

SOME OF THE MEN WHO ARE DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE PUBLIC MORALITY OF SYRACUSE, N. Y.



W. F. MULVIHILL, Secretary of the Prohibition County Committee, Syracuse.

CHARLES R. WRIGHT, Chief of Police, Syracuse.

ALAN C. FOBES, Mayor of Syracuse.

THE REV. DR. C. A. FULTON, Pastor of First Baptist Church and vice-president of the Municipal Voters' League.

THE REV. J. R. KNAPPENGERGER, Pastor of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Syracuse.

THE REV. DR. G. B. SPALDING, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Syracuse.

IS SYRACUSE A "WIDE OPEN" TOWN?

MANY OF HER MOST REPUTABLE CITIZENS SAY THE "LID" HAS BEEN OFF SO LONG THAT IT IS LOST.

Do you agree to the best of your ability to execute and enforce the laws of the State and the ordinances of the city which are intended to safeguard the public morals, and in particular to use your best endeavors to suppress street strolling on the part of public prostitutes, and all public gambling, including the illegitimate use of slot machines and the sale of policy slips?

Will you carefully investigate into the qualifications of those whom you contemplate appointing to office, and appoint only those who are known to be honest and efficient?

Not so with Chief of Police Charles R. Wright. "Well, what of it?" asked the Chief, in the blunt manner which is known to his friends as one of his characteristics.

"They were arrested. That's why they came in. Annual round-up!" stormed the Chief. "No such thing! These people are arrested whenever they are caught breaking the law."

"How often?" "The Chief couldn't say, but there was a room full of records, the reporter might see for himself. "Any graft?" The suggestion was too funny. The Chief laughed.

"They wouldn't get much," was his comment. "Some people," said the Chief, "would, of course, like to see us close up all the saloons and drive every fallen woman out of town, but that can't be done. The best we can do is to keep a tight rein on them."

"But I don't care what they say; the laws are enforced as well in Syracuse as in any city in the State, and I'll say this," declared the Chief, pausing a moment to give emphasis to his assertion: "I'll say this for the department, I'm ready to match it against any police department in the country. No, I won't even except the city of New York. But see, Commissioner Bowen. He's my superior. He knows what the department is doing."

The Rev. Dr. C. A. Fulton, pastor of the First Baptist Church, who, as vice-president of the Municipal Voters' League, and determined enemy of the saloon, has taken an active part in the Syracuse crusade, gives the present administration credit for attempting to better conditions in the city.

"The police have been trying to put an end to these 'stalls' and they have bettered conditions somewhat, there can be no denying that," he said. "But there remains much to be done. Syracuse is a 'wide open' town. The law is being violated with alarming regularity. The Sunday closing ordinances are not being enforced as they should be. The violation of these ordinances carries with it, of course, a spread of vice which the authorities seem powerless to check."

Dr. Fulton has not contented himself with hearsay evidence as to conditions in Syracuse. He has personally investigated the situation. "Some of the saloons here," said he, "are really concert halls. In them the waiters invite guests to meet women upstairs. A protest against these places was sent in some time ago, and an investigation served to better conditions somewhat. There has also been a movement started to break up the visiting of saloons on the part of women. But while open violations of the law may be a little less flagrant, the real conditions are practically the same."

"Graft," well, of course, I have no way of knowing if there is any, but then—well, we all have our opinions, you know," said Dr. Fulton. "Gambling? Well, now, that will depend upon whom you ask. The authorities will tell you that if there is gambling they can't find it. The general belief is," continued Dr. Fulton, smiling significantly, "that there is a good deal of gambling going on in Syracuse. Of course, I can't say definitely where it is; I haven't made an investigation within a few weeks. But there is any amount of gambling in Syracuse, and for big stakes, too."

"Not only the saloons but the concert halls and other places depending upon vaudeville to attract attention are being run in open violation of the law. The theatres began by giving so-called sacred concerts; these have changed to moving picture shows, and benefit performances of different kinds have crept in."

"But there has been such a brazen defiance of the law that public sentiment has in a measure revolted against the disgusting exhibition. I think Mayor Kline was turned down largely because of moral conditions here. The present Mayor seems disposed to do well. How far he can succeed I cannot say."

The Municipal Voters' League, of which Dr. Fulton is vice-president, was organized in Syracuse last fall. Its membership includes several hundred voters, whose chief wish is to see a proper administration of the law in the city. Willard A. Glenn, a prominent attorney, is president of the league, and E. A. Hill is secretary. Mr. Hill is a regular attendant upon the meetings of the council and closely watches every measure presented. At regular meetings of the executive committee municipal affairs are thoroughly discussed and the council to be pursued by the league outlined. Secretary Hill has great faith in what may be accomplished

through a new move to place the responsibility for the licensing of all entertainments upon the City Council instead of on the council and Mayor, as at the present time.

