

KANSAS IN LABOR

BY CHARLES B. DRISCOLL

MY FATHER made two or three barrels of wine from his own grapes every Fall. He also liked to stop and have a foaming schooner of beer at Frank Gard's saloon when he was selling hogs or cattle in Wichita. When he felt particularly domestic he would bring home a case or two of beer for the family, but the family, God forgive it, didn't appreciate the offering, and he invariably had to drink the whole of it himself.

When visitors came to our Kansas farmhouse, my father thought it a routine matter of hospitality to offer some of his wine. He would go down cellar and draw a tall pitcher of it, and bring it before the company, with glasses.

"Will you have some wine?" he would ask, quite innocently, for he was born in Ireland and he had sailed the seas and Great Lakes, and he couldn't quite believe that Kansans could be as queer as they seemed to be. "I made it myself," he would add, propitiatingly. "It is good medicine for a hot day—or for a cold one either."

The company, if it chanced to be local and respectable, would sniff. Perhaps there would be a pious observation upon the evil effects of wine and debauchery in general upon the young.

In such cases, my father would fall silent and seem to be considering the ways of persons among whom he was always destined to remain an alien. Then he would quietly drink the pitcher of wine himself, and go on about his work.

Since my father made no secret of his wine-making and his love for a cold measure of beer to temper the scorching Kansas sun, he became a sort of hissing in the

valley. On the next farm lived Steve Balch, a hearty, loud-laughing, independent spirit. He made much wine of many kinds, and he didn't go to any church, and he minded his own business so well that he was conceded to be the most progressive farmer in the community. He loved to tell the preachers to go to Hell, but he explained to his good friends that that didn't mean anything, since there really wasn't any Hell. He just wanted to frighten the Prohibitionists.

Steve Balch, however, was a Yankee, born and bred. In fact, he was born in that very neighborhood, or came to it in babyhood, for his aged parents lived near him on another farm. The Balch ancestry went back to Connecticut or some such thoroughly American locality, and therefore Steve could afford to flout the common hypocrisy and go on making the good wine that he always was ready to give to the sick and ailing or to the rare spirit who might appreciate it.

You could be independent if you were a Yankee. But my father spoke with the rich accent of County Cork. He had his citizenship papers, to be sure, but the community never considered him a citizen. He was a Roman Catholic, while Steve was merely an atheist. The good people of the valley did not so far forget their Americanism as to consign Steve and my father to the same Hell.

We children went to a one-room public-school, a mile-and-a-half away. It was a sorry school from an educational point of view, but it was sound in matters of faith and morals. We were obliged to sing Prohibition songs for opening exercises, and

at least once each day we were given mass instruction on the evil effects of alcohol and tobacco upon the human system.

Kansas was the first State to put Prohibition into its constitution. Maine had a Prohibition law before Kansas was able to sit up and vote, but it was only a law. In 1881 Kansas adopted an amendment to its constitution, forever prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor. The Prohibition Amendment under which we now groan nationally is taken bodily out of the Kansas constitution, with only a word or two changed to make it national in scope.

In my early boyhood, however, Kansas constitutional Prohibition was merely a blunt instrument, used to extort blackmail from saloon-keepers. It had no more force and effect than the Ten Commandments or the Beatitudes. Saloons were doing a slopping good business in every Kansas town, but they had to observe certain forms, out of deference to the hypocrites who wanted to pretend that the State was dry. No signs were permitted to say Saloon or Bar. The recognized name for a saloon was Sample Room. There were thirty-eight sample rooms in Wichita, our nearest town.

Besides the name, the saloons adopted another clever disguise, so that the ministers might go on telling the world that there was no hell-broth in Kansas. They curtained their front windows, or painted them, exactly as the saloons in Hoboken do today.

In this formal disguise, the saloon flourished. But it was against the law, and once a month, on the first day thereof, the saloon-keeper had to go to the City Hall and pay a fine of from fifty to one hundred dollars, depending upon his location and prosperity. This blackmail kept the city running, and the preachers pretended to think that their own taxes were kept low by the simple expedient of fining the wicked run-sellers whenever they were caught at their devil's work. Of course, any preacher with a nose could smell a

sample room a block away, but who wanted to ruin the town and increase taxes by analyzing odors?

