Ida Tarbell

307 S. Main St.,
Wichita, Kansas, 10/2/30.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

I have just finished reading your Delineator article. Perhaps you will be astonished to learn that I have got more satisfaction out of than I have got out of any other. There have been so many wild guesses, sometimes proclaimed as reliable facts, that it is a joy to have something on which to depend. I had not seen Mr. Gebhark's estimate of the liquor bill of the Continental U. S. No doubt that is as close an approximation as can be made. Well, two and a half billion dollars is a lot of money, and it is a calamity to see that amount taken out of the channels of legitimate business, and employed in a traffic that is so hurtful. But, last summer I heard, over the radio, an address by the President of the National Grange in Washington, something that I had heard before, but had forgotten, that the drink bill of the U. S. was three billion dollars before prohibition.

Now the two and a half billion, divided up among the population for 1930 or 1929, makes just about $21.00 percapita, while the three billion of 1919, divided amoung the population of that date, approximates very closely to $30.00 a head. thus you see that there has been a falling off of the average man's bill of nearly one third "under " prohibition, a pretty substantion reduction. But this is not all.

The other day I interviewed some of my druggist friends. I inquired as to the relative prices of whisky now and before prohibition. While they differed as to the exact cost, they were of one mind as to the enormous increase in the cost. Not one of them put the ratio so low as three to one. But I shall adopt that ratio - that is, that the bootleg stuff one may buy today costs three times as much as standard whisky did before the amendment came into operation.

Thus it will be seen that the $21.00 which, according to Mr. Gebhard, the average man spends today, buys only as much as $7.00 bought before prohibition., and the ratio of consumption, which is the really important thing, is 7 to 30, instead of 21 to 30, which is the ratio of cost. Thus, under prohibition, the people are drinking only one fourth as much as they were drinking before prohibition.

Now the only way to avoid this conclusion is to destroy the premises. In order more closely to approximate the amounts consumed in 1919 and 1929, you must show that the Government's statistics for the former year are far too high, or that Mr. G's extimate for 1929 is far too low, or that prices of whisky in the two years named approximate far more closely than 3 to 1.

Of course the Government statistics are accurate. The amount of whisky smuggled into the country, or produced by illicit stills, is negligible, and the statistics must stand. With Mr. G's estimate raised to three billion, six hundred

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million, and the prices of the two dates equalized, you would have the same per capita consumption, but this is absurd. What, then, can be said of the much proclaimed increase in consumption?. Of, course, some are drinking now who didn't drink before. But that means a greater falling off among those who did drink before. And there you are.

I know that you are as pleased with this result as I am, and that you will not again be misled by loud assertions of interested parties, that are without proper foundation.

Now let us go back to the Woman's Journal article, and examine a few things there.

The power of choice. I think that you use the word "power in the sense of "liberty". Now don't think for a fleeting moment that I am laughing at you. I, too, am a worshipper at the shrine of Liberty. Now I can not imagine a more sacred right than the right to resist an assault upon one's own person. And the habitons of the province of Quebec had a very high appreciation of that right when they refused to be vaccinated, many, many, years ago. To submit to the inoculation of an unknown substance was unthinkable. I suppose that it would have taken half the British army to vaccinate those people. The Government gave it up. What happened? Dr. Wm. Osler tells the story in his "practice of Medicine". A Pullman conductor left the train there, too ill to go farther, and was taken to the hospital. In a couple of days his trouble was diagnosed as smallpox. The hospital authorities were wofully incompetent. Instead of putting the building ~~in quarantine and vaccinating inside, they allowed the disease to be~~ ~~imported from the outside.~~ The result was loss of three thousand lives in the province, all because these misguided people insisted on exercising their liberty of choice. Not many years ago another wave of smallpox swept over the East, including New York City. There were many thousands there who would not have been vaccinnated if they had been permitted to exercise their liberty or power of choice. They were not consulted, at least individually at the time.They were well protected. There were perhaps a score of cases, with, if I remember rightly, one death. Of course, most of the people of New York were educated to the necessity and value of immunization, but many were not. Yet these profited as truly as the others, and I think that you would find some difficulty in showing that their characters were at all impaired by this compulsory immunization.

Take another illustration: McPherson County, not far from Wichita, was settled largely by Dunkards, a people of Russo-German origin. They are a very industrious, honest, thrifty and kindly people, long accustomed to following faithfully the advice of their preachers and elders. They are non-combatants in principle, and when a drive for the sale of Liberty bonds, and contributions to the Red Cross was made at the entrance of the U. S. into the World War, they refused to subscribe for the bonds, and to give to the Red Cross unless assured that the money would not be used in the war. This roused the ire of some of the hotbloods

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of the town, and there was talk of tieing some of the leading men to the tail of a car, and taking them for a sprint over the country roads. Better counsels prevailed. I got the story from the Congregational minister. They got three or four of the leaders into the parlor of one of the banks one morning early. "Those men", said my friend, "would have welcomed martyrdom on behalf of a principle. We stayed there until nearly noon, and I saw a wonderful thing - the birth of a new spirit of duty. They finally saw the light, and said that their people should subscribe. And they did, liberally".

