

WAYNE W. BLEAKLEY, President

GEORGE A. FAHEY, Manager

THE NEWS-HERALD

THE LARGEST AFTERNOON CIRCULATION IN VENANGO COUNTY

PRINTED DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAY AT FRANKLIN, PENNSYLVANIA



EDITORIAL STAFF
James B. Borland . . . Managing Editor
James A. Murrin News Editor

CITY NEWS STAFF
Orrin H. Graham City Editor
Mildred Kinch Lusher . . . Suburban Editor
Helen F. Deck Society Editor
Ruth M. Strance - Assistant to News Editor

FRANKLIN
Pennsylvania (June 29, 1929.)

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
New York City.

My dear Miss Tarbell: As a former Prohibition editor and one who retains a lively interest in the development of the Prohibition issue, I have written to the editor of Liberty magazine a letter commenting upon your article in the current issue, and am sending you a copy.

Respectfully,

Orrin H. Graham,

Orrin H. Graham,
Franklin, Pa.

Digital Images, 2010. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

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June 29, 1929.

Editor Liberty,
247 Park Avenue,
New York City.

There is no question that Ida M. Tarbell, who has won a distinguished place by her studies and writings on the subject of John D. Rockefeller as well as upon the life and work of Abraham Lincoln and upon other topics, expresses a real anxiety in her article, "Is Prohibition Forcing a Civil War?"

There is equally no doubt that the question is comic. In order that there may be a civil war there must be two belligerent, courageous forces to fight it. But in this case we have one only. There is no doubt that millions will fight before they will see the country dominated by a small group of bootleggers born, bred and trained in the criminal world. But on the other side you have only those who are equally sure they stand for the most basic of human rights and that they want their wife's relatives to do the fighting for these rights.

If you think it is too severe a charge, upset it by naming one courageous, upstanding thing they have done in the 10 years they have been given the chance. Was it when they shot down, from ambush, a lone coast guard? Was it when they attacked, a hundred or so to one, some Prohibition officer in the discharge of his duty? Was it at any time in their campaign of skulking about in the darkness, holding whispered and furtive congress with purveyors of liquor, throwing away their "goods" on the approach of officers, and lying about it in court afterwards? Was it when they took a solemn oath to bring in a verdict according to the evidence and all the time meant to acquit no matter what the evidence? Or was it when they reached that sublimity of heroism and derring-do suggested by Miss Tarbell's drunk themselves in the gutter who never drank before, gave to their sons, opened a bar in their homes---with due regard to secretiveness and caution---and obtained from some spigot or bunghole the last libation Liberty draws from the heart that swigs and swigs in her cause?

Where, in all this resounding clatter about "personal liberty" and the dearest and most inalienable rights of mankind has there been the stamp and certification of one worthy, red-blooded deed? Where is the wet Washington, Kosciusko, Marco Bozarris?

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler flames and thunders about the intolerable manner in which Prohibition is invading the sacred fundamentals of human liberty, how bloody tyranny flourishes over us and trails in the dust the sacred flag of the forefathers, how the tocsin should be sounded and the balefires lighted and every frosty-headed son of thunder rally 'round the flag--and then gets into his limousine, rolls away to his mansion and leaves the fighting to his wife's relatives.

No; there won't be any civil war over Prohibition. Two parties to it you must have. One is ready to fight, if need be. The other admits that it represents in our day the heroes and the martyrs of the glorious past, and will never bow the knee while a single one of their wife's relatives remains.

Miss Tarbell falls into grave error, anyhow, in estimating the number there are who view with increasing indignation the forays Prohibition is making against the innate ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ rights of mankind. Let us to the facts and figures.

In our state of Pennsylvania, several investigations and committee hearings ago, Mr. William S. Vare ran for United States Senator on an unequivocal personal liberty platform. Incidentally he expended such sizeable amounts of money that you would think now, if ever, he would bring out every personal liberty knight, hind and yeoman there is. He carried two counties out of 67-- though the Senate committee asks to be shown whether he carried Philadelphia county--for his slogan of "give an American his rights." He rallied to the standard of personal liberty ONE OUT OF SIX of the voting population of Pennsylvania, so frozen is the old American spirit in our veins.

