

MARION PROGRESS

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER DEVOTED TO THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF McDOWELL COUNTY.

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MR. CARLTON REPLIES

Says Situation in Marion is About the Same as Exists in Other Towns in the State.

DEAR MR. EDITOR:

The article appearing in last week's issue of your paper entitled: "Blind Tigers in Marion—Town Officials Criticised for failure to enforce the law against the sale of liquor" is misleading when reading the headlines alone. Whether the writer of the article or the editor is responsible for this I am not prepared to say, but a careful reading of the article reveals that criticism is directed against the following: First, the Town Marshal; second, the Mayor; third, the Board of Aldermen; fourth, the citizens of the town; fifth, the members of the churches, including Mr. Morgan himself.

I am not called upon to answer for all these classes, but as a general statement will say that if this article presents the true situation things are most alarming in Marion.

Not very long ago I heard an old colored man begin his speech with the following astounding statement: "Marion is the best little mountain town betwixt Heaven and Hell. I do not know how far away Heaven is, but I know Hell is right here." If Mr. Morgan's portrayal of conditions is true, then the old colored man was not far wrong.

I have been informed by good citizens who have lived here for years that the picture is somewhat overdrawn—that conditions are better now than they were ten years ago. Is it possible that "the boys of this town are now debasing themselves with liquor more than at any previous time during the past ten years?"

Having lived here not quite two years I am not able to answer this question. I became a citizen of this town and county on the 20th day of April, 1910, coming here from another section of the State. On the anniversary of my arrival I was honored with the nomination for the office of Mayor. This honor came to me unsought and I would have manifested an ungrateful spirit had I refused to accept it. On the first of May last I qualified by taking the oath of office and entered at once upon the discharge of its duties. Having had due regard for my oath of office, I have tried in every possible way to diligently enforce the laws and ordinances of the town, and have done so impartially and courageously with no expression of encouragement from any living soul, except my Marshal and the unfailing loyalty of my Board of Aldermen. These gentlemen have stood by me on every proposition for law enforcement and have at all times had, as it seemed to me, the good of Marion at heart.

As to what has been done for law enforcement the record will show. It is an open book to the public and "all who run may read." An examination of it discloses the fact that many citizens have been convicted for drunkenness and some have been bound over to the higher court charged with selling liquor illegally. Every single case brought before me charged with drunkenness has had a thorough investigation—the defendant in

each case, without a single instance, except in one case where the defendant was represented by counsel and was advised not to go on the stand, has been subjected to a most thorough, grilling cross examination to find out where he purchased the liquor that made him drunk as well as touching his knowledge of where liquor was bought or sold in Marion.

If conditions are so bad it seems strange, indeed, that some good citizen has not volunteered some information, some knowledge or facts that would secure a conviction of these violators of the law. If Mr. Morgan, or any member of his proposed "Band of six or more good men" or any other good citizen or citizens or the Town Marshal will put the facts before me, I will immediately issue a warrant for the arrest of the offender or offenders, as the case may be, be he high or low, rich or poor, or whatever his station in life, and will make a thorough investigation of the matter and if the facts show even probable cause of his or their guilt, I will bind him or them under a good and sufficient bond to the next term of the Superior Court to answer the charge.

There seems to be a disposition which has become a common habit among us to criticise and even sometimes sneer at, our public officials. This spirit is manifested by the people for whose very benefit the laws exist. This spirit of criticism and disparagement does not grow out of any dissatisfaction with the machinery of our system of law, but is inspired sometimes by a spirit of prejudice, or envy, and by one thing and another that we cannot explain.

To put down vice and crime is a difficult task unless the officials in power have the hearty co-operation and the support of the good people of the town and community. Your Marshal can not successfully apprehend these evil doers without it. Your Mayor can not do it alone, even though he shouted a proclamation from the dome of the county court house itself. A certain king in Norway once undertook to organize a great shout. He sent his proclamation all over his kingdom. The imperial edict demanded that at a certain hour, at a certain minute, at a certain moment, every one of his subjects was to shout in unison. The greatest interest in the king's strange idea; there was a great movement to and fro, and preparation for the appointed moment; it came but deathless silence reigned. Only one person shouted, and that was a little woman away up in the mountains of Norway who said: "Boo!" All the rest stood waiting to see what the others would do, and to hear the great noise which was expected to ensue.

