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Saloon fight at Berne, Ind.







# SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, IND.

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NOT A NOVEL, BUT REAL HISTORY.

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TRUTH STRANGER THAN FICTION.

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BY FRED ROHRER.

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Published By  
THE BERNE WITNESS COMPANY,  
Berne, Indiana, U. S. A.  
1913.

Price, 50 Cents.

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Copyright, 1913,  
By the Author.

To my Wife and daughter Margaret who suffered more than anybody else in order that Berne might be freed from the home and soul-destroying influences of the liquor traffic.



48672

## PREFACE.

The object of this book is threefold.

1st. To praise God for victory after a long and bitter war of constant battling between the forces of heaven and hell.

2nd. To encourage young people to do right because it is right, no matter what people say; for right wins in the end.

3rd. To nerve temperance people individually to law enforcement, for this, coupled with faith in God, is the key that solves the temperance problem.

THE AUTHOR.

## A FOREWORD.

I first met the Author of this Book in Indianapolis in 1903 when he was seeking for detectives to obtain evidence which would discover the guilty parties dynamiting his home in connection with the Anti-Saloon Crusade in his town. His straightforward recital of these outrages, his meek but heroic spirit, his sublime trust in the protection of Divine Providence and his willingness to suffer anything for this cause made a wonderful impression upon me. Since then I have followed every event in his remarkable career with an ever increasing interest, have visited him and his family in their home and my own life has been made better as a result.

At different times, at my earnest request, Mr. Rohrer has appeared before audiences in different places where the simple recital of the remarkable experiences herein written has made an impression never to be forgotten. I have frequently told him that he owed it to the Temperance Crusade to write the history of the crusade in Berne, which history is probably without a parallel in any city or town in America. We rejoice that he has at last consented to do this and that now the world will have the privilege of reading this story, which is stranger than fiction because it is true and which is more thrilling than romance because it deals with real events. This story will no doubt prove to be the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of the Anti- Liquor Crusade.

E. S. SHUMAKER,

(State Supt. Indiana Anti-Saloon League.)

## INTRODUCTION.

We have here a story fresh from the life of a man, who, laying no claim to distinguished parts or to greatness of any kind, as the world acclaims them, yet signally typifies in his moral sense, his patience and forbearance, and in the unbreakable continuity of his purpose, the qualities of citizenship that constitute the strength of the state and insure the progress and welfare of society, — a story somewhat crudely told, but so plain, so simple, so direct, so sincere and truthful as to challenge and grip and hold the interest of the reader to the end.

Beneath the freedom of the slave and the solidarity of the American Republic lie the spilled blood and bruised bodies of Garrison, of Lovejoy and of Abraham Lincoln. Through and by them the Nation attained a new birth of freedom, liberty and unity. Its foundations are buttressed by their ashes and cemented by their blood.

And some day, in the providence of Almighty God, there shall come to this same Nation another newer and a more glorious and exalted birth than even that given it by these immortal martyrs—a birth so full and free and virile that it shall arise and stand forever disenthralled from the curse and blight of alcohol and the countless evils it entails. When it comes it will rest upon the sacrificial lives of men and women—men and women, who, loving it more than property, life or reputation, have died for it, as died the martyrs for the new birth proclaimed at Gettysburg and confirmed at Appomattox.

This story from the life of this plain and simple man exemplifies in no mean measure the work that must be done, the services that must be rendered, and the sacrifices that must be made before the Nation can receive the disenthralment that shall come of this newer, holier birth.

It discloses, too, the lawlessness, the criminality and the cruel and hellish brutality of the liquor traffic. Neither the will of the people, however solemnly expressed; nor the persons or the lives of men or women; the sacredness of home; the sanctity of motherhood, nor the innocence of childhood, are considered when they stand in the way of the consummation of its purpose. When occasion requires it violates every relation that men are wont to hold sacred, with a heartlessness and an abandon which only the lust of gain can inspire.

It reveals also the conquering power of a great cause involving human destiny; the certainty of its ultimate triumph, and the sense of right and justice that lies, sleeping perhaps, but not dead, in the breasts of the people of this Nation.

Four times the sponsors of the traffic assaulted and beat this man's person. Once they sought to mob him, and once they dynamited the home where his wife and children slept. But his will was unbreakable, his courage unfaltering. He remained throughout it all as loyal to his convictions as the needle to the pole, and as faithful to his purpose as the circling stars in their courses, consoled and sustained by a flawless faith — a faith that whatever might personally befall him, the cause he served would remain and go marching on until God should crown it with victory.

J. FRANK HANLY.

(Governor of Indiana 1905-1909.)

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## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY HISTORY OF BERNE.

Five miles north of Geneva, Indiana, the home of Mrs. Gene Stratton-Porter who wrote "Freckles," "A Girl of the Limberlost," "The Harvester" and many other popular books, is the town of Berne. The towns are named after Geneva and Bern, Switzerland, because the early settlers of this community hailed from the land of Wilhelm Tell, and about eighty percent of the population of Berne and vicinity speak the Swiss dialect to this day.

Berne used to have one saloon for each one hundred inhabitants. At that time everybody patronized the saloons; not only men who made no profession of Christianity, but preachers went in and took their glass of beer as well as anybody else. When farmers brought their grain or live stock to town they always expected a glass of beer together with their pay, and after going into a store to buy a bill of goods, the merchant again had to "set it up" before settlement was made. Nearly everybody kept wine and cider in the home, and at almost every social gathering the little brown jug or red pitcher was in evidence.

But despite the popular custom in those days of patronizing the four saloons, when no one looked askance on anybody, not even on church members and ministers of the Gospel, for visiting the public drinking places, there were a number of earnest and devoted souls that abhorred the custom and shunned

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

the cup that inebriates, and both privately and openly preached the doctrine of temperance.

Certainly no person in Berne has done more to create a temperance sentiment than Rev. S. F. Sprunger, for nearly forty years pastor of the Mennonite church. Next to him John Christian Rohrer, father of the author of this book, who came to this place in the spring of 1885, was chiefly instrumental in agitating the personal abstinence idea, which he brought with him from Bern, Switzerland, where he was a charter member of the Blue Cross total abstinence society, organized first among the French Swiss in Geneva in 1877 and two years later among the Germans in Bern, the capital city of the little Alpine republic. Father Rohrer was the first person known to sign a German total abstinence pledge, and the card is kept by the eldest son, the writer of these lines, as a precious relic.

At first Father Rohrer's total abstinence idea did not take very well with the people here with whom he had come to live. Nevertheless during the winter of 1885—1886 several informal "counter" meetings and discussions by a few friends of temperance resulted in the organization of a German temperance society in Berne, Indiana, on the evening of February 4, 1886, with J. F. Lehman, Moses Moser, Joel Welty, John A. Sprunger, Levi A. Sprunger, F. G. Eichenberger, C. C. Sprunger, Eli Riesen and N. G. Fankhauser as the charter members and Mr. Lehman as their chairman.

The original object of this society was more that of an anti-saloon society than that of strictly temperance, to create a sentiment to compel the saloon keep-



## EARLY HISTORY OF BERNE.

ers to run their business within the bounds of the law. These first members of the German temperance society in Berne, Indiana, believed that my father's views on the liquor question were too radical and impracticable at that time and for that reason did not invite him to their organization meeting, but he had vision enough to see that they were coming his way and at first opportunity he joined them.

As the society took shape and grew in membership, which it did very rapidly, the sentiment of strict personal temperance of its members, approaching total abstinence, also grew very rapidly, as the only effective means by which to further the temperance cause. In the first year the membership of the society, despite the most violent opposition against the new movement, even among the majority of church members, grew to 79. Even though Rev. S. F. Sprunger also joined the society soon after its birth and became its very soul and impetus it was some time before the society as such was permitted to hold a meeting in any church. In summer time the monthly meetings were held in schoolhouses throughout the neighborhood and in winter time in the Sprunger hall over a clothing store.

In the summer of 1886 a blessed revival came to Berne and on Saturday evening, June 26th, at a cottage prayer meeting held in the home of J. F. Lehman I was happily converted and saved through faith in the blood atonement of Christ Jesus, and one of the first things that Christian duty prompted me to do was to join this temperance society, though at that time I was still in my "teens."

## CHAPTER II.

### BEGINNING OF ANTI-SALOON CRUSADE.

This society quietly worked as a leaven in the community and gradually changed the public sentiment in favor of temperance and against saloons, so that by ten years later the number of saloons decreased to three while the population more than doubled.

We learned, however, that trying to regulate saloons is a hard task. No matter how often we filed complaints against the liquor sellers and no matter how overwhelming and conclusive the evidence would be, it was an utter impossibility at that time to get a conviction in any court in Adams county against any violator of the liquor laws. The more we tried to regulate the saloons the worse they became, so that we finally concluded that the only proper regulation is extermination.

The opportune time came in 1902. The town was having an oil boom, and oil men came moving in in such numbers that houses could not be built fast enough to accommodate them. But most of these oil men were a rather undesirable class of citizens, living from hand to mouth, many of them spending a greater part of their salaries in the saloons, which were running wide open as they pleased, without any regard for law whatever.

The ministers and other citizens came together and talked the situation over. They were afraid of this foreign element and the influence it might have

## BEGINNING OF ANTI-SALOON CRUSADE.

on our community. They said, if we ever want to close the saloons it must be done now, before they become intrenched behind this re-inforcement of bad men. The question of dollars and cents did not enter the minds of the good people of Berne when they decided to close up these places and prevent the town from becoming a hotbed of immorality, vice and crime. Happily, in our town the ministers hold an influence not enjoyed by any other class of citizens. They are looked up to as viceroys of God, and their word generally goes.

On September 9, 1902, Rev. E. G. Saunderson, then connected with the Indiana Anti-Saloon League at Indianapolis, arrived in town and in the evening of that day the ministers of the town held a meeting with him at the parsonage of the German Reformed church, to which meeting E. M. Ray, J. F. Lehman, James E. Sprunger and myself were also invited. At this meeting the whole plan for starting and keeping up a remonstrance campaign was explained by Rev. Saunderson. After several other meetings solicitors were selected for the town and each school district in the township, who were to get up the blanket remonstrance with power-of-attorney given to E. M. Ray, Dr. Ernest Franz and myself.

The canvassers were Rev. I. A. Sommer, Rev. E. H. Vornholt, Rev. James A. Sprague, E. M. Ray, J. P. Habegger, D. J. Sprunger, T. S. Perkins, and Amos R. Brandyberry. No one knew a thing about the movement except those connected with it. These solicitors started out nearly all the same day, on October 23rd, and in about three days' time they had a majority of the voters on the remonstrance, which

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

has been kept up ever since and is being kept right up to date all the time. Later on H. P. Ray, Wm. P. Hendricks and C. C. Sprunger also secured a large number of additional names, but the king of all solicitors was Rev. I. A. Sommer.

At that time the vote cast in the township for Secretary of State constituted the basis from which to determine a majority on a remonstrance. To make matters worse for the saloon keepers a great many of the "dum Dutchmen" who had signed the remonstrance did not vote for Secretary of State in the November election of 1902, so that according to the strict letter of the law we had almost twice the number of names required to make the remonstrance effective.

It was because of such tactics pursued by remonstrators here and elsewhere that the Indiana legislature of 1905 then changed the law so that a remonstrance must now have a majority of the highest number of votes cast for any office.

## CHAPTER III.

### SALOONS ARE CLOSED.

The real battle began in the following month of December, after E. M. Ray had filed two copies of the remonstrance with the county auditor on November 27th, one against Jacob Brenneman, the pioneer saloon keeper of Berne, and the other against Jacob Hunziker, both natives of Switzerland. On December 2nd both of these saloon keepers appeared before the county board of commissioners for a renewal of their license, and to overcome the obstacle that had been placed in their way, Evans Woolen, of Indianapolis, then attorney for the State Liquor League, was sent for to assist their local attorney, David E. Smith, of Decatur, our county seat. The temperance forces aligned an excellent array of legal talent on their side, headed by Charles J. Orbison, of Indianapolis, at that time legal advisor of the Indiana Anti-Saloon League, and Frank W. Gorden, of Bluffton, Indiana, who assisted our local attorneys, Dore B. Erwin and Jesse Sutton, of Decatur.

In the morning of that day when the saloon keepers with a large number of their friends and the ministers with the remonstrators in still greater number were all assembled at the station in two groups, ready to board the train for the county seat, some one remarked:

"It looks like heaven and hell are going to leave town."

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

And it was a stubborn battle that was fought all day in the commissioners court, that day, though really only on trifles and technicalities because as to the real legality of the remonstrance and its overwhelming majority there was no question. Attorney Clark J. Lutz was the legal advisor to the commissioners, and on his advice Commissioner Jacob Abnet finally moved that the licenses to both applicants be refused, and the other two members of the board assented, though one of them, Samuel Doak, did it reluctantly.

On the 5th of December the two saloons remained closed. It was almost too good to be true, and, of course, only few people believed that it would last long.

## CHAPTER IV.

### FUND OF \$10,500 SUBSCRIBED.

That first battle cost the temperance people over \$100.00 and we soon realized that it will take sums of money to keep up this warfare, because when you attack the saloon business you are taking the devil by his horns, and when you take the devil by his horns he is going to do some lively kicking. As the law was then, we could remonstrate only against individual applicants and we had to be prepared to fight one or more of them every month. For that reason the following month, January 1903, a number of citizens of Berne and Monroe township signed \$500.00 each to a reform fund with which to fight the liquor business in Berne. They were J. E. Lehman, I. A. Sommer, A. A. Lehman, Noah Wulliman, Peter Liechty, Jacob C. Neuenschwander, Emanuel Sprunger, J. F. Sprunger, E. A. Luginbill, L. A. Sprunger, Chr. P. Sprunger, C. C. Sprunger, H. P. Ray, Isaac Lehman, Dr. E. Franz, Benjamin Sprunger, W. J. Sprunger, J. P. Habegger, Dan Sprunger, John Lehman and myself. They were all freeholders except one. This gave us a fund of \$10,500.00 and was notice to saloon keepers that we are in the fight to stay.

Besides this I received on January 12, 1903 by mail \$100.00 in \$10 and \$20 bills with the following anonymous letter to be published in "The Berne Witness," of which I have been the editor and manager ever since I founded it in September 1896.

