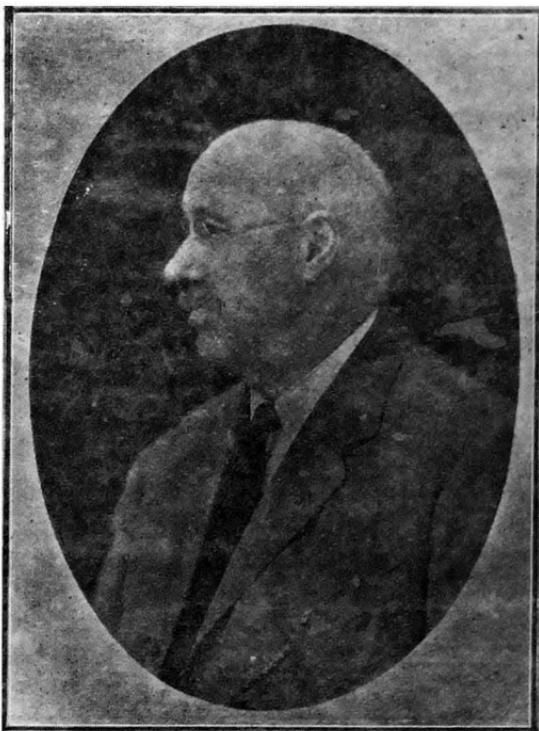


**“PUSSYFOOT” JOHNSON
THE MAN AND HIS WORK**



W. E. JOHNSON
"PUSSYFOOT"

“PUSSYFOOT” JOHNSON
The Man and His Work

BY

G. V. KRISHNA RAO

AUTHOR OF

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Nicolai Lenin : His Life and Work.

MADRAS
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1921



As. 8.

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OF TEMPERANCE REFORM
IN INDIA.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

IN this book I sketch out to my Indian brethren the noble life and work of William Eugene Johnson (known as "Pussyfoot"), the great temperance worker of America, who is amidst us to-day to witness our fight for prohibition. He comes to us at a time when we are fighting for our existence as a nation and although he might keep aloof from participating in our domestic politics, it is better that he should take note of what is happening here and relate afterwards his experiences of the Indian tour to our American brethren. He comes to us to relate the story of America getting "dry" and the beneficent results of the prohibition in America. The coolness he shows in times of danger and the persistency of action he exhibits should certainly attract our admiration and his life must be a bugle-call to our temperance workers to carry on vigor-

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ously their work silently and cheerfully amidst the dangerous pinpricks of the powers that be and even to court death if necessary.

I must acknowledge my indebtedness to all authors and newspapers from whom I have freely quoted in this book.

Gandhipet,
Guntur :
28th Aug. 1921. }

G. V. KRISHNA RAO.

FOREWORD

“State the facts,
Read the text right, emancipate the
world.”

Browning.

FROM immemorial times India is not addicted to the drink evil. The large masses of the Indian people are enjoined strict abstinence by their religions and we may well say that they have inherited the instinct of temperance and moral sobriety. This evil is of a recent growth in us. With the advent of the British Rule, along with other evils, this drink evil was imported into India and the liquor traffic has become one of the important financial foundations of the rulers. Even in the formation of the Excise Policy we have had no part in it and one must admit that a very small percentage of our people indulge in this bad habit. Official statistics clearly prove the steady increase in the drink revenue due not

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only to the enhancement of the duty charged but also to a decided increase in the volume of liquor consumed. The excise revenue in 1904-5 was £ 5,295,863 while 7,680,070 gallons of liquor was consumed. But in 1918-9 the revenue was £ 11,421,524 and the liquor consumed was 9,710,056 gallons. Thus we find the excise revenue more than doubled and the consumption of liquor increased by roughly two million gallons in a decade and a half. The people who consume liquor are considerable percentage of the wage-workers in Madras and other industrial areas, whose condition may be compared to the squalid misery of the South East London.

When hard pressed to abolish the drink evil, the British official in India has pleaded always that the excise revenue is one of the important financial items which he could not lose. He seems to say.

“ Let them die, but let me live !

Let them be put under a ban, but let me prosper !

Let them perish, but let me increase !

Let them become weak, but let me wax strong.”

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In fact, the Executive members of the Bihar Council, in so many words, confessed that the Government could not be carried on without its 'drink' revenue. By licensing the shops the Government is only *Indirectly* encouraging the people to become drunkards and this will in no way elevate us in our actions. For, as Lord Chesterfield has truly said, "there is no doubt, but those in authority will be directed by their masters to assist in their design to encourage the consumption of that liquor, from which large revenues are expected." The Government of India naively expressed its sympathy with the temperance movement and Sir William Vincent, the Home Member, said that the Government had never opposed anyone advocating the temperance cause without any violence. I should characterise Mr. Vincent's reply as hypocritical. Let us analyse the facts and the hollowness of the Government contention will be clear.

The Government gets an annual profit of 17 crores of rupees out of its licensing and excise for "liquor and drugs." The Government manages this dirty business through a special Department. The promotions of ser-

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vice in this Special Department, as confessed to me by one of the officers of that Department, depend largely on the effective collection of revenue. You could get a large revenue only if there is more consumption of liquor. To have more consumption, licenses should be increased. And if the temperance workers effectively take up the propaganda against drink they cannot but come into conflict with the excise officials whose duty it is to promote liquor consumption. Consequently charges of intimidation or violence are trumped up against the temperance workers. And yet, Mr. Vincent says that the Government sympathises with the temperance problem and sheds his sympathetic crocodile tears in the Legislative Assembly of the Government of India !!!!

After a careful investigation of facts, one must confess that the real enemy, the dangerous enemy, to the temperance reform in India is not the professional drunkard but the "misguided" official "who feels and fears that the whole structure of the Government machinery will crumble down with the reduction or disappearance of the excise revenue."

FOREWORD

The attitude of the British Bureaucracy towards the Congress campaign against drink at the present moment justifies also our contention.

With the arrival of "Pussyfoot" Johnson, I believe, we have secured a powerful ally to support our cause. Coming as he is with tremendous experience, we welcome him into our midst to help us with his advice and active co-operation to destroy the drink evil, root and branch, in this ancient land. I earnestly hope that all parties, irrespective of caste, creed, or color, will join in this great national prohibition campaign and raise their fellow brethren, who, seduced by satan, fell into evil ways.