"This change," said Secretary Hill, "will put this matter squarely up to the council, and I believe it will result in closing up some of these concert halls." There are about twelve concert halls in Syracuse which are said to be, in reality, houses of assignation with saloon and vaudeville attachments.

The Rev. John Grimes, pastor of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, considers these places the greatest of the evils besetting Syracuse, and puts the blame for their maintenance, with other similar evils, on the shoulders of the politicians. Father Grimes declares in emphatic terms that the administrative and judicial system of Syracuse is rotten to the core.

"Syracuse is a wide open town," said he, "if ever there was one. "You can't paint it black enough. It is something terrible. I have repeatedly denounced the condition of affairs here. The Bishop of the diocese has denounced it. The violation of the excise laws is only a small part of the wickedness. The city is overidden with fallen women, and daily young girls are being ruined by scores."

"And the worst of it all is that these monsters who conduct these evils come boldly and defy the law, and the arm of the law seems paralyzed. No one dares lift a hand against them. "One young girl I know of came here, and a nice respectable girl was, too. She was taken to a place in Water-st., and there she was ruined by the proprietor. I became interested in the case, who has handled cases for the Anti-Saloon League, said: "I don't know how Syracuse compares with other places, but the town is 'wide open,' that's certain. Those who are fighting the liquor men have little money and the other fellows have plenty."

Another attorney, who would not allow the use of his name, said: "Why, my dear sir, this town comes about as near hell as anything atop of earth. Open? Why, it is wide, wide open. Here, a short time ago, the annual 'round-up' of the fancy houses was made. The demi-monde were notified to come in and ante up, and they came in their fine carriages and paid what were called fines of \$5 or \$3, as the case might be."

"Rotten? Why, my dear sir, there are from 125 to 150 professional prostitutes in this town of 120,000 souls, to make no mention of those not classed as professional."

The Rev. Dr. Albert Coit, pastor of the Olivet Baptist Church, severely criticized the authorities. Dr. Coit, who has lived several years in Rochester, said the conditions in Syracuse were far worse than in Rochester.

"There is a stronger moral and civic force in Rochester," said Dr. Coit, "than there is here. The saloons are now open on Sunday here in Syracuse. Screens are set up, obstructing the view of the bar. The side and back doors are usually open. The record of scraps, fights and drunken brawls aired in the police courts every Monday is evidence of the doings on Sunday."

"The social evil is fearfully prevalent here. Some heartrending instances of its deadly work through with no grumbling, and that is the end of it—until they are brought up again. Their infamous business goes on without hindrance. The conditions in this city are truly frightful."

Fillmore Smith, general secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, in Syracuse, is one of those who have made a close study of conditions in the city. In his position as secretary of the society with which he is connected, Mr. Smith has been brought into close contact with the law-defying element, and knows what he is talking about. Said he to a Tribune reporter:

"There can be not the slightest doubt that the administration of the laws here in Syracuse has been so managed that the liquor element have been favored. They make their demands. They have the required 'pull' to enforce them. No one dares antagonize them. The result of twenty years of that sort of regime has been to develop a large criminal and pauper class."

"Raines law hotels abound. I should say there were about fifty of these hotels in the city. They are nothing more or less than schools of vice. They afford every facility and opportunity for the ruin of young girls. It is a fact that girls under age resort to these hotels, and that the beginnings in the careers of a large per cent of our fallen women may be traced to these places. They are not only a school of vice, but a school of prostitution, especially Mr. Bowen, Commissioner of Public Safety, has shown a marked disposition to eliminate these evils. I think Commissioner Bowen appreciates the extent of the social evil in our city and desires to abate it. I know he does."

"I do not blame the police wholly. The Police Department of Syracuse is like a locomotive. It may be driven here or there. It may be hooked to a machine that is perfectly under control. Had the police the opportunity they would soon wipe out these evils. It is scattered through their existence lies with the political bosses. They make their bargains with the criminal classes and carry them out. Other wrongdoers would soon be driven from our city. "Why, it has got to be so now in Syracuse that a man is hardly counted as wealthy or influential unless he holds a certain amount of brewery stock. This stock is now looked upon as the most valuable asset any man can have. It is no longer confined as it once was to men connected with the brewery business, but is held by practically every capitalist. It is scattered through the city and vicinity. Now, when it comes to a war against those interests, it is hard to see how the hand of the law is paralyzed."

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the violation of the laws in Syracuse the subject of personal investigation.

"I have not even a suspicion that the laws are being enforced in our city," said he. "I do not know in what respect they are being violated more than in another. The city is wide open. Anybody with eyes can see that the saloons are selling openly on Sunday. They usually have side doors and back doors open and obstructions before the bar. Sometimes even these precautions are not taken."

