

Real Facts About Birmingham

(From the Birmingham Age-Herald, February 4, 1916.)

President of the city commission, George B. Ward, replied with vigor yesterday to the slander against the city of Birmingham being given wide circulation about the state of Montana in the prohibition fight now under way. Mr. Ward is not a prohibitionist, but he is unwilling that the name of Birmingham shall be stultified in such manner.

Commissioner Ward's statement has been mailed to various persons in Montana as a complete and official refutation of the charges of lawlessness in this city. Copies of the statement have also been mailed to "The Survey" of New York and "Finance" of Cleveland, Ohio. The statement follows:

"The people of Birmingham are incensed at the articles being circulated throughout Montana by the Commercial and Labor league of Helena. It is known now that these and similar articles are being used systematically throughout every section of the United States where there is a prohibition campaign in progress.

"In other words, the liquor interests are willing to blacken the reputation and damage the financial status of a great city in order to carry out their designs.

Tremendous Blunder

"It will doubtless occur to the liquor people in a very short time that they have made a tremendous blunder in citing Birmingham as an example of the disastrous effects of prohibition. This is going to be a clear case of 'He laughs best who laughs last.'

"The article in the 'Survey' has been exaggerated and garbled.

"Although there was a large reduction in expenses of the city of Birmingham last August, it was not due to prohibition but to the large floating debt that has been accumulating for some years. This debt was funded by a bond issue, with the un-

EIGHT MILLIONS

At the end of its tenth year THE MIDWEST LIFE has \$8,000,000 of insurance in force, representing a net gain of \$800,000 a year for each year it has been in business. Now that it is entering upon its eleventh year, the officers wish to express again their appreciation of the support and patronage which it has received. They expect the second decade of its existence will show a greater growth and that the company will be in a position to render still better service to its policyholders.

April of this year, while not the best month in new insurance, yet it was the best April in the history of the company. All of which shows that western people are buying their insurance more and more in western companies.

THE MIDWEST LIFE
OF LINCOLN, NEBRASKA
A STOCK COMPANY SELLING
GUARANTEED COST LIFE INSURANCE

derstanding that in the future the city of Birmingham would be kept within its legitimate income. Hence the drastic cut in expenses.

Reverts to Survey Article

"Reverting to the 'Survey' article, Birmingham has not dispensed with its health officer, its city physician or its market inspector. They are all doing business as usual and accomplishing fine results.

"It has not extinguished one-half of its street lights, although it cut out some few and shifted others around to better locations. There are about as many lights in the city of Birmingham today as ever before.

"It has not discontinued one-third of its police department, nor put it on a twelve hour shift. It re-organized this department, with some removals, and left it on an eight hour shift. The reduced force has proven more effective than ever, to the astonishment of the public.

"Not a single fire station has been closed, although some men were dropped from the fire department as a matter of economy. The result for the past year shows that this reduced department has responded to this burden and produced one of the most wonderful records in the history of the United States. The fire losses were \$416,000 this past year as against \$1,252,000 for the preceding year. Owing to this wonderful record the insurance companies have practically agreed to reduce the rates in the city 15 per cent in the near future.

"In addition to perverting the 'Survey' article, the liquor people stultify themselves by adding:

"That in Birmingham social disorder prevails; that the city is seething with crime; that the city is infested with criminal crooks, etc.; that crime is rampant and drunkenness more prevalent than ever before in the city's history; that the worst kind of alcoholic poisons are being sold in enormous quantities to colored people, and that the use of deadly drugs is growing daily."

"Not a word of which is true. Just the reverse is true.

"The use of deadly drugs has practically been stamped out by the harmonious co-operation of all the courts and the police department. There is practically no liquor coming in, except as is provided by state law. Seldom is a drunken man seen.

"The larger phases of crime, murder, etc., are practically reduced to a minimum, as the following record will show:

Record of Arrests

"Comparative statement of arrests and convictions for months of October, November and December, 1914 and 1915:

	1914	1915	P. C.
	Sa-	Prohi-	De-
	loons	bition	crease
Total arrests	4599	2742	41
Total convictions	3294	1910	42
Drunkenness	999	340	66
Wife whipping	23	11	57
Disorderly conduct	863	487	44

"Homicides in the city of Birmingham have been reduced exactly 33 1-3 per cent for the last three months of 1915.

"Suicides for the entire year of 1914 were 30. For the entire year 1915 were 14, or a reduction of 60 per cent.

"It is a noticeable fact that Birmingham has never before in its history been so quiet and orderly.

"Following is a comparison of the number of cases in the police court on February 2, 1914, 1915 and 1916: Saloon, February 2, 1914, 130 cases

Saloon, February 2, 1915, 44 cases
Prohibition, Feb. 2, 1916, 3 cases
Little Use for Jail

"Another fact the liquor people can chew upon.

"The city of Birmingham has the handsomest city jail in the south, costing about \$100,000 and surrounded by twenty acres of ground beautifully cultivated.

