

**"PUSSYFOOT"
JOHNSON**

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"Pussyfoot" Johnson by F. A. McKenzie

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F. A. MCKENZIE

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MR. W. E. JOHNSON
May, 1920

Photo: Nier.

Bookplate

“Pussyfoot” Johnson

By

F. A. McKenzie

*Author of “Korea’s Fight for Freedom,” “Through the
Hindenburg Line,” etc.*

“Let Johnson alone: more power to his elbow.”

President Roosevelt.

*Hodder and Stoughton
Limited London*

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Introduction

THE Prohibition movement ranks among the most remarkable crusades of modern times. That is a fact hardly to be denied even by those who differ most strenuously from it. The majority of the English-speaking communities of the world, and some non-English-speaking nations, have voluntarily, within a few years, renounced a favourite and established habit—a habit which literature, tradition and custom had caused mankind to regard as one of the pleasures of life.

Alcohol had been for generations untold an anodyne in grief, a symbol of joy, a medicine for the invalid and comfort for the mourner. It accompanied men literally from their birth to their grave. No christening was complete without it; every birthday was made an occasion for the drinking of healths: a wedding-feast with-

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out strong drinks would have seemed like a banquet without meat ; and before they laid a corpse in its final home the mourners gathered together and decorously drank wine.

Then came the movement against alcohol. Men ceased to drink, at first individually. After a time they banded themselves in societies and formed an easy butt for novelists and satirists. Next they started to cut off the sale of drink in their own communities, village by village, town by town, state by state. More recently whole nations agreed voluntarily to stamp out the traffic. To-day men are dreaming of a "dry" world, and it is a dream that many hope may come true in our time.

Of all those associated with the Prohibition movement the name of only one has become, up to now, a household word throughout the world—"Pussyfoot" Johnson.

Fortune brought me in touch with Mr. Johnson in an exciting and adventurous hour. Our experiences then led to further meetings. In time I came to see the man as

he is, and to understand why he has won the place he holds.

When it was suggested by others that I should write this brief sketch of his life, Mr. Johnson hesitated. He would prefer to work for to-morrow and leave the adventures of yesterday to themselves. "I do not believe in a biography that is all praise," he once said to me. "The only perfect beings that I know are in heaven." His only request was that I should write as critic rather than eulogist. "I have learned a lot from criticism," he declared, "and I have a lot more to learn yet."

This narrative is a plain record of some of the main incidents in the adventurous life of an adventure-loving man who has been a fighter from his youth up. I have come to admire William Johnson because of his directness, his simplicity, his courage, and his shrewd capacity. It is a good thing to observe the life of a man who goes straightly and strongly on, with his eyes set at one mark, a man who is neither weakling nor pietist, trimmer nor ranter, who can and

does give hard blows, and who is ready to take them without malice.

“Pussyfoot” Johnson won the admiration of two continents by his cheerful courage when he lost his eye as the result of a students’ “rag” in London. The qualities that he revealed then were not assumed for the moment, but were part of the man. I do not profess to share all his views, but I am proud to have the honour to tell of the life-work of a real “white” man.

F. A. MCKENZIE.