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***Prohibition Hypocrisy Due to Job-Changing "Statesmen"***

In a previous article I spoke with some sniffishness of the courage and intelligence of the average congressman, and ascribed the success of the Anti-Saloon League, and particularly its immunity to legislative inquiry and attack, to the low development of both qualities. Let me now apologize for too much politeness. My old vice of oleaginousness seduced me into flattering the gentlemen. The truth is that the Senate, of late years, has filled up with a crowd of cheap ear-bumpers and eye-rollers from the rural Chautauquas, and that the mean intelligence of all, save a few bright stars in the present House, is scarcely to be distinguished from that on view at a Billy Sunday meeting or in a tramp steamer's forecandle.

If you don't believe it, send \$1.50 to the public printer for a month's subscription to the Congressional Record. What you will read therein, of bosh and tosh, of balderdash and flapdoodle, or bad grammar and worse syntax, will fill you with pity for the newspaper reporters who had to boil it down and translate it into English. It is not a battle of wits that goes on down there; it is not even a debate; it is simply a Fest Asinoria. Sham patriotism, sham learning, sham honesty, some industry, sham ideas, sham men—this is what is on tap.

In part, the direct primary is to blame. It has put a premium upon the sort of sophistry that catches boobs; it has driven the self-respecting man out of politics; it has brought in a host of snide rabble-rousers of the general order of neighborhood uplifter and fraternal-order magnate. But the spoiling started long before the direct primary came in. It goes back, indeed, to Jackson's time, and it is visible today in the general tawdriness and childishness of our politics, local and state, state and national, national and international. The business of running the government is no longer the charge of the man of mark, nor even the trained hack; it is the charge of the loudest gabbler and silliest ass, the professional yap-socket and job-chaser. Look through the biographies of congressmen (all written by themselves.) You will not find twenty who have not leaped incessantly from job to job, beginning in their nonage and continuing to the present instant. And you will not find thirty who, aside from their job-holding, have ever attained to the slightest distinction in any legitimate field of human endeavor. There are in the lot, amid many shysters, half a dozen good lawyers. There is scarcely a good anything else.

*Lobbyists are Clever*

These professional job-chasers are shining marks for such adept and unconsciouable manipulators as the whips and lobbyists of the Anti-Saloon League. Don't, as I have before warned, underestimate our brothers of the grape juice. They are shrewd; they are clever; they are capital judges of men, and, in particular, of interior men; they know exactly what's what.

And among the things they know are these: That the average American politician has no conscience, no principles and no self-respect; that his sole object in life is to get and keep a job, and that he will sacrifice any ideal or idea, jump through any hoop, turn any flipflop, roll over any number of times, to attain his desire. Here we have the genesis of the “dry” statesman, the affecting burbler for “our boys” and “the home” in legislative halls, the shameless hypocrite upon whom the whole prosperity of the Anti-Saloon League depends. He is a job-chaser who has discovered that the support of the “drys” helps him in his business, as their extraordinarily malignant and effective opposition hinders him. He is the fellow upon whom they chiefly depend, in Congress as in the state legislatures, to put over coca-cola and the blind pig, the jitney millennium and the jug-behind-the-door.

But why depend upon such a person? Why not, if they are so powerful, elect their own men—men who honestly believe in prohibition, and perhaps yearn for good jobs, too? The answer is simple—they seldom can. That is to say, the number of voters in any given Congressional or Assembly district, or other voting area, who actually believe in prohibition is seldom enough to make a majority. If a straight-out Prohibitionist candidate was put up he would get less votes than either of the candidates of the two regular parties, and so one of those candidates would be elected. This is where the old Prohibition party made its mistake. It tried to beat both Democrats and Republicans, and was always beaten itself; in thirty years it never elected a congressman, and seldom, even in Kansas, got through an assemblyman.

### *Job Hunters Willing*

The Anti-Saloon League gladiators know a trick worth ten of that. Instead of putting up a candidate of their own they seek out the easiest and most eager mark among the candidates of the other parties. It is in the primaries that they get in their earliest and most effective work. Almost always, on one side or the other—and usually on both—there is some aspirant who is willing to do anything to get votes. His actual platform is simple—he wants the job. But over that actual (and esoteric) platform, he is willing to erect a campaign platform made up of the plants of all the bands of enthusiasts who can deliver votes.

