

BITTER ATTACK ON DRYS MADE BY CLARENCE DARROW

Johnson City Staff-News, Monday Afternoon, September 19, 1927

Prohibition and its advocates are scathingly denounced by Clarence Darrow. in an article in the first issue of "Plain Talk Magazine" in which the famous lawyer remarks that before Volsteadism (*referring to the Volstead Act which outlawed alcoholic beverages from 1919 – 1933*) "even poisoning rats was looked upon as a cruel method of warfare.

The article by Mr. Darrow well lives up to the name and purpose of the new monthly. With no beating about the bush, this modern champion of downtrodden causes directly accuses the Prohibitionists of a cruelty and barbarous unexampled in our civilization.

"No other federal or state law," says Mr. Darrow, "and no law of any nation, civilized or barbarous, has ever been sought to be enforced by **scattering poison** through the land. This method was never resorted to in cases of witchcraft or heresy in the fervent days of religious persecution. The advocates of Prohibition refused to permit a law to remove the poison from alcohol and in the meantime the death rate from government poison, fostered and protected by the advocates of Prohibition at all costs, continues to mount. The cost of Prohibition is not only cost of liberty, of money, but likewise of life.

"Do these men and women realize what it means?" asks Mr. Darrow. "They are like other people, with the same feeling and emotions and the same regard for human life, and yet, so intent are they on forcing their views and beliefs on the public, that they do not hesitate to insist on a practice that is in direct conflict with every feeling of justice and every decent human emotion. Their color-blindness, obtuseness and cruelty must be the result of their fanatical devotion to a cause.

"Prohibition is an obsession. It is such a superlative obsession that its advocates can think of nothing else. They believe that the life of the nation and the destiny of the human race depend upon compelling an unwilling and resolute people to submit to what seems to them only tyranny and despotism."

Of those who talk about violating the Federal Constitution, Mr. Darrow has this to say, "With a defiance of facts born of fanatical intolerance, they denounce those who do not accept the Volstead Act, as if the statutes of the past and the present, not only of America, but the whole

world, were not replete with rudimentary laws still on the books which have been repealed through lack of use. No one but a prohibitionist could justify himself in declaiming in favor of the enforcement of all laws, when he knows that he neither believes, advocates nor practices the enforcement of many laws, and even constitutional provisions that have not been repealed.”

“Where is the advocate of prohibition?” asks Mr. Darrow in conclusion, “who ever even hints that the people refuse to obey any law but the sacred Volstead Act!” Mr. Darrow feels that with many another unwarranted law, a change can be effected without resorting to a federal amendment.