Two of the best and most liberal citizens of our town in those days were Tommie and Johnny Mahan, who ran a wholesale liquor house and owned many saloons. Whenever a charity committee or a civic graft gang wanted money, the leg-pullers went to the Mahans and started their list. The fattest man in town was Fritz Schnitzler, also in the wholesale booze business. Peter Getto, who never sold a dishonest quart in his life, handled some excellent brands wholesale.

These good town-boosters did not hide in a corner. They advertised their wares on the opera-house curtain, took space in every amateur programme, and had their names posted at church fairs and socials, wherever such publicity would aid a worthy cause.

II

The Devil, I was early informed, never sleeps. Some of his insomnia infected the Prohibition agitators who prowled over the prairies in those days of innocence and sin. Kansas has always been a booze-conscious Commonwealth. The prairie preachers, the deaconesses with holy fire in their eyes, and the moral leaders of the Y. M. C. A. talked and sang and prayed Prohibition for many weary years before the country at large consented to take their mission seriously.

One of our teachers at the rural school I attended was a squatty little man with a flowing red mustache. He taught school rather less efficiently than the teachers who had preceded him, although that really seemed quite an impossible feat. But Mr. Mar was popular in the district because he lost no opportunity to inculcate the evils of strong drink. Under his learned tutelage we barefoot urchins were taught to sing, twice a day, about some poor unfortunate who once took a sip of red wine, and eventually, at the end of the twenty-fourth

stanza, was borne in a cheap hearse, "o'er the stones to a wine-bibber's grave."

There was a large chart in the sanctuary of that temple of learning, and it was kept always open to a section depicting the evil effects of alcohol upon the insides of the human body. Some of the more nervous girls were unable to look at this chart without becoming ill, but most of us became so accustomed to the revolting sketches, in five colors, of an ulcerated stomach and a disintegrating liver, life size, that we much preferred them to the dull pink map of the British Isles on the opposite wall.

The laws of Kansas required that we be given daily instruction in the evils of booze and the desirability of Prohibition. Since it was much easier to tell about the depravity of habitual drunkards and the horrible deaths they invariably met than it was to teach the fundamentals of the Arabic system of notation and numeration, we spent much of our time taking notes upon Prohibition discourses.

The Last Day of School was the annual social affair of the district. The mothers of extensive families cooked and baked for a week in preparation for the event, and every wagon, buggy and buckboard that wended its way over the muddy roads to the school ground was heavily laden with good food, especially cakes and pies. It was a regular cake-and-pie orgy, and the strong farmers fairly staggered home in the twilight, thoroughly done in by indulgence in samples of not less than forty pies and twice forty toothsome cakes.

The school children were drilled and rehearsed for half of the school term in preparation for the Last Day entertainment. Shortly after Christmas we began learning the new Prohibition songs and canticles. The drilling furnished a fine excuse for occupying school time with something other than study and teaching, and helped to save the teacher from the embarrassment of being caught by one of the big boys or girls in a fatal error in arithmetic or history.

There were dialogues designed to illustrate in a lifelike manner the dangers of taking just one sip, however small, of wine, beer, whiskey or mint julep. There were tableaux representing the plight of the deserted *mater familias*, whose unworthy spouse was at that moment enjoying the subtle damnation of 4% brew in a palatial hell-hole in the neighboring Gomorrah.

One of the most fetching of these dramatic interludes still haunts my memory in graphic detail. A chorus of a dozen girls, the non-bathing beauties of the valley, sang a song beginning:

Oh here we are, as thus you see,
Each one a farmer's daughter;
We know just when to legislate
And when we hadn't oughter;
And we won't have any saloon men
To kneel to us and bow, sir,
For we can do without a man
If he can't follow the plow, sir!

The adolescent swains who heard that noble chorus day after day could hardly avoid conversion to the cause of militant Prohibition. We pictured these fair ones spurning the grovelling saloon men who might become maddened suitors for their hands. I used to dream of the loathsome bartenders and vendors of spirits, vainly attempting to coax a promise of honorable marriage from my favorite among the long-legged Prohibition chorus girls. Secretly I vowed to hit a bartender right on the end of the nose some day.

