

a community called ...

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HIGH LICENSE EXPOSED

BY

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HIGH-LICENSE EXPOSED.

THE question of licensing the traffic in alcoholic beverages has been revived of late under the form of "High-License." By this means it is proposed to more fully protect society against the ravages of intemperance than any other method has yet done. Several classes of persons have been deceived by these insinuating pretensions :

1. Those who have not specially studied the subject, and are not familiar with the facts and principles which have been developed along the more advanced lines of the temperance reform.

2. There are also good people who have no sympathy with either the use of, or the traffic in, alcoholic liquors, and desire to see the evil put under the heaviest possible legal restrictions, but who are not yet able to see that the more rigid policy of Prohibition is practi-

cable, especially in the larger centers of population.

3. Another class do not believe in total abstinence, holding that the moderate use of the milder intoxicants is compatible with health, and that, therefore, the sale is legitimate and should be provided for by law. They think that under High-License provision will be made for the legitimate sales with the least possible evil.

4. Another class, without reasoning much about it, look upon intemperance as one of the inevitable scourges that cannot be cured, and hope that High-License will bring it under some check.

5. Another class is hallucinated with the economies of High-License, the revenues it affords to public treasuries diminishing taxation, and "paying back a part of the cost the liquor evil inflicts upon society."

6. Another class have no confidence in High-License as an adequate protection of society against the saloon, but, nevertheless, regard it as a provisional measure, which

they hope will prepare the way for a more radical suppression of the alcohol evil by Prohibition.

The "High-License" policy has earnest advocates. Those who use liquor are enthusiastic over any thing that favors the drink traffic, and some good men who use no liquor honestly favor this measure because they see no better way to deal with the evil. The "High-License" system has been before the country, in some form, six or eight years. It has been tested in a great variety of circumstances, and we are learning that the results do not justify the extraordinary bluster and pretentiousness of its advocates. But to the facts:

MISSOURI.

The newspapers have widely circulated the very deceptive statement that the saloons have been reduced in this State in six years under High-License from 5,000 to 3,000. What are facts?

1. The reduction is correct, but not due to High-License. Of the 3,000 remaining, about

2,000 are in St. Louis, where they have High-License.

2. Consider the features of the law—that it comprises both Local-Option and High-License. Where the people vote not to allow saloons they are excluded; but where the popular vote favors them, High-License fees are paid. The law also fixes conditions under which licenses may be refused, even when the popular vote favors them. The county is not always the voting unit. A city of 2,500 inhabitants decides for itself, however the rest of the county may vote.

3. In 65 of the 116 counties there are no saloons. In 43 counties the saloons were abolished by the popular vote, and in 22 others petitions for licenses were refused. Aside from these 65 counties upward of 20 more have no saloons, except in one or two cities or large towns.

4. In some of the smaller cities where the license vote prevails the fee is fixed as high as \$3,000, and is, therefore, practically prohibitory.

5. It is easily seen, therefore, why the number of the saloons in the State of Missouri in six years has decreased from 5,000 to 3,000—not because of High-License, but because of Prohibition, under Local-Option.

6. As to St. Louis, the daily *Republican*, a Democratic paper of that city, last November said: “The dives are so numerous in this city, their organization is so compact, the clientele so extensive that so long as present conditions remain they will control the city completely. . . . The more disreputable the dive the greater its political influence, the more impudently aggressive its determination to rule at all hazards. Our present license law was intended to break their power, but so far as it applies to St. Louis it has rather served to increase it. . . . The groggery, the gambling-house, and brothel control the city affairs, and openly boast their power; and woe to the man who, by fair deeds and respect for law and his oath of office, excites their enmity.”

7. The same paper says: “One can travel
No. 235.

clear across this State, from the Iowa line to Arkansas, by rail, and never be within ten miles of a saloon"—not because of High-License, but of Prohibition by Local-Option.

CHICAGO.

For five years we have heard much about what the \$500 license fee has done for this city. What are the results? The *Chicago Daily News* of April 6, 1888, is authority for the following statements :

1. High-License is a success as a revenue, but it is an undisguised failure as a temperance measure.

2. It in no way checks the consumption of intoxicating liquors as a beverage.

3. Nor does it, in the least degree, lessen the evils or crime from the use of alcoholic liquors.

4. "The dives and dens, the barrel-houses, and the thieves' resorts are as bad and as frequent in this city to-day, after five years of High-License, as they ever were."

"Call High-License what it is—an easy way to raise a revenue from vice—but let

there be an end of indorsing it as a temperance or reform measure."

A CITY IN WISCONSIN.

A writer in the *Home Missionary*, the organ of the American Missionary Association, gives the following facts about Ashland, Wis., where a \$500 license fee prevails:

1. We have 65 saloons, each paying \$500 license fee.

2. The saloons are all open on Sundays, running at full blast.

3. Fifteen hundred men are on the streets every night. The saloons are brilliantly lighted, while pianos and other musical instruments, singing, and other attractions draw crowds to them.

