

August 4, 1921.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

Once again I want to bring up the subject of the suggested book by you on "The Story of Prohibition in the United States", and to wax wordy and garrulous. The more I think about the matter the warmer my original enthusiasm grows, and what is more important, it has the full endorsement of Mr Brett's judgment and experience. In a word, if you can see your way to writing this book, it should prove to be the outstanding book of its year.

Although it seems to be the general policy of the newspapers to obscure it, there has never, so far as my personal experience goes, been so burning a topic as the present state of Prohibition application and evasion. Even the war was not so much discussed. It is on more tongues than was the Dreyfus Case in France in the late nineties. And after two years, instead of dying down, the discussion is growing more vehement every day. The Prohibitionists call the uneasiness, irritability, discontent that exist the simple expression of an appetite that is being balked or partially balked. The Anti-Prohibitionists see in the issue something that far outweighs the mere question of drink, something that menaces the very roots of the Republic. What is the truth in the matter, the motives behind Prohibition, the methods by which it was brought about, and the practical results, so far as they can be ascertained?

An absolutely impartial book by one of your standing would do much to clear the air, and, to speak practically, should have a very large audience and sale. It does not seem that either side could, without dangerously prejudicing its cause, withhold any of its evidence, or do otherwise than court the fullest investigation.

What is the true story of the activities that, reaching back to the years when the idea of Prohibition was regarded as a huge joke, led to the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act? There are many firmly and bitterly intrenched in the following beliefs: 1; that Prohibition was not the will of the people, but lobby made; 2; that a "drug store trust", greedy for spoil, was the chief financing agent; 3; that the Anti Saloon League, in order to enforce its will, went so far as to blackmail senators and congressmen, using the files of the Standard Oil Company, which

had been turned over for that purpose;4;that locally,the League used its small minorities to swing elections on condition of reciprocal service. In a word that the country was outrageously tricked,that the people did not have a clear chance for decision,that four million American soldiers were practically disfranchised,and that the war,instead of being regarded as a grave duty,was the golden opportunity.As charges these points are vaguely expressed;they are speciously and rather evasively answered.Whatever the real facts,it is an ugly,resentful,and widespread sentiment.

Frankly,I am biased. I believed Brabdt Whitlock when,in the Embassy at Brussels last year,he told me that appalling story of his first experience with Prohibition intrigue when he was entering politics.Seeing more drinking than ever before I feel that Prohibition ~~HMM~~ does not prohibit,only makes bootleggers enormously wealthy. The present laws could be rigidly enforced-by creating by conscription a standing army of four million men for the purpose and maintaining it by the methods of Frederick the Great;by placing the Republic under martial law;by daily search of every home;by doing away with trial by jury and substituting judges from the Anti-Saloon League;and by reviving the thumb screw,the rack,and the Iron Virgin of Nuremburg for the purpose of extorting confession.But some persons of anarchistic tendencies might object to that as not being quite in accordance with the principles of 1776. Seriously,I hope for sane laws that will work for real temperance.

But what I think does not count. As Mr Brett had pointed out,there is much to be said on the other side;there have been communities really benefited;savings-bank increases;decreases in crime. Historically there is a great deal in the subject. The temperance movement goes back to 1840 or before.In 1870 Horace Greeley was preaching the idea. Before the Ohio Anti-Saloon League,out of which the present League grew, there was the Massachusetts League.Maine of course had the experiment,and then Kansas. There is the story of the South going dry(incidentally in Colliers in the summer of 1908 Will Irwin had articles on "Nigger Gin" and "Who Killed Margaret Lear?" )

I might keep on to any length,but pause to give you breath.

Very sincerely yours.

Arthur B. Mumma