"IN THE BOWERY"

A Priest on How Prohibition Works,

(N. Y. Herald.)

"So far as the Bowery is concerned, give me the pre-prohibition days every time."

Father William J. Rafter, head of the Holy Name Mission and a veteran in good works among the denizens of the Bowery, made that statement with emphasis last night. He was talking about the desperately bad effects of the denatured alcohol which, mixed with water, is being imbibed along the Bowery under the name of "Bowery Smoke."

"It's hellish stuff," said Father Rafter, "When it doesn't kill these poor fellows it drives them blind and crazy. They know not what they do."

"In the old days, the days when men could get a decent drink, I never saw such sights as I am confronted with every day now. The Bowery men drank beer or mixed ale, and even when they took the hard stuff it didn't hurt them much. This new liquor is different. It is rank poison to brain and body. So far as the Bowery is concerned, prohibition is a wicked failure."

"We have nearly more than twice as many violent alcoholic cases now as we had two or three years ago. It was really rare then to see a man blind, staggering, crazy drunk. Lots of times we saw poor fellows who had slipped down the ladder some a bit under the influence, and God knows that was bad enough, for I do not defend liquor in any way, but they were amenable to advice and suggestion."

"When they got over their bad they were in fair physical and mental condition. They could get a job or do what they had to do. Now they are hopeless. They are inspired to climb and ever mentionable wickedness. Drunkenness has increased and is increasing fast—in this section of the town—and I know what I am talking about after a quarter of a century of work among these people."

Whenever possible, Father Rafter advises the magistrates to commit men to the workhouse for intoxication after drinking "Bowery Smoke."

"It's the only way to save their lives," said Father Rafter. "Turned loose, they would buy a little more of the stuff and that would mean death. They pay 20 cents for a half pint of this 'medicated alcohol,' doctor it with water and swig it down. It's got so we have to keep a husky guard at the door of the Holy Name Mission to keep these crazy men from thrusting themselves in and starting a fight."

Police give testimony similar to Father Rafter's, saying in the district touching the Bowery that their work among the Intoxicated is harder and more dangerous than it ever was in the days before prohibition became legally effective.