Subtract from his vote the criminal class--and let it be discourteously remembered that the criminal class are all loyal and enthusiastic wets and soldiers in the last ditch on behalf of human rights if certain others are. Subtract from his vote those who are only automata in the hands of the boss. Subtract the brewers and their followers and others who have a personal stake in the matter and are not actuated by thoughts of freeing mankind from despotism. Subtract those who are wet because they are disgusted with the manner in which the law has not been enforced by the Republican and Democratic parties. Subtract all the tombstones, cats and dogs that swelled the cohorts of embattled freedom as manifested in the Vare vote, and you have exactly 00 out of every 10 voters in Pennsylvania who flocked to the Vare banner actuated by Freedom's shriek, sang the Mayonnaise and threw their all on the altar of holy Freedom.

Again, you have heard of the referendum in New York State and how the wets carried it "two to one" as they boastfully relate. But you have not heard so much about the depressing fact that, with no opposition whatever and with every big daily shedding ink without stint they mustered TWO OUT OF FIVE of the state's voting population to rescue man's dearest rights and hurl the usurper Prohibition from his throne.

You heard of the elaborate straw vote conducted by scores of newspapers in unison and how, when all was said and done, ONE OUT OF NINE of American voters had caught the torch thrown by those who had bravely shed the last drop of some keg or barrel and perished in the attempt. That is, there were one in nine if some didn't sit up nights clipping

newspaper coupons and voting them (I voted eight myself).

One out of nine! And if you make the deductions already enumerated, you will find again in the newspaper publ a demonstration that in America exactly 00 out of every 10 voters are ready to demonstrate that in them the sacred fires are not yet extinct.

To be sure, 697,735 last November voted in Massachusetts to ask Congress for the repeal of the 18th amendment, and Miss Tarbell inadvertently shows where her sympathies lie by a gasp of admiration that Massachusetts, late of Concord and Lexington, "is still Massachusetts".

Now we find that the voting population of Massachusetts is over 2,000,000. Wherefore, when the reincarnation of Paul Revere galloped from Cape Cod to Hoosac he rallied ONE OUT OF THREE. And let us now analyze the total and see what proportion of it was prompted by the spirit of liberty which, if unduly annoyed, rises in civil war: We find it composed as follows:

The criminal class---pickpockets, race track touts, second story men, etc.....7,735.

Brewers, distillers and others financially interested in the repeal of Prohibition....90,000.

Those disgusted with the results of putting the biggest distiller in the United States in charge of Prohibition enforcement with Gilbert and Sullivan dead and gone.....599,999.

Those voting as they did because of their love of human liberty and sincere belief that Prohibition menaces it.....1.

Those of this last number willing to engage in civil war unless their wife's relatives would be the ones to fall bleeding at every vein...00

Miss Tarbell counsels moderation, compromise, accommodation of some kind, she knows not what. Let me unfold for you the history of the Prohibition movement and show how utterly out of the question is everything of the kind. To state it in a nutshell:

The wets have, during nearly a thousand years, rejected every imaginable form of moderation, compromise and accommodation proffered by the dries. They have written it plain in the records of all these decades and centuries that their objection is not to Prohibition laws on the subject of the liquor traffic but to any kind of laws on the subject of the liquor traffic. Again I invite the extreme test--- that anyone name one instance refuting me, not a hundred or a dozen, but one. Where, in all the years since Noah started this, have the wets lived up to any law on the subject of the liquor traffic, no matter whether it was Prohibition or something else?

both Yes, that is water under the bridge. But another fact isn't, and that is the fact, known to everybody to be a fact, that the wets-- neither those who vend ~~and~~ those who drink--will not now, in our day, for one moment of time abide by and obey any restriction or regulation of any kind imposed on the liquor traffic.

Their brazen demand is that the country lie down abjectly and surrender unconditionally to every excess and license they wish to exercise. In other words, the wets have both by their long history and their present universally known and admitted attitude, made it clear that they want a contest in which the winner takes all.