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

### "IS LIQUOR BEING SOLD ILLEGALLY IN BERNE?"

"Opponents to the remonstrance often said that there would be more liquor sold in Berne if licenses were refused, than if said licenses were granted.

"To assist in demonstrating the matter, \$100.00 has been deposited with Fred Rohrer to be used as follows: \$10.00 to be paid for the first, \$15.00 for the second, and \$25.00 for the third conviction of any one party by the Adams Circuit Court. Money to be paid by Fred Rohrer to such parties that file the complaint. All complaints must be filed in the Adams Circuit Court.

"Mr. Rohrer, you will please use enclosed money, as shown by slip.

(Signed)

"A Friend of the Cause."

This item was published for a long time as a "Standing Offer," but as nobody outside of myself ever earned it, I turned it over to the reform fund.

The license of the other remaining saloon, owned by George W. Nichols, expired in March. He had no hopes of faring any better than his other associates had done, and so he was going to celebrate the last day of the saloon business in Berne with a great blow-out. The readers will find on the next page a photographic reproduction of the kind of bills he had put out for the occassion.

But Mr. Nichols' "Last Day" was just one day too late. He had made a miscalculation of the termination of his license. He thought the closing day came on Saturday, March the 7th, but the day before he was



Free!—Free!—Free!

---

—GRAND—

# BARBECUE


—AT—

## BERNE, IND.

—ON—

### Saturday, Mar. 7, 1903

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 SINCE THE MAJORITY OF VOTERS of Monroe township have expressed their will against saloons by signing remonstrances, and thus driving me out of business, I am desirous of showing all my patrons of the past, and all others who may care to join us, a good, live time for once in their lives, and have therefore arranged for an old fashioned Ox Roast at my place of business, on above date, the closing day of the saloon business in Berne.

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### Special Feature

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A Balloon Ascension and parachute drop by Prof Lanning of Bluffton, the man who made the famous ascension and leap here last summer.

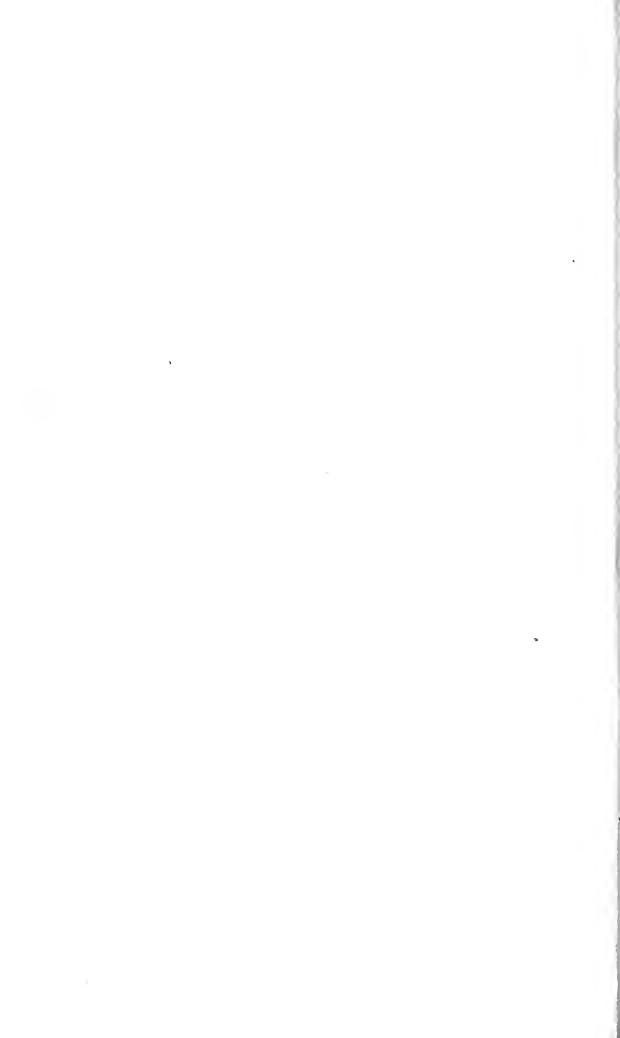
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### Music by Berne Band

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THE BIGGEST AND BEST  
Time in Berne's history, free to every one Help  
us celebrate the last day

### GEORGE W. NICHOLS



## FUND OF \$10,500 SUBSCRIBED.

notified that his license expires on March 6th and that he would make himself liable to prosecution if he sold liquor the next day, the 7th. Thus Friday, the last day, closed without any demonstration, and the people who came on the "Barbecue Day" found the last saloon closed and the doors locked.

One night about a week or more before George Nichols' license expired some one placed a red lantern on the door steps of the home of E. M. Ray, who had filed the remonstrances against the other two saloon keepers, and for this reason he asked me to file the remonstrance against Mr. Nichols. His application was dismissed on March the 6th by the county board of commissioners, without any argument, after he had kept our attorneys and myself in a state of uncertainty and expectations for several days, as he was evidently trying to evade the remonstrance by procuring his license when we would not be on guard. But we were on deck all the time from Monday till Friday when the case was unceremoniously disposed of.

On March 10th "The Berne Witness" said:

"And now Berne is a dry town. If anybody denies it, let him prove the contrary. The \$100.00 reward is still open and ready for the man who can bring conviction against any one for selling liquor illegally."

## CHAPTER V.

### OPENING OF CLUB HOUSES.

But the closing up of saloons did not stop the consumption of liquor; Jacob Brenneman sold his saloon property to Samuel L. Kuntz and returned to Switzerland with his family, but remained there less than a year and then came back again to this place and became my neighbor. Mr. Kuntz started a social club with nine other men and called it the "Dry Town Club," and George Nichols organized the "Berne-Adams Club" with twenty-six members.

The directors of the "Dry Town Club" were: Samuel L. Kuntz, Frank C. Forman, W. H. Bole, Chas. W. Wright and Chas. Wright, while the directorship of the "Berne-Adams Club" was in the hands of Geo. W. Nichols, Wm. Sheets, S. A. Dulin, Jacob W. Ehram and Lemuel S. Colbert.

As to the operation of these clubs a report from this State to the "Grand Rapids (Mich.) Evening Press" gave the following:

"The anti-temperance element in Berne formed a club of 100 members, opened a club house to which each member received a key, and liberally stocked it with liquor. Whiskey is bought by the demijohn, beer by the barrel. Whenever a member enters, he locks the door after him and while the temperance folks might guess what is going on inside, they have to be content with guessing.

"The club house has proved a very attractive

## OPENING OF CLUB HOUSES.

place for certain citizens of Berne, and a number of persons in the township outside of the town have also become members and have been provided with keys. Each man has been placed on his honor and keeps his own account of the kind and quality of liquor he imbibes. He puts the money in a designated place before leaving the building. The club aims only to cover expenses. The money received is used in replacing the stock."

## CHAPTER VI.

### SALOONS RETURN.

But, somehow, this club business must have failed to give satisfaction. Perhaps the men who had been placed on their honor took more and more liquor and left less and less money, until there was nothing left with which to replenish the stock. At any rate the club season lasted only a few months.

In June one man, John E. Rinaker, applied for a license to retail liquor in Berne and it was granted to him. The next month two more men applied, Samuel L. Kuntz and J. M. Ehram, and they received the licenses. Will Sheets had also published notice of his intention to apply and a remonstrance was filed against him, but he did not appear.

We were dumfounded. We had remonstrated against each applicant in the same manner as had been done before and our attorneys presented the law and argued the case, but without effect.

A change had taken place in the personnel of the board of county commissioners on January 1st. The new man who came into office was David Werling, evidently a saloon man, and he and Samuel Doak, who also favored the liquor men whenever he could, simply set themselves above the law and trampled under foot the will of a great majority of people and issued licenses contrary to law. They said to us, "If you are not satisfied you can appeal to the circuit court."

This, of course, we did in each case, but the

## SALOONS RETURN.

saloon men postponed their trial as long as they could and then finally asked for a change of venue into another county, which was granted to them, and in the mean while the business of dispensing liquor in Berne was merrily going on again for almost a year, just as if we had never remonstrated.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DYNAMITING EPISODE.

After these two commissioners had granted a license illegally in June and two in July, 1903 another man, Joseph Hocker, published notice of his intention to make application in September. I went to Decatur on the first Monday morning of September with the power-of-attorney in my pocket to fight the applicant. The man soon came and his attorney with him, but noting my presence they failed to go ahead with the application. The attorney evidently knew that the commissioners would be in session all week and must have told his client that they would have plenty of opportunity to get the license without embarrassing the commissioners with my interference.

I remained in the commissioners' office, however, until they adjourned Monday evening, and then went home, twelve miles, on my bicycle, and returned Tuesday morning and stayed all day in the court room and went home again Tuesday evening.

By this time the commissioners became tired of me. My presence began to annoy them and when they adjourned in the evening, the president of the board Samuel Doak, asked me:

"Do you intend to come back tomorrow?"

"Yes, Sir," I answered.

"It's hardly fair to make you wait here every day; the applicant may not come till Friday or Saturday. We have a very busy week, and he has a right to come



## DYNAMITING EPISODE.

any day as long as we are in session. You can go home tonight and stay there until we send for you. When the applicant comes we will notify you and give you a hearing."

I thanked him for this kind and generous offer and said:

"I would indeed be glad if I could stay at home, as I have thirteen hands employed in the printing business and we are very busy. I know my presence is needed there, but, I guess I'll come back."

And I did go back Wednesday morning and stayed right close to the commissioners all day. But I felt that I was an unwelcome guest at the court house, and as the Decatur papers by that time began to make fun of me and ridiculed me and roasted me, I felt somewhat annoyed.

While riding home that evening on my bicycle, the thought came to me, Does it really pay? Here you are spending your time watching for that applicant and fighting saloons, when, as the saloon keepers say: Every man ought to mind his own business.

Sam Kuntz had given me the information that if every man would just mind his own business, everything would be lovely in this world. But it's because so many men do not mind their business, especially liquor men, that others are compelled to shoulder more than their share. This together with the insolent and prejudiced action of those two county commissioners so aroused me and stirred up that Swiss blood in me, that I determined to go back the next day.

That evening I was weary and retired early. Just as I was about to lie down my wife came to my bed and said:

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

"Papa, I felt very uneasy for you all day. I have worried and have been troubled, for I heard of many threats made, but I took my refuge to the Bible and read the 118th Psalm and was so much comforted by it. I wish you would read it too before you go to sleep. I know you need it."

She handed me the Bible and I sat up in bed and read the whole chapter aloud, and then we both knelt down once more at my bed and committed ourselves again into the care and keeping of our God and Father whom we know and trust and then went to sleep with the assurance that nothing can harm us, nothing can happen to us without Him knowing it, nor against His will, and that whatever He permits to happen, will be for our good.

About midnight my wife was awakened by a scratching noise and looked out the window, but, as she saw nothing, she went back to bed without disturbing me. At 47 minutes after 12 o'clock an explosion occurred on the west side of our house. The exact time is known from the fact that the clock stopped and all day showed thirteen minutes of one. A stick of dynamite had been placed inside a window screen and it was the cutting of the screen that my wife had heard. This explosion was directly under the spot where my wife was sleeping, and the shock threw her from the bed to the middle of the room.

Fortunately God put it into my head to stay where I was. I was in a bed on the east side of the room, and as we were all sleeping in the second story of the house, I thought if the house fell in we would be safer in the beds than elsewhere, and I called to my wife to return to her bed.

## DYNAMITING EPISODE.

Paul, the younger boy, sat up in bed and asked: "Papa, what is this?"

His mother replied:

"Paul, pray."

And the little fellow, murmuring a childish prayer, dropped asleep again.

My wife didn't feel like going back to bed. She came over to where I was and stood in front of a window near my bed, looking out, when, behold you, another explosion came; louder and fiercer than the first, so that the house shook and rocked as if by an earthquake. The window, in front of which my wife was standing, fell in right to her feet and pieces of timber shot up through the roof of the porch before her and came rattling down upon the house. Then she turned around and said to me:

"Now you get up."

Well, I finally got up, and—it came just as naturally as a duck takes to water—we knelt down and thanked God that He permitted us to suffer real genuine persecution for His cause. We prayed for the safety of our three children, the oldest of whom was then nine and Ruth, the youngest, not quite three. We also prayed for the poor men whom we supposed to be still about the house getting ready to do some more shooting and we asked God not to lay it to their charge. As we were kneeling there and praying with open eyes a most wonderful peace came over us,—a peace which we will never forget,—a peace of which the world knows nothing and can't take away. It was like being encamped round about by angels of God.

Then we arose and listened. We expected another

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

explosion every moment, but all was quiet. It was a tense silence with the sound of the explosions echoing and re-echoing in our ears. Finally we looked out the windows on all four sides of the house and then went downstairs. When we came into the sitting room just beneath the bed room we had just occupied, an awful sight awaited us. Then the meaning of the two explosions came to me at once. The first was to alarm us. The second was at the front door, to the very place we would have gone to ascertain the cause of the noise, and the two charges were so timed, that, had we gone down immediately after the first explosion, we would have walked into the second, and it would have killed us all.

The moon was sending her beams through a large hole in the wall where the front door used to be, and through two more gaping holes from which the windows were blown. A few shreds of curtains left hanging from the top of the windows were fluttering in the wind, and with the broken glass from the windows and mirrors strewn over the floor, and tables and chairs turned topsy turvey, the room presented a ghastly appearance. As we stood there and looked over the debris I remarked:

“This is intended to keep me away from the court house today, but I guess I’ll go back to Decatur just the same. God will take care of you and this house.”

My wife replied:

“Yes, you can go.”

But after a long silence she put her arm around me and leaned her head upon my shoulder and cried out:

“Oh I feel so lonesome, why doesn’t anybody

## DYNAMITING EPISODE.

come! Call up Jeff Lehman and tell him to come over."

I comforted her with the words of Paul to Timothy:

"If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

Looking in the direction of the telephone I saw it was still hanging on the wall, but the box covering the batteries was off. I climbed over the door lying across a rocking chair and stumbled to the phone and called up central.

"Number?"

"Hello, is this you, John?" (Craig at the central)

"Yes."

"Did you hear the explosions? They were here at Fred Rohrer's home. We are all alive, but the house is partly wrecked."

