the advice of any other man who had his world outlook; but as Pope he has nothing to say about how I vote or for whom. He can tell me not to eat meat on the Wednesdays of Lent or to pay my just debts to the last penny. That is in his right. But he cannot tell me to vote for or against an income tax or to change my vote from the Democratic to the Republican Party or to side with Japan against China. Purely civil and political matters are out of his field. Only faith and morals are his province, and I obey him only there."

"Ah," subsumed Stevens, taking the side of his friend, "and that is just the point. Faith and morals are questions on which divided allegiance constantly arises."

Others Disobey

"Perhaps. But your allegiance is just as divided as mine, if you are the honest man I think you."

"How do you make that out?" almost flared Stevens.

"Because if the United States Government, with the backing of the whole Supreme Court, ordered you to act against your conscience and do something you felt to be wrong, you'd refuse to obey. If, let's say, it ordered you to kill a sick child or poison a well during the course of war or steal from your partner, you'd refuse point-blank. Your conscience is dearer to you even than your country. And you would obey your conscience.

"Don't forget that recently we have heard

much applause for the type of ministers who have said that, if the Government ordered them to go to war, they would flatly refuse. They have put conscience above country and are being, in certain Protestant quarters, warmly praised for it.

No Conflict

"Now in all the nineteen hundred years since Christ established the Papacy upon the Rock of St. Peter, the Popes have never commanded anything that conflicted with the law of a nation unless the law of the nation commanded something that was flatly wrong and against conscience. If America ever puts through a law that violates justice or human rights or morality, the Pope may conceivably forbid Catholics to obey. But he won't need to forbid them. Their consciences will already have forbidden them.

"Don't forget that if the principle of obeying the state no matter what it commands had been practiced there would never have been any Christianity. The Roman Empire forbade the Christian Church, ordered men and women to offer incense to the statues of the gods and worship pagan deities with lustful rites. The law was wrong. The consciences of the Christians, backed by the commands of the Popes, would not permit them to obey. They refused obedience and through martyrdom established the Christian Church throughout the world."

Stevens looked particularly thoughtful. Overman, however, had an argument he

was saving. "You forget that since the Vatican State has been established the Pope is a temporal monarch too. By giving your obedience to him, no matter in what line, you are giving your allegiance to a ruler of another nation."

Pope as King

"I see," replied Floyd. "But you've got that badly muddled. As Pope the Holy Father is spiritual head of the world. Christ gave him command over all Christians when He gave him the shepherding of His flock: 'Feed my lambs; feed my sheep.' But as head of the Vatican State he is temporal ruler of those people only who live in it. So the laws that he makes for them do not in the least affect us in America. And if in the course of a world war, for example, by some queer twist of circumstances the Vatican State were to side with the nations opposed to the United States, we Catholics would go out and fight against the Pope's tiny little army just as we would against that of any nation. He commands us in spiritual things. He is temporal ruler merely over the people who live in Vatican City."

Catholic Opposition

Cars were beginning to curve up the long drive that led to the club house. The young people were taking over the club, and from the main dining room (now cleared of tables) came the sound of the preliminary trills and scales of an orchestra.

"You said something about us Catholics

being opposed to American institutions," Floyd suggested.

"And there I know I'm right. You are opposed to the public school, heart and soul. And, you know, we Masons are pledged to support it with all our power."

Public Schools

"First of all," Floyd answered, "don't forget that public schools are not the original schools of America. Private schools existed long before public schools were thought of, and Americans, for the first fifty years of our national life, were educated in them. Public schools began to develop in the thirties, and private schools have continued to remain an important part of our educational system—beginning with some of our largest and most famous universities and continuing down to privately owned and controlled kindergartens. We Catholics are not the only ones who think that parents have a right to pick the school their children shall attend.

"I want you to remember, too, that we Catholics own the public schools quite as much as you Masons do. We pay our taxes; our sons and daughters teach in the system; we are as heartily in favor of education as you are.

"But we also believe that we have a right to send our own children to schools in which God is acknowledged and honored. We hold that children belong to the parents, not to the state. And like the other millions who send their children to private

schools, we know that education, and not necessarily public education, is essentially American, that we have a right to see that our children are taught about the Creator of the world as they are taught about the world itself, and that we, and not the state, control the destinies of our little ones.

Divorce

“You mentioned divorce, didn’t you? Yes, the Catholic Church is opposed to divorce, and so are its members. We have not forgotten what Christ said about a man who put away his wife and married another. But we’re not the only ones opposed to it. The State of South Carolina recognizes no divorce. Does that make the citizens of South Carolina un-American? If those who are not Catholics recognize divorce, we are sorry and disagree with them. But we do not interfere.