We will find that in dealing with public sentiment relative to law enforcement in towns and cities there will be a disposition to leave the agitation to one man, or a few men. It seems to me that there must be, first of all, the organization of a propaganda for a righteous public sentiment which shall bring to the altar the love and patriotism of every true hearted, broad souled citizen who has the moral good of his town or city at heart and who wants to see the boys and young men and old men, lifted up to a higher plain of duty and usefulness as citizens.

The "Blind Tiger" situation in Marion is about such a state of

affairs as exists in most towns and communities of its size throughout this state. Not for one moment would I condone such condition. It is far from ideal. Evasion and direct disobedience of the law should be punished. The question of just how to get hold of the offender is one that has puzzled and is puzzling the officers and citizens of these towns and communities all over the state. No amount of rumor or mere heresy constitute legal evidence. No amount of certainty about the guilt of a supposed offender can make him liable to arrest unless that certainty is based on real, definite facts. In an earnest effort to get at these facts I have been thwarted time and again, just when the case seemed almost complete.

It is my purpose to do my duty. I will welcome the help of Mr. Morgan and all good citizens in suppressing this evil in our midst. With such a sentiment alive in the hearts of the private citizens it ought to be only a matter of a little time until undisputable evidence is before me.

In Raleigh, Charlotte, Asheville and in all towns large and small where the "blind tiger" has been routed, it has taken the earnest, concerted action of the organized citizenship as well as the hard work of the officers of the law to effect results. Only a short while ago in Morganton, was organized a "Law and Order League" with Mr. Ernest Erwin as its president. By reason of its influence Mr. Johnston, the Solicitor, informs me, that there were several convictions of persons charged with the illicit sale of liquor in that town. If such an organization is good for Morganton why not for Marion? Is there a good, strong, healthy sentiment in Marion for law enforcement? If so, all good citizens should be willing to cooperate and actively support the officials in power that law and order may prevail in our town? "There is no cause without a remedy." Have you one to suggest?

D. L. CARLTON.

Marion, N. C., March 27, 1912.

Old Fort Matters.

Old Fort, March 27.—Deputy Sheriff Turner, Chief of Police Mauney and all the other officers and quite a number of citizens held a very peculiar watch meeting here Sunday night; not that they were so anxiously waiting for the light of Monday morning and the labors of another week to appear, but there was (or thought to be) a person, supposed to be a man dressed in woman's clothing, coming through town some time during the night, and it was thought by some folks that the mysterious person was one of the Allen brothers, who is being searched for by Virginia officers. But alas! she or he did not appear, and the watchers were forced to disband in the wee hours of the morning and seek their homes and beds. How sad to be disappointed.

A prisoner in the city jail here Saturday night set fire to the building and then gave the alarm. There being only one prisoner but help close at hand, the damage was not very great.

J. C. Green went to Asheville, Tuesday, to visit his daughters, Misses Maude and Louise, who are in school there.

Mrs. James Ray of Marion spent Tuesday with relatives here.

Mrs. M. R. Young, who has been very ill, is improving.

Three cheers for Mr. W. T. Morgan's article in last week's issue of THE PROGRESS. As the Editor says, it rings true and is to the point. Would it not be a great blessing if all the officers and citizens as well would put their shoulders to the wheel and push with all their might until McDowell county is rid of the "blind tiger" curse.

EVERGREEN.

It is stated that Mr. W. B. Odell, of Concord, former State Senator, has about decided to become a candidate for State Treasurer.

KEEP UP THE FIRING

Mr. Price Reviews Work of Anti-Saloon League—Says People Favor Enforcing Law.

Mr. Editor:

I was glad to see the article last week by Mr. W. T. Morgan on "Blind Tigers in Marion," and your editorial in which you ask what the preachers and church officials have done to rid Marion of "blind tigers" and the evils of whiskey, for two reasons. First, because of the great need of stirring up our people, and especially our officials, on this subject, which is a blot on our town and one that is sapping the very life and character out of our town; and second, because it gives an opportunity for me to answer your question, "What have the preachers and church officials done to rid Marion of blind tigers and the evils of whiskey," and Mr. Morgan's statement (which is true) that "veteran prohibition leaders have for a time been silent."