"You don't say—there are a number of men in the street looking in all the stores to see where a safe is blown up. I'll tell them to come over. That's what you get for your anti-saloon work."

"It looks like it. Good bye."

We went up stairs again and in a little while the crowd came running in the direction of our house, among them a few of whom some thought they might have told long ago where the explosion was. Until they were here we had remained in the dark but now we lit a lamp.

N. G. Fankhauser, one of my employes who at that time lived directly south of us, arose and went to the door when he heard the first explosion and was standing in the door way when he saw the second go off. It looked

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

to him as if the whole house was being blown to kindling wood. He turned to his wife and told her, "This is the enemy." It scared her so that she fainted and he did not come out again for half an hour.

After the situation was fully taken in we told our children to dress and get ready to go over to our neighbor and brother-in-law, C. C. Sprunger, to spend the rest of the night, because bad men wanted to kill us here.

When the two boys saw the heap of ruins and learned the meaning of it they laughed and Ira, the older, shouted:

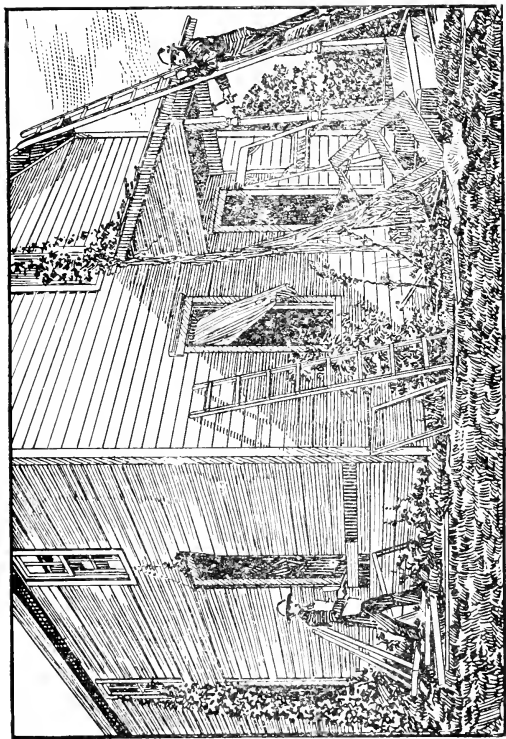
"Ho! ho; they tried to kill us and they couldn't do it!"

In the morning, Thursday, September 10th, I left my family and the house in the care of friends. They at once employed carpenters to repair the damage done to the house and gave my family the best care possible, especially Mrs. David Sommer helped my wife all day and the next while I returned to Decatur to attend commissioners court just as if nothing unusual had happened.

That day the applicant came and was very much surprised to find me on deck. He at once made the air blue in my close proximity, aiming all his surplus hot air at me. The "Decatur Democrat," in giving an account of the affair at that time said:

"Rohrer stood the fire without retaliation either by word, sign or deed, and as one man can not gracefully run all sides of a fight the encounter ended before it began".

The Saloon keeper was so beaten, that after the first skirmish was over he left and went out in com-



“They Employed Carpenters to Repair the Damage Done to the House.”





## DYNAMITING EPISODE.

paratively good humor, without asking to have his license brought up for consideration.

This time I remained in Decatur over night, and the next day stayed with the commissioners until they adjourned the session and a signal victory was won over them because they adjourned this time without granting a license. They were now whipped into line, for they saw we meant business and were in the fight to stay. Although nearly two dozen times after that men tried to obtain licenses, there has never been another license issued to anyone to retail liquor in Berne or Monroe township.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONFERENCE WITH SALOON KEEPERS.

When I returned to Berne that Friday afternoon I went into every one of our three saloons that were then running on illegal licenses and talked with the proprietors about the dynamiting and the saloon war in general. Then I called the three saloon keepers together, and going with them into a small room in the rear of Sam Kuntz's saloon, behind locked doors, we had a council of war. To have a witness with me and allay the fears of my friends I took Albert Butler, the county sheriff, along.

I said to the saloon keepers:

"Every body is of the opinion that the fight against the saloons is the cause of the blowing up of my home, but I don't suppose that any of the temperance people are guilty of this cowardly act; it must be some one on the other side. But if any man thinks he can scare me out of doing what I consider my duty by dynamiting my home at night and trying to kill me and the whole family, he'll find himself badly mistaken. You fellows just got me started now, and I'll promise you that from now on I'm going to wage relentless war on the liquor business. The best thing you fellows can do now is to hand your licenses over to me and lock your doors and quit your business. You know your licenses were given to you contrary to law."

The three saloon keepers sat there like dummies for a minute. It came to them like a streak of lightning

## CONFERENCE WITH SALOON KEEPERS.

and a clap of thunder out of a clear sky. Presently Sam Kuntz rallied from the shock and with proud resentment asked:

“What do you take us for, anyhow? As long as there is a town of Berne there will be beer sold in Berne.”

I replied that I mean just what I say, and then sprang another surprise on them by giving out the information that I had been watching them on law violations all summer and that I have thirty-three cases against them, and unless they were ready to capitulate and accept my terms I would now go to court with them. Again they looked at each other for a while, and wiser counsel moved the other two, Ehlsam and Rinaker, to meet the proposition with the counter-offer to sell out at cost to the remonstrators; that they were tired of the business, that they knew every body was blaming the saloons for the outrage committed on me. Mr. Ehlsam, one of the three saloon keepers, also gave Sam Kuntz a severe piece of mind, blaming him for all the trouble, because they had agreed to observe the law and that he had been the first one to break it.

Well, I finally consented to lay the proposition before the remonstrators for consideration, and went out and called some thirty of the leading “drys” together for a meeting at the Mennonite church and briefly reviewed the situation and laid the saloon-keepers’ counter-proposition before them. A lively but brotherly discussion followed. The advantages and disadvantages for the future of the temperance cause that an acceptance of the proposition might bring was thoroughly aired. It was strongly argued and

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

generally conceded that it would be for the best of the temperance cause to show a magnanimous and conciliatory spirit to the saloon keepers, even though the legal advantage should be on the temperance side, so far as it would not set a dangerous precedent, and this latter apprehension prevailed against the acceptance of the saloon keepers' proposition, as the fact was well appreciated that we have not only three saloon keepers to deal with but that much stronger force, the entire liquor traffic behind these; that even though the present holders of licenses might be trusted with good faith, the stronger force behind them could not.

The chief argument against accepting the proposition to buy out the saloon keepers' stock was the decided opinion that such a course would weaken the temperance cause as it would weaken the respect for temperance laws. It was held that these saloon keepers knew when they got their licenses that they were getting them over a bonafide and lawful remonstrance and that they might have expected trouble. Thus by buying them out the temperance people would virtually be setting a premium on law violations, i.e. paying law breakers for returning into the ranks of law-abiding citizens.

My original proposition was therefore accepted by the remonstrators as being the wisest one, i.e., to relinquish all litigation against the saloon keepers on their giving up the licenses, with the additional offer to give the latter some time to wind up their business affairs, i.e. to sell out their stock.

Thus I went back to the saloon keepers to tell them that we were not in the business of buying saloon

## CONFERENCE WITH SALOON KEEPERS.

fixtures and furniture nor a stock of wet goods, etc. but before I had time to tell it all, Mr. Ehrtam informed me that they (the saloon keepers) had held a conference and that Sam Kuntz had flatly backed out, except he could sell out at his price; that he had too good a business to sell out at cost.

Therefore I reported the thirty- three cases to the grand jury that had just been called, but the courts of Adams county at that time were so dominated by the liquor power that only two indictments were returned against each of the three saloon keepers. Each case was tried and fought hard not only by the local saloon attorneys, but by an additional lawyer who came from Fort Wayne and who was no doubt furnished by the brewers of that city. I spent day after day on the witness stand with C. C. Sprunger as the other witness, and every case resulted in a conviction, but only a minimum fine was imposed on each law violator.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LADIES TAKE BELLIGERENT PART.

On November 7th following the three saloons should have been closed because the saloon keepers failed to have their license cases tried in the September term of court in which the question of legality of the licenses was to be settled. Knowing that their licenses were granted contrary to law they asked for a change of venue to another county in order that they might have more time in which to continue their illegal business, and "His Honor," Judge Erwin, was kind enough to grant the request.

However I had also begun to study the Indiana liquor laws and by that time knew them almost by heart. On November 6th I gave the saloon keepers notice through the "Witness" that by virtue of their appeal to another county their right to sell liquor would cease the next day, which was the last day of the first term of court in which their cases could have been tried, and said that if the view of the three saloons remained obstructed, every man who went into these places, be it through the front door or back door, would have to go to Decatur to tell the grand jury what he saw and what he was doing there.

The "Decatur Democrat" the next day made light of this and stated that the "Witness" was making a little law to suit its own case, that several legal lights were asked as to the proposition advanced by the "Witness" and they in accord declared it contrary to

## LADIES TAKE BELLIGERENT PART.

all usages and laws and contrary to the constitution, that the saloons in Berne would continue unmolested until the cases were tried in the Jay circuit court.

Of course the saloon keepers were much pleased with this dope and therefore gladly continued to do business at the old stand regardless of my warning. Nevertheless through a number of helpers I secured the names of some sixty men who went into the saloons after November 7th and reported them to the grand jury. Nearly half of them were subpoenaed in one day, and the prosecuting attorney, John Moran, apologized to one after another for having been obliged to put them to such inconvenience and trouble, saying that it was at the instigation of Fred Rohrer that they were called to appear upon the green carpet, until finally one of the jurors, Martin L. Smith, stopped him.

Well, most of those men, while at Decatur that day, November 18th, filled up on bad whiskey, and when they returned to Berne in the evening we had a "hot time in our old town." A few who returned in the afternoon at once made a bee line for my office and used language that wouldn't look well in print, and challenged me to go into the street with them.

As I was going from my home to the post office and book store after supper, Louis Sprunger, a big tall stock buyer, measuring in the neighborhood of six feet some inches, waylaid me who can barely touch five feet six inches. As I came away from the post office he ran upon me from the rear and attacked me in the middle of the street. I managed to get away from him before he had done me any harm and returned to the post office where he followed me and

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

knocked me down just inside the door, and would have beaten me black and blue had it not been for the two lady clerks, the Misses Helena Liechty and Salome Luginbill, who came to my assistance. Miss Liechty jumped on the fellow's back and pulled his hair and scratched him with all her might, and Miss Luginbill rushed up in front of him and with her soft little hand punched his nose as hard as she could. I was down on the floor and the big fellow and the two girls all on top of me and they hammered away, he on me and they on him, until Menas Wulliman came and with one hand took the stock buyer by the collar and with the other at the caboose of his breeches and litterally mopped the floor with him.

During the scuffle a plate glass in the door broke and fell on my hand and cut it badly. Beside this and a black eye and a raised knot of good sized dimensions upon the back of my head I wasn't hurt at all.

Sprunger was at once arrested on his own instigation and arraigned before Squire Frank C. Foreman. When the charge was read to him and he was asked if he was guilty or not guilty, he answered:

"I tried to, but I didn't get satisfaction."

"His Honor" then fined him one dollar and costs, amounting in all to \$8.50, which was paid by a former saloon keeper.





"They Hammered Away, He on Me and They on Him."



## CHAPTER X.

### MOBBED AND JAILED.

About an hour after the events just told when I had returned to my office where I happened to be alone, Abe Bagley, who was then president of our town board, came in, first on business, and then asked, why I had made him go before the grand jury. He had also been seen going into the saloons when they should have been closed and that's why his name was handed in with the rest.

At that time our town officers would pat the saloon keepers on the back and tell them to just go ahead and pay no attention to us, that ours was just a mushroom enthusiasm which would soon die out; that we had a kind of a crazy spell and would get over it after a while.

I hadn't said many words when the town president came into my private apartment, behind the desk, grabbed me around the waist, jerked me off my stool and knocked me on the floor. Just then the door was opened and in came some twenty men who had been watching for just this moment.

Billy Sunday would say that they were the "saloon and ex-saloon keepers, their bar tenders and bar flies, the old boozers and geezers, the riff-raff and scalawags, the saloon hobos and the beer-sotten, whiskey-rotten bums", all as mad as hornets. I knew that I was at their mercy and I silently prayed to God to help me face the worst.

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

Others had been delegated to go to the railway station and get the express truck. These came running down the street, shouting and hollering, and stopped in front of the office. The plan was to get me out and throw me on that truck and give me a free ride out of town and do me up.

Our town president proceeded to drag me out, but before he got me out of my private office I had a chance to get on my feet again and caught hold with both hands of the iron guards around my desk, and I silently prayed to God to keep me from letting go. The man of towering physique who had hold of me again grabbed me around my waist, lifted me off my feet and tried to jerk me loose until my hands were blistered and skinned. Then he took hold of my wrists and tried to work my hands loose from the iron railing, so that both arms were swollen the next morning.

The mob was in a fury and became impatient. Some cried:

"Bring him out, bring him out, why don't you!"

He replied:

"I can't take him out."

Then others shouted:

"Punch him, punch him!"

Still others yelled:

"Pound him, pound him!"

As he brought his big fist down upon the back of my head and on the neck in rapid succession I silently prayed to God to help me bear it. And He did. Bless your heart, God never goes back on a man who doesn't go back on Him. Although I saw the stars fly in every direction at each stroke, they



"I Can't Take Him Out."



## MOBBED AND JAILED.

never hurt me a bit. I never groaned and never uttered a sound during all the time the mob was in the office. The town president hammered away on my head until the town marshal, William Tucker, came and with difficulty forced his way through the crowd and ordered the men all out.

I was reading proofs when the men came in, and as they left I picked up the papers that were scattered over the floor and went straight to my work again. The town marshal was standing in front of my desk and watched me a while as I was marking mistakes on the proof sheet. Presently he remarked:

"This is going to be a bad night for you, I wouldn't be in your shoes for a thousand dollars."

"Why?" I asked.

"Oh they are red hot after you; and they will get you tonight if they can. You'd better go home."

"Well, if they want me they can get me at home just as well as here. If you think there is too much danger I'll go over to the post office, then if they want me they will have to break into Uncle Sam's domain."

The marshal advised me to go and I locked up my place of business and he went with me to the post office.

In the mean while the town president also submitted his case at once to the justice of the peace where he also plead guilty to assault and the fine was paid, no doubt by some one else, which Squire Foreman again assessed at one dollar, making a total of \$9.35 including the costs. I was not present at this trial.