Still I marvel that we were able to hate saloon-keepers and their patrons collectively, when we knew so many charming drunkards and so many Christian vintners and dispensers.

One member of the school board was Lem Sulka, a right noble tippler and a farmer beyond reproach. He was prosperous, but democratic. He would drink with anyone, and had been known to endow an unidentified tramp with the entire proceeds of the sale of a load of fat hogs from his pens. The tramp, it seems, had approached Lem while the genial farmer was reclining, somewhat stove in, with his

two legs strangely intermingled with the barbed-wire fence that bordered the railroad right-of-way.

"What's the matter?" says the tramp.

"I don't rightly know," replies Lem. "I think my horses got drunk. They ran away when I tried to drive down the railroad track so's to get home quicker."

"Are you hurt?"

"Hurt? I don't know about hurt, but I've got a roll of bills here that'll never do me any good, because I can't drink with all this wire around my legs. Here, you take the money and buy a drink for yourself!"

Lem had the most powerful horses in the valley. They all looked like graduates from the Ringling circus parade. And run! Well, if such a patron of the turf as Harry Sinclair had ever seen Lem Sulka playing Ben-Hur in a lumber wagon, coming home from town after a successful day in the market, the ancient and honorable sport of chariot racing would have been revived as a national pastime. Lem loved to travel rapidly, and as airplanes were still far in the future, he laid on the lash with a right good will, and the infuriated horses went madly galloping along the country road, while groceries, bottles, and bits of wagon gear went flying in a train of steadily mounting destruction.

When the valley folk passed along that highroad next day they viewed the sad disfigurement of the roadside hedges, the mailbox posts, all bent and broken over in one direction, and the splintered remains of rolling stock. Then they said one to another, "I'll bet old Lem Sulka's had another runaway. We better stop and see some of his kin and find out if he's bad hurt."

Nobody really wished Lem any ill. He was a thrifty, likable fellow, with that same rare ability to mind his own business that distinguished Steve Balch and others among the unsaved.

Tom Fahey was one of the first saloon-keepers I ever knew, and he was of the salt of the earth. He was all that a jovial Irishman is supposed to be in song and

story, and his home was the dwelling place of hospitality. Down town he ran a sample room until he began to grow too old for such activity, and then he set up his favorite son in the business.

"It takes a man in ivery sinse of the wurrid to stand behind the baar!" declared Tom Fahey, as he looked upon his son and was well pleased.

I remember waiting outside of Ed Fahey's sample room one hot Summer day, holding the reins over a patient farm horse while seated in a cart that was the Ford of the farmers of that time and place. My father was within, imbibing great draughts of Fahey's cooling beer. Out came old Tom Fahey, fat and hearty and cool, holding high a foaming schooner of beer. He stepped up to the cart at the curb.

"Here you are, me bye!" he shouted. "A drink on Tom Fahey! Fine and cool, and 'twill make a man of ye!"

I refused. Or was it I who refused? Certainly, there is something gravely awry with this philosophical theory of Personal Identity.

But there sat one whom I then called I, refusing a perfect glass of wholesome beer, while the unbelieving Tom Fahey stared in wonderment that Old Man Driscoll should possess a boy who didn't know enough to drink a freely offered container of joy. He stood there and argued and urged and descanted upon the merits of this particular brand of beer, which already had made Milwaukee a center of civilization. He went away beaten and discouraged, after tossing the flat stuff into the gutter. He had wasted golden words upon an ignorant spirit, and the hot sun had robbed his nectar of its life.

My father, I am told, wept when he heard his old friend's report upon the waywardness of the son of an Irish sailor.

"The boy would be all right," said my father weakly, "if it wasn't for these God-damned Prohibitionists! It seems there's a law that we have to send the children to school, and the teachers and preachers they have at the school are trying to make

sissies out of them. Glory be to God, Fahey, I don't know what this country's coming to at all, at all! You best put a case of beer in the cart, and I'll see if the family won't feel like a little drink before going to church Sunday morning anyhow."

While the Yankee neighbors pointed to my father as one lost in Romish superstition and devil's brew, I never saw the man drunk but once, and I fully believe it was his only lapse into genuine inebriation. He was past fifty, prosperous, and at peace with the world. But he conceived a violent dislike for a certain prospective son-in-law. The family took no heed of his likes and dislikes, since he was generally conceded to be a bit old-fashioned, and never thoroughly Americanized.