Of course these Mennonnites were not resisting a law. (I said Dunkards" above, where I ought to have said "Mennonnites".) But what of one who isconscienciously opposed to a law that commands a certain line of action? I should be very loth to impose a heavy penalty upon him. And, so far as I know, the Governmental authorities have always made a distinction in his favor. In the late war such people were drafted, of course, but they were put to work that did not require active service in the field. But what of the duty of the individual in such a case? I think that you will agree with me, without argument, that he ought to yield, readily and cheerfully as may be, to the penalty, as a tribute to popular government - to good citizenship. This was not the attitude of a distinguished Professor of History in the University of Pennsylvania last winter. He was quoted as referring to the "whig tradition" of the right of revolution, and in his comments on the "Black Duck"case, referred to John Hancock as a smuggler.

That tradition, if my memory serves me faithfully, had its origin in the resistance of the Barons to the autocratic John. The American Revolution had its origin in resistance to just as autocratic laws, in the making of which the colonies had no part. The gentleman overlooked something. There is no right of revolution by force in a popular government. And by the way, have you the remotest idea that the Professor would have made that remark, or that a great protesting meeting would have been held in Boston, if the "Black Duck", instead of attempting to smuggle whisky, had tried to smuggle in silks, or other articles of merchandise?

I must tell you frankly that I didn't like your reference to Mr. Lincoln. You too overlooked something. Dr. Barton has pretty thoroughly exploded the story that Lincoln went about making Prohibition speeches. But he did say this, which I think is not in your book, that the pastor of the church that Mr. Lincoln attended preached a sermon, urging the legislature, then in session, to enact a law forbidding the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages in Illinois, and that Mr. Lincoln signed a petition calling for the printing and circulation of the sermon. That does not necessarily mean that he was a prohibitionist. It does mean that he was not opposed to the principle of prohibition; that he did not look upon it as an invasion of the constitutional rights of the individual. Moreover, at that time the

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brewers had not taken over the saloons. They were interfering with lagislation, and were using money and whisky at local elections, but they had not yet become the deadly menace to popular government to the extent that later obtained. I feel reasonably sure that if Mr. Lincoln were living today he would be in favor of a prohibition law. Perhaps not just such a law as we have. But he would fight the conspiracy of today against popular government with the same determination that characterized him in his fight against the conspiracy against the Union.

Now let us take up the subject of alcoholic psychoses. I must confess that I know almost nothing of this. I am also sure that you will hail this confession with delight; that your generous soul will glow with pleasure on learning that this cock-sure guy has the courage to acknowlidge that there is one thing in the Cosmos that he doesn't know all about. When you spoke, in your first "Liberty" article of the increase of alcoholic psycoses, I was shaken. Here was something definite; something that differred from opinion based on insufficient data, or that might follow the wish. I wrote to Dr. Klopp, Supt. of the Hospital for the Insane at Allentown Pa. His report cinfirmed your statement. I also wrote to Dr. Carmichael, Supt. of the Osawatomis Kansas Hospital, and to Dr. Parry, of the Topeka Hospital. Dr. C. did not quote the records of his institution. He simply said that there had been no change during the ten years of Prohibition. Dr. Parry gave me definite data. I enclose his letter, which I will ask you to return. Take a copy of it, if you like. I would send you a copy, but for my impairment of vision, which might cause serious error. You will note that there is no serious difference between the ten-year period before Prohibition, and that which follows. You will note, also, that the percentages are vastly less than in the other reports, and that Dr. Parry suggests that this difference may be due to the better enforcement of the law in Kansas. I called on my colleague, Dr. Ross, an expert in such matters, who knows his stuff. It had occurred to me that the difference in the records might be due to differences in living conditions; that the nerve-racking strain of the stock market, for instance, might be a cousative factor; or that the idle minds of some of the enormously rich, intent only on their own pleasure, might have become so weakened as to give way readily. Dr. Ross said no; that nearly all of these psycoses developed in the very poor; day-laborers; that there might be some of the other classes in private institutions, but that the State institutions contained only the very poor, nearly all of whom were foreign-born; that this form of insanity is rare in persons of American birth, and is found chiefly among the Irish. Next come the German, then the Italian.

But how is the increase to be explained when the amount consumed, as shown above, has fallen to about one fourth of what it was before Prohibition? Here again I am at a loss. I can only suggest that the people from whom these cases come have not quit drinking, as so many others have done, and that the poorer quality of liquor may account for the larger percentage.

