The Story of a Speakeasy

Newspapers in New York have made much of the closing of a speakeasy in the Borough of Queens, for the reason that the circumstances were quite unusual. It seems that the back door of this speakeasy was directly opposite a public school, and children were frequently greeted with the spectacle of drunken men staggering about. The place had twice been raided by the police and once by the Federal authorities, but it still managed to do business.

Finally Mrs. R. L. P. Wallace of the Parent-Teachers' Association tried her hand. She appealed to the proprietor, who offered to close the back door but explained that he could not very well move to another location, because the bar and other fixtures had been made to order and moving would be too expensive. So Mrs. Wallace made the wires to Washington hum, sending telegrams directly to the President, to the Department of Justice, to Senator Copeland and to Representative Brunner. This done, a meeting of the Parent-Teachers' Association was called, and it was agreed to start picketing the speakeasy unless it were closed forthwith. This threat proved availing, and now Mrs. Wallace is receiving congratulations on her victory.

The experience has been sufficiently illuminating to Mrs. Wallace to cause her to change her views on prohibition, which she had previously believed in and advocated. She is now for the repeal of the Amendment, holding that the law has proved itself to be a failure, that it is generally unenforceable and that it has led to the disregard and disrespect of other laws. She explains that the Parent Teachers' Association was moved to take action in this particular case only because of the proximity of the speakeasy to the school. If the proprietor had not thus transgressed the proprieties he might still be doing business. He not only violated all existing laws but the old stipulation that a saloon must not be too near a school or church. Mrs. Wallace is now convinced that regulation that regulates is preferable to suppression that neither suppresses nor regulates.