[illegible] W. Cedar St.,
Enid, Okla., 2/2/30.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

I was glad to get your candid and thoughtful letter. I quite agree with you that Lloyd George did not make the highest appeal, but he doubtless knew his audience, and it may have been, to him, the highest appeal. It may surprise you to learn that I was not strong for the amendment when it was introduced in Congress. I thought that the Aurora plan was better calculated to aid the cause of temperance, and could be the more easily enforced. But this was not to be, and I am now of the opinion that the Aurora plan would have been fought as bitterly, and defied as openly, as the amendment has been. I know that there has been a great increase in crime and corruption. Prohibition has been the occasion of much of this. I do not believe that it is, properly speaking, the cause of it. You remember that in the first year of Mr. Lincoln's administration, a charge of gross irregularities was made on the floor of the House - irregularity in the Treasury Department. Mr. Lincoln sent a special message to Congress stating that the Subtreasury in New York had called on the Treasury for two million dollars, and that he knew the service to be so honeycombed with treason that the money would never reach New York if sent through the regular channels. He had therefore sent it by private messenger, and it had been safely delivered. The faithlessness of some Prohibition officers is no more to be attributed to Prohibition that was this treason attributable to the Lincoln administration. Such an argument, honestly made by some intelligent people, would cover with shame "the old Continentals, in their ragged regimentals", because of Benedict' Arnold's treason.

Now as to other crimes than bootlegging. A recent article in the Post states an interesting fact. The average age of convicts was 41 when he took the post, [illegible] five years before. When he resigned it was 31. The old criminal seems to be becoming a thing of the past. Bperhaps", he says, "if the means for a quick get-away had been at hand in the pre-automobile days, we should have had a larger number of criminals".

I like to see a man who has a high regard for personal honor, and resists temptation. But the man who voluntarily places himself in the way of temptation, unless for the definite purpose of rendering assistance to another, is running a serious risk. Even Jesus prayed: "Lead us not into temptation". And surely it is far more admirable to remove stumbling blocks from the path of the weak, than to develop resistance in those who are strong. It was once thought proper to "harden" a child by exposing him to cold and toil and hunger. That has been proved a fallacy again and again. And I think that this is true in the moral realm, notwithstanding the fact that a boy may be so coddled and kept apart from contact with life as to make him an easy prey when he is come o manhood.

On the other hand, I think that the moral tone is rising. Never before was the world so altruistic, so humanitarian. The community chest is filled more and more easily each year, for an increasing amount, as our range of charitable contributions increases. We have gone to a ridiculous extreme in the care of criminals, and there is reason to hope that this misdirected kindness will soon be more carefully and wisely directed.

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As to intellectual activity, I am not quite sure what you mean. The tide changes from time to time. Perhaps you mean in government. Was there ever a better exhibition of consummate skill than that shown by Mr. Mellon in extricating us from the awful mess we were in at the close of the Big War? Has the world ever seen a more altruistic move toward peace than was begun in the Washington Conference, and is going on today, with increasing hope of success? Perhaps you think that I ought to give Mr. Wilson praise for this. I am sure that Mr. Wilson's heart was set on achieving peace. But his was the effort of the boy who insisted on being the whole procession. He couldn't or wouldn't use the material that lay all about him, and achieve his ends by teamwork. Indeed, I think that we are entering on an era that will go down in history as the golden age of American History. The spirit of the American government is far higher than it was twenty-five years ago, and still higher than fifty years ago.

Prosperity is bringing its problems. Society is in a state of flux. The ten-dollar-a-day carpenter has a great deal more money for his family than the three-dollar-a-day carpenter had twenty-five years ago. Some of these men are educating their families; some are squandering their money. People have to learn how to use their leizure and money. This is not due to Prohibition. Many years ago a lot of German farmers came to my county. They pre-empted land. They worked, saved, and bought land. They gave farms to their children when the children married. Today some of these children are living on mortgaged farms, or are tenants, because they would not work and save. They preferred to run around the country in automobiles for which they had no other use, and neglected their farms. They had not learned the new order of things. They had not learned to rule themselves.

Perhaps you meant intellectuality in literature. I suppose that there was never such a group of men as the Cambridge group of half a hundred or so years ago. It was unique. So was Shakspere. It may be a thousand years till his equal appears. But I believe that there are as great writers and teachers and preachers in America in this year of grace as were gathered together at Cambridge. It might be invidious to name some and leave out others. One does not like to be accused of egotism, nor to discredit and perhaps offend his friend by neglect.

I thi nk, on the whole, that the outlook for the country in the matter of law enforcement, prohibition and other law, is bright. I like the way Mr. Hoover says nothing, and the way Mr. Mitchell says something. But I have run on long enough.

I had a letter from the Best Girl yesterday. I have been a little anxious, while she has been away so long, about her health. She had a bad breakdown at the University more than twenty years ago, and I have been afraid of a recurrence. She writes that she is in roaring health, and that people are guessing her between thirty and thirty-five years old. I wouldn't dare tell you how far they miss it, but it is a compliment to her youthful appearance to get such a guess.

Very sincerely yours, Walter Graves.

P. S. Did you overlook my request for the address of a literary agent, or did you kindly refrain from pairing me by telling me that there is not one in New York who would touch my article with a pair of tongs? W. G.

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