Then the crowd came to the post office and made such demonstrations and threats that the town marshal

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

feared regular mob violence and therefore telephoned to Decatur for the county sheriff to come to Berne. At 8 o'clock every questionable character was chased out of the building and the postmaster, J. F. Lehman, locked the doors. Seven or eight of our friends remained inside to keep watch. The mob walked up and down the street past the post office building, rattled the doors, kicked against the wall, and shot with revolvers, so that some of our men became excited and scared.

At about 11 o'clock the postmaster came into the post office compartment where he had locked me in and waked me up. I had become tired waiting so long and had lain down on the mail table and gone to sleep. The sheriff and three deputies had arrived. When the sheriff learned what had happened he went into the saloon where the mob was still congregated and tried to talk to the men and quiet them down and persuade them to be law-abiding. But he soon returned and reported that they are all mad and full of whiskey and won't listen to anything, and it was thought best that I leave town.

So the sheriff and the three deputies took me into their rig and in the middle of the night they drove back to Decatur, twelve miles from Berne, and put me in jail for the rest of the night for safe keeping, where I had a good sleep until 8 o'clock the next morning. I was still in bed when the reporters of the Decatur papers came to interview me.

That morning as N. G. Fankhauser, one of my employees, passed John Kinaker's saloon Jacob Hunziker, an ex-saloon keeper, standing at the door accosted him asking,





"I'll Lick You Too."



## MOBBED AND JAILED.

"Where's your boss?"

Fankhauser replied:

"I guess you know more about it than I do; you had a hand in it last night, didn't you?"

Hunziker, offended at this, said:

"Yes I had a hand in it, and I'll lick you too."

Fankhauser retorted:

"You can do as you please about it."

Hunziker, with an oath, at once assailed him with his fist, inflicting but slight injuries, however.

The result was a trial before Town Clerk Chris Stengel, where Hunziker plead guilty and paid his fine of \$5.00 and costs, amounting in all to \$14.10.

By this time affairs in Berne had attained a rather strenuous attitude. Excitement was running at fever heat. The situation was a crucial one. Men walked about the streets muttering imprecations of the most ominous nature. Indeed conditions became so alarming that a telephone call was sent to Sheriff Albert Butler to not permit me to return to Berne. Some of my friends were going to bring me a suit case and clothes and send me out of the state for a few weeks.

But I said "no" to the sheriff, "I am going back to Berne this afternoon and am going about my business. The saloon fellows must know that I have done nothing but what I had a perfect right to do. They ought to be the fugitives from justice, not I."

The sheriff was afraid to let me go alone and sent a Mr. Ault with me who was well armed.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MRS. ROHRER THE HEROINE.

Of course, the first place the body guard and I went to after returning to Berne was to my home to see my wife and children, who had seen nothing of me since the day before, when I left them at the supper table. My wife met me with outstretched arms, and a happy:

"Oh, I am glad to see you, I see you are still alive."

"Yes, I am still alive" I echoed, but informed her that she might as well realize the gravity of the situation and know that my life is at stake. I said to her:

"I know that I owe my life first of all to you and the children. Now what shall I do? Shall I continue in the fight or shall I give it up?" .

There was a long and painful silence which neither tongue nor pen can describe.

No doubt heaven was looking down upon that poor woman and watched the battle that was raging in her heart as family ties of the inner circle and duties to fellow men of the outer circle were fighting for supremacy. Tears filled her eyes and streamed down her face, and words first choked her as she began to speak. But she braced up and firmly commanded:

"Don't you give up on my account. I don't want to be responsible for saloons coming back to Berne."

Of course, my family was not alone in the house

## MRS. ROHRER THE HEROINE.

when I returned from Decatur. On the evening before, after the two attacks on me, friends went to my house to console my wife and be with her. Now they and relatives urged her to persuade me to stop fighting the saloons. But she answered:

"Why that would be too cowardly to give up a fight because it is growing warm."

"Yes, but they will kill him as sure as you live, and you can't stand it."

Very calmly and deliberately she replied:

"Kill him? Let them kill him if they wish; I've given him up. I'd rather be the widow of a dead hero than the wife of a living coward!"

And that settled it with me. After that I never had enough nerve to act cowardly. With such a woman at my side what else could I do but to keep my place on the battle field, and stay there like an ox between a yoke on one side and an altar on the other—ready for service or sacrifice.

And a sacrifice we did bring. Seven months after that dynamiting, five months after the mobbing, a little daughter was born into our home; a child that is the offspring of prayer and love, not lust, and poor Margaret suffers to this day from the effects of that dynamiting and mobbing. Her hearing and whole nervous system are defective. We have spent hundreds of dollars in giving her all kinds of medical treatment. But what my wife suffered during all that time and many years since on account of this saloon fight, only she and God know. Up to 1903 she was a strong and healthy woman; now she is a nervous wreck and her health is gone. Divine Providence

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

might well reward us by closing up every saloon in the nation.

My wife's heroic declaration was by no means a flippant one. She pinned her faith to that 17th verse in the 118th Psalm which we read on the day before we were dynamited, where it says:

"I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord."

She would say to God, If a sacrifice must be made I am willing to make it, but I don't believe You will require it, or else how in the world will You redeem that promise.

And every day she would sing the song:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word?  
What more can He say than to you He has said,  
:To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled.:

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid;  
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
:Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.:

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
For I will be with thee thy trials to bless,  
:And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress:

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
:I'll never, no never, no never forsake.:

Then, too, she had reasons for not wanting to be responsible for the saloons becoming re-established in Berne. She knows what it is to be the child of a drunkard, and be reared where mother is compelled

## MRS. ROHRER THE HEROINE.

to support the family because father has wasted all his substance and spends every dollar he earns for drink. When she was only eight years old she was obliged to leave home and make her own living. Fortunately her father has since become converted and freed from the power of Demon Rum.

Now that God has been true to His part of the promise contained in Psalm 118:17, I am trying to be true to mine. Hence the writing and publishing of this book.

But we must go back and see what became of that body guard that accompanied me home from Decatur.

After spending a little while with the family we went to the home of Rev. S. F. Sprunger where the ministers of the town were holding a meeting relative to the saloon situation. Then we returned to my office to attend to some business matters. The body guard followed me everywhere I went over town, and in the evening we returned to Decatur to spend the night. There I dismissed him and the next day I walked home all alone and went about my work as usual.

The grand jury that was still in session brought indictments against Abe Bagly, George Nichols, William Sheets and Jacob Hunziker for rioting, and Judge Erwin placed each one under a \$1000.00 peace bond. But Mr. Nichols was the only one that ever faced trial and he was acquitted, and the charges against the others were dropped.

The same grand jury also indicted every one of the saloon keepers and their bar tenders for selling without a license, because they did not close on November 7th as they had been warned to do, but

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

before these cases came to trial, the saloon keepers and their attorneys realized that their cause was lost and they thought the best thing for them to do is to get out of the business with as little expense and anxiety as possible.

On Sunday following the mobbing Rev. S. F. Sprunger made some very earnest remarks at the Mennonite church on the present temperance situation in Berne, and in view of the fact that several attempts had been made on my life he called on the congregation to give me a vote of condolence, confidence and support in the fight against the saloons in town. With a few exceptions the vote was unanimous, women rising amid flowing tears. Over a thousand people were present.

For a whole week after the dynamiting and for two weeks after the mobbing no one slept in our house. Friends considered it unsafe; many would have been afraid to stay with us, and of the neighbors only C. C. Sprunger welcomed us to his home, and a few nights he even employed men to guard his house with shot guns.

But that wasn't all. On Saturday morning, November 21st, a man from Decatur was working on the telephone line near the tile mill east of town. D. C. Neuenschwander, living close by, was also working along the road, and the two men soon engaged in a conversation and talked about the events of Wednesday night.

The line man said:

"If the saloon fellows could have carried out their plan it would have been a terrible thing for that man Rohrer. They had intended to take him



## MRS. ROHRER THE HEROINE.

out of the office and put him on that truck that they got from the railroad station, and would have taken him out of town to cut him up or kick him to pieces. I was in one of the saloons last night and there heard them talk about what they intend to do to him now. They know he is back from Decatur, and they set tomorrow night for the time to fix him up right. They say they will make it so sure that there will be no getting away this time. Of course, I don't sanction any work of that kind. While I drink my beer, I don't uphold any such cruelty and lawlessness."

Mr. Neuenschwander did not say much to this, but in the afternoon, along towards evening I was importuned to leave town without fail. I went home at 5 o'clock and told my wife about it and said:

"After supper when you all go over to C. C. Sprunger's, I'll leave and go to some other place to stay over night. I don't know yet where I'll go, and it is better that you do not know it so that when the men come to Sprunger's to get me you can all say, you don't know where I am."

At 6 o'clock I was called up by telephone and another man urged me to go out of town. So we hurried over to C. C. Sprunger's and I bade my folks good night and told them not to worry about me. The oldest boy cried when he could not learn where I was going and heard that I would not be back till morning.

Mrs. David Sommer, a neighbor, was there and invited me to her house, but I considered it too close home.

I gave my wife and children a farewell kiss and went out the back door. The night was dark and cold.

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

There I stood in C. C. Springer's orchard and wondered which way I should go. I thought of several places, but my first aim was to go out of town, so I went north because there were only a few houses in that direction. After reaching the second half mile road I turned east until I came to the farm of Peter Burkhalter. There I knew that I would be safe. It was after 8 o'clock when I arrived there and I soon went to bed. In the morning I arose before breakfast and started for home and was glad to see my house still standing and learned that there had been no disturbance in town. It was that evening that the sheriff came and placed the leaders of the mob under a \$1000.00 peace bond.

## CHAPTER XII.

### SALOON KEEPERS OFFER TERMS.

The three liquor license cases which were to decide the legality of the licenses granted by the county commissioners after the remonstrance had been filed were set for trial in the Jay county court for December 31, 1903. But on December 17th Shaffer Peterson, attorney for the saloon keepers, came to me with the following written proposition:

"This agreement entered into this 17th day of December 1903 between John Rinaker, J. M. Ehram and Samuel L. Kuntz of the first part and the remonstrators in the cases now pending in the circuit court of Jay county, Indiana, in which first parties are applying for liquor licenses to retail liquor in the town of Berne, in Adams county, Indiana, witnesses:

"That said causes, (giving the number of each) are to be continued in said court until April 1, 1904 and that on said day said causes are each to be dismissed after the costs have all been paid therein by the said applicants and the saloons so owned and operated by the first parties hereto are to be closed permanently and the said first parties, nor either of them, shall hereafter make no application for liquor license in said town and shall not engage either directly or indirectly in the sale of liquors in said town either by retail or wholesale and no club rooms shall be maintained by said first parties, etc., etc."

In short they made a written promise to be good,

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

provided we give them three months to continue their illegal business and cause them no further expense in these license cases.

Mr. Peterson himself admitted that it was asking a great deal of the magnanimity of the remonstrators, as he was well aware of the hopelessness of his side of the case. Nevertheless the majority of the remonstrators were ready and willing to generously acquiesce to the terms of the compromise simply for the sake of peace and good will, and therefore I went to Portland with the instrument and had our attorneys there, Adair & LaFayette, (Oscar H. Adair and Judge John F. LaFayette) sign it for the remonstrators and make the necessary entry on the court docket.

However this did not dispose of the indictments brought against the saloon keepers by the grand jury, as there was nothing said in the compromise about them. The November grand jury, to which I had given the names of some sixty witnesses, brought nine indictments against the saloon keepers and their bar tenders, J. M. Ehram, John Rinaker, Sam Springer, Fred Meyer and Jacob Hunziker, for selling without a license. The cases came up in the February 1904 term of court and lasted through several weeks.

First the attorneys for the saloon keepers filed motion to quash the indictments because of our compromise agreement with the saloon keepers. This was overruled by the court. Then they filed a plea in abatement, claiming that the grand jury had not been regulary impannelled, that I had packed the jury. To this motion they were given a hearing. I was placed on the witness stand and made to go through

## SALOON KEEPERS OFFER TERMS.

a fire of rigid examination and cross-examination, but the plea in abatement was finally overruled by the court.

Then another motion to quash the indictments was filed, claiming that the saloon keepers have license. This raised the question whether or not the saloons should have closed on November 7, 1903. Saturday, March 5, 1904, was set as the day to hear arguments on this issue, and resulted in the court's ruling that they should have closed. Thus all the men had to face trial the following Monday and a large number of witnesses was subpoenaed. Only one case was tried and to the rest the defendants plead guilty. Then they all agreed to close up and run no more risks at getting caught. The "Decatur Democrat" of Tuesday, March 8, 1904 told the story in the following words:

"The saloon war at Berne is over, at least for the present, and the saloon men have lost. This morning the keys in every saloon in town are turned and thirsty patrons shook the knobs in vain. In several of the places the windows were covered with black paper, signifying that business is dead. The fight has been a long one and every day a battle."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SALOONS TURNED INTO JUNGLES.

All parties implicated in the cases before mentioned entered into an agreement to close their places of business until such time as they can open them with the sanction of the law. But they closed only the front doors and kept the back doors wide open. They just changed their fronts from Main street to the alley and did business nearly every hour of the day and night and every day in the week, selling to everybody, young and old, because they could no more be prosecuted for selling during forbidden hours nor for selling to minors, since they had no license. They were not saloon keepers anymore. All we could do was to prosecute them for selling without a license, and since they never received any jail sentence and only small fines at that, they gladly paid them and laughed. Our town officers never turned a hand to stop any of the lawlessness; conditions became so serious that many people began to accuse me for having brought them about and I was cursed and damned on every hand.

One day Sam Kuntz came into my office and asked:

"Well Fred, what do you think of the saloon business by this time? Don't you believe the people of Berne would prefer an orderly, well regulated saloon to the way the business is carried on now?"

I said: "No!"

## SALOONS TURNED INTO JUNGLES.

“Well, will you go with me and find out?”

I gladly consented, and on Friday, May 20, 1904, we started out together in the morning, each with a note book in his hand, and asked every business man and every professional man the question:

“Which do you prefer, the licensed saloon or the way it is now,” meaning blind tigers?