So my father prepared to get drunk as a gesture of protest. That Fall he made seven barrels of wine, instead of two or three. There was some good wine left over from other years, too, and he started on it while the new wine was a-ripening. He laid in a few cases of beer, a five-gallon jug of whiskey, and a few little jugs of gin. By Thanksgiving it was clear that he was a bit groggy, and by Christmas he was fairly plastered.

He sobered up suddenly, a year later, and he never drank more than enough to make him a bit reminiscent during the thirty years of life that still remained to him. He had registered his protest, and no stress of circumstance could ever induce him to utter a word against the objectionable son-in-law thereafter.

Every once in a while a holy pilgrim would come to our house, laden with tracts dealing with liquor and tobacco. Cigarettes were already under the ban of Kansas law, but some dudes from the cities were bootlegging in the vilest kind of cigarettes, we were told. These instruments of the Devil were packed subtly, perhaps by Satan himself, who was said to frequent tobacco plantations and factories where his weed was made up into smokes. Pictures of shameless play-actresses, some in tights that displayed their legs to an inconceiv-

able height, were to be found in these packages, and fond mothers were warned that their boys often secretly collected these pictures and stored them above the rafters in the barns.

As if to point the moral taught by the wandering salvationists, a family of townies bought the farm adjoining ours on the south. The Burwell boys used to ride out to the farm from Wichita behind a spanking team of bays, and there were plenty of eye-witnesses to the fact that all three of the Burwells smoked cigarettes.

Coming home from school along the highway, we boys often picked up samples of the offending pictures of actresses. Then we knew the Burwell boys had been out to the farm again, or had driven back to town that way. One of my sisters was of the tender age of sixteen, and she was sternly forbidden to speak to the Burwell boys, even though they were our next neighbors. They smoked cigarettes, and rumor had it that they also carried a flask of whiskey out from town with them when they came to stay a week or so at the farm.

III

About this time there came eerie signs in the heavens, presaging the approach of a new dispensation. Three prophetic stars twinkled insinuatingly above the monotonous prairies. They told of the coming of the three prophets of reform: Carry A. Nation, Henry J. Allen and Myra McHenry.

Carry Nation came first, making straight the paths of the other prophets. There had been much stirring of the spirit at Sunday-school conventions and meetings of respectable married church women, and as ill luck would have it, Carry Nation was having domestic troubles. She lived in Medicine Lodge, and she was the town's professional troublemaker. She was short and fat and ugly, and her special mission was the preaching of damnation against women who were young and slim and beautiful. She had turned Medicine Lodge

upside down by publicly denouncing the ladies of the choir for wearing their skirts clear up to their insteps. Such hussies, averred this prophetess, were out after the husbands of honest women.

Having a pronounced beauty phobia, and not being able to find very many beauties upon whom to vent her despite in Medicine Lodge, Carry hustled over to Wichita, where, she had heard, there was a picture of a beautiful woman in the Carey Hotel bar, owned by Johnny Mahan. The picture was entitled "Cleopatra at the Roman Bath," and had been painted by John Noble, now a notable New York painter, in exchange for unlimited credit at Mahan's bar. It was a very large picture, and very nude, and it hung in front of the bar, so that the customers might be charmed ceaselessly by it while they sipped their potations.

Carry Nation had heard that Cleopatra was the most beautiful and seductive of all women, and she had heard something quite the reverse about herself. So she would have it out with Cleo, here and now. She went into the Carey bar on the morning of November 21, 1900, and, after feasting her eyes upon the winsome curves of the Lady of the Nile, she proceeded to lecture Eddie Parker, Johnny Mahan's brother-in-law and bartender, on the wickedness of beauty, especially nude beauty.

Eddie Parker uttered not a word, but cleared his throat a couple of times and even coughed a little, as he looked at the floor. He was a very polite and mid-Victorian gentleman, and he did not hold with those who say that a woman may use any words that a man may use, so long as they are both in a barroom.