"I have been a clergyman here sixteen years now, and from the knowledge I have received, the disorderly houses are open carried on. There is an annual round-up. The proprietors pay what is called a 'fine' and then they go on undisturbed for another year. I have understood that these cases are not tried in open court, but are heard in the magistrate's private office."

"I know portions of the city, in which decent people who can sell their property are going away as fast as they can because of the spread of this evil."

"From what I know of the city, I assume the present is in a political control. The present police cannot enforce the law. If they did they are likely to lose their positions. The department is in a state of corruption. The performance of its duty depends upon finding these people and arresting them. They are not to be put in the streets. They cannot find them, and after all, it would do good if they did."

"Even a man like Jerome could make no headway here in Syracuse. To begin with, a man like Jerome could not get in office here. No man who has had radical views of enforcement of law can hold office in the city of Syracuse."

"The only hope seems to lie in a possible change in the executive under former Mayor Bowen. The enforcement of the law. As the laws stand now they serve simply as a fortification for the liquor element."

"I have seen no improvement under the new administration. There is not a particle of difference in the conditions under former Mayor Bowen that I can see, and I have a good chance to see. "No, under present conditions, the only way I know of to put a stop to the perpetration of law in this city is by assassination. Nothing short of that can stop it."

Mrs. Cora D. Graham, county president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, said: "There can be no question concerning the violation of the laws in Syracuse. There are many places in town styled places of amusement. They are really more than that, and in them the boys and girls are led astray. Repeated failures to secure enforcement of the law on the part of the officials have served to convince us that the only successful way to improve things here is to educate the children. We have engaged in organizing them into legions and have carried our work into the schools."

"As an illustration of the attitude of the city officials toward reform in Syracuse, Mrs. Graham said that some time ago a movement to secure the enactment of a curfew ordinance was started, the idea being to keep young boys and girls off the streets at night. She said that although the petition was signed by several hundred prominent persons, one of the aldermen, a well-known manufacturer, against the measure as to prevent its consideration and to bring about the complete failure of the plan."

"I hardly know," said Mrs. Graham, "whether the new administration really means anything for good or not. I think they have been very kind to us, but they have all been broken so often that we have lost heart."

E. N. Jenks, chairman of the Prohibition City Committee, was one of those who spoke his mind freely. "The Sunday closing law is openly violated here," said Mr. Jenks. "Gambling and worse things are openly carried on. The block within a stone's throw of Police Headquarters and the City Hall where gambling is going on continually. A man who knows tells me this city is worse than the other five points in New York during the most palmy days. I pass saloons every Sunday where the law is being violated, and I never see a policeman near them. I know of a saloon where twenty-five or a hundred disorderly women walk into Police Headquarters and lay down the law. The men in the saloon don't look as if there were 'graft' somewhere."

The Rev. Dr. George B. Spalding, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, when told that people in Rochester declared the city to be worse than Syracuse, remarked, "Well that was what Sodom said of Gomorrah."

IN DEFENCE OF ROCHESTER. One Clergyman Who Doubts the Truth of Others' Observation.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: In your issue of a week ago there was an exhaustive article giving, together with the portraits of distinguished clergymen, a description of the wickedness of Rochester. Statements like the eminent divine's to the effect that all the theatres were running Sunday nights as on other nights are misleading. What are the facts? One theatre has been used as a church by one of our largest parishes for nearly a year; another is dark nearly every Sunday night. The other two are in the habit of having so-called "sacred concerts," a fact to be regretted, perhaps, but not quite so bad as the condition suggested. At the same time people attended divine service. I am sure the other clergy would not object to "run" like that "every night in the week."

Liquor Selling On Easter Sunday.

To the Editor of THE TRIBUNE. Sir: Yesterday was Easter Sunday. For the purpose of ascertaining positively to what extent the excise law is violated in this city I spent about three hours in visiting the saloons and hotels in the centre of the town. I visited twenty-one places, between 3:30 and 6:30 p. m., within two blocks of Police Headquarters where the law was openly and flagrantly violated. Many of these places were crowded with customers. A number of them had not even locked their front door, and in two of them women solicited visitors to buy the drinks. In one place, a combination saloon and pool parlor on week days, there were over fifty young men present. The bar was partitioned off by a black cloth screen, but liquor was sold over the end of the bar to beardless boys without pretence of concealment.

I stood at the entrance to Police Headquarters for about ten minutes and saw six men enter the back door of a saloon nearly across the street. Two policemen stood on the corner and saw these men go into the saloon, but they made no investigation, so I did. I found about twenty-five men in the place, eight of them lined up and drinking over the bar exactly the same as on week days.