“Persecuting Catholics”

“Yet don’t you honestly think,” Stevens put in, “that if we had Catholics in control of the country persecution would begin again?”

Floyd laughed. “Persecution is not an essentially Catholic practice. You have forgotten that England hanged, drew, and quartered Catholic priests, and that Calvin burned Servetus at the stake. And if you’ll look around the world today, you’ll find that persecution is being waged, not by the Catholics, but against Catholics. Orange Belfast has its death-to-the-Pope parades;

the Catholic Free State has the freest welcome for Protestants. Catholics are being persecuted in Mexico and Russia; atheistic mobs are burning Catholic convents and schools in Spain. Restrictive laws still exist against Catholics in some of the Scandinavian countries. And you'll scarcely find a vestige of persecution in even the most thoroughly Catholic country.

"When persecution raged in Catholic countries, the countries were solidly Catholic and the Catholic religion was written into the law of the land. To act against that religion was to break a law as one would break a law by theft or arson. The persecutions were conducted to keep heresy with its wars and disunion out of the country. The Inquisition in Spain acted against Moors and Jews who professed to be Catholics so that they might burrow from within and bring back the Mohammedan rulers who had held Spain captive so long. They were traitors to country just as much as they were traitors to faith, and they were punished as traitors are punished everywhere.

"You need not fear Catholic persecution. It's just an ancient and weary ghost out of the past."

Rooted in Ignorance

A waiter presented the check, and Floyd, with a quick gesture, signed it.

"Well," said Overman, "I'll have to tell my friend Hutchinson that I talked reli-

gion to you for hours, or rather that I listened to you talk religion."

"Have I bored you?"

"No. You've really not. I think I've learned a lot."

Floyd looked down and then looked straight at his guest. "May I say that practically all the prejudice and misunderstanding and bigotry we suffer from is simply the result of ignorance?" He held up his hand to forestall a protest. "Please understand me. It's an inevitable ignorance. We have been lied about most atrociously. I remember reading in a bitter anti-Catholic journal that every one of our assassinated Presidents was killed by a Catholic, when as a matter of fact no Catholic had anything to do with any of the assassinations. During the Smith campaign, the whisperers had the Pope arriving in Washington the day after election. The Pope has not left Rome for fifty years and would no more think of coming to Washington than he would think of transferring the Vatican to a Labrador trapper's hut.

"Our teachings are deliberately distorted by our enemies. Vague charges are piled up until it seems that there must be some foundation for them. Enough mud is thrown to give basis to the hope that some of it will stick. While this is going on, friends are separated and embittered, small shopkeepers feel their patronage falling away, little children are taught to hate one another, and Catholic men and women walk

surrounded by a chill atmosphere of suspicion and dislike.

Weary of Lies

"Catholics discovered America. Catholics fought and died in every American war in numbers beyond their actual obligations. We love our country and are deeply grateful for the freedom and opportunity we have found here. We give it our best service. If there are Catholics who are grafting politicians in New York, there are non-Catholics who are grafting politicians in Philadelphia and Chicago. Believe me, no grafting politician dares tell his graft in confession and hope for absolution unless he promises to restore what he has stolen.

"We're not cowards, but we are weary of the feeble, ancient lies thrown at us and the stupid doubts of our patriotism that rest, not upon history or facts, but upon old wives' tales and the shameless lying of professional bigots who make a fortune out of their attacks upon the Catholic Church as dope peddlers grow rich selling opium to ignorant addicts.

"We find it just a little odd that our patriotism should be questioned, when the patriotism of Seventh Day Adventists and Holy Rollers and Moravians and German Lutherans and Christian Scientists is accepted without question.

Facts Prove

"If we have proved traitors, we deserve the treatment accorded to traitors. But

where have we ever failed? If our theories and principles are detrimental to the public good, show us how this is the case? Does it hurt the country to follow Christ, to believe in pure womanhood, to accept the spiritual leadership of the Popes who led all Europe out of paganism, to practice universal charity, to stand for the sanctity of home and family, to preach honesty to employees and justice to employers, to accept the principle that just government is from God and that we have the double obligation of giving to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's?

"No one can answer lies as fast as they can be uttered. We have been overwhelmed with lies. Our answer to those lies is the blood of our men and the purity of our women. We love America even when our fellow Americans distrust us. We are patriots even when our patriotism is questioned. We have never failed our country. Please God, we never shall."

They rose, shook hands around, sent messages to mutual friends, and departed.

A few days later, on Floyd's desk rested a small package postmarked from Oklahoma. He tore open the wrappings and found a small silk flag and with it a card and a brief message.

"Put the flag up somewhere on your wall," it read. "Somehow, Mason though I am, you convinced me that it is very safe in Catholic hands."

And the signature was Overman's.

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