Seeing Eddie somewhat chapfallen, Mrs. Nation turned and threw a piece of a stone through the glass and canvas, sorely lacerating the perpetually young seducer upon the wall. As Eddie still did not stir, Carry was inspired with her Great Idea. She threw another stone (she had put three stones into her handbag before entering) and smashed the mirror.

The mirror cracked from side to side, as in the case of the one at Shalott, and the curse descended upon the American trade in strong waters. Carry smashed some bottles, and went her way. She was sent to jail and there quarantined by a jolly sheriff who thought that ordinary imprisonment was much too good for a woman who would willfully waste good beer and smash lovely pictures.

The world-wide publicity given the Carey Hotel bar-smashing spurred on the more spectacular of the ladies of the W. C. T. U., and soon Carry Nation found herself the leader of a band of females with long unsatisfied grudges against the temptress who beguiled Mark Anthony. Every pious dame who looked as unlike Cleopatra as did the doughty smasher rallied to her banner, and when the leader was out of jail the gang of them went up and down the streets of Wichita, smashing in sample room windows, seeking lewd pictures, and chopping open barrels and kegs with hatchets that were the very images of their countenances.

Myra McHenry, who yet survives to scourge the ungodly in the plains region, was one of the trusted lieutenants of Carry Nation. She often posed with a hatchet in her hand, and many times kicked and bit and scratched the officers of the law who came to take her into custody when she stood upon street corners, vilifying the leading citizens and telling the unpublished lives of the most noted of the local ministers of the gospel. Myra hated booze and seducers so flagrantly that she was willing to set even the First Christian Church by the ears with tales of its reverend pastor's life, shouted frenziedly at noonday, right in front of the temple.

Henry J. Allen came along when the battle was waxing hot, and bought the Wichita *Beacon*, a mild-mannered evening newspaper. He came out for God and against liquor in all its manifold forms. The stirring of the waters of unrest in Kansas began to take on tempestuous proportions.

Marsh Murdock, who ran the *Eagle*, was a very Stonewall Jackson for the beleaguered hosts of the rum power. He was for booze, and no nonsensical hypocrisy was indulged in by him when he wrote about it. He predicted that the reformers would be the death of the town and of the State, and he meant, of course, the spiritual death, although his enemies chose to believe he merely threatened financial ruin to the Commonwealth. Marsh Murdock went down fighting, his circulation sadly depleted, his heart broken, and his closest associates whispering the treason of compromise in his deaf old ears. He was the last. His heirs surrendered sullenly to the rising clamor, and recouped the fortunes of the paper after the most vitriolic of the reformers had won the battle and gone to their eternal reward.

The sun rose on a dismal Kansas, one certain morning, after an election in which Henry Allen and Carry Nation and the Lord of Hosts had won a smashing victory. The Mahan Supply Company was in ignominious retreat toward free Missouri, in three long freight trains. Tom Fahey was standing forlornly outside his dismantled sample room, meditating upon the wickedness of the foes of joy and beauty.

IV

Kansas entered upon a new era. It was an era of self-glorification and of missionary activity. The forces of righteousness had so completely triumphed that they began persecuting the ungodly in the name of God. They hauled Jay House up before a court of justice to make him tell the names and addresses of all the saloons in Topeka, and when Jay refused to be a Smedley Butler they denounced him and deplored him throughout the length and breadth of Kansas. They dragged Steve Balch from his peaceful agricultural pursuits, and tried to make him divulge the name and address of someone from whom he had bought a half-pint. When Steve laughed his care-free laugh in the magistrate's face,

he was consigned to the dungeon, and there held for contempt of court for the better part of a Summer, while weeds grew in his beloved vineyard.

Those were bitter days for the few free spirits who remained within the State. Billy Sunday came swooping down upon the wreckage of a once bibulous frontier civilization, and convicted the community of sin and lust and evil. Those who wanted their businesses to thrive upon public approval hastened to join the church, to weep publicly at the Billy Sunday mourner's bench, and to get as much publicity for their repentance as possible. Henry Allen, although already safely enrolled in the Book of Gold, stepped forward and grasped the great evangelist's hand, weeping, while the inspired community arose as one man and shouted, "Glory to God!"

