

The Moistening of a Dry Editor

The Super-Patriotism of a Great People

NOW THAT WE'VE What Price
Glorified the boys at the front
from every angle, it's up to
somebody to What Price Glory the
folks back home. The spiritual debacle
Right Here was quite as terrifying as
the physical debacle Over There. The
soldier boys lost their bodies, but for
the most part kept their heads. We
saved our bodies, but completely lost
our heads. We've had a tremendous
literature telling of the sacrifices on
Flanders Field, but nobody celebrates
the sacrifices made on Main Street.
Full of propaganda, prunes, and high
purpose, what *wouldn't* we do to stop
those Horrible Huns from cutting the
hands off little babies? Not only would
we fight, fight, fight and pay, pay, pay,
but we'd punish the Germans in subtler
ways, like calling good old hamburger
"Liberty Steak" and changing the
name of Schiller Street. If that wasn't
war-like enough, we'd even refuse to
be married to Herr Mendelssohn's
wedding march. In fact, so steeped
were we with patriotism that we'd
"report" any back-slider who took two
lumps of sugar in his coffee, and bash
on the head the poor wop who didn't
rise to his feet at the playing of "Auld
Lang Syne," which many good hun-
dred-per-cent Americans mistook for
our national anthem.

The Spiritual Horrors of War

IT WAS DURING this historic hysteria
that we, along with millions of
other fellow patriots, went out one
day and voted for a great sacrifice bill
now humorously known as Prohibition.
While the boys at the front were lap-
ping it up in French billets we were
to win the war by keeping sober. Nor
did we regard our sobriety simply as
a war measure; so filled were we with
virtue that we decided to make our
new morality permanent by writing
the act into the Constitution. Several
of the states had been already dry—
some, like Kansas, for virtue's sake,
and others like Alabama, from consid-
erations of efficiency. National prohi-
bition, motivated by a combination of
the two, went over. When you tie
virtue to efficiency you've got some-
thing.



Bottoms Up to Prohibition

IT WAS THE latter consideration that prompted some of us mild toppers to join the virtuous in the great moral experiment. We were perfectly willing to soft pedal our own modest thirst for the increased efficiency of the country at large. For a time the experiment seemed to be working, but as the war receded in perspective and the "higher virtues" began to dim, many people began to irk under the restriction placed upon their "personal liberty." The herd idea of war gave way to the intense individualism of the American Anglo-Saxon, who is perhaps the most contradictory animal in the civilized jungle, for though he wishes to do as he damn well pleases, he also wants everybody else to do just as he does. Thus we began to note the extraordinary spectacle of millions of people behaving wet and voting dry. We believe in prohibition for everybody but ourselves. The workers were better without it, but that shouldn't stop us from having it. The lowered efficiency of a stevedore was a national calamity, the lowered efficiency of a stock-broker was nobody's business.

Drinking Becomes a Sporting Adventure

AMERICA IS A youthful nation and the chief characteristic of youth is rebellion. It hates rules and regulations, inhibitions and laws. A boy will be playing happily in the back yard; tell him he can't go out and immediately he tries to get over the fence. It is this spirit of rebellion, this challenge of authority, that is responsible for an enormous amount of our present drinking. B.P. (Before Prohibition), the average business or professional man never dreamed of drinking spirits during the working day, and the most he had at night was perhaps a cocktail and a little table wine. Now, however, a full grown man with the sparkle in his eye of a naughty sophomore, will meet you on Spring Street at eleven in the morning, slap you on the back, and ask you to duck up to his office

where he will uncork his forbidden treasure as though he had outwitted the dean and the president of the student body. Men brag of their liquor and thrill to the mystery of bootlegging deals just like little boys playing pirate or sophomores letting you peek at smutty pictures.