This condition is not confined to the centre of the city, but exists all over the town. The police know the law is violated, but they make no raids. Yours truly, W. F. MULVIHILL, Secretary Prohibition County Committee.

SYRACUSE, N. Y., April 4, 1904.

The fellow was arrested. When I came up in court I didn't attend, but I am told that a wealthy brewer appeared in behalf of the defendant and told how many thousands of dollars worth of property he owned in Syracuse. Nothing ever came of the case. What can the police do? Case comes up, nothing is ever done with them? Why take up case after case only to have it pigeon-holed in the District Attorney's office?"

"The downfall of Syracuse dates back to about six years ago, to the enactment of the Raines law hotel legislation. The Raines law hotels have been the curse of Syracuse. "I will say this of Commissioner Bowen—he is doing a good work. He has closed the 'stalls,' but I fear he is sadly handicapped. Syracuse is still a 'wide open' town in every sense of the word. I know of no place of its size to equal it. But what can we do? Were you to fill The Tribune you could not tell half the shame of Syracuse."

The Right Rev. Patrick A. Ludden, Bishop of the Diocese of Syracuse, was fully as emphatic in his brief comments as was Father Grimes. "I do not have much opportunity to see the exact conditions," said Bishop Ludden, "but I know they are bad enough here in Syracuse. Certainly they can be no worse elsewhere."

"No, indeed; I do not think the police are doing their full duty. They could put a stop to many evils if they would. The worst feature of the situation here in the way in which the disorderly houses are allowed to run 'wide open' with no interference. "But the laws are a humbug," declared the Bishop. "The first thing we do when we discover anything wrong is to run to Albany and get a law passed. These excise laws are a humbug."

Levi S. Chapman, a prominent Syracuse attorney, the medium of the Raines law hotels have come to my notice. "Former administrations have not been slow to make us understand that we must not be too particular in our enforcement of the law. We have been told that to crowd the lawbreakers too hard would be only to make matters worse. The truth is the politicians are afraid of them."

"A colored burglar once said to me when I told him I had never suspected any of his race of being burglars before. 'Well, boss, we's pretty good imitators.' It is so with Syracuse. She may not be as bad as New York, but she is a pretty good imitator."

Asked about "graft," Dr. Coit said: "I have been informed that a financial consideration helps to keep violators of the law on good terms with the politicians. It is an open secret here that for years gambling institutions have been assessed weekly or monthly, according to a sliding scale, for the privilege of carrying on their business. This I have on the authority of a former detective and under sheriff who has figured in raids on delinquents, for we do make a show of morality occasionally, you know."

"It is recognized as a fact that it is almost impossible to get a case against a wealthy offender of the excise laws through to a successful issue. If an indictment is secured, an acquittal usually follows, but unless he is a poor man he is seldom indicted."

"Let a poor Poland or any poor person without influential friends be caught breaking the law and he is promptly punished, but those with friends politically powerful are allowed to go unpunished. Evidence which in the case of a murderer would send a man to the electric chair seems to have no weight against such men."

"The keepers of the disorderly houses are brought up with regularity. They pay their fines

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If there is any one official of Syracuse who seems to enjoy the respect and confidence of the best element of the population, that man is Ralph S. Bowen, Commissioner of Public Safety. "Bowen means business," they say, and then they add "but—er—er," and they hang on to that "er" with a tenacity which awakens all kinds of fears. Finally they concede the familiar suspicions about the Commissioner being able to battle successfully with the powers of evil.

"But he has done one good thing since he came into office; he has closed out these 'stalls,' they admit, and then they add apologetically, "that is—some of them."

The Commissioner himself says "all of them," he places emphasis on the expression. To a Tribune reporter the Commissioner said: "The greatest evil we have had to do with here has been these 'stalls,' or back rooms in saloons, but we have wiped them out now."

Being told by the reporter that prominent persons insist that the social evil is still appallingly powerful in Syracuse, he became considerably excited and asked with some warmth: "Do they say that these are present conditions?" Being told that there could be no mistaking the terms applied to present day Syracuse by some of her citizens, the Commissioner said he knew the conditions referred to to be true of the city under former administrations, but said it was not true of the present administration.

He could shed no light upon the methods of the police in dealing with proprietors of disorderly houses. The Commissioner seemed to be astounded when informed of a cruel but persistent report

THE REV. DR. ALBERT COIT, Pastor of the Olivet Baptist Church, Syracuse.

FILLMORE M. SMITH, General secretary of the Syracuse Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

THE REV. PATRICK A. LUDDEN, Bishop of Syracuse.

THE REV. JOHN GRIMES, Pastor of St. Mary's Church, Syracuse.

MURRAY BARTLETT, Rector of St. Paul's, Rochester, N. Y., April 4, 1904.