We were going all day and in the evening each of us had in his book the following result: 124 names for the legalized saloon and 33 names **against** it. Even C. A. Neuenschwander, a deacon in the Mennonite church and then vice president and now president of one of the Banks in town, declared himself in favor of the licensed saloon. That hurt.

The saloon crowd was jubilant, and five men gave notice that they would apply for license. They were Joseph Hocker, William Sheets, Sam Sprunger, Jacob Hunziker and Sam Kuntz, one of the three who had signed a written agreement through his attorney that he would never again apply for a license to sell liquor in Berne.

Many of the temperance people tried to discourage me and even many of the leaders, among them one of the ministers, Rev. D. B. Koenig, advised me to file the remonstrance no more. That was discouraging. But fortunately no one of the remonstrators withdrew his power-of-attorney given me.

When I have problems confronting me which I do not know how to solve I consult men of experience, but when I have convictions I neither ask for nor take any man's advice. I said, We don't have to have these blind tigers always; new conditions will create a demand for new laws to cope with them; we got rid

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

of the saloons, we'll get rid of the blind tigers. So I asked some of the solicitors to go out into the country and get new names on the remonstrance and make it stronger than ever. My wife stood by me and on June 2nd I filed five copies of the remonstrance, each with 423 names on it, making a majority of 210.

Oh but this made the saloonatics mad! There was a regular reign of consternation and terror in the wet camp. They swore and cursed and said I was bull-headed and ought to have my skull cracked. The five applicants were in a dilemma and so were the commissioners. The latter didn't want to see anymore applicants from Berne. They knew they had no right to grant licenses, but were afraid of the saloon power to refuse them. The applicants went to Decatur on Monday, June 6th and fished around to see if they could not find some way by which to throw out the remonstrance or get around it. They went back the next day, and the next, but were afraid to open up the fight, and finally went home without applying.

Then they tried to wear me out. One man after another published notice of application for liquor license, just to make me file a number of remonstrances every month.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### TOWN BOARD WANTS FIGHT STOPPED.

This was the limit. On Saturday morning, July 9, 1904, the town marshal, William Tucker, came to my office and said I was wanted at the town hall. There the town board, Samuel Schindler, Philip Schug and Amos Kirchhofer, with the town clerk, Chris Stengel, were assembled in special session, and the following, taken from the minutes of this meeting, shows what was done.

Town President Schindler addressing me (Rohrer) said:

"We sent for you to see if an agreement can be made by which you would not file the remonstrance any more against the applicants for saloon licenses."

Rohrer: "Well, it is not in my power to make such an agreement. I am only one of the remonstrators and can only speak for myself. There are over 400 others whom you would have to see. As far as filing the remonstrance is concerned, I am acting as agent for the rest of the remonstrators and I am duty-bound to file the remonstrance every time there is going to be an applicant, for they have not only empowered me but requested me to do so."

Schindler: "You wouldn't have to file the remonstrance if you didn't want to."

Rohrer: "No, not if I didn't want to. I could back out and refuse to serve any longer, but I don't want to."

Schindler: "Well, we thought perhaps we could

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

make some agreement to let the saloons come back if we raise their license fee to about \$150.00 a year and then make them obey the law. You see, one of them just bought the property where he wanted to do business and another one spent lots of money fixing up his place expecting that they would get their license. Now they are barred again, have their money invested and can't do anything."

Rohrer: "I don't pity them. They knew that the saloon business is outlawed in Berne and that they can't get a legal license."

Schindler: "Well, but you see this way the town loses the license fee, and they or somebody is selling the stuff anyhow. The town might as well have the money."

Kirchhofer: "I know how it is in Kansas. I've been there and I know that there is just as much liquor sold there as anywhere."

Rohrer: "If the men here are retailing liquor without a license, it's your duty to stop them. That's what you and the town marshal are here for. You have all sworn that you will enforce the law and keep order in town. If the town marshal would go and arrest the fellows, they would soon quit selling."

Marshal Tucker: "I won't touch them."

Stengel to Rohrer: "You started it, you finish it."

Rohrer: "I beg your pardon, we didn't start this saloon fight. The town marshal and town board started it by willfully letting the saloon keepers do as they pleased as long as they had license."

There was silence for a few moments. The town officers were too mad to speak and Schug went out. Finally Rohrer continued:

## TOWN BOARD WANTS FIGHT STOPPED.

"I don't believe they are selling much now."

Marshal Tucker: "Yes, they are selling a great deal."

Rohrer: "Well, I haven't seen a drunken man in town since the saloons are closed."

Tucker: "There have been many drunks just the same. You don't see them. They put them on wagons and haul them out of town."

Rohrer: "Then the town is just that much better off now. When we had the open saloons you let the drunken men stagger around in the streets; now the saloonists take care of them."

Schug had just returned and on hearing this he took another retreat.

Then I said: "It will be two years next fall since the remonstrance movement was begun, and the town has not been without saloons much more than six months. Let it be dry now till next fall; then if you think the people want the saloons back, let them revoke their power-of-attorney. The only legitimate way to have saloons again is to get the remonstrators to withdraw their power-of-attorney, but even if they do this now it will not be effective until next fall, so you might as well wait till then."

No one said a word to this. So I asked:

"Is that all you want of me?"

Schindler replied: "Yes, I guess that's all."

"All right, good bye," and I returned to my office and wrote out the minutes, thinking that the town clerk may not keep a record of this meeting.

## CHAPTER XV.

### GUERRILLA WARFARE.

While one or more gave notice nearly every month of their intention to apply for license, no one made any special effort until in December 1904. At that time Sam Kuntz, mentioned before as one of the three who had agreed never again to sell liquor in Berne, and Joe Hoeker, with their attorney made a stiff fight before the commissioners to get a license on the ground that the power-of-attorney had now been used two years and was run out. Their attorney made such plausible arguments that the commissioners sustained the point and were going to grant the license. But we called in the county attorney, C. J. Lutz, and he ruled that a power-of-attorney is good until it is revoked. So the board had to reconsider their motion and sustain the remonstrance. This was an important victory for us.

In February 1905 another desperate attempt was made by Julius Johnloz to get a license. He went before the board of commissioners and made affidavit that not one of the men whose names appear on the remonstrance signed it, nor authorized me to sign it. This was for the purpose of subpoenaing every one of the remonstrators to the county seat and make them testify to the genuineness and validity of their signatures. Our attorneys, Merryman & Sutton, argued against this before the board and induced it to rule that only the original solicitors, eleven in all, of the signatures for the remonstrance would have to be summoned.

## GUERRILLA WARFARE.

Wednesday, February 8th, was set for the day of trial and not only the remonstrance solicitors, but 75 of the remonstrators themselves, for whom I bought round trip tickets out of our reform fund, took the train to Decatur to lend the remonstrance moral support before the commissioners through their personal presence. The signers to the reform fund made me treasurer and gave me the liberty to use the money in any way I saw fit, just so I got results. They said, Results is what we are after, at any cost.

One solicitor after another was called to the witness stand and examined by attorneys, L. C. DeVoss for the applicant, and J. T. Merryman (now Judge Merryman) for the remonstrators. Name after name on the remonstrance was examined and tested to the satisfaction of the commissioners, and not a hitch unfavorable to the remonstrators occurred in all the examination of names which lasted two and one-half days, from Wednesday morning till Friday noon when 330 names had been examined, which was one more than the required majority (329).

Attorney DeVoss then asked, how many more names the solicitors had, and on being informed that there were still considerably over 100 names to be heard from, he gave it up and moved to dismiss the case. The commissioners made the entry accordingly and charged the applicant with the costs in the case. That settled this man for all time to come, and the commissioners declared they hoped that no more applicants would apply for liquor licenses from Berne and Monroe township.

But saloons die hard. Only a few days after the remonstrance was now "irrevocably established"

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

George Nichols and Mathias Brandyberry published notice that they would apply for license at the March session of the county commissioners, and Mr. Nichols offered to sign an agreement with us that if we would not appear against him and thus allow him to secure a license that he would give a bond of \$1000 that he would conduct his saloon strictly according to law. But we smiled and said:

"No, we have the key now and we are going to keep it."

The armistice was for three months only, however. Another chapter in the Berne liquor fight was opened in the county commissioners' court the first week in June, when George Nichols, Jacob Hunziker and Samuel Sprunger again tried to get saloon licenses. They had hired Judge Olds, of Fort Wayne, and Judge Heller, of Decatur, to represent them and fight for the much coveted papers. I was on hand with a remonstrance against each individual applicant and my authority as attorney-in-fact to sign these remonstrances, and had my grounds defended by Attorneys Merryman & Sutton.

The saloon keepers had filed 254 names purporting to be withdrawals from the remonstrance, but these names were never considered at all, because any one acquainted with them could see at a glance that they were intended only for a fraudulent show. It took so long to pick out a few actual remonstrators from the list that the papers were thrown aside. The only bone of contention was the answer filed to the remonstrance by Judge Olds and Judge Heller in which they set out that the law under which the power-of-attorney was given me was repealed by the Moore

amendment to the Nicholson law, which had just been passed by the 1905 session of the Indiana legislature, and become effective. We had not yet secured sufficient signers to the new power-of-attorney to remonstrate against the traffic as provided for by the Moore amendment, and so I remonstrated against each individual applicant as I had done exactly twenty times before. The commissioners were not sufficiently well versed in law to settle this question and therefore called on County Attorney Lutz to render his opinion. His decision was that the Moore amendment did not repeal the Nicholson law, and since I kept within the power granted to me under the Nicholson law, the board could not lawfully grant the applicants a license; and so they were refused.

From this finding they appealed to the Adams circuit court where the case was set for a hearing September 28, 1905. But in place of going to trial on that day they prayed that the venue be changed to Allen county, for the reason that an odium attaches to the applicants in this county because of the local prejudice of citizens thereof, and that the applicants did not discover this prejudice until this 28th day of September 1905, and since the setting down of these cases for trial,

To this I strenuously objected; so the court sent the cases to Jay county.

It was not until March 1906, that the cases were finally tried there, and the remonstrance upheld by Judge LaFayette. Not satisfied with this George Nichols appealed his case to the Supreme Court and lost out there. Now our remonstrance was iron clad and gilt-edge,

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THIRD ASSAULT UPON THE EDITOR.

On March 26, 1906, after George Nichols and I returned from Portland where his trial was held and the court had rendered a decision against him he came into my office, right into my private apartment, behind the desk and asked:

"Fred, what are you going to do next?"

I said: "I don't know, it depends upon your next move."

"Do you think you did right in putting me out of business as you did?" he asked next.

"Of course I do, or I wouldn't have taken a hand in it," I told him.

Then he continued: "What if I put you out of business tomorrow!"

"Well, that's a different proposition, that would be all wrong," was my reply.

"It would? Why so?" he wanted to know.

"Because your business was a nuisance, mine is a benefit to the people. Furthermore we never put you out of business at all. It was the law that put you out at the expiration of your license, and we just kept you from going back in, as the law gave us a right to do."

This was a revelation to him. He had never looked at the saloon business in that way before, but it made him gnash his teeth and give away the real purpose of his visit, for he said:



"Fred. I came to lick you!"

"All right, just lick me if you think it will do you any good."

He then tried to provoke me into anger and get me into a fighting mood but I jollied him all the while and tried to keep him in good humor as long as I could. Finally he thundered at me:

"Are you ready?"

"Yes, I am ready any time, are you?" I answered, but remained seated on my stool and let on as if I wasn't paying any attention to him, and that of course wasn't getting him ready very fast. You see it's hard for a man to work up his fighting spirit to the striking point when you try and make him laugh all the time. Fighting and laughing don't mix very well. It was like pulling teeth for that man to get started in his fight but he finally mustered up enough courage to raise his big arm and land a heavy blow into my face so that I flew off my stool into a corner like a little squirrel as he himself termed it.

Then he proceeded to kick me and to pound me, but before he had done any great harm, three of the employes, Henry Reusser, William Narr and Ernest Dro, came and floored him.

Narr, the pressman, a little fellow with muscular, brawny arms, took hold of Nichols' ankles with both hands and pulled out his feet. He made just one jerk and the great big fellow, weighing in the neighborhood of 300 pounds, nearly three times my weight, slipped, and down he came like a heavy tree on his big beer belly with such force that it almost burst. Then all four of us sat down on him and held him there until the town marshal came and took him out.

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

It wasn't long until a large crowd gathered in front of the office and looked in through the show windows to see the performance. One man said we looked just like four little frogs sitting on a log.

When Mrs. Nichols heard that her husband was held a prisoner on the floor of the Witness office, she came and scolded him saying:

"I told you not to go into such a place as this. What did you want with that scabby little fellow, anyhow?"

The next day Mr. Saloon Keeper was arraigned before Squire F. C. Foreman where he plead guilty to the charge of assaulting me. The squire felt that if he fined this man one dollar like he had done the others, he would be ridiculed and laughed to scorn, so he raised the fine one hundred and fifty percent, and said to his friend:

"I am sorry that this happened. If you had taken Rohrer out into the street and given him hell there, it would not have been so bad as to lick him in his own place of business—but I'll be lenient with you and make the fine as low as I dare," which was \$2.50, with costs amounting to \$12.95.



"All Four of Us Sat Down on Him."



## CHAPTER XVII.

### SALOON MEN CHANGE TACTICS.

Now let us go back and take up the thread of history again where we left it off in June 1905. The following month Jonathan Andrews had to be kept from getting a license, and after that the remonstrance rested for a while.

The worst things we still had to deal with were blind tigers and blind officers. But a town election came off in November 1905, and I said to the remonstrators, "The most important thing for us to do now is to clean the rubbish out of the town hall and put in some real timber." The trouble with us was that so many of our German people never took enough interest in elections, and many never knew exactly how to vote. I studied the election laws carefully and went just as far as I dared to go to make voting easy for our German people who do not read English. We slated men from the two old parties whom we wished to be elected and then I printed a lot of sample ballots, and because the law only says that they **should** be printed on paper of a different color from that used for the genuine ballots, and prescribes no penalty for the failure of observing these instructions, I used white paper, the same as was used for the genuine ballots, but was careful to print "Sample Ballot" in large letters at the top. Then we marked these ballots the way we wished to have them voted, and made

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

a thorough canvas among all remonstrators, and instructed them to take this sample ballot along into the election booth and lay it down side by side with the genuine ballot and mark it just like the sample, then put the sample in a pocket and fold up the real ballot and hand it to the inspector.

