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This Space Bought and Paid For. THE DOCTRINE OF FORCE.

The Doctrine of Force.

A broad humanity can have but little sympathy with the intolerance which thinks there can be no worthy object of effort in life save that of applying force to compel men to conform to its standard of habits, morals and beliefs, and which holds every custom pernicious, every practice sinful, every conscience depraved, every life a thing of wickedness, and does not yield to the authority of the same narrow bigotry and intolerant fanaticism that control it. Doubtless the great majority of prohibitionists are honest and sincere in their belief, but in the narrowness of their vision they either lose sight of other sins or assume that the virtue of being a prohibitionist palliates all other evils of which they may be guilty. There is an assumption of superiority about them that is offensive to self-respecting people. The assumption of superior conscience and moral excellence of these modern Pharisees is especially nauseous to the great public which has in its heart an earnest prayer for temperance, but which does not believe that to be the sole and only good in the universe. Most thinking people recognize that almost everything in the world, as well as liquor, is subject to abuse; that the only restraint from abuse is the moral conviction of its wrong; that if coercive measures should be adopted to restrain abuse wherever found, a lifetime would not serve to read our statute books; and that if every man guilty of abuse were punished the last man of the race would have to reach out through the prison bars and lock himself in. Knowing this, and the futility of efforts to shape character by legal enactment, they are not prepared to accept the tenets of prohibition, or to recognize the superiority in morals which the advocates of that idea claim. It is the peculiar and invincible folly of the advocate of prohibition that he tries always to place the drunkard's responsibility on every one but the person to whom it actually belongs.

The error of prohibition is that it attempts to work a reform backwards. While its primary object is avowedly to prevent intemperance, it does not aim its laws at the intemperate, or at the drinker but only at the seller. It declares it a crime to sell intoxicants of any kind, but ignores the fact that if it be a crime to sell, it is equally a

crime to buy, since the two parties to the transaction stand upon an equal footing. If, therefore, in its inception creates in the mind of the public a sense of injustice. The man on a jury who has bought a drink cannot bring his conscience to declare that the man who sold to him became a criminal by the act of selling, while he by the act of purchase committed no sin. There is a universal sense of justice which is opposed to inflicting punishment solely upon one of the offenders, while granting immunity to the other.

The reason why prohibition thus aims at the seller is because the number of sellers is comparatively limited, and it is satisfied to make them scapegoats over whose shoulders the blow is readily aimed at the purchaser. Owing to the number of the latter and the direct interference with their rights or personal inclinations, the prohibitionists dare not attack openly the rights of the purchaser, or in other words, the drinker. Therefore, the party which claims the courage of conviction, and condemns all other parties as temporizing with evil, lacks the courage itself to aim its blows at its real adversary. This has put the prohibition party in the position of professing one thing while intending another. The effort, we are told, is to get rid of the saloon—not to lay an embargo upon the drinker. Who creates the saloon? The drinker. If there was no one willing to pay for drink there would be no one maintaining a place for its sale. The purchaser of liquor usually seeks it. He can not get it without paying for it, and no means has ever been, or is ever likely to be, devised of preventing men from getting it, so long as they pay for it.

The natural way, then, to get rid of the saloon is to bring sufficient pressure to bear for the reduction of the demand for liquors. This is the true method of temperance, and this is the method of moral suasion, not of compulsory statutes since even the rashest prohibitionist would not dare to propose a statute forbidding men from drinking. It is a method whose main forces lie beyond the domain of legal enactment. Prohibition, while ineffective, serves to tie the hands of reform and leaves the real evil without a cure. Of course it is said that prohibition is effective but such statements are only from those who have a pur-

pose to serve in making them. The Governor of Maine has certified that prohibition is effective. The Attorney General of Kansas has done the same thing. Ergo, it must be true. Against the certificates of these two honorable gentlemen are facts reported from every town and county in their states. That the saloons in those states have taken down their signs and are less open to the public observation is unquestionable, but you do not rid society of an objectionable thing by driving it out of sight. Testimonials are cheap. Prohibitionists ignore the fact that liquors may be made and sold for useful purposes, and even that the drinking of liquor—if not in excess of moderation and decency—may not be hurtful and unusually is not. It is the abuse or misuse that leads of evil, and this abuse is the domain of man's own individual responsibility. No man is bound to abstain from the use of a thing because some other man abuses it, and the orderly sale of liquor to persons who do not abuse it, can not properly be suppressed on the ground that excessive drinking occasionally leads to disorder.

"Nuff Sed."

Colonel Robert B. Franklin delivered a speech in favor of local option at the court house on last Tuesday evening. Truly, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform."

Evading The Local Option Law.

The Beeville Picayune says: "In Temple they have prohibition. There are a number of club rooms in Temple. It costs 15 cents to become a member. No one is barred from membership. When a member takes a drink—and there are plenty of drinkables in their club rooms—he is fired out of the club, which he can join again for 15 cents. This may not be the exact plan, but that is the way it works, anyway. The only difference in this sort of prohibition and the State law regulating the sale of spirituous liquors is in favor of the States, for under the State law it is a penalty to sell intoxicants to a minor, while a boy of 15 can be a member of these clubs in a prohibition town." And a confirmed drunkard can also join every time he wants a drink and his wife's warning to the club not to sell him a drink doesn't go, as it does in a town where the open saloon prevails. The fact is, where prohibition is not upheld by the sentiment of the community it is a thousand-fold worse than the open saloon. Prohibition may be all right in some towns, but the Times earnestly believes that it is a terrible mistake to continue prohibition where public sentiment does not demand the enforcement of the law. The blind tiger or club room is infinitely worse than the legitimate saloon.—Laredo (Texas) Times.

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