

SOUTH CAROLINA'S LIQUOR DISPENSARY

PROBABLY DOOMED-

A STATE ENTERPRISE THAT CAUSED RIOTS, RAIDS AND OFFICIAL SCANDALS.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S famous lesson in liquor legislation is believed by the majority of people in that State to be wounding out its concluding chapter.

The State dispensary law, one of the most remarkable experiments in the way of public control of a commodity in popular demand ever attempted, will, it is thought, be itself repealed by the incoming Legislature.

At the recent primary elections in that State the voters of the dominant party declared in favor of the candidates antagonistic to the present system of liquor control.

For thirteen years the State dispensary law of South Carolina has run its troubled course. Riots, raids and official scandals have clustered upon the pages of its history; violations of the law have been frequent, and more or less open; graft has been charged in this quarter and that. The dominating influence of one man alone—United States Senator B. R. Tillman—has kept the law upon the books this long.

In the recent primary campaign the appeals of Mr. Tillman were disregarded, and a sentiment adverse to the dispensary gained ascendancy. The fate of the dispensary rests with the new Legislature—the State officials to be elected are against it. Even should it be banished from South Carolina, its unsavory odor will linger long within the confines of the Palmetto State.

SENATOR TILLMAN is regarded as the father of South Carolina's dispensary system. Whether its seemingly impending overthrow will have any effect upon the political fortunes of this picturesque and rugged statesman cannot be predicted, nor is such prediction necessary.

Despite the fact that the Democratic voters of the State apparently decided against him on this issue, he undoubtedly has a firm hold on their affections. He was not the issue in the campaign of last summer; if he arrayed himself on the losing side in the advocacy of a system in which he believed, he did no more than other leaders have done.

No one has ever impugned Senator Tillman's honesty. Impetuous, headstrong, fiery and uncontrollable he may be, but suspicion of graft does not attach to him. That it has been charged to the system he fathered is not laid at his door.

Soon after Mr. Tillman was elected Governor of South Carolina in 1890 he was confronted with the old, perplexing problem of the sale of intoxicating liquors. Until that time he had been a farmer, unprepossessing in appearance, rugged in manner and without schooling in statesmanship.

He had led a revolt of the farmers of the State against existing political conditions and the so-called "blue bloods" dominating his party and Commonwealth. He resented a continuation of the traditions of Southern ante-bellum days, and took office determined to make a record for reform.

At the outset of his administration, Tillman found the party in peril of being swamped between the opposing forces of high license and prohibition. Advocates of the latter had greatly increased in numbers, and in some of the counties, like Marlborough, the sale of liquors had long been in disfavor.

At that time the city of Athens, Ga., was experimenting with municipal control of the sale of liquors in packages, buying and selling through a municipal commission. It was suggested that such a plan be expanded and adapted to the entire State of South Carolina.

DISPLACED ALL SALOONS

The idea found favor, and the dispensary plan was born. It was decided to close all existing saloons and, thereafter, to have liquors sold only by State agents at authorized State dispensaries—one or more in each county—and under strict legal regulations.

No dispensary law was formulated. Its provisions were to be carried out by a State Board of Control, consisting of five members elected by the Legislature. The number was afterward reduced to three.

This board was to purchase all liquors and have them tested. A commissioner, appointed by it, was to act as executive officer and distribute supplies to the various State dispensaries.

In every county, at such places where the sale of liquor was allowed by the board, local dispensers were appointed, as well as constables to see that the provisions of the law were duly observed.

It was intended to make only a fair profit from the sale of liquor for the State. Part of such revenue was turned into the State school fund, the remainder being divided between the county and town governments where the local dispensaries were located.

For eleven months of one year—reported under this system and taken as a specimen period—the total receipts from sales amounted to \$2,621,848.22, and the cost of supplies was \$1,980,247.75. Of the net profits, the amount accruing to the State on behalf of the school fund was \$738,813.15; and the amount divided among the counties and towns was \$208,152.25.

The entire net receipts of that year were \$266,807.19, an increase over the preceding year of \$152,045.56. Among the leading items of cost, besides supplies, were labor contracts, \$1,123.91; salaries and expenses of administrative exclusive of constables, \$24,872.31; pay and expenses of constables, \$30,621.14; freight and express charges, \$30,801.41.

Trouble and unhappiness followed in the wake of the dispensary law almost from its launching. Thousands resented the restrictions thrown about the sale of liquor. They had been accustomed to walking into a bar, and buying what and when they pleased; the new order of things was regarded as an encroachment upon personal liberty.

Under the dispensary law every person wishing liquor was obliged to purchase it in package form—from a job upward. He had to present to his local dispenser a written or printed application, giving a good deal of personal information in reply to questions that, perhaps he regarded as impertinent. And at that the dispenser could refuse to sell to him, if he desired.

All this created dissatisfaction. Many persons be-

Senator Tillman, Sponsor for the South Carolina Dispensary.