All went well and the remonstrators went early to the polls to do their duty. But one good old German who had celebrated his ninetieth birthday a few months before, forgot his instructions. When he went to the voting place and the clerk handed him a ballot he said in German:

"I got a ticket."

That "let the cat out of the bag" and he was obliged to give up his sample ballot.

To make a long story short, we won out in the election and the defeated candidates and their allies took that sample ballot and went with it before the grand jury and made that body believe that I printed imitation ballots and tried to stuff the ballot box, which would have been an offense punishable by imprisonment in the State penitentiary from two to five years.

I was indicted and on January 9, 1906 arrested and released on \$500 bond. The case was set and re-set for trial but never was heard.

When the grand jury met again in another session these men who were so anxious to get rid of me again voluntarily went before the grand jury and must have made their pleas more urgent than before, at any rate the grand jury returned another true bill against me and Judge Erwin issued a bench warrant for my arrest and fixed my bond at \$1,000. It was done to get

## SALOON MEN CHANGE TACTICS.

my name into the newspapers and keep it before the public as that of a criminal. Finally I urged that the case be either tried or dropped for I was kept under arrest for nearly a year, and was not allowed to leave the state without permission from the prosecuting attorney.

Of course the saloon men desired to cause me just as much trouble and expense as possible and therefore pushed the prosecution. On Monday, December 3, 1906, the trial began and lasted for two days. Two of the defeated candidates, Phil Schug and Fred Wechter, and Otto Ryf, who was editor and manager of the "Berne News," a paper which the "wets" started in November 1903 and kept up for four years to run me out of business, with a lot of other witnesses tried to bolster up a case but made a miserable failure of it. After the State rested I took the witness stand and told the court and jury what I had done and called in a few character witnesses. After the arguments were made by the attorneys on both sides the court instructed the jury to bring in a verdict of acquittal, and it took the twelve men only three minutes to do it. The bailiff had scarcely locked the door and still had the key in his hand when a rap inside the door gave the signal that the jury was ready to report. One of the jurors said to me:

"We purposely tried to see how quick we could do it."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### BEGINNING OF CLEAN-UP.

The men who were successful in the November election 1905 took their office on January 1, 1906. This gave us new courage to go after the blind tigers and prosecute them with vim and vigor. On January 9, 1906, Sheriff Albert Butler came to town with seventeen indictments against saloonists, of which number six were charged against Sam Sprunger, five against Sam Kuntz, three against Morris Ehlsam and three against Jacob Hunziker. Such a bunch of indictments had not been returned against any one community in many a day and some interesting court news seemed not far distant.

But over a month passed before the cases were called. They were set for hearing on Monday, February 19th, and the defendants went into the court room smiling, hoping for the same clemency from the Judge that had been extended to them many times before. But this happened to be a "blue Monday." Two of the new town trustees and myself also went to Decatur and told the prosecuting attorney, John Moran, that, unless the defendants this time were punished so that they would clean up and stop their illegal liquor business for all time to come, we would appeal to Governor Hanly. This threat did not need to be repeated. The Prosecutor told the Judge what we intended to do and that was enough. In order to get the court mill to grind this grist as fast as possible



## BEGINNING OF CLEAN-UP.

the proposition was made to the saloonists that provided they plead guilty to two cases each, the others would be dismissed. They thought they were getting off cheap and snapped the bait like a cat fish. They had not reckoned on the jab which Judge Erwin had up his sleeves, for there was not a scowl on his face, not a tremor of displeasure, nor even a curl of the lip which would indicate what he had in readiness for the bunch of fellows who plead guilty to having a good time at the expense of the law in Berne through the medium of entertaining their friends with wet goods for which privilege they had no license. The Judge imposed a fine of \$100 and sentenced the defendants to 30 days in the county jail for each case.

This was more than they had bargained for. At first they didn't seem to grasp the meaning of it. It was like a nightmare to them. One man asked,

"Well, Judge, do you mean it?"

The poor fellows learned that they were up against the real thing. They surrounded the bench and pleaded with streaming eyes for clemency, making such pitiful pleas, that if we dared to repeat them here, one of them especially, the readers would laugh as they seldom laughed before. But not until they promised never again to enter into the business of selling intoxicating liquor without a license, did the Judge show the least sign of weakening. Upon this promise he remitted the jail sentence, but leaving the fine stand. The total amount of all the fines and costs in these cases was nearly one thousand dollars. The men then returned to Berne sadder but wiser, and two of them soon moved out of town.

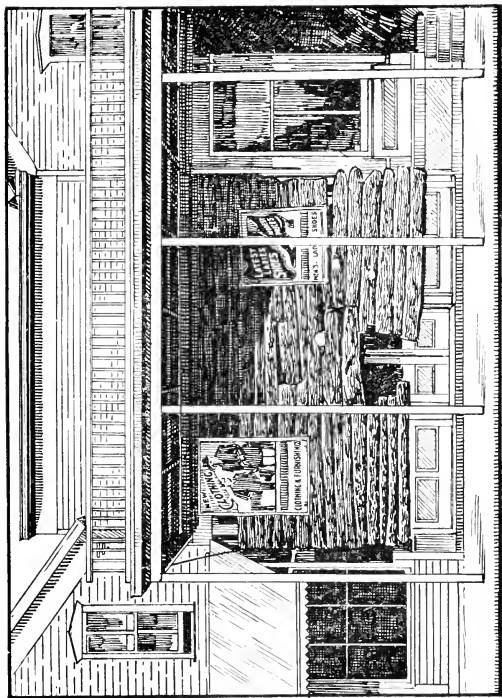
One of the saloons was turned into a restaurant.

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

Another one was closed and the front boarded up with shiplap in which condition it remained until a number of remonstrators went together and bought the building and rented it out for a general store. Sam Kuntz's building stood empty for a long time with a sign in the window "For Sale, Trade or Give Away" until one night he covered up the whole front with slabs as shown in the picture on next page. To make it more offensive he tacked on two large advertisements of a Geneva firm. As soon as I saw it the next morning, I sent our photographer, E. K. Shalley, to take a picture of it and said then, "Some day I'll make good use of this."

But Kuntz's scheme did not work as he had anticipated. The old log cabin in the main business part of town with its Geneva advertisements was so offensive that not even his friends pronounced it a smart trick. Nobody was bored worse than Kuntz himself. Two days was all he could stand. As the slabs came on in the night they went off in the night, and three days later he rented the building for a butcher shop. After that it was used for various purposes until finally he sold the property to me.

The town was now dry for a while, actually dry, as dry as last year's birds' nests. But it did not last long. Samuel Sprunger, the man who turned one of the saloons into a restaurant, soon had to get something stronger than pop and orange cider and ginger ale for the kind of customers that patronized him; but he kept the drinks that scratch when they go down the throat in a back room behind lock and key, and generally admitted only one man at a time and only such ones as have no regard whatever for an



The Covered Up the whole front with Slabs.



oath, for time and again we had men before the grand jury who swore that they neither saw nor received any intoxicating liquor there, when everybody knew better, only nobody could prove it. Under such conditions it was impossible to get evidence and the best thing we could do was to wait for the enactment of an effective blind tiger law. As soon as that law was passed we took steps to clean house.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### TIGER DRIVEN FROM THE JUNGLES.

It was in February 1907 that the Indiana Legislature finally gave the temperance element a weapon with which to make a successful hunt on blind tigers. As soon as Governor Hanly signed the bill, Superintendent U. G. Humphry of the Anti-Saloon League notified me of the fact by wire, and sent me a certified copy of the law. Then I went before Squire Joel Liddy and swore out a search warrant.

There was one man in town of whom I was afraid he would interfere and cause trouble, and I studied what to do and how to meet him and get rid of him if he came near. Suddenly the thought flashed through my mind that since he was elected constable at the last election the best way to get rid of him would be to make him help. He was the man who himself had also been running a blind tiger a long time and finally when he was forced to close up covered up his front with slabs. In the fall of 1906 he used his former saloon and blind tiger joint as a kind of hall and it happened that one of the old parties held its township convention there to nominate candidates for township offices. Some one arose, and, as a kind of compliment to him because he was the proprietor of the place, nominated him as candidate for constable. No one opposed him, neither in the nomination nor election, and so he was elected without opposition by a small vote. He took pride in it and

qualified. Therefore I instructed the squire before whom I swore out the search warrant to have it served by this man. When the squire handed him the paper he tried his best to get out of the job. The poor fellow turned and twisted and squirmed and had all manner of excuses. But I had followed the squire and stayed right with them and gave the constable to understand that he had to choose one of three things, either serve, or resign, or be impeached.

He turned angrily at me and asked:

"Who are you that you are bossing me?"

I said: "I'll tell you who **you** are. You are not Sam Kuntz now, but Constable Kuntz. You are a servant of the law, and I have the law here in my pocket; you just do as I tell you."

It was a bitter pill for him to swallow, but he saw he was caught. He didn't want to resign on my account; he knew that if he didn't serve that I would have him impeached; so he finally chose to serve—

Now I said to him:

"All right, you can appoint the town marshal and the deputy prosecutor to assist you, and remember, I am going with you.

This time he became real mad at my dictating to him and retorted:

"I'll pick my own men. If you want that place raided you go over there and stay there and see that nothing is carried away before I come."

Under the law he had a right to pick his own men. I never supposed that he knew that much law but he evidently did, and so it was now my turn to mind him.

I went to the restaurant, run by Sam Sprunger,

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which by this time was known as the "Hop Cream Parlor." He kept a kind of a sham restaurant in the front part of the building and a regular saloon in the rear. This "Hop Cream" he sold in the front part as a soft drink until one day I bought and drank three pints of it to test it and got well drunk on it.

This is how it happened: One morning as I walked past the building and looked in, I saw the proprietor standing behind the bar, a glass, with what looked to me to be plain every day beer, set out on the bar and a customer in front of it. I thought, There is your chance. So I went in, walked up to the man and looked at the liquid that was sparkling in the glass, and then said to the proprietor:

"I wish you would give me a glass of this."

He looked at me in bewilderment and hesitated. Then I looked about and took note of who was standing around. He caught on that I was looking for witnesses, and saw that I had him. So he concluded that he might as well let me have a glass, and he set one out to me. The eyes of every one in the room were fixed on me and the bums and toppers all watched me take the glass, hold it to my lips and sip the contents until there was nothing left.

When I set the glass down I said to the proprietor:

"Now if this was beer you will see me drunk in about five minutes."

"You don't need to worry about that" he replied; "this stuff is perfectly harmless. If it were not, I would not sell it to anybody."

Well, I went out and over to my office and expected to soon feel the effects of the hop cream, but there were no signs of intoxication, except a little



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weakness in my knees and a slight dizziness in my head, but no one could have noticed it on me. Then I began to think that perhaps I made a foolish move. I thought for myself, now this will be reported all over town; the blind tiger man will make capital of this and use me as his best advertisement. I realized that something more had to be done.

In the afternoon I returned to the hop cream parlor and asked for another glass and drank it, and then another. This time the proprietor did not hesitate, but was in good humor and laughed, and remarked:

"I'm glad you came back, Fred, I hope you will keep this up and tell your friends to come in. This is actually the finest temperance drink that's made. It won't hurt anybody. My wife drinks it. She likes it and she says it does her good."

She was sitting by the stove near by, and I walked up to the stove to warm myself, and give the hop cream all the chance to show its real effect upon a person. Presently, as I was standing by the stove with my back turned to it, my eyelids closed and I tipped back and forth, and, with my hands on my back, I burned my finger tips a little. This woke me up and I walked out and exercised in the cold air until I was sobered up again.

Still I wasn't so drunk that anybody could have noticed it much, at any rate there was no one that would have witnessed to it if called upon to do so in court. I saw that I had made another mistake and began to think about it seriously. The evil effect it might have upon our temperance cause impelled me to go to the deputy prosecutor and tell him all that

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had transpired. The town marshal happened to be in his office and to them I made this proposition:

"If you men promise me to lock the door and let no one in here and keep me here until I am sober again, I will make a thorough test of this hop cream here before you."

They agreed and six pint bottles of the stuff were purchased, the marshal emptying one bottle, the prosecutor two and I swallowing the contents of three of them, and what they did to me was a-plenty. It was a long time before the door was unlocked and I was permitted to go home without running the risk of getting arrested for public intoxication.

This was on Saturday, February 16, 1907. I still had a head-ache the next day when I stood before my Sunday school class, teaching the lesson on Lot's Choice.

The next week Sprunger was tried in the circuit court before a jury for selling plain, everyday beer, and the evidence that was given through the "experiment" was so convincing that it was easy to guess what the verdict of the jury would be. He was fined \$75 and costs, and that gave me a chance to include the hop cream in the search warrant, for I had to designate in the search warrant all the different kinds of liquor I expected to find in the hop cream joint.

As a rule when a member of the Mennonite church becomes intoxicated or commits any other grave offense, he is disciplined, and the deacons, Fred Sprunger, C. W. Baumgartner and C. A. Neuenchwander, made no exception in this case. Fred Sprunger, an uncle of Samuel Sprunger, the man who was running the blind tiger, thought I did wrong not

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only in drinking hop cream to excess, but in using the law at any time against saloon keepers and blind tiger men. He thought, in place of forcing them out of their nefarious business we ought to "love" them out.

To satisfy these deacons and the wet members of the church, I arose before the whole congregation on Sunday morning, March 24, 1907, and made the following confession:

"I am sorry that the liquor that had been sold in Berne for a long time under the name of "hop cream" and which had very likely been bought right along by some of our own church members, and was relished by them as a perfectly harmless and non-intoxicating beverage, failed to be such when I drank it. I confess to having taken so much of it, that it made me drunk, and I promise to drink no more of it knowingly."

Then the whole congregation arose, signifying thereby that they have forgiven me. After they were seated the pastor of the church, Rev. S. F. Sprunger, made the congregation arise once more (there were 800 or more people present) and made them confess to me that if every member of the church had done his and her duty we would not have had this long and bitter war against law violators, and there would have been no occasion for my becoming intoxicated.

But here, I have already wandered too far away from the subject. The readers will have to go back with me to the "hop cream parlor" which we were about to raid.