"The normal number of prisoners confined within it before the advent of prohibition was 200 and upwards. Today the number ranges from 60 to 70, most of them colored women.

"Now our problem is, what to do with this fine jail. As a result Birmingham is forced to do its street cleaning and garbage collection with paid labor instead of with prisoners.

"This wonderful fire and police record can be traced almost directly to prohibition, for, in the fire department it is preventing conflagrations by minimizing carelessness and wantonness. In the police department it is forestalling crime.

Attack from New Angle

"In other words, through force of circumstances and economic necessity Birmingham is attacking these problems from a new angle. That is to say, instead of winking at or ignoring crime at its source and then handling it afterwards at a tremendous cost, the city is annihilating the source.

"Instead of handling and putting out fires after starting with a costly department, it is ejecting the causes of fires.

"A systematic inspection of all fire risks with additional inspectors was devised to offset the reduction in the fire fighting force. This, assisted by a sober populace, is doing the work.

"Every passing month demonstrates more clearly that the monetary loss from prohibition is being offset in so many other ways, both direct and indirect, both financially and morally, that the result is startling. This also to the wonderment of half the population.

"While the anti-prohibitionists in Jefferson county have polled large votes in preceding years, it is doubtful should the issue come up again that the open saloon would have any adherents at all.

"It would be well to call the liquor people's attention to the further fact that the effect of such villainous tactics and slanderous statements will be to drive away from their ranks many conservative people who heretofore have looked on their propaganda with favor.

"It is known in Birmingham that I am no prohibition fanatic, having never voted that ticket, but in fairness to the prohibitionists I can not stand idly by and see the results of their effort minimized by false and absurd reports.

"Nor will our people allow the financial status of the city to be damaged for the sake of a lot of saloons in Montana or anywhere else."

LOCK THE DOOR BEFORE THE HORSE IS STOLEN

An era of unbridled extravagance in national expenditure! Billions for "preparedness," without adequate insurance against waste. All sorts of schemes for extracting millions from the federal treasury, to benefit special interests rather than the general welfare. Neglect of many useful measures and prudent reforms. The piling up of more taxes onto people least able to bear them, instead of making war profits carry the cost of preparedness!

These are the mistakes congress may make, unless sternly restrained by public opinion and organized agriculture. The government should have a budget, know how much it

must spend and what for, instead of plunging recklessly with no regard for taxpayers who must foot the bills.

Even more than other people, our farmers are ready and willing to bear their share of the cost of government economically administered. They will give freely their treasure and blood, if necessary, for their country's welfare. Farmers are of that stern stuff which has "millions for defense but not one cent for tribute." Yet they will not be swept off their feet by the hysteria which is being worked up to commit our government to half-baked plans of preparedness that may enrich munition manufacturers and impoverish the common people without corresponding benefits to the United States.

Let Uncle Sam keep cool, sensible, wise, far-sighted, planning prudently yet comprehensively for the impending Evolution in world economics, world politics! Employ sound economy of thought and labor, money and life, in preparing for peace as well as for insurance against war. Working along these lines, the United States may serve still more largely in promoting world civilization, but not for her own selfish aggrandizement. This great nation, co-operating with the other republics of the western hemisphere, may yet induce the eastern hemisphere to recognize that right, not might, is the only basis for a civilization that shall bless all the people with peace and plenty, liberty and life, health and happiness. —Farm and Home.

THE DEMOCRACY OF THE DEAD

In the democracy of the dead all men at last are equal. There is neither rank nor station nor prerogative in the republic of the grave. At this fatal threshold the philosopher ceases to be wise, and the song of the poet is silent. Dives relinquishes his millions and Lazarus his rags. The poor man is as rich as the richest, and the rich man is as poor as the pauper. The creditor loses his usury, and the debtor is acquitted of his obligation. There the proud man surrenders his dignities, the politician his honors, the worldling his pleasures; the invalid needs no physician, and the laborer rests from unrequited toil.

Here at last is Nature's final decree in equity. The wrongs of time are redressed. Injustice is expiated, the irony of fate is refuted; the unequal distribution of wealth, honor, capacity, pleasure and opportunity which makes life such a cruel and inexplicable tragedy, ceases in the realm of death. The strongest there has no supremacy, and the weakest needs no defense. The mightiest captain succumbs to that invincible adversary, who disarms alike the victor and the vanquished. — John J. Ingalls's eulogy on Congressman Burnes of Missouri.

NOT PERSONAL DIFFERENCES

It should not be necessary for Mr. Bryan to say in The Commoner that there are no personal differences between himself and the President and that their relations continue cordial. Honest men can disagree without disliking one another. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that the President's respect for Mr. Bryan and belief in his sincerity are impaired by his opposition to the President's plans for the national defense.

The intimations that Mr. Bryan and the President have come to be personal enemies have their origin in minds incapable of understanding this difference of opinion is compatible with kindly feeling between men of intelligence and self-respect. — Columbia (S. C.) State.