JUSTICE CLARKE ON PROHIBITION

Upon the black books of the extreme reformers will be placed this day, without question the name of John H. Clarke, associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. He spoke before the alumni of the New York University Law School at New York Saturday evening and one does not have to strain his imagination to the breaking point to realize what must be the opinion of William Hamilton Anderson, general superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League of New York, concerning at least a portion of the remarks made.

The Eighteenth Amendment, said Justice Clarke, required millions of men and women abruptly to give up habits and customs of life which they thought not immoral or wrong but which, on the contrary, they believed to be necessary to their reasonable comfort and happiness. As we all now see, he said, respect not only for that law but for all law has been put to an unprecedented and demoralizing strain in our country, the end of which it is difficult to see.

One of the great evils in American life was the saloon and the people finally determined that it should go. That the world would be a better and happier place if no one ever drank intoxicating liquors is a contention with which we have no desire to disagree. The prohibitionists, who demanded that everyone else should totally abstain from drinking alcohol in any form, finally managed to have the consumption of liquor prohibited by constitutional enactment. The millennium was due but it failed to arrive and even the most optimistic persons who are willing to consider facts are not predicting its early appearance.

And the disrespect for law which Justice Clarke spoke about must be apparent to us all. Millions of dollars are being spent to enforce the prohibition laws and our newspapers continue to find their columns constantly crowded with news that has to do with drinking and the illicit sale and manufacture of spirits. The boy who sees, if not his own father, other men for whom he has respect and who are classed as decent citizens, almost openly violating one of the fundamental laws of the land is not apt to see why the others need be held in wholesome respect.