When I entered the room the proprietor and the

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men who were standing around probably wondered if I had come back to get some more "hop cream." You remember I went there to wait for the constable, and the marshal, and the deputy prosecutor. I waited and waited a long time until I began to think that my friend Mr. Constable had fooled me. But I stuck to my job and finally he came, but not with the marshal, nor with the prosecutor, but with two of his friends, Fred Meyer, a former bar tender, and Will Ray.

The moment they entered, Kuntz looked about to see if I was there, and as soon as he spied me in the crowd he looked at me with a grin, as much as to challenge me: Now go ahead if you dare!

It wasn't the most comfortable feeling that came over me just then. I felt that he was trying to scare me out and as I was the only one of my kind in the building I felt for a moment like a lamb among a pack of wolves. I realized that something had to be done quickly; that he would conquer me if I didn't conquer him. It was a case of: You be afraid of me, or I'll be afraid of you.

I looked up and said to myself: My God, I followed You in here, You see how You bring me out again.

And as I looked up I became more afraid of God than I was of the man. I became afraid of God to shirk my duty. When a man looks up in such a trying moment he sees a great deal more than he does under ordinary circumstances. True fear of God drives out all fear of men. You just be afraid of God to do wrong in His sight, and you will never be afraid of any man to do right in his sight.

After I had conquered the situation in my will,

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I looked the man straight in his face with such a determination that made him readily see the victory in my eyes and he was outdone right then and there. He seemed as blind as the blind tiger and couldn't see anything that smacked of liquor, until I bossed him and his two assistants all through that building in the presence of a threatening, cursing crowd, made them open up every box and chest and cooler, taking out bottles here and bottles there, going from one room to another, and, coming into the third room where the selling of beer and whiskey was going on I made them take note of a government tax receipt tacked on the wall, while I copied the wording of it.

When we came to the storage room we found the door locked. I demanded the key. The proprietor positively refused to give it and again ordered me out as he had done several times before.

I said: "I'll not leave this house until this door is opened," and commanded the constable to burst it open.

By this time one of his assistants became frightened. Will Ray, looking at me, said:

"I'm afraid you are getting us into trouble here. There'll be some shooting done before we get through."

I told him: "Never mind the shooting. You fellows just do what I tell you. I want you men to burst this door open!"

Then all three began to pound away at the door with their fists, but the door never budged. Finally the constable exclaimed:

"It's of no use. This door is blocked on the

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

inside; we can never open it."

He thought he had me there. But I studied a little while and then reasoned this way:

Well, I thought, if the door is blocked on the inside, and if there is no one in the room, there must be another opening to it. The man surely didn't come out here. I noticed a hallway and said to the men:

"You fellows follow me."

Here we found a window, the only other opening to the room. It was boarded up and I made the men tear off the boards and pry open the window, and then, because no one else would do it, I crawled in through the hole into the dark room, and opened the door from the inside.

"Now you fellows come in here and help roll this stuff out," I said to them, and at the same time sent the constable after the 'squire and had him take an invoice of what we had gathered up so that none of it might get away. The constable, who had no more thought of making a real raid than of jumping to the moon, had to help roll out two dray loads of wine and beer and whiskey and hop cream. There were 2 jugs of wine, 1 keg of whiskey, 30 bottles of rum and brandy and Kimmel, stuff that had been imported from Germany for the old German tipplers, 20 gallons and 13 pints of the famous hop cream made by the Marion Brewing Co. (now out of business because of too much dry territory) and 489 bottles of the Crasser brand Toledo beer.

The constable now had to take charge of it and was held responsible for it until the court ordered it destroyed. The first night he had a few men stay

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up with it for fear some body might steal it. Then he locked it up in his place of business where it remained over two weeks. He was so beaten and dumfounded that he absolutely refused to sign the affidavit on which to arrest his friend in business I had to sign the paper myself.

The first case under the new blind tiger law was tried and ended in a conviction of the defendant, and on Saturday afternoon, March 9, 1907, the county sheriff and this constable with three other helpers brought out all the bottles and jugs and kegs into the street, and in the presence of a large crowd of bystanders they poured them out, and for nearly two hours, wine and beer and whiskey and hop cream flowed gurgling, gurgling down the gutter into a sewer, where all the liquor ought to go.

Many a man looked on with a long face and almost shed tears at seeing the "precious liquors go to waste." One old German cried:

"What a waste! What a shame!" and he so completely lost his self-control that he stole two bottles of the amber brew and escaped.

If Berne has not been a practically "dry" town since then, you never need to look for any on the map.

## CHAPTER XX.

### ASSAULTED THE FOURTH TIME.

All was now quiet in Berne for many years until February, 1912, when an editorial in the "Witness", criticising Township Trustee C. C. Beer, asked some questions concerning a coal and beer deal in which Sam Kuntz, the ex-blind tiger keeper and raider was to have had a hand. On the day of the appearance of this article, Friday, February 9, 1912, Sam Kuntz walked into my private sanctum and stood beside me and waited until there was no one else in the office except a boy who was on the other side of the room behind a counter.

While Kuntz was waiting he asked a few questions about the item published, and then accused me of having tried to send him to the penitentiary in the year 1901 when Governor Durbin issued requisition papers to Charles Brewster, chief deputy game warden of Michigan where Kuntz was wanted on a charge of perjury.

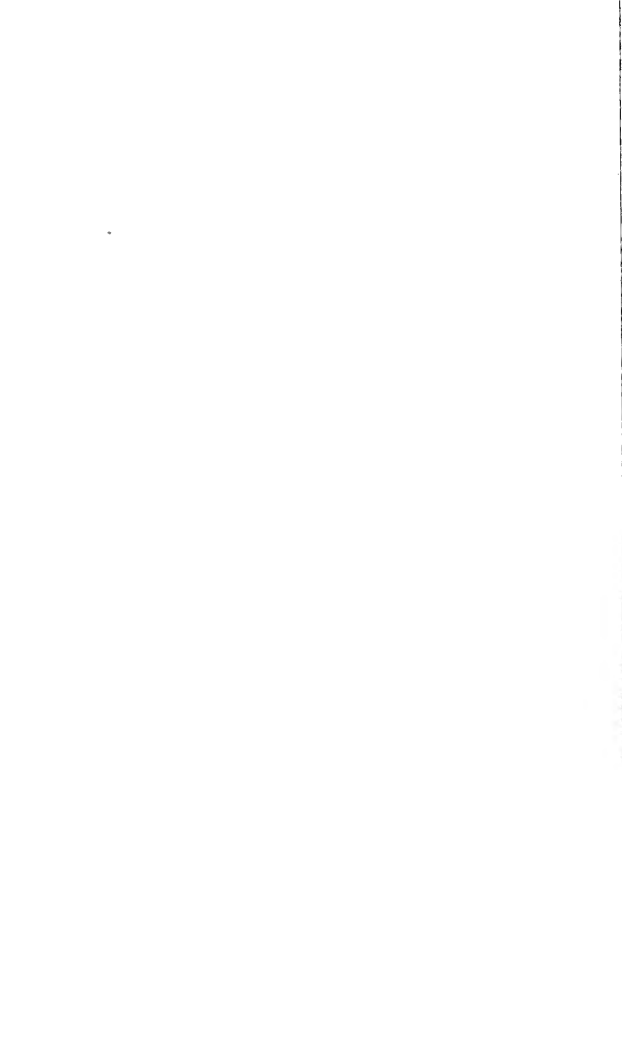
He also accused me of having fought him all the time while he was running the blind tiger. To this I plead guilty.

I was sitting on my stool and he was standing beside me and all at once landed a heavy blow over my left eye, smashing my eye glasses and cutting a hole in my face between the eye and nose. He then hit me over the other eye, on the nose, the jaw bone, the forehead and the mouth, which latter blow resulted





"I Took It All Good-naturedly."



## ASSAULTED THE FOURTH TIME.

in breaking off an upper front tooth. I took it all good-naturedly and never moved.

By this time the boy from behind the counter, his name is Fred Amstutz, came running up and hit Mr. Kuntz a blow on the head with a heavy spool of wire, which made him take to his heels and run.

Mr. Kuntz then went out and had a friend swear out an affidavit against himself, charging himself with assault and battery before another friend, Mr. 'Squire Joel Liddy, to which he pleaded guilty and paid a fine of one dollar and costs, in all \$8.65.

You may wonder by this time why I never defended myself.

Because I didn't want to hurt any body.

Yes, you say, but a man has a right to defend himself, even at the risk of another man's life, because self-preservation is the first law of nature.

It is to the natural man, the man who has been born only once and for whom all laws are made; but not to the man who has been born the second time. I would let a man shoot at me or in any other way take my life ten times before I would ever do anything to endanger his life while he is committing a crime.

Why?

Because I believe it is better to send a man to heaven than to hell.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### PINKERTON DETECTIVES AT WORK.

A few days after the dynamiting of our home in the fall of 1903 J. F. Lehman, then postmaster, said to me:

"If you want to get detectives to find out who dynamited your house, just get whomever you wish, and I will see that the expenses are paid; the money will no doubt be taken out of the reform fund. You need not tell anybody anything about it; just go ahead and spend \$200, anyway, and I'll see that you are not out anything. You need not even tell me whether you get anybody, so that it will be an absolute secret between you and the men employed. Whenever you need money, just say so."

Two or three days after the explosions at my house I received letters from various detective bureaus, offering their services and stating that they have read in daily papers of the dastardly attempt made on my life and those of my family. The letters were from Detroit, Indianapolis, St. Louis and Minneapolis. I wrote to all and asked for their terms. A firm at Indianapolis was the cheapest, and in their letter they wrote:

"Will refer you to local officials and police department as to our reliability and character of our work. This is a point you may find is of considerable importance, as so-called unreliable detectives are sometimes dangerous people to deal with."

So I concluded to go to Indianapolis and see the men personally and make inquiry about them. Having arrived in the city on Wednesday noon, September 23, 1903, I first called on Chas. J. Orbison, then attorney of the Anti-Saloon League and now Judge of the Superior Court at Indianapolis, and stated to him the object of my visit.

"Well, Fred," he said, "if you are going to any expense at all, I would advise you to get the best men that can be had. I would go to Chicago and employ the Pinkerton people. These we know are absolutely reliable and are competent and have a national reputation. The men here in the city—well, I don't know anything about them. They offered their services to us some time ago, and asked if they can't assist us in temperance work, but I don't trust them. However, since you are here it might be a good plan for you to call on them and see how they are located, anyway. You can have a talk with them and you will soon know whether or not they are all right, but be careful that you don't bind yourself to them too soon."

Having had some other business matters to look after I spent the rest of the afternoon in attending to them, and looked up the detective agency the next morning.

A few blocks away from the office of the Anti-Saloon League I found the detective bureau. I showed my card and a lady admitted me through a door that had been barred with a heavy brass bar, led me through a suit of rooms into a small apartment which contained only two chairs and a writing desk well laden with revolvers and hand cuffs.

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As soon as I was introduced to the gentleman sitting at the desk and had a few words with him he called the president of the firm. The door was closed and locked as soon as he entered, and then he began to make inquiry into my case, the gentleman at the desk taking down every word I said. I was asked for the names of all the saloon keepers in town, the bar tenders, the town officers, the county prosecutor and county sheriff, and was asked if I had any known enemies. The man at the desk wrote down every name and was very particular about getting the spelling correctly.

Then they showed me a scrap book containing a number of newspaper clippings, giving accounts of successful detective work in which their names figured prominently.

They proposed to send two men to Berne for the reason that two working together would have the guilty parties ferreted out much quicker than one alone could do it, and then there would be the decided advantage of two witnesses to everything heard and said, which would be especially valuable when it comes to prosecute the guilty parties. They drew out contracts and wanted me to sign one. I read it over carefully and found nothing objectionable in it, but said:

"I'm in no hurry about this; I would like to have some reference to responsible men in the city with whom I can consult."

"All right," said the president, "just go to the police station and ask for the chief of police. He knows us and will recommend us to you. We are on the regular city police force," and unbuttoning his

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coat he showed me a big star on his vest.

This was Thursday morning, September 24, 1903. I said: "All right, I'll be back at 1 o'clock this afternoon," and went to the police station.

There I was escorted by an officer to the Chief of Police, whom I found in a little room sitting in a big arm chair, with his feet high in the air and hands folded in his lap. He was a large, heavy-set man with a bull-dog look in his face that showed neither signs of intelligence nor manliness.

I presented my card and told him what I wanted. Before I had said two dozen words he interrupted me and murmured:

"Yes, they are all right, I employ them," and he looked out the window, gazing into empty space.

I left and thought, If they are like you I don't want them.

Well, what could be done next? I went to the newspaper offices, the Indianapolis News, and the Indianapolis Journal, but received no satisfaction there, and then went to the office of the American Press Association. There they advised me to go to Chicago and get the Pinkerton people. However, one person gave me the name of Lucius B. Swift, attorney for the Good Citizen's League of Indianapolis, and a man prominent in state and national politics, and said, Whatever he advises you to do will be safe to follow.

I soon found Mr. Swift in his large law office. When my turn came to enter his consultation room I told him my mission and where I had been and what I had done. Then he said:

"Well, Mr. Rohrer, I am sorry you have been there, and I wish the Superintendent of Police would

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know nothing about your case. You see our police force is very corrupt. These men of the detective bureau say they will send two men, and charge you \$5.00 a day and expenses. This means that it will cost you \$20 a day for the two men. They won't come themselves and they have nobody to send. If you give them the job they will advertise for help. They have their way of doing it and the first men they get that suit them, they will send. These will loaf around in Berne for a week or more and accomplish nothing for you. But since they know all about your affairs and have the names of the parties suspected of the crime, you are handicapped. If you get somebody else they will write the men whose names you have given, and let them know that you were here and that you are employing detectives. So I think the best way to get rid of them is to employ them for a few days and then discontinue them. Tell them that you don't care to have the investigation continued any longer, and they will leave in good humor. I hope you will succeed and come out victorious."

I left Mr. Swift's office and as I turned the corner of Meridian and Washington streets Mr. William H. Blodgett, special correspondent of the Indianapolis News, who has been on the job for nearly forty years, has traveled over the country from coast to coast, has been aboard the flyers with every presidential candidate for a score of years and whose dope is read each season with increasing interest, took me by the arm and greeted me with a:

"Hello Fred, old boy, what are you doing here in town?"