Thus he gets himself “converted” to woman suffrage, the single tax, vice crusading, the initiative and referendum, the recall of judges, the eight-hour day, mothers’ pensions, preparedness, the parole system, child labor laws, conservation, efficiency, trust-busting—in brief, to any cause of mania or political peruna that has any organization behind it, and money to pay for campaigning, and enough votes to make an impression in the ballot box. And thus, in particular, he gets himself converted to prohibition, which has the best organization of them all behind it, and the sharpest leaders, and the most docile voters, and the readiest facilities for concentrating its huge strength in a small area, and to the benefit of a chosen serf.

### *Flirt With Prohibition*

In the early days the job-chasers laughed at the Anti-Saloon League. Then they saw brilliantly before their eyes just what it could do. Now they all court it, flirt with it, fawn over it. Its block of voters may be, and usually is, relatively small—but it can deliver them. They

march to the polls with the fire of a great enthusiasm in their eyes, and they vote unanimously for the candidates bearing the league's high imprimatur. They are enough to swing a primary nearly everywhere. They are enough to swing a general election in perhaps three election districts out of five. The two great parties (or, in the South, the two factions of Democrats) are commonly nearly equally divided. The weight of the Prohibition vote, small as it is, is sufficient to bear down the scales. It was precisely by this process, bit by bit, that the Anti-Saloon League conquered in such states as Virginia, Colorado and Washington. It is by the same process that it is gradually preparing for the final struggle in Ohio, Maryland and California, and laying its pipes for the future in Pennsylvania and New York.

There are, of course, perils in the game. The job-chasers brought up to grace by such frank trading are not always to be trusted. When it comes to the showdown the rum demon often snatches them from under the eyes of the "drys." In various Southern states, in legislature after legislature, these worthies sold out, at the last minute, to the whisky men. This happened, too, in the West. It will happen again, and yet again. But year after year, it is harder to get away with.

The Anti-Saloon League not only knows how to reward; it knows how to punish. The rascal who thus betrays it, after it has delivered the goods to him, is pursued relentlessly and with all arms. The league press agents see to it that every farmer in the whole state hears of his treason. Terrible tales about him are whispered from Sunday school to Sunday school. He is held up to universal obloquy and ignominy. Pious mothers use his name to frighten their young. A few such examples, and the other occupants of the mourners' bench stay put. Not infrequently, indeed, the recreant job-chaser, tasting the steel, steps up, confesses and promises to sin no more. I emit no theories. The thing has happened often, and more than once under my very nose.

### *League's Gigantic Power*

It is by such votes that "bone dry" prohibition measures are rammed through the legislatures of state after state, and it is by such methods that the Anti-Saloon League has acquired its present gigantic power in both houses of Congress—a power so vast that its lobby is more than equal to a third house. At each end of the Capitol, of course, there are stray members who actually believe in the prohibition rumble-bumble—fanatics who are ready to swallow anything that looks pious, or shrewder fellows who have genuinely convinced themselves that whatever is so potent must have merit. But the number of such authentic whoopers is not nearly so large as the unsophisticated imagine. The typical Anti-Saloon League legislator is one who is in it for this political health—one who knows, perhaps by experience, that it is much easier to hold on with the league wire pullers in favor of him than with them against him.

Some of these wire pullers, in fact, actually prefer this sort of retainer. As one of them once frankly explained to me, he is usually easier to handle than the true believer. His sole desire is to keep in good odor with the camorra that made him and can break him; he is willing to do anything so long as his job is thereby safeguarded. No order can come too swiftly for him. He is ready to jump at the drop of the hat. The trouble with the true believer is that he has ideas of his own. He wants to be consulted. He is jealous of his dignity. The

result is that he is a poor soldier to depend on in a tight place. Too often he bucks when the need is for instant obedience. And his bucking not only costs a vote that may be sorely needed, but also heartens the opposition. The rum demon's janissaries are forever alert. They cannot be fought with an army that wrangles.

The typical champion of prohibition; knowing precisely what he is there for, and just how he got there, and how he can stay there, never wrangles or rebels. Let him be told clearly what hymn is to be sung, and he will sing it with a voice of brass, flapping his wings and drenching his nose with tears. He is hot for saving the younger generation from cocktails, highballs, mickeys, flips, slings, sours and stone fences. He is full of statistics—medical, criminal and sociological. This canned eloquence that is pumped into him at one bung he sprays magnificently from another. His voice and votes are for home, mother, virtue, religion, the moss-covered bucket, buttermilk, the empty jail, the deserted almshouse, the happy wife, the little children playing with Fido under the table. And after he has done his exalted work for his masters of the Anti-Saloon League, he departs grandly from the bull rung of inspired legislation—and touches up his gills with a drop of corn at the nearest kaif.