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CRIME, and LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ever since President Hoover gave his stinging indictment of the lawlessness and lack of character shown by the American people since the War, an extensive agitation of conscience is being shown, and a serious intention to study the causes and remedies for the same.

It is being widely charged that much the greater part of the vicious forms of crime are committed by recent immigrants who have not yet learned the necessity for conforming to the statutes and restrictions of our government, and especially those who are subject to certain alien political church influences. Even if true, this does not relieve our American citizens from any of the responsibility. We invited them, and encouraged them—until recently—to come here and help build up the country. In return for which, we undertook to civilize them and make them equal as citizens. Now that we have failed to do so, it is our fault; and we shall continue to be severely punished as at present until we meet the responsibility.

The first thing to be observed, perhaps, is that the increase of crime is not from the increase of natural criminals, but the great increase of criminal opportunity afforded by the invention of the auto. The easy means by which the auto can be used for robbery of all sorts, kidnapping and murder, as well as the disposing of liquor, have caused a vast increase in these forms of crime. And in close connection with these lie all of the evils of the liquor traffic and drinking. For the liquor evils, sporting business and professional men, fashionable society and a certain type of newspapers

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are almost wholly responsible. Without the present liquor laws, the conditions would certainly be vastly worse than at present. The great mass of the people, the farmers, mechanics and the labor ranks are far more sober and law abiding than they were before the Prohibition Amendment; and as these classes will furnish practically all of the parentage of the future, their interest is the only one entitled to consideration.

The checking of the crime wave is not merely a moral, or good citizenship issue. It is quite as much a matter of self preservation. The ominous increase of the deadly forces of electricity and gasoline in all industries and locomotion, and the well known fact that any drinking of alcohol affects the sight, caution and judgment in the brain, has made it imperative that all liquor drinking must be suppressed; no matter how much it may conflict with self indulgence or 'personal liberty'. It cannot be dodged by any such absurd farce as a certain portion of the Press is now exhibiting with its mass of letters. There is no line of practicable compromise. A beer and wine compromise would demoralize the whole country and negate all enforcement. It cannot be shirked by loading the responsibility on public officials. They can go but little further than juries will back them with unanimous votes. There must be a strong general backing of the efforts of the President,—the first President who has ever shown a positive purpose and ability to deal with the worst evils of society—by the daily volunteer propaganda work of all decent citizens.

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