4. The saloons have every thing their own way, claiming that they have paid for the privilege.

ATLANTA, GA.

The Atlanta *Commonwealth* says:

1. In the year 1887, under Prohibition, the arrests for drunkenness in the months from
No. 235.

January to September, inclusive, were 674 ; in the same months in 1888, under a High-License fee of \$1,000, there were 1,510 arrests.

2. Therefore this paper says : " The \$1,000 High-License law in Atlanta is an utter failure ; " " it is no bar to crime and drunkenness."

WORCESTER, MASS.

The city has recently been under three different regimens : May 1, 1886, to May 1, 1887, *No-License* ; May 1, 1887, to May 1, 1888, *Low-License* ; May 1, 1888, to November 1, 1888, *High-License*.

The Rev. D. O. Mears, D.D., at a recent public meeting in Worcester, gave the following statistics from official sources :

1. ARRESTS FOR DRUNKENNESS.

May 1, 1886, to May 1, 1887, <i>No-License</i> . . .	1,682
" 1887, " 1888, <i>Low-License</i> . . .	3,549
" 1888, to Nov. 1, 1888, <i>High-License</i> .	1,763

These facts show that there were 81 more arrests for drunkenness in six months under

High-License than in one whole year under No-License, and that the rate is almost the same under High-License as under Low-License.

2. PRISONERS IN THE COUNTY JAIL.

	Under No-License. 1886.	Under Low-License. 1887.	Under High-License. 1888.
Oct. 1. . . .	159	233	264
Nov. 1. . . .	147	232	236

These figures show but little difference under Low-License and under High-License, but a little worse under High-License. As compared with the period of No-License, there were 63 per cent. more arrests under High-License than under No-License. The superintendent of the jail and the city marshal furnished the foregoing figures from official records.

PLAINFIELD, N. J.

In this city the license fee was raised from \$300 to \$500, but the *Central Times* of that place says :

1. More licenses have been granted under the \$500 fee than under the old \$300 fee.

2. High-License in Plainfield has only succeeded in one thing, and that is in fastening the liquor-traffic upon the town because of the large revenue it brings into the treasury.

3. High - License thus proves a revenue bribe to the consciences of city officials, who like to make a good financial showing under their administration.

PENNSYLVANIA.

It is claimed that the High-License law enacted in this State in 1887, and which went into effect in 1888, has done great things in reducing the saloons in Philadelphia from 6,000 to 1,300. Several things should be stated:

1. A letter to me from a judge in the courts of that State says: "The law of 1887 differs in no material feature from the former license laws, save that the fee is somewhat higher; and in Philadelphia city the granting of licenses was taken from an Excise Board and put at the discretion of the judges of the courts, as it has long been in the rest of the

State. In Philadelphia, under the Excise Board, sales were practically free. The granting of licenses was so vastly overdone as to cause a revulsion, and hence the number has been materially reduced under the new law."

2. This same judge further says: "There is no merit in the High-License feature of this law: first, because it is not high; second, because there is no practical provision for reducing drunkenness with the attendant evils; and third, because it does not express the opinion of any portion of the people who will persistently enforce it."

3. No credit is due to "High-License," which entered but slightly into the framing of the bill, the fees being, in the largest cities, only \$500; in cities of the next class, only \$300; in boroughs, \$150; and in townships, \$75. It is evident that such fees cannot cripple or restrain the liquor-traffic.

4. The most effective provisions of the law (a copy of which lies before me) are the conditions on which licenses are granted, cutting

off many persons formerly licensed. It is said that in Philadelphia 2,500 applicants came with money in hand, but were excluded by the terms of the law; the prohibitory features which Prohibitionists in the Legislature had engrafted upon it, and without which it could not have been enacted.

5. There is no evidence that the volume of liquor consumed has been diminished. Brewers claim that they sell more liquor in that city than before, a much larger quantity of bottled beer going directly to private houses.

6. The statistics of arrests in Pittsburg, as given in the *Pittsburg Times*, indicate no improvement in that city :

	Drunk.		Disorderly.	
	1887.	1888.	1887.	1888.
June.....	302	345	416	373
July.....	237	305	435	467
August.....	284	285	469	354
September.....	295	341	397	411
October	257	368	406	320
November.....	251	347	308	352
Totals.....	1,626	1,991	2,431	2,277

Combining the two classes, we have 4,057 in 1887 to 4,268 in 1888, an increase of 211 under High-License.

7. A gentleman writing me from Luzerne County says that, in a population of 150,000 in 1888, out of 833 applicants, 718 received licenses, or one for 209 inhabitants; not much improvement upon the four license States, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Connecticut, and New Jersey, which, combined, averaged in 1887 one license for 182 inhabitants.