A Typical Dispensary in South Carolina.

lieved that the State had no right to enter business; others, not indulging in ethical premises, concluded that they had a much right to sell liquor as the State, law or no law. In any event, they knew that there was money in it.

Consequently, hundreds of speakeries were opened all over South Carolina. It has been asserted that, while there were ten legal dispensaries in the city of Charleston, there were at least 200 speakeries, or "blind tigers."

Thereupon, the army of constables became busy. They were endeavoring to do their duty, perhaps; but, as a rule, they were not highly cultured nor especially gentle.

Raid after raid ensued. For a time such official intrusions were confined to places suspected as being speakeries. They were not conducted according to the



Raiding a Private Residence for Liquor.

Help for the Discouraged, 'Motherless' Girl

TO AID motherless girls, Mrs. M. M. Van Cott, the well-known evangelist, has formed an organization which she hopes to see flourishing all over the country in a few years. It is called the Motherless Girls' Christian Association.

At present headquarters are at Catakill, N. Y., but "Mother Van," as she is affectionately known from New England to the Pacific, expects to visit a number of other cities and establish branches where she thinks the greatest need exists.

By Mrs. M. M. Van Cott

I AM FREQUENTLY asked the object of the Motherless Girls' Christian Association, and yet I think its object is set forth in its name.

To comfort, care for and win the discouraged motherless girls, especially in our large cities, and through loving counsel strive to prevent them from going to the bad—that is our object.

Most of them are good girls now—or when they start out to face the world—and we hope to help them to continue in the path of uprightness by entertaining and guiding them; to keep them from the street and save them for God, home and religious motherhood.

The officers of the association at present are: President, Mrs. M. M. Van Cott; vice president, Miss Anna De Groat; recording secretary, Mrs. W. P. Bates; treasurer, Mrs. H. Fredenburgh.

I cannot impress upon the public too strongly our purpose, and so I venture to repeat: We desire to gather together the motherless girls, and in tender love instruct, warn, guide, encourage and entertain them, while we "mother" them for God, home and womanly purity.

Does there live man or woman in whose breast there is not found tenderest pity and true sympathy for a motherless girl?

Many a girl, tenderly reared and unfitted by nature or training to be left to fight the battle of life alone, hears all too early the rustle of the wings of the angel of death, as it takes away her best earthly friend, counselor and guide, her mother. She turns away from the parent's grave, desolate, heart-crushed and undone. The sight of the vacant chair in the cheerless home smites her soul; she misses the gentle foothold of one that cometh not; at bedtime there is no mother's embrace, no loving good-night kiss.

Then dawn a new and, too often, a troubled life. She must go out into the world, from which she has been so tenderly shielded, to earn her own living. Do you know what that means? If you do, you understand the need for sympathy and help.

The child is oftentimes totally inexperienced, knows nothing of life, its temptations and pitfalls. Heavy hearted, she seeks a situation. Perhaps she is sweetly beautiful in her sorrow—more's the pity for her; then the cheap boarding house becomes her home. She earns just money enough to keep a shelter above her and provide her with distasteful food. Poor one, with none to counsel or guide!

Weeks and months go by with a growing, intensified longing of soul for a kindly word or smile of love.

She is a good girl at heart, brought up religiously, and doubtless attends church. But even at church, none notices her, even to offer a hymn book. Her clothes now begin to look a bit shabby—these

touches the depths of her womanly spirit. She sees no chance to replenish them. What now?

Discouraged beyond measure, again and again she wishes she could die.

Now comes Satan in human form, going about seeking to devour. She believes his words of love. Soon she is happily engaged to be married, and her spirit is joyous in its hope.

He invites her out to some place of amusement, then to supper. See her eye sparkle; she supposes she is loved. Wine is called for. She hesitates, but her intended drinks his glass, tells her, in simple, mild wine and she is beguiled to drink it, for she loves him and has not the least doubt of his love.

From such a dream of happiness she too often awakes to a horrible reality. Unless God, in pity, sends a Florence Critchden rescue saint to the undone one at whom the world will now point the finger of scorn, some mother's child will sink deeper and still deeper, till in mercy to her poor sin-racked body the potter's field opens its arms and she finds a nameless grave.

Now, then, it is to save such as these, in a work of loving prevention, that our association has been formed. We purpose to have a home of rest for tired ones, open the year round, where they may find loving motherly spirits to cheer, counsel and watchfully guide them. Many in our stores, factories and mills are not sick, but utterly tired out and discouraged.

As soon as funds are at our disposal we shall buy a home and invite the good girls, who desire to remain good; to come in relays of ten or twenty, as God shall give us the means. They will spend a week, ten days or two weeks, as each case may need.

We purpose to give them perfect rest of body, with a neat room, good wholesome food, and last, but not least, motherly love and Christian counsel as to the value of pure womanliness and refined womanly dignity. We shall teach each one that as a woman she, in ruling herself, can in her lot rule the world.