I am glad to get definite information as to the increase of our prison population. I didn't know where to go for it. I have heard and read so much of the increase of crime during the

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last ten years, that your figures came to me as a pleasant surprise. this increase has often been attributed entirely to Prohibition. This, of course, is not true. That some of the increase is thus due, I will frankly admit.

I read a part of an article in Collyer's last winter, (I thought it a very wellthought out article) which bore on this subject. I am sorry that I did not get to finish it. But the writer showed that there are several new crimes which have contributed materially to this increase.

Every post-war period has seen an increase in crime. One of the factors has probably been the injection into our industrial life of a large body of men without employment. This was true of the years after the Civil war and the Spanish-American war. In the present post-war period we have some factors which did not appear formerly. We have the Mann Act, and the Harrison anti-narcotic law. And we have the Eighteenth Amendment.

An evil deed is just as deplorable before it is forbidden as after it is forbidden. But it does not become a crime until it is forbidden. The writer of the above-mentioned article says conviction for the violation of the Mann and Harrison laws take precedence in point of number over those for violation of the prohibitory law. Thus the very increase may to that extent be taken as evidence of the mounting moral tone of Society.

Every period of readjustment has its tragedies. Charles Reade tells, in one of his novels, of the outrages committed in England in opposition to the introduction of labor-saving machinery. We have the same history in this country. Even the health laws that put an end to the sweat shop and the tenementmade cigars caused hardship. In the end, everybody was the better for the improved health conditions, and the labor-saving machinery.

Another factor is the greater ease with which a certain class of crimes is committed. There has never been such a flood of banditry in this country as in the last ten years. A few weeks ago a couple of men drove up to a bank in a village near Wichita. One of the men left the car, and approached the bank. There was something about the men that aroused the suspicion of one of the bankers, and he came out from behind the counter, and met the man at the door. The visitor thrust a gun against his ribs, and told him to throw up his hands and be quick about it. The banker promptly complied with the suggestion. He threw up his hands very quickly indeed. But one of his hands grasped the gun, while the other smashed into the bandit's face. The man fled, leaving the gun in the hand of the banker, who tried to shoot him. The gun was not loaded, and the bandits escaped for a time. They were apprehended soon afterward in a near-by town. That, and many others like it, are often ascribed to Prohibition.

"Post hoc propter hoc" is a favorite form of reasoning with many people. Indeed, it is sometimes for the best of us to get

different

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entirely away from it. In this case the "hoc" is Prohibition. I should not be much surprised to learn, if a careful analysis of these crimes could be made, that there are fewer crimes directly attributable to the new conditions under which whisky is sold today, than there were under the old conditions in a like period.

I neglected to say , when speaking of the National origins of alcoholic psychoses, that Kansas has very few foreign-born. There used to be a great many German immigrants. These have for the most part died, and the State probably stands well up to the head of the list in ratio of native- born. This will explain the disparity between Dr. Parry's report and that from other States which have a large foreign-born population.

That "6" is again staring at me, but I shall ignore its reproaches for a little longer. You struck the keynote when you deplored the immunity of the "higher-ups" who lure the "Jimmy"s to their doom. It is the disgrace of our American jurisprudence. The Court that reviewed Judge Landis' decision in the Standard Oil case said that the fine was rediculous. He did not challenge the fact that 290,000 barrels had been shipped contrary to law; He did not deny that the shipment of each barrel was a distinct offense; he did not hint that the imposition of a fine of $100 table was unjust, nor declare the multiplication was unconstitutional. He just said that the fine of twenty-nine million dollars was "ridiculous". In thus wiping out that just decision he struck a deadly blow at the administration of justice. And in numberless other cases employes have sufferred the penalty, while the big criminals have gone right along, immune to the law.

You may remember that about twenty-five years ago Mr. Taft made an after-dinner speech in New York, in which he warned these criminal "Captains" of industry and finance that if they did not quit their evil courses, Congress would pass laws with teeth in them.

I am looking forward with great interest to the report of the Wichersham Commission next winter. You remember that when Mr. Hoover asked for an additional $250,000 to enable the commission to complete its work, a bill was reported, proposing to limit the appropriation to $50,000, and also limiting the work of the commission to a consideration of Prohibition. I thought that I saw in this bill the fine Italian hand of some of those "Captains". Mr. Hoover disposed of the matter beautifully, and the Commission will complete its work of preparing a reform of judicial procedure. I hope that these reforms will serve to demolish the familiar defenses of the big criminals. I have no doubt that all the defendants in the great Conspiracy case that is now being tried here will be convicted. I am not so sure that the verdict will stand the review of the Circuit Court. Not that the verdict will be unjust, but that the Court may find some little technicality , or rather some violation of some little technicality in the course of the long trial, and which does not in the least affect the rights of the defendants, to serve as a reason for disapproving the verdict which is almost sure to be returned.