The Ignobility of a Noble Experiment

WE'LL SAY THIS for our much maligned "flaming youth"—they act more blasé about their liquor than do their parents. Most of them have grown up under Prohibition and to them it is a normal state, lacking entirely the memory of the "good old days" and the excitements of "showing the damned long-hairs that they can't tell me what I shall do." And perhaps if the noble experiment had gone on gently until the present generation of parents had poisoned themselves into early graves, it might have won out. But the transition has not been gentle. In fact, it has become so violent that the daily record reads like war news. The naughty boys will have their liquor, and as they are able to pay for it, the excessive rewards have become the blue chips of the market place. The enormous revenues from taxation and the legitimate profits of distilling and brewing have suddenly been tossed to the bootleggers, moonshiners, hijackers and gangsters, a great warring army of crooks not only fighting the government, but machine-gunning one another.

There Are Only Ten Commandments

PROF. PITKIN IN his book, "Folkways," says that no law ever stuck that was not in the mores of the people. It is dramatically obvious that prohibition has not even become a folkway. Theft, murder and rape are deeply imbedded in our mores and there is not the slightest question regarding the enforcement of laws controlling them. But Sunday closing, censorship and prohibition are still debatable among vast numbers of our people, and so, according to the great sociologist, are absolutely unenforceable. Furthermore, the tremendous loss in both morale and efficiency due to the fight over prohibition is all out of proportion to its importance. The question of whether we should serve liquor at our dinners or even whether

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an occasional individual should prefer a drunkard's grave, should not occupy the attention of the nation to the exclusion of great constructive work. Washington is all but paralyzed over that ridiculous issue.

We Are a Jewel of Consistency

PERSONALLY, WE have been very patient with the experiment. We voted for it and for ten years have stood loyally by giving it every chance of success. Without wishing to appear priggish or "holier than thou," we hereby state that in all those years we have not bought a drop of alcoholic beverage. Not because we lack the appetite, for we would give our shirt for a good glass of beer, and there are times when our dinner seems utterly flat without table wine. There are even moments, when our battery is particularly low, that a good shot of Canadian Club whiskey would seem like an ambrosial gift of the gods. Have we drunk illegal liquor? Doubtless, but as "possession" is sometimes legal and sometimes illegal, we haven't been priggish enough to question our host regarding his particular guilt or innocence. Often, however, when the damn stuff tasted like perfumed varnish, we have been made eloquently suspicious.

The Insincerity of Enforcement

YES, WE HAVE demonstrated our patience with the noble experiment. But patience that goes beyond a reasonable point becomes ridiculous. We think we have more than reached that point. Our real awakening came last week when we read of the arrest of a scholar and a gentleman of Movieland for the horrible sin of "possession." Prohibition snoopers pounced upon him and discovered—what? A great cache of illegal liquor to be bootlegged through Movieland? No. A case of gin and a few quarts of assorted liquors—no more than any gentleman wishing to exhibit a little social hospitality would need. Probably half the homes in Beverly Hills conceal more booze than that. During the holidays we saw case after case of Scotch and gin being carted about as Christmas gifts, and if we could see it, so could the snoopers, yet they had to lay hold of one of the finest characters of the stage and screen and hold him up to obloquy and shame.

Prohibition Loses a Champion

IN A WAY, WE are glad that they picked on the man they chose as a victim. A few more such obscenities and the real revolution will begin. Obscenity is not too strong a word, for the gigantic hypocrisy of the whole messy situation can be described in no other way. When practically every friend one has possesses illegal liquor, the law becomes too utterly discreditable to be debated. When even the lawmakers we send to Congress drink wet and vote dry, the hypocrisy has become positively loathesome, and when anybody can order and have delivered all the liquor he wishes, it is simply ridiculous to say that the enforcement officers can't do the same and thereby locate the "sources of corruption."

No, prohibition henceforth must get along without our help. Not that we intend to break the law, but the law will have to get along without our tremendously important approval. We shall devote all our time to important matters, such as editing the Brightest Paper in the Sunshine City of the Great S.W. We're not even going to *think* about prohibition.

"Leicester, what's the show for tonight?"

"'The Bootlegger's Daughter,' Dad!"

Gosh!

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