In our home we hope to set an example and to train to an industrious, purposeful life those who come to us. In other words, we shall try to save and give to the world hundreds of womanly women by making them to see and know that life is not only worth living, but is a beautiful, useful gift from God.



Mrs. M. M. Van Cott.



The Bloody Battle at the Depot in Darlington—Many Killed and Wounded.

amenities of an afternoon tea; hence it is of little surprise to note that several killings ensued.

It was when the activity of the constables extended to the search of dwellings that indignant resentment rose to white heat, and bloodshed was charged to the working of the dispensary law.

Rioting took the place of protest. At Darlington, a prosperous city in the Pee-Dee section, came the first trouble. Several places there were raided late in March, 1894, by a force under Chief State Constable Galliard, and while there was no open resistance, the onlooking crowd was ruffled and threatening.

Soon after this, the report became current that several private houses were to be searched for supplies of liquor.

That was more than the men of the town could stand, and they began to gather, armed with shotguns, rifles and revolvers.

No trouble occurred that day, however; but on the following morning twelve State constables, armed with rifles, reached the town.

The appearance of these officers aroused intense indignation, and calls sent to the surrounding country brought in scores of sympathizers with the people of Darlington.

Such a demonstration seemed to convince the constable that they were not in a healthy locality. On March 20 fourteen of them, bearing Winchester rifles, were assembled at the railroad station, awaiting a train.

Before it arrived, however, firing began. It was stated that five unarmed citizens, who happened to get together near the depot, were made the subject of attack.

In any event, the rifle reports brought a number of citizens to the scene, and they took part in the scrimmage with prompt enthusiasm.

When it was all over, four men were found to be dead, several others were mortally wounded, and there were a number of cases of more or less serious injury.

The constables concluded that discretion was the better part of valor. They promptly took to the woods, where, for several days, they were hunted by a frenzied crowd. All, however, got away safely.

News of the Darlington riot spread like wildfire. Disorder, too, spread like a contagion.

In Florence a mob wrecked the local dispensary and destroyed supplies valued at \$15,000.

Governor Tillman ordered out the State militia. Three companies in Columbia refused to respond. One of these was no other than the favorite Governor's Guard. Other military organizations throughout the State also did not obey.

It was a theatrical moment when the historic Governor's Guard refused to proceed to Darlington. The command was marshaled on the lawn before the Executive Mansion, and soldier after soldier threw his equipment on the ground at Governor Tillman's feet.

Fearing that the State capital would soon be in the hands of a mob and that the Executive's life was in danger, friends of Mr. Tillman urged him to flee for safety. His single eye blinding with wrath and determination, the Governor refused.

"They may kill me, but they cannot scare me," he said. "The people of South Carolina put me here to attend to their business, and I will stay here and do my duty, or be carried out a corpse."

In this perilous position, the Governor appealed to the farmers of the State—the "wool hats" who had selected him—to help him maintain sovereign authority.

FARMERS RALLIED TO THE GOVERNOR

By scores and hundreds they responded, all armed, and soon 800 or 900 determined men were at hand to back up his rule.

Mr. Tillman, however, found a sufficient number of troops ready to obey his orders to control the situation at Darlington. He placed the town under martial law, and soon restored order.

The "whisky war," as it was called, lasted ten days, and then came to an end.

That was by no means the end of the troubles of the dispensary system, however. Other troubles have arisen from time to time.

It has been charged for years that graft was rampant and that the whole traffic as conducted by the State was rotten.

This finally led up to an official investigation by a committee of the Legislature. The investigation, conducted only a few months ago, resulted in revelations that, doubtless, had much to do with the recent verdict of voters against the dispensary system.

Rebates by the hundred were found, it is stated. It was also found, according to reports of the proceedings, that public bids for supplies had been tampered with, that exorbitant prices had been paid for bottles, labels, liquor and everything else that had been bought, and that some of the dispensers had been shown guilty of actual theft, and yet had been retained in the employ of the State.

Scandal after scandal has marked the history of the State dispensary. The people have not been satisfied, and the State has been enriched, it is declared, should the dispensary law be repealed, the relief throughout South Carolina, it is stated, will be general.

Postmen Collect Debts in Austria

A DEBT-COLLECTING agency which is run as a part of the regular postal system is the newest "improvement" of the postoffice of Austria.

Despite the novelty of the enterprise, the plan has worked admirably, so that thousands of dollars are collected annually by the postmen throughout the Austrian empire.

The system is very simple. Suppose a tradesman in Vienna has an account due from a customer in, say, such a distant town as Budapest, which he wishes to collect. Distance does not matter in the least.

He merely sends the bill to the postoffice in the capital, whence it is at once transmitted to the post office at Budapest. There the postman presents it to the debtor, collects the cash, and returns it to the Vienna postoffice, whence it is delivered to the tradesman by postman.

In the event of payment being refused, which, of course, sometimes happens, the creditor is promptly apprised of the fact, and valuable time is thus frequently saved.