By that spectacular maneuver Henry almost ran away with circulation and advertising. The Murdocks remained unrepentant in person, although they allowed their newspaper to join the ballyhoo for right living. Sons of old Marsh Murdock could deliver up their swords, but they could not quite bring themselves to bow the knee before the alien invader.

Gospel teams were now sent scurrying out into America Irredenta, to carry the tidings. Flying squadrons of Prohibition speakers went east and west, telling how Kansas had done it. New life was injected into the fight which the Anti-Saloon League and the Ohio Gang had been carrying on in so desultory and expensive a manner.

Raymond Robbins, Dan Poling and a half dozen other apostles met in an upper room in lower Fifth avenue, New York, and found themselves endowed for a foray. They went forth in what they called the Flying Squadron, stopping for one-night stands in the larger cities, from coast to coast, advertising the slogan: "A Saloonless Nation by Nineteen-Twenty!"

I was a reporter in Omaha when the Flying Squadron hit the town for two meetings, in 1914. When sinful Omaha

heard the slogan of the invaders, it roared with good-natured laughter, and lifted another bumper to Bacchus. That was on a Sunday, and I wonder whether any clairvoyant pastor of souls thought it worth while that day to preach on the text: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

During those precursive years, you met the Kansans everywhere, tirelessly and with staring enthusiasm, preaching Prohibition. They went into far fields, stumping the East and the West for silly-looking

Prohibition party candidates for every imaginable office, and taking defeat with the same angelic smile with which an idiot takes castor oil.

A short-sighted nation was somewhat annoyed by the noise and confusion that proceeded from the general direction of Kansas. Annoyed, and mildly amused. For the nation was too busy about trifles to realize that Kansas was in labor, and that the ridiculous offspring she would soon bring forth would live to betray a continent.

FOOL

BY JOHN HUSTON

VICTOR DU LARA was a young Italian. He had the shape of head you often see on clever boys. You would call it conical. From a small hard jaw it widened upward to a cranium that was round like a bowl. He had a hard mouth, and his eyes were set wide apart. He was short with a strong back, so he could hold like a vise and pound in the clinches. He was a slugger with a lot of native speed. Like a nail he made his own openings, and he followed up fast, hammering like a carpenter.

Victor and myself, and a fellow named Harry who used to second for us, and a friend of Harry's, a man whose name I forget, who had just got out of the army, were all of us on the street car. We were coming away from Madison Square Garden down in Darktown.

Madison Square Garden is a Negro fight arena, named after the big Madison Square Garden in New York.

When I think about that ride I get elated. Something had happened that put me at the dirty end of the stick. I had done something terrible. I want to say that Victor and Harry and the soldier were three men of mercy. They laughed at my sin and didn't rub it in. They let it go at that. Their treatment rid my nature of a lot of rubbish.

Victor du Lara and I had gone as children to the same school, but we had not known each other. That is, we had never been friends. I was a few months younger than he, and that made a great difference. He was the crustiest boy in the school.

The neighborhood of the school was poor. Most of the students were the sons

and daughters of low-class Italians and Negroes and Polacks. Beside myself, there was only one other child who could lay any claim to being well raised, and he was slightly effeminate. The Italian boys used to gang him on his way home—not from lack of nerve, for any one of them could have handled him. They only desired to share the pleasure. I envied them.

One night after school I was alone with the tormented fellow. I hoped vicariously to enjoy the companionship of the rough-necks by beating him myself. But it was a heartless effort. He made no resistance. The yard was deserted except for the effeminate boy and me. I had been awkward about starting the fight. He would resent nothing. Finally I pushed him over. When he got up I knocked him down with my fist. Then he sat in the sand, rubbing his eyes and weeping, while blood trickled out of his nose. I threw him my handkerchief and went home.

To and from school, and in the recess periods, Victor jumped rope and shadow boxed. He was the youngest in his room and he was small, but he could teach tricks to anybody in the school. Into the Negroes he put the fear of God. He called them jigaboos. I have seen him step into a group of blacks, measure the largest, and without warning slap him flat-handed. The jigaboos came to understand that any defense meant twice the punishment. Whenever they gathered there was always one posted to keep a nervous watch for Victor. When he came toward them they'd separate. He never picked on a jigaboo alone.

In those days all paths led to love and physical supremacy. They were the male