

AROUND THE EDITORIAL TABLE

ARRRESTS, imprisonments, charges and countercharges of corruption have all added to the complexity of the situation in New York City as a result of the non-enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment, and probably if the lid were lifted, a similar complexity would be found in every other city in the country.

Here we have the spectacle of four men "socially prominent" in New York going laughingly to jail for having committed a crime against the Constitution of the United States. When we consider that the four La Montagne brothers who were sentenced to a Federal penitentiary for bootlegging are the friends and associates of the same "society people" who talk about radicalism and the dangers of the lawless emigrants from Europe, we wonder what has become of what in our youth we knew as the American Tradition.

In early Colonial times, the best American families were willing to die for liberty—the right of free speech—the right to worship God as they saw fit. The descendants of the same families seem to be perfectly ready to go to jail in order to preserve the right to get drunk, and not even the sacred Constitution, of which they are the most ardent defenders when any reform or progressive wishes to amend it to afford greater protection to those who work with their hands—has any terrors for them when it interferes with hootch. What we may expect in the future if the present attitude is kept up will be that the "society" reporters of great Metropolitan dailies, Mr. Fauley of the *Times*, and Mr. Allen of the *Herald*, will be obliged to cover the penitentiaries in order to make their news columns complete and spicy.

Thus we may expect to read some morning:

"Mr. William K. Van Astorbilt is spending the week-end at Atlanta prison with a few of his friends. He arrived in his private car "Boozingus," which is on the railroad siding alongside the prison. Incidentally the Government has been obliged to increase the siding facilities at Atlanta as so many private cars are here waiting to take northern visitors to other winter resorts."

Mr. dePeyster Van Rhinelanders was host at a bridge and checkers party last Tuesday at Essex County Federal Prison, having for his guests some of the famous New York attorneys who defended him in his recent controversy with the Government, in which he came off second best, resulting in his invitation to spend a month in this quiet and exclusive retreat. Mr. Van Rhinelanders is very popular with the other guests here and his democratic ways have made him many friends. He plans, on leaving, for a cruise in Southern waters and it is said that one of his guests will be the famous bank burglar, Charlie Blackjack, whom he has come to know

and admire immensely since meeting him in this caravansary of governmental displeasure.”

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More astounding than the attitude of the society people were the pleas of the distinguished attorneys who went into court and stood up before the Judge who was about to sentence the “society bootleggers,” and uttered, what we hope we will be pardoned for calling, the prize banalities of this curious age.

Mr. Joseph S. Auerbach is one of the leaders of the American bar, a gentleman who has written for *THE FORUM* and whom only a few months ago we editorially commended for the high moral character of his writings.

Not so soon did we think that we would be obliged to say of Mr. Auerbach that his speech in Court in which he pleaded for a light sentence for these bootleggers does him little credit and, should he live long enough, will come back to plague him. For when a distinguished leader of the bar asks for leniency for culprits, it should never be on the ground that the law of the land is one for which a certain number of people have no respect.

More shameful, however, and one more insulting to the intelligence was the oratorical effort of Mr. John G. Milburn, former President of the State Bar Association—a man who is supposed to represent in his person the dignity of the bar, and yet who had the effrontery to plead that the prominence of the defendants as tennis players and polo players should be considered in the pronouncement of sentence.

Is it any wonder that the influence of the original stock of America is lessening year by year—in the East, and especially in New York City, when exhibitions such as these are made in public by those who are supposed to know how subtle are the influences that go to make for lawlessness and disregard of the American Constitution.

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The other side of the picture is quite as nauseating. For years the leader of the anti-wet forces of New York has been Mr. William H. Anderson, who is now being investigated by the District Attorney of New York County as a result of information lodged with him that Anderson forced a subordinate to split commissions with him and had spent \$24,000 of the Anti-Saloon League's money in mysterious publicity ways. A respected minister, the head of the society, Dr. Burrell, rushes to the defense of Anderson with the blatant statement that if Anderson has done wrong the directors knew of it and if Anderson goes to jail, they should go to jail too. Of a man of Dr. Burrell's position and profession, one would like to speak with gentleness, but apparently he does not see the moral side of the question and apparently is indifferent to the disgust with which the public looks on the inside workings of the Anti-Saloon League. Both Anderson and Dr. Burrell pour out their wrath on the head of the former

employee, who gathered money for them and who has exposed the inner workings, not realizing that if their collector, Phillips, was half that they say he is, he should never have been in their employ. As if the scandal had no end, Phillips is revealed to have made large sums of money which apparently the United States Government was not aware of, for the Collector of Internal Revenue has to call his attention to the fact that he had not filed an income tax return. Phillips blithesomely retorts that his private affairs should not be exposed to the public and that he is going to have a bill introduced in the House of Representatives to protect citizens who have difficulties with the Income Tax Department!

A sad mess, a sad world, my master's.

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During the past month but little light has been shed on what is really happening in the Valley of the Ruhr. The French advance, minutely planned in every detail, has been completed and the latest reports state that over three-fourths of the mining district is in the French hands, and that over three million out of the three and a half million German inhabitants are now living under French rule.

The latest French reports state that already nearly 2,000 carloads of coal have been exported from the Valley of the Ruhr to France, and before three months are over the mines operated by German workmen will be producing their maximum output. The German reply to this is that they will be able to hamper every French move and will be able to do without the coal coming from the Ruhr. They hope, by buying their supplies of coal from England and Scandinavia, to be able to surmount the difficulties and to play a "fight to the finish" game with the French forces.

What the outcome will be it is most difficult to determine. Naturally the French papers are full of optimism, while the German's still unflinchingly breathe open defiance. The English as a whole appear to be somewhat pessimistic as to the outcome, but do not wish to take any step which might decrease France's chance of ultimate victory.

In this country the one indication—the stock exchange trend—has remained thoroughly satisfactory for France. Despite the warnings issued by several of the greatest financiers in the country that ruin was inevitable, and that French francs would probably be where the German marks are at present, not only has France been able to keep almost up to their old standard, but the general money market has appeared to be extremely hopeful of the outcome.

We do not take quite such an optimistic view of the situation. France is spending millions of francs a day from which, at present, she is getting no results. Ultimately, in three or four months, she may come to an understanding with Germany, but will she be able to gain sufficient compensation to be able to warrant the great expenses that are every day piling higher and higher?