

A short-short story

The Sins of the Fathers

By RENICK



Take down that crucifix! This is a hospital, by gum, not a church! I'm paying here for my wife's hospitalization—do you understand? She doesn't need that—that—superstitious bric-brac. Take it down! Take it down, I say!

What's that? It won't do her any harm? Won't affect her delivery? Drot it! Who asked for your opinion? I don't give a hoot for your mealy-mouthing. Do you hear me? Take that crucifix down! Listen. I don't want—any child of mine—ever—to look upon—the image of—a crucified Jew!

...to heck with these religious! They'll put one over on you if you don't watch out. All this tripe about religion is just a lot of bunk! Fetish. Voodooism. Black magic. That's what it is. But they can't fool me. No. Sir! Ole man Harrison is too smart for 'em.

Ho! ho! the face of that nun when she heard me say I never want any

child of mine ever to look upon the image of a crucified Jew! Like a wet rag, by gum! A very wet dish-rag! It's worth the trouble of getting rid just to see one of 'em jump out of skin. Golly, that was funny.

The image of a crucified Jew! Well, that's what it is. That man's been dead and buried these two thousand years. No man in his right senses would worship a corpse. Much less a corpse that has rotted for twenty centuries. These fool Catholics! Scraping and bowing and all that sort of stuff. Well, just goes to show you there are fools born every minute...

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Oh, here comes the doctor. Well, doc, how was the delivery? Any hitch? Okay, did you say? Fine work. I knew I could count on you. How's Mary. All right? Fine, Fine. What is it? A boy? Gee, that's swell. Marvelous. Six pounds and ten ounces, eh? Ho! ho! Takes after his

dad, I'll say. Boy, I feel like celebrating. Here, doc, have a cigar...

So-a-y, Sister, —nun—or whatever you're called—what are you looking at me like that for? Still mad at me? C'mon. Be a sport. Let bygones. I can't be mad at anybody today. I'm a father! What do you say we shake hands, eh? Forgive and forget—that's what I always...

Listen, doc, give her a chance to say something, will you? Maybe, she has something to say. Doc! What are

you stopping her for... Hey! Is anything wrong? Gosh, Doc; nothing is wrong, is there? You told me the operation was a success. Mary's all right—or is she? Nothing is wrong—tell me nothing went wrong—Doc! Don't stand there like a statue! What does she mean by staring at me like that?

What was that, Sister? No. No! No! Gosh, Sister—you can't mean it! You can't! Don't tell me—my—son—was born—blind!

Letters to Stalin (I)

By VICENTE ROMERO

*In the year of Grace,
At the Philippines.
To the Premier of Russia,
Ruler and Supreme Master of
those Nations that have been
betrayed into his hands,
Persecutor of good and Promoter
of evil,
At Moscow in the Land of Slavery;
My dear Stalin,*

Can you sleep at night, Comrade Stalin? I should think every shadow would make you start with fear. The moonlight playing in the corners must remind you of the moonlight on the tombstones of

those you have killed. And yet so few of them are buried beneath tombstones! Those open graves and those mass executions — do they not come back to haunt you at night, Comrade Stalin? Can you forget the faces of those you have forced to work on your railroads and your bridges, and driven to their death? Do you think that you can run away from them forever?

Can you forget Poland, Comrade Stalin, or Hungary? Do you find yourself unable to eat when you think of Estonia, Lithuania and