In order to answer these two statements fully will a review of our work since the organization of the Anti-Saloon League in our town, when I was elected president and we went to work, with all the ministers in town in the front ranks, organizing and trying to create sentiment to vote whiskey out of town. Some of us worked day and night for several weeks, but we were defeated by about 44 votes. Then our only hope was to get a bill through the Legislature. We kept our organization up, holding monthly meetings, getting the best speakers and workers in the state to come from time to time, paying their expenses, until the Legislature met in 1905, when only three of us would volunteer to go to Raleigh and try to get a bill passed prohibiting the sale of liquors in our town. We went, paying our own way, had a bill prepared and introduced, but our representative opposed it and it was killed by the committee. We returned home determined to keep up the fight until we did succeed, believing that "the brightest position any man can hold in this world is to stand as a machine, connected with his maker by a band of living dynamic faith and hope, willing to serve and sacrifice for the uplift of his fellows, and leave results with Him," and that in God's own time it would come.

We kept well organized, trying to mold sentiment until the Legislature met in 1907. Our representative said if a majority of the voters of the county were in favor of prohibition in Marion he would not oppose it. You can see what a task we had to get out petitions in every township in the county and get men to make a canvass from house to house in order to secure the names of a majority of all the voters in the county, but we were in the fight to a finish, and we got good men who were willing to do the work. When the petitions were returned to me I found that we did not have a majority of the voters on our petition. The county had not been thoroughly canvassed. I went to the livery stable and hired a horse and paid a good man to ride in the snow until he secured sufficient names to give

us a majority of the voters. We then made up a party of nineteen of the best men in the town and county and one woman, and employed one of the best lawyers we could find, and went to Raleigh and spent a week and secured an IRON CLAD bill, prohibiting the making and selling of intoxicating liquors in the town of Marion. Some of us spent more than one hundred dollars in cash, besides the time we gave, but we believe it was the best investment of time and money we ever made, and gave both gladly.

The extra session of the Legislature submitted a vote to the State on State prohibition. It had been claimed by some that McDowell county was not in favor of prohibition. Rev. H. H. Jordan, then president of our Anti-Saloon League, and myself made what I consider the most vigorous campaign ever made in the county. The returns from the election showed only 187 votes cast against prohibition, and the votes in Marion township, the only place it could be made and sold, showed only 62 votes against prohibition, and the State gave 44,196 majority for prohibition, being the greatest victory ever achieved in the county and State. We had the people on record, showing public sentiment almost unanimous for prohibition. We had all the LAW AND SENTIMENT we needed.

We then selected a board of aldermen and mayor that we believed would execute the law. We then felt that our work was done. Soon it was claimed that the chief of police could not catch the "blind tigers." The mayor authorized Rev. H. H. Jordan, president of the Anti-Saloon League, to get a detective, which he did, and through his work there were several arrests, and by the aid of W. T. Morgan at the trials in court there were several convictions for which Mr. Morgan never received one dollar. The cost of the detective was \$145.00. The money was borrowed from the bank until the meeting of the board of aldermen. The claim was presented by Mr. Jordan and refused. At the next meeting of the board he asked me to go with him, and we both presented the matter again. Two voted to pay it and three against it. The result was that a few men had to go down in their pockets and pay the \$145.00, to have the law enforced; the law that they had elected officers to execute, and had paid their taxes to help pay the salary of the officers whose duty it was, and now is, to execute the law. I must confess I did not pay my part of this money with as good grace as I did the money I paid trying to secure prohibition.

It is no more the duty of private citizens to pay their money to have one law enforced more than any other law. And why will officers not enforce all the laws? If there is to be any discrimination it should be to more rigidly enforce the laws against the greater crimes. If our officers are doing their full duty, then prohibition is a miserable failure. Other people are not indifferent, nor have they lost interest in this cause, neither are they asleep, but I am glad of this new

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