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Prohibition has helped Kansas.

By The Rev. Charles M. Sheldon.



WHAT has prohibition done for Kansas? There are many sides to any question. It has been many years since Kansas became more or less notorious through its laws prohibiting the sale of intoxicants. Previously Maine had a monopoly in the prohibition line. Kansas has been all the way through it. There are people who say that prohibition doesn't prohibit. Now, a few words about Kansas, a state where "potatoes they grow small, and potatoes they grow tall, and they eat them skins and all—in Kansas".

Kansas has the smallest number of paupers to its population of any state in the union. It spends more money for education than any other state in proportion to its population. It publishes some 805 newspaper publications, including dailies, weeklies, monthlies, etc. Out of that entire number only twenty ever publish any liquor advertisements, and four of the twenty are printed in the German language. It is not necessary to enlarge on the moral and religious uplift to a community which is made possible by the absence of an institution which as history is being written has degraded the human race and brought it down to the brute more than any other one thing known to men. It is a source of constant marvel that any Christian community can endure without constant and practical protest a business which has not one single good thing to its credit; which has centuries of ruin, and dishonor and shame, and broken hearts, and broken homes, and dwarfed and pinched and starved children, and bruised motherhood and widowhood laid at its feet and piled up high as an offering of the devil to one of the greatest passions known to the race. I think it may be said without fear of contradiction that twenty-seven years' experience which the law as it now exists in Kansas has fortified the people's hearts in its favor.

The prohibitory amendment to the constitution of Kansas was submitted to the people by the legislature of 1879. After full and intelligent discussion of the measure by the people for a year, the amendment was adopted by a general election in 1880 by a vote of 91,874 against 84,037. The legislature of 1881 gave effect to this constitutional provision by a statute which went into effect the first day of May, 1881. From that time to the present this statutory amendment has been the source of discussion and of action in many different ways among the people of the state of Kansas. The law itself has been on the statute books now nearly twenty-five years, and it may safely be said that by a larger majority than that which voted the law into existence twenty-five years ago the same law is believed in and upheld by the people today.

Every one in Kansas knows that certain places in the state have deliberately nullified the amendment and have disregarded the statute as enacted. It does no harm to mention these places, for every one in Kansas and those who are familiar with the state know their names quite well. It is not vilifying these places to put them on the roll of dishonor so far as this particular disobedience to law is concerned, for they have put themselves on that roll by their own act. The cities which have for twenty-five years refused to obey the law, and have accepted a condition of defiance to the constitution, are: Atchison, Leavenworth, Wichita, Kansas City, Fort Scott, Junction City, Pittsburg. There could also be added to this roll, which has practically for the better part of these years been the same, other smaller towns and communities which at different intervals have tried to be a law to themselves. The city of Topeka has from the beginning, through the public sentiment of its population, demanded enforcement of the law, without always securing it, owing to the fact that under some city and county administrations the entire number of officers in authority were opposed to or indiffer-

ent to the enforcement of the law.

The law has been a center of attraction for different kinds of people in rallying around a common vantage ground where men of different political views and of different religious views could unite on the one issue of law or lawlessness. One of the things which has helped to unite the churches in Kansas has been the fact of this constant moral issue created by the enactment of the law.

The value of such public sentiment is incalculable in the protection of the community from those who would destroy it for the sake of bloody gain or for the exercise of their personal passion.

It may be well, also, to note some economical facts connected with the prohibitory law in Kansas during the last twenty-seven years. Here are some facts which the government itself furnishes, and which no one can deny. Four years ago the total amount of taxes paid to government in Kansas for liquor licenses, including druggist permits to sell on prescription, was \$115,483. In Nebraska, which is a high license state, and which has one-third less population than Kansas, the amount was \$2,776,900. In Missouri, another high license state, adjoining Kansas on the east, the entire amount of taxes paid to government was \$5,576,945. Of fermented liquors there were shipped into Kansas four years ago, 9,022 barrels; into Nebraska, 255,972 barrels; into Missouri the same year, 2,699,778 barrels. There is only \$1 paid to the national government for license tax in Kansas to more than \$40 in Nebraska and \$140 in Missouri.

And in addition to this it may be stated without fear of contradiction that the liquor laws of Nebraska and Missouri are violated more times than the prohibitory law in Kansas. As an economic statement of what prohibition has done for Kansas this is one item out of scores of other. From 105 counties in Kansas only 21 have any paupers in them; 25 have poorhouses; 35 have their jails absolutely empty; 37 have no criminal cases on their docket.

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