And the Prohibitionists, after far more patience and tolerance than anyone had a right to expect, are going to see that they get it.

Talk about compromise! The wets have rejected it always and reject it now, and the dries have abandoned it and made the situation unanimous.

Don't be absurd and quake lest Civil War sticks out of that. In the former time, there were countless business-like, grim men who took the thing personally and did not leave it to their wife's relatives to do the fighting for the Southern Confederacy. This time, you can't rally a corporal's guard for the holy cause of personal libberty even when all they had to do was to place a mark on a ballot or a newspaper coupon.

You can't, though dared and badgered to do it, name one instance in which their heroism and daring and desire for the thanks of millions yet to be have risen above the level of a rendezvous down back of some disputed pigpen with some outlaw fresh from the dens of vice and crime.

How are these modern prototypes of the men of iron and flame in the past going to gear their heroic souls to the work of defeating the Prohibition laws? Let us go over the list of possible ways.

First, they might raise an army and openly resist the arrest of bootleggers. But here I have stood and scoffed them, and flung hatred and defiance into their teeth, and offered to quit the field in confusion if they will point to one solitary indication in their record that they will do work of this kind and not stand one side and call upon their wife's relatives to do it.

Then, not having stomach for anything so possibly mortuary as that, the next thing they might try to do is to get on the jury and lie with a straight face when they take the oath. But in the happier days to come the jury commissioners will be Prohibitionists and there will be 12 of me on every jury.

If they can't get their wife's relatives to fight to keep alive the flickering candle of liberty, and if they are barred from perjuring themselves so that they may set the bootlegger free, what can they do? They might, like the worm in the story said he would do as his part toward revenging the animal creation upon the tyrant Man, decide to "eat him after he is dead."

Their every gun but that is spiked. There was the "no beer, no work" strike, which went blooey when the lady of the house lay ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in wait for returning hubby, rolling pin in hand. There was the boycott of a General of Marines because he punished a breach of discipline committed in his presence by a drinking subordinate, which the same boycott has apparently left the ~~xxxx~~ 18th amendment in the constitution.

There will be no difficulty in finding suitable slogans for Miss Tarbell's dreaded insurrectionary wet Army of Freedom. "I have not yet begun to booze-fight" readily suggests itself. "My only terms are unc'nishnul (his) shurrender", and "Freedom shrieked when Konitsche went under the table", "My only regret is that I have but one life to give for my cognac", and "Tom AND Jerry, now and forever, one and inseparable." Who cannot visualize the wet General who will wave his sword and say: "Ynder are the Red Haven Splits; we must surround them today or my wife's a Follies Chorus!?"

But there will be difficulties, tactical difficulties for wet strategists to overcome. How will the criminal element, who stand just as bareheaded under the stars as any other of these noble scions of Freedom mentioned by Miss Tarbell, be kept in line if formed too near somebody's chicken coop? And what if some dry General, with devilish cunning, should lay down on the wet line a barrage of demijohns just when a charge of round-headed Methodists and Baptists is coming on?

Behold I show you a mystery: Wet writers have before them the chronicles which show that the dry movement tried for well nigh a thousand years to find some way, through restriction and regulation, whereby the evils of the liquor traffic could be stopped without stopping the traffic. With this record before them wet writers, with a straight face, speak of the dry movement as an effort to force total abstinence on somebody. And, as Miss Tarbell has done, censure that movement for trying to drive men into intemperance instead of trying to persuade them.

Having failed at the ballotbox where in the beginning they had it all their own way; having shown by their record that they do not propose to submit to Prohibition tyranny while a single drop of blood remains in the veins of their wife's relatives, and having got nowhere that way, the wets hope to overthrow the Prohibition laws by connivance with the denizens of another world who have come up and taken a leading part in Freedom's holy cause, Model 1929.

Just take one hasty glance through the history of this movement, and note how invariably resistance to the law prevailing at any given time has not led to its modification but to something more drastic. That's all.

Respectfully,

Orrin H. Graham

Orrin H. Graham,

Franklin, Pa.