

pts
Burlington

215 South 15th St.
Muskogee, Oklahoma.
June 11, 1931.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 E. Nineteenth St.,

New York City-

My dear Miss Tarbell:-

Your good letter and welcomed photograph arrived last evening and I do so thank you for both. We shall cherish the latter as one of our most prized possessions and as soon as Mrs. Flanner has recuperated from the "flu," she too will express her appreciation. I had about concluded that the only solution of the difficulty in attempting to settle the question as to which of three contending claimants was entitled to the glory of completing the same discovery well on the same location on the same day, was as you have suggested. I most heartily agree with your views as to the effects of the prohibition amendment. Our overcrowded jails; our depleted national treasury and the looseness with which the amendment is enforced, all attest to its failure to promote temperance. The old argument that by closing the saloons the coming generations would know nothing of liquor is an exploded fallacy. For example, last Saturday night when the wind was howling out of the northwest and the rain descending in torrents, a mixed party of young folks - some married, some not - none of whom was over twenty-three or four, came in out of the storm about midnight. They foregathered, about eight of them both men and women, before the kitchen window of an adjoining apartment house in what has heretofore been a quiet and peaceful neighborhood. With both shades and windows up - the girls smoking - the men mixing drinks - they soon

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became a howling mob x About 2.30 a.m. they staged an Indian stomp-dance on the bare floor; whooping at the top of their lungs x They then broke into song, winding up, of course, with "Sweet Adeline" x They all entered a car about 3.30 a.m., evidently on a hunt for more liquid refreshments, returning about 4 a.m. Sunday morning - one of the young girls shouting - "O, Jessie come here quick - there comes the milk man!" Sleep being impossible at our house, Mrs. Flemer and I were forced to sit up and thus witness a disgusting performance x These girls move in the best circles here; they are college graduates and while their talk was not rough they were milder than a Comanche Indian on the warpath. If I may offer the suggestion - the annual report of the Attorney General, which should soon be available, might offer some rather startling statistics as to the cost of convicting persons on liquor charges; the number sentenced and the amount disbursed for their upkeep in jail x At the present time there are over 200 prisoners in the Federal jail here serving time; 95 per cent of whom are petty liquor violators, while the big fellows manage to elude the law x In my opinion a high license and strict regulation of the liquor traffic is the only solution of the problem x The young folks of today, while probably no more immoral than those of past generations, are absolutely unmoral and I attribute much of this to the prohibition amendment for which I voted but should not

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do so again. I will keep on the lookout for stories similar to the party pulled off by the "Ladies of the Jail". Your unfamiliarity with these home-made concoctions of strong alcoholic content known as "hooch", has led you to coin a new one - "hoots" - which is probably as good a name as any, although unrecognizable doubtless by the real "hooch hounds".

Recently a federal prisoner here broke out with small-pox and was sent to a detention hospital - the U.S. guard employed to watch him got drunk - the patient - prisoner escaped and the whole countryside was in danger of contracting the disease. The favorite potion of this particular guard, who is no longer in the employ of the Government, is "canned heat" - the solid cakes used in sterno burners - This is melted and then drunk; in many cases with fatal results.

I shall follow your advice and until such time as I have gotten the oil history completed, shall refrain from bothering you. I do so appreciate the interest you have shown and together with the photograph now framed, am a victim of undreamed of happiness. Mrs. Flemer joins me in wishing you as much happiness and with kindest regards, am

Very sincerely yours.

John W. Flemer.