8. A writer in the *Congregationalist* says: "I am told by well-informed persons that there has not been the least change in this valley, from Carbondale to Nanticoke, with a population of nearly 300,000 people. In Carbondale itself there are 137 *unlicensed* saloons, as against 10 licensed; and I am sure the same is true in regard to western Pennsylvania. The law seems to be a dead-letter outside of Philadelphia."

9. A large amount of money has been expended in Philadelphia to gild and beautify the saloons, which are now patronized by

young men who never would have entered a low dive.

10. Moreover, the experiment is only a few months old in Philadelphia. Wait a few years, as in St. Louis, Chicago, etc., until the liquor power adjusts itself to the new conditions, and the evils of the High-License regimen will become conspicuous.

11. *The Christian Statesman*, published in Philadelphia, after citing the figures now freely circulated in favor of High-License in that city, says:

“The advocates of High-License throughout the country are heralding these figures abroad as powerful vindication of the superior efficacy of this method of dealing with the evil. But it must be steadily insisted on that High-License is not the feature of the law which has operated to produce these results. They are due almost exclusively to certain well-defined Prohibitory features in the statute. Since such results as are outlined above have followed partial Prohibition, what may not be expected from the complete abolition

of the traffic. Every figure in the above returns is a powerful argument for the adoption of the Prohibitory Constitutional amendment.

12. It is known that the action of the courts in Philadelphia, in refusing two thirds of the licenses applied for, involves so much of "colorable monopoly and favoritism" that it is doubtful whether it is sustained by public opinion. The judge before quoted writes: "Already attempts are being made at the capital to amend the law so as to emasculate it; and so it will ever be a football of the politicians and the legislators, as well as an apple of discord among the people. We want Constitutional Prohibition because it is consistent, progressive, and permanent."

NEBRASKA.

1. The law makes High-License elective, by Local-Option; the fee is \$1,000.

2. The first year there were fewer saloons; but the second year showed a gain, and they have continued to increase in numbers.

3. In Omaha, though the number of the
No. 235.

saloons has been reduced to 250, there appears to have been no diminution of drunkenness and crime. These statistics for Omaha are appalling. It is stated that last year there were 11,910 arrests, though the entire population of the city was but 110,000. Many think the High-License principle has corrupted the public conscience.

4. The beer-brewers' reports show that in this State, under the High-License fee of \$1,000, the consumption of beer has steadily increased from 40,000 barrels in 1880 to 108,000 barrels in 1887. Kansas, with nearly twice the population of Nebraska, consumed only 16,000 barrels in 1887.

5. Hon. J. W. Hardy, Mayor of Lincoln, Neb., the father of High-License, makes a full and honorable confession of its failure. He says:

“High-License does increase the number of unlicensed drinking places. The last time we had access to the internal revenue collector's books (he won't let us see them lately) there were 91 persons in Omaha and 17 in

Lincoln who held a government permit without the sign of a city or State license. Of course they were selling liquor, or why did they pay for a government permit? They are not afraid of local authorities, but do not dare to trifle with the government. We never knew one liquor-dealer to complain of another. They all live in glass houses of violated law, and throwing stones would be dangerous. Some parts of the State are even worse than the cities I have mentioned.

“It does not lessen the number of open saloons. If ten are making a clear thousand dollars each and you tax each of them a thousand dollars, it would leave them no profits at all; but if four dropped out or went into partnership with four others, then they could pay six thousand and make money again, for they save the expense of running four saloons and have all the trade the ten did. It does not lessen the drinks or the curse, but heavily increases them. After a man pays a thousand dollars he pushes things the best he knows how.

“It procrastinates Prohibition ten years. It is a whisky devil in temperance garb. We were deceived by it, or Nebraska would have Prohibition to-day. The money serves as a bribe. In Omaha it is \$32 for every voter. Praying church-members vote for it just for the money. They are willing to let their boys slide rather than miss the money.

“At first the liquor-men fought against it, now they all fight for it. Put on restrictions; but don't take their money. A virtuous woman may be deceived and betrayed, but when she deliberately sells her virtue for money what is she? It is selling boys for drunkards and girls for drunkards' wives. There is now no longer any excuse for being deceived as we were. The fraud has been tested and found wanting. I was first elected Mayor in 1877, and again re-elected at the close of my first term. I thought at the time I had done a good thing to reduce the number of saloons from 22 to 5, but when I found it did not lessen the curse, I saw my mistake. There are just as many stabbings, shootings,

and pounded noses as ever there were; just as many broken homes, crying wives and ragged children. It is no great consolation to a houseless, hungry, crying wife to tell her that her husband got drunk on High-License whisky. High-License is one of the devil's best devices to deceive good temperance people. Then to think I was his first agent on earth to start it! Don't you think I ought to do something to atone for such conduct?"

No. 235.

