

THE KU KLUX AND POLITICS

THERE has been much discussion as to the influence of the Ku Klux Klan in the political situation. Sensationalists have been inclined to exaggerate it. In National matters it is practically nil; in the East and the Southeast it is negligible; in the West and Southwest it has had local effects in different ways, but has not acted consistently or for definite issues.

An example of this was seen the other day in the announcement that in Texas Earle Mayfield, "Ku Klux candidate," as the newspapers called him, had won in the "run off" primary for the United States Senatorship which followed the first primary, in which six candidates engaged. An examination of the facts shows that his Ku Klux support was only a minor matter. The Ku Klux candidates for State offices made a poor showing and were defeated by large majorities. The prohibition issue was prominent in the State campaign. Mayfield was "dry." His opponent, Ferguson, was "moderately wet;" and the fact that when Governor he was impeached and removed from office told heavily against him. If the Texas primary showed anything, it was that Mayfield was the stronger man personally, and that the prohibition sentiment is still

POLITICS

strong in Texas. It is even intimated that the Democratic situation is so unsatisfactory in Texas that a good liberal Republican might have a chance.

There have been some queer developments in the Ku Klux Klan. Thus in Georgia it has been alleged that Negroes were being asked to join, and in New York it has been charged that the Negro "Moses," Marcus Garvey, had been approached by the Klan. There are many indications that the Ku Klux is soon to pass away as a disturbing element. Yet not many weeks ago newspaper accounts stated that "a crowd totaling nearly 30,000 from Chicago and northern Illinois gathered to witness the initiation of nearly 3,000 new members into the secret council of the Ku Klux Klan. The ceremonies were performed in an immense field three miles northwest of Springfield. Similar ceremonials, celebrating the initiation of tens of thousands of new members, have taken place in other parts of the country."

Officially the Ku Klux has promised not to wear its regalia in night raids and disclaims any intention of regulating supposed evil-doers by violence. As a terrorizing agency it is practically dead.

But its attractiveness to the great class of "joiners" is strong, for it combines mystery and publicity uniquely; it is a "secret society" which, as the Chicago incident above quoted shows, thrives on flashlight photographs and press notices.