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Miss Tarbell
Miss Ida M. Tarbell:
%Woman's Journal,
171 Madison Ave., N.Y. City.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

It was with great regret and disappointment that I read your article against Prohibition in the Woman's Journal.

When as a young girl I started teaching in Sunday School, I always liked to read the Tarbell Teacher's Guide, and I feel sure it was Ida M. Tarbell that was the author and who said many good and helpful things, after reading that article in the Woman's Journal I hope my memory of the name is wrong and that it was some other Tarbell. The sentiments in that article are so inconsistent with the good thoughts I remember in the other volumes.

Your article is full of errors, which you could easily have checked up, if you had earnestly desired to find Prohibition a success instead of being anxious to make it a failure.

Then too your arguments are inconsistent, to mention just one, - "A new lawlessness born at least partly from the effort to make this not a temperate country but one in which what a man drinks is proscribed by law." "I was never more impressed with the quality of a community which had developed under local option, than back in 1916." That was proscribing by law, and you heartily approve of it. In one breath you disapprove and in the next you approve, so long as it is a smaller community, what is good for the City, County or State must be good and even better for the Nation.

Your article is full of such contradictions, as though you were writing of something you did not believe, but were urged by those about you, or a desire for notoriety or money, both of which are unthinkable to me concerning the writer of the books I used to peruse with pleasure and interest.

You write as though the opportunity for temperance and self-control had passed, and then show a picture of intemperance and lack of self-control that affords greater opportunity than ever before for the practice of those virtues.

If you try, you can discover that conditions in our schools and colleges are far better than they were a generation and more ago. You can also discover that,

There is far less drunkenness, and beasts produced by drink,
The number of speakeasies nowhere commence to be as numerous as the saloons and speakeasies were, nor have they anything like the number of patrons,

No such quantity of liquor is consumed,
There were speakeasies before prohibition,
The liquor traffic has always been a law violator,
The former brewers are the main stay of the Asso. Against Prohibition.

Just because some selfish, wealthy people are crying out that they must be permitted to jeopardize the lives of others by making beasts of themselves as and when they please, is no reason for repealing a law; it is a great opportunity for teaching them just that temperance and unselfishness you seemed so anxious to have an opportunity for.

We do not repeal our laws against vice, murder, theft, etc., because so many violate the law. We are having much trouble enforcing the law against narcotics, but no decent person is suggesting that we drop it and let the individual do as he pleases, or as you put it, "denies a man's freedom to choose in a matter which is his own business."

Unselfishness and self-control are two of the most moral forces in life. It is a man's business to conduct his life, not to please himself, but to render the greatest good to the community.

If, as you state, prohibition is immoral because it denies a man's freedom to choose in a matter which is his own business, then all law must go and we must accept national and social chaos in this country. If a man has a right to put in his mouth that which he knows destroys his brain, and which he takes because it makes him indifferent to care and thoughtfulness of others and of life's duties and obligations, in the form of intoxicants, then he has an equal right to narcotics, nor can you stop there, - he has a perfect right to sexual indulgence as and where he pleases.

Do you think a man should turn on his radio or victrola to annoy the whole neighborhood, as some do? Should he tear through the streets, jeopardizing other lives, because some dear one needs a doctor? Yet all those things are a man's own business, in which you declare he should have freedom to choose, meaning simply that whatever he chooses the law should not interfere with him - this is chaos indeed. If he chooses the unselfish the self-controlled act in any line, aiming at the highest good of the community, he will need and find no restraining law. There are many such people. Shall we let the selfish, uncontrolled beast - rich or poor - ride ruthlessly over the staunch and true people of our land? Surely you do not see the logical outcome of your statements.

The enormous amount of money and the chief motive involved in this struggle for the repeal of the 18th Amendment was unintentionally given in the New York World on Jan. 26, 1930, in an article entitled, "Dry law repeal would pay half United States income tax," in which it said, "Representatives of brewers and distillers told a World correspondent today that their principals would be willing to pay one billion one hundred and twenty five million dollars annually in Federal taxes to return to pre-prohibition production."

The present success of Prohibition is further demonstrated by the poll taken by the New York World and published in the World of March 31, 1930. The World investigators visited a large number of speak-easies in New York City and upon personal inquiry ascertained that the **SPEAKEASY PROPRIETORS & BARTENDERS** in New York City, **TWENTY to ONE**, want the 18th Amendment **REPEALED**. The facts developed were that the liquor business under present circumstances is poor; that the graft which has to be paid is large; that the danger of arrest is increasing; that the public discussion of prohibition is leading people to be total abstainers; and that the speak-easy people believe that the repeal of the 18th Amendment would improve their business.

You can find accounts before Prohibition showing over 600 saloons in a mile square with innumerable bootleggers and speakeasies, called blind pigs; with shocking assaults upon young girls taken to saloon dances, with the toughest men in control of the saloons, and the liquor interests determined to sell liquor with ruthless disregard of local option and State prohibition laws.

Evangeline Booth certainly has sufficient experience along these lines and she declares that, "Prohibition is the greatest blessing that has ever been visited upon this country; whatever its evils they are as NOTHING compared to the good that it has done throughout the country."

I should surmise your line of study must have been in the dripping wet newspapers of some of our large cities.

It grieves me deeply to ~~connect~~ your name with the worthy books of years ago, after reading your article in the Woman's Journal. If you are the same person I ~~pray~~ you may see the light once again and declare yourself as publicly on the side of good citizenship, placing public welfare above selfish wilfulness and indulgence, and that you will cease striving for privilege and exert your powers for the progress of the race.

Our Master said: "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfill the law," and instead of pleading for "a man's freedom to choose in^a matter which is his own business," our Master said, - "Whosoever shall cause one of these little ones to stumble, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea."

My memory of you (if I am correct) is in wisely and helpfully expounding just such statements of our Lord. How could you have strayed so far away as you added years to your life?

Sincerely,

Lillian Francis Fitch

Mrs. Lillian Francis Fitch
Summer address,
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May 29, 1930.