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And there lies the reason for much opposition to the law. I have heard many men say: "O, it is a good law, if it only could be enforced". And their doubt is not a doubt of the will of the people, but of the integrity of the courts.

Yes I am optimistic. We have really had only a few months of really systematic, whole-hearted, effort to enforce the law. As I have said before, a lot of traitors have been retired, some to privte life, some to the classic shades of Leavenworth and Atlanta. The service is all in one Department. The personnel has been largely increased. It is increasingly evident that the Government is determined to do its duty. And illustration of the wholesome affect of this real effort came to my knowledge the ~~xx~~ other day. A man came to Mr. Hasty, an official of a local investment, to consult him about a loan on a farm that he was thinking of buying. A few days later he returned and called the thing off. It was his intention to erect a roadhouse on the highway that passes by the farm, and sell booze. He was afraid that the Government might catch him at it, and confiscate his farm, and 160 acres of land was too much to lose for the profit on even illicit booze.

I hope that you will continue to write on this subject. I have found the articles very enjoyable, containing important facts that must be considered. I have not always been able to agree with your conclusions, and have been very frank in expressing my differring views. I know, too, that this frank expression has been just as welcome as if I should agree with you. Both of us are desirous of arriving at the truth, and of serving the welfare of the people. So if you publish more, please send me a copy, and I'll write you about it, and not hesitate to tear it to pieces if I think that it deserves such a fate.

As for me, I don't expect to publish anything. My view of the subject is very unpopular with most magazines, and I am not known. Poor dubs, they don't know what they are missing(!). I can't help it, and shall just have to leave them to their fate.

But now I am going to tell you, in conclusion, and I'll promise to stop when I finish the story, how Carrie Nation got her inspiration for the hatchet crusade.

There was a Mrs. Sheriff, a widow, living in the village of Freeport, about fifty miles S. W. of here. She had a little son, about six or eight years old. On the lot adjouning her cottage was a "joint", as the illicit saloon was commonly called. One day the child came home drunk. She protested to the jointist, who laughed at her. She appealed to the village authorities, but could obtain no redress. Again and again the boy cake home drunk. One night, after this happened, she got an axe, and nearly chopped that saloon down before she was stopped. She was arrested and taken to Anthony, the County seat, for trial. She was promptacquitted, and the verdict was good in law as well as morals. No one will deny the morality of the verdict. Its legality is based on these facts: The Kansas law had declared the saloon a nuisance. Now one who is affected by a nuisance only as the general public is affected, may not abate it by his own hand. He must wait for the authorities to do it. But if he is especially affected by it, he may abate it by his own hand. The Court

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so instructed the jury, and the jury, thinking that Mrs. Sheriff was especially affected, turned her loose.

A few days later mrs. Nation and her husband were seen examining the papers in the case. Evidently they overlooked or ignored the issue in the case, for a short time after Mrs. Nation made her dramatic raid on Burns' saloon in Wichita.

Miss Tarbell, I don't see so much good white paper going to waste, so I' ll just tell you another story.

Did you read Mr. Liggett's article in "Plain Talk" on "Holy Hypocritical Kansas"? The author was called before the Senate prohibition committee to answer some questions relative to statements in the article. Me quoted Mrs. My ra McHenry as his authority. Now to people outside of Wichita that will not mean anything more than if he had quoted Miss Mary Smith. But most people in Wichita know Myra. And when they read that testimony, the genial Wichita countenance was overspread by a broader smile than it had exhibited since the whisky jobbers' panic.

Myra is an institution. She affords relief from the serious business of building a real city on the Western Plain. When the spirit moves her, she takes her stand on the corner of Main and Douglas, and "lets into" Henry Allen. Of course Henry pays no attention to her, the passers-by pause a moment, and go away grinning, and the atmosphere is is more joyous than before. The daily strain is relieved. Occasionall somebody else is her theme. I am reliably informed that it is her habit to go to the Kress store and buy a string of beads for ten cents. This she offers to someone of more or less social or political prominence, who has, as Myra thinks, a flaw somewhere in his record. She wants five dollars for it. Sometimes he buys. Sometimes he doesn't. If he declines the invitation to pay five dollats for a string of glass beads that cost ten cents, Myra says impressively:"You better". If he still refuses, he becomes a target for Myra's artillery.And this is the "authority" for the statements in Mr. Liggett's article.

Very sincerely yours,
Walter Graves.

P S. Ican't put my hand on Dr. Parry's letter. If I should find it, I'll send i to you. However, the percentage of ~~insane~~ psy choses due to alcohol is much lower than in ~~Eastern asylums~~ tutions, probably for the reasons given above. W. G.

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