

## Prohibition—A Joke

Having had an opportunity to observe, along with the rest of the 115,000,000 Americans, the year and a half old institution we call prohibition, we have arrived at the conclusion that someone played a big joke on the old United States on July 1, 1919. Somebody started the story going around that July 1, 1919 saw the burial of friend John Barleycorn and that from then on the unruly veteran should live only in our memories. But somebody was kidding. Either another was buried in the grave dug for John or else they put him in it and left him an air hole. Anyway he's been making as much fuss during all these months as he ever did when he had a license to do so, and with the passage of time seems to be increasing his noise.

It begins to look as if the United States constitution lost some of its prestige when it incorporated the 18th amendment, and unless it persuades the people it governs by force or tact to take the new member seriously it would appear that the venerable document would be better off if the trouble

maker were stricken from its pages. Otherwise it may weaken the moral influence of the whole of it, and respect for its precepts will diminish. The people the constitution governs are likely to feel less and less reverence for it and look upon laws in general as shams, and to feel that personal license takes precedence over any and all attempts at government.

There is no denying the fact that the eighteenth amendment as a piece of national law thus far is a failure. It is down in black and white and that is about all there is to it. The liquor traffic goes ahead, inconvenienced a little of course, with more and more individual fortunes issuing from it than ever before.

Citizens who have no mite of regard for a constitutional statute are being paid lavishly for their lack of principle. Bootleggers, both high and low, are reaping a harvest of dollars as a reward for their unscrupulousness; members of the medical profession who are without conscience are raking in the shekels from patronizing sots; dealers in any kind of liquid that can claim a percentage of alcohol and who are willing to sell it illegitimately are fattening their pocketbooks thereby. Disregarding the eighteenth amendment has come to be a new American profession, pursued because it is so profitable.

That quota of American citizens who would welcome a general compliance with the prohibition act, even though it may be distasteful to them, have been waiting patiently for the liquor stocks to run out, thinking that then law abidance would come perforce. But apparently there is no end to the supply. On the contrary it has been flowing more freely of late than ever. And everybody knows it.

Laws that cannot be enforced are worse than no laws. Better that we have no prohibition than a sham prohibition. Better to have real prohibition, however, than no prohibition.