I was on my way to the Anti-Saloon League office,



but Mr. Blodgett induced me to return with him to the News building and made me acquainted with the different editors of Indiana's greatest newspaper. I repeated to them my mission to the city and rehearsed my experiences, and they all agreed that to follow Mr. Swift's advice was the best thing to do under the circumstances.

Then I returned to the Anti-Saloon League office and informed Mr. Orbison of what I had learned and intended to do.

"I am very sorry I sent you there" he replied in an excited manner, and looking at his watch he continued: "You have just thirty minutes to catch the noon train on the Monon route; you will get into Chicago tonight at 8 o'clock. You go and see the Pinkerton people."

"But what about my appointment at the Detective office? I told the men I would be back at 1 o'clock."

"Never mind your appointment there. I'll attend to that. I'll be there at 1 o'clock and say to them that I am your attorney, that you have left the matter in my hands and have gone home to consult your friends and committee further, and that you will write to them when you want them. Now do not write to them until you have heard from me first. I'll go and see what they say and then I'll let you know what to write to them, and I'll see that everything comes out all right. Now get your grip and we will hurry to the station."

The next morning, after spending the night in a hotel, I stood in front of the Pinkerton Building, 201 Fifth Ave., in the heart of the city of Chicago. From the many signs on the outside I saw that this agency, founded in 1850 by Allen Pinkerton, occupies nearly

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every floor of the five or six story building. Besides this it has offices in eleven other cities. I went into the elevator and asked to be taken into the superintendent's office. This agency employs hundred's of people at this office alone, from little boys and young ladies up to men and women, and in one room were a dozen or more big policemen in uniforms.

I gave my card and after a long wait a boy escorted me into the private room of Assistant Superintendent Barton. In order that he might know the situation thoroughly and act accordingly I related to him my whole experience of the day before at Indianapolis. It amused him and he laughed over it and said:

"There's no harm done. This so-called detective agency will not interfere if we take up the case. They never interfere with our business. They know they exist only by our tolerance. What they will do is this: They will write to these parties whose names you have given them and will say:

"We have learned through some source that you are suspected of having committed the dynamiting of the home of Fred Rohrer in your town, two weeks ago or so, and we know why you are suspected and have learned that detectives are now employed to rope you. If you get into trouble and need any assistance to help you out, we respectfully offer our services to you, as we can assist you because we know the inside of the case etc."

The fact is that after Mr. Orbison went to meet my appointment at the Indianapolis detective office, one of the men left at once for Berne and was there the next morning while I was in Chicago. Fortunately

the men at my office could give out no other information as to my whereabouts except that I had gone to Indianapolis and had not yet returned. A few days after that many of the men in Berne did receive letters from this agency, just as Mr. Barton predicted that they would, and one man, Phil Schug, who was only incidentally mentioned as being one of the trustees of the town, as they had asked for the names of all the town officers, became frightened and went to Indianapolis to see what was wrong.

In continuing his inquiry into the case the assistant superintendent of the Pinkerton office asked:

"How do you stand with the postmaster of your place, is he your friend or one of your enemies?"

"He is my friend."

"All right, that's important. Will he keep a secret for you and trust you with secrets?"

"Yes Sir."

"Well then, the course that we will pursue is this: A detective in a small town is easily detected. So we will send a man as agent of the Underwriters' Association, in the guise of an insurance agent and have him make an open investigation until he finds out on whom to work secretly. He will come and register at your hotel as an insurance man, and he can tell the people that he is there to find out who dynamited that house and in a few days he will know who is to be roped."

Other necessary arrangements were completed, and I was introduced to the man who was to leave the city with me and come at once to Berne.

When we met again at the Union Station he was

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finely dressed in white vest and high collar. At Ft. Wayne we separated.

This operative was in Berne from September 25th until October 2, 1913, made a thorough open preliminary investigation and soon learned where to cast the net to make a successful haul, although the saloonists and their friends all told him that nobody but Fred Rohrer committed that crime in order to get sympathy for the cause for which he is fighting.

The operative made daily reports to the Chicago office of his findings and conversations held with people, and from there I regularly received a copy of it.

Several weeks lapsed before a secret operative was detailed to this place and put to work here, because we were anxious to have the people forget that a detective was here and leave them under the impression that nothing was discovered, and nothing more would be done.

On October 26, 1903, the Agency wrote to me:

"We are sending forward tonight Operative E. P. A., who will take up the secret work in your matter. He will hold no communication with you whatever unless something of unusual importance transpires, and he deems it necessary to inform you of it at once.

"We strongly urge that you do not let anyone whomsoever know that a secret man is on the case, or that you intend having anything done. You will see the necessity of absolute secrecy. Reports will be sent to you as promptly as possible and we suggest that you file our letters where no one will have access to them but yourself."

The following are a number of the daily reports to give the readers an insight into real detective work. We leave some of the names mentioned in the reports blank in this book, for obvious reasons. This man did not come dressed in a white vest and high collar.

"Decatur, Ind., Tuesday, Oct. 27, 1903.

"I left Chicago at 10:50 p.m. yesterday and rode to Ft. Wayne, Ind., arriving there at 6 a.m. Today I purchased a ticket to Hoagland, Ind. On reaching Hoagland, I left the passenger coach and boarded the bumpers of one of the freight cars, which were made up into the train, it being a mixed local freight and passenger train, and in this manner I rode into Decatur, Ind.

"I remained in Decatur during the day, apparently looking for work. I made inquiries as to the chances of securing employment in the oil fields, and let it become generally known that I was looking for work. At 10:30 p. m. I went to a boarding house and retired."

"Decatur, Ind., Wednesday, Oct. 28, 1903.

"I loafed around Decatur until about 12:30 p.m., listening to conversations, etc. in an endeavor to get information, and then boarded a south bound local freight train and rode to Monroe. I remained about the one saloon there and mixed with the frequenters of the place until 9:05 p. m. at which time I boarded a freight train and rode to Berne,

"I spent the evening in Berne, lounging around Hunziker's and Kuntz's saloons, in an endeavor to get information and become acquainted. I shall

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try to get work here tomorrow, either in the oil fields or elsewhere."

"Berne, Thursday, Oct. 29, 1903.

"After having breakfast this morning I went to the oil fields west of town, and applied for a position, but was unable to get work.

"I then returned to Berne and loitered around Kuntz's and Hunziker's saloons until about 11:00 a. m., when I succeeded in securing a job as hod carrier for a cement contractor, who is building a cellar in a new building here.

"I worked all afternoon as hod carrier and helper. A boy named E. Kuntz, a brother of the saloon keeper, Samuel Kuntz, is also employed here. He told me that his brother had gone to Maine to hunt deer and would probably be gone for about a month.

"I spent the evening loafing around Kuntz's saloon and making the acquaintance of the loungers there and endeavoring to become acquainted with — —.

"I retired at 10:30 p. m. I slept in the same room with a man named Charles Marks. During a conversation with him, he told me about the explosion at Fred Rohrer's home, and said that the saloon keepers were suspected of doing it. He said detectives had been working here, trying to locate the guilty parties and being unable to do so, had decided that Mr. Rohrer did it himself."

The reports of several days following are similar. The operative worked at all kinds of jobs in day time and spent evenings mostly in Kuntz's saloon. In his report of Monday, Nov. 2nd, he says among other things:

"—— ———told me that the reason the saloon keepers were so particular about selling liquor to minors was because they had a reformer in town, who was continually fighting the saloon keepers. He said he had the saloons put out at one time and was trying to have them put out again. He told me that some one had dynamited the house of the editor of the Witness and tried to kill him."

Of the next evening he wrote:

"I remained about Kuntz's saloon until late in the evening and after nearly everyone had left. The bartender in Kuntz's saloon told a customer whose age he had asked, that he was forced to ask those questions because the editor of the Witness was watching for an opportunity to have them closed up."

"Wednesday, Nov. 4, 1903.

"I arose at 6:00 a. m. and after having breakfast I went to Kuntz's saloon, where I remained all morning.

"On several occasions I noticed that —— got drinks over the bar and did not pay for them, and also that the bartender did not charge up anything on the credit books. . . . —— remarked that he did not intend to work all the rest of the winter, as he had earned enough and therefore could loaf."

"Friday, Nov. 6, 1903.

"I arose at 6 a. m. and after having breakfast I went to ——'s saloon, where the bartender —— was alone. He told me that the saloons in Berne were going to be closed up again. He said it was the work of the editor of the Witness, and that if they

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were forced to close up, the saloon keepers were going to fix the editor. He told me that they had intended to do so before, but were just holding off to see what he was going to do, and that if he did not cease working against them, they would fix things so that he would have to leave Berne.

"He said the saloon keepers would not do the work themselves, but would hire some one to do it for them. He told me that they had it all planned to pay some one to break into his premises at the printing establishment some night and either set fire to it or damage the machinery so that he would not do anymore printing. He said they would do it in such a way that the saloon keepers would be running no risk of being implicated in the matter. He smiled and looking at me said, 'I don't suppose it would take a very great amount of money to get you to do the job, would it? I told him that I might consider it, if the amount at stake was worth the risk.

"At this point in the conversation a customer came in and interrupted us. The bartender gave me a wink not to say any more about the subject. Later in the day Wm. O'Neil and I were reading the account in the Witness about the saloons having to close. It mentioned something about the dynamiting of last September. O'Neil asked the bartender if the saloon keepers really did dynamite the editor. He said, 'Yes, they put a stick of dynamite on the window and one under the porch, but it did not do much harm.'

"He told us that if Mr. Rohrer succeeded in putting them out of business again, they would open up club rooms and sell liquor without a license....."



"Saturday, Nov. 7, 1903.

"I rose at 6 a. m. and after having breakfast I loafed around the saloons here until about 8:30 a. m. when I went to work unloading some cedar posts from a freight car. I worked until noon when I went to dinner, stopping at ——'s saloon. I met the bartender while enroute and asked him whether or not the saloon keepers had received any notice to close up. He said they had not as yet, but expected to get word during the afternoon. He said if they closed up the saloons the saloon keepers would see that Rohrer did not do any more printing. He said, 'They are going to "white cap" his place and put it out of business and if you are here long enough, I'll see that you get the job.' He told me not to let any one know that he had spoken to me about it. He said, 'You are a stranger and no one will ever suspect you.'

"I worked part of the afternoon unloading posts, and the remainder of the day I loafed around the saloons here. I met —— —— and spent the greater part of the evening in his company. He brought up the subject of the closing of saloons and said, 'Old Rohrer is at the Bottom of all that.' I said it was a wonder they did not put him out of business. He replied, 'They would but they haven't got the nerve.' I said, 'I guess they could get the nerve if they had the money to put up. —— —— answered, 'Yes, if they would give me twenty-five dollars, I'd soon put his place on the bum, and no one would ever get next, either.'

"I remained with —— —— until about 9:30 p. m. at which time he went home. . . . . I noticed several young boys, who were to all appearances under 18

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years of age, buy intoxicating liquors over the bar at ——'s saloon. Gambling for money is allowed to run in ——'s saloon. Men were there shaking dice nearly all day."

Monday, Nov. 9, 1903.

"I arose at 6 a. m. and after having my breakfast I went out to the oil fields about three miles west of Berne and worked all day digging ditches, in which to lay pipe lines.

"I returned to Berne at 6:00 p. m. and had supper. After supper I went to Kuntz's saloon and bought a drink of liquor. There were a number of other persons in the saloon and the bartender was making no attempt to conceal the fact that he was selling liquor. The other two saloons in town were also selling liquor without attempting to conceal the fact.

"I met —— at about 6:30 p. m. He appeared to be very angry about something. I asked what was the trouble, and he told me that he had been out with a girl and some one had told his wife. He said he would get even if he ever found out who it was. He told me that he expected to have some trouble with his wife on that account, and asked me to leave town with him. He said he cared more for the girl he had been out with than he did for his wife. He told me that his wife had forced him to marry her on the grounds that she was going to be the mother of his child. He said he had been married four years and as he had not had any children, he knew that he had been duped."

"I told him I did not care to leave town just then as I was nearly without funds. He said, he would

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get the money all right, and offered to pay my expenses until I could get to where we wanted to go and had work. He said he would rob some store or 'hold up' some farmer returning from town, after selling some stock. He said he would do something in order to get the money.

"The subject came up about Fred Rohrer and the closing up of the saloons. ——— said, 'I wish they would give me a bunch of money, I'd get rid of that Rohrer.' I told him that I had been given to understand that there was some possibility of getting money from that source.

"He told me if I were approached, not to take less than \$100.00. He said, 'Tell them that you have a good partner and that you each want \$50.00. He said he would help me as he wanted to 'get even with Rohrer,' and also because he knew the location of everything in the print shop. He said, 'We will get about ten pounds of dynamite and blow up the whole place; that is the quickest and surest way.

"I pretended to disagree with him on that point on the grounds that we could not get dynamite without considerable trouble. He said, 'You can go to Decatur and buy it, or else make the saloon keepers get it for us; we'll tell them that if we are going to do the work, we want the material on the grounds.'

"He told me to be very independent with them, because, he said, he and I were the only ones in town who had the nerve to do that and therefore we could charge our own prices.

"I told him we might be wrong about that as they might get the same parties to do the work as

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did the other dynamiting. He agreed that that might be so.

"I asked him if he knew whether or not the other parties were in town now, so that we could know just how independent we could act, because if the other parties could not be reached, we would be the only ones whom they could get to do the work. He replied, 'I don't know whether they are or not. I have no idea who did the other work at all, but I don't think it was done by any one around here.'

"He further said he left town that night after having borrowed considerable money from friends of his, and went to Ft. Wayne and from there to Marion, Ind.

"He said he remained there about a week and his wife wrote him to return and then he returned to Berne. He said, directly after the above, 'If we do this work, we can leave town for about a week and then return after it has all blown over, and no one will suspect us.'

"Although he denies it, I am still of the opinion that he has a guilty knowledge of the dynamiting of September."

On another day when Operative E. P. A. and ——— talked about the saloonists getting ready to have the Witness office demolished (one of them was more anxious to have me killed than to have only the office ruined) ——— said:

"When they come to terms let me in on it; I'll show you that I've got the nerve. I can ruin all the machinery in ten minutes by just destroying certain parts."

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E. P. A. told him that he was afraid that his nerve might fail him when the time came, and —— —— remarked:

“Why, I’ll kill Rohrer if they will put up the money, I’d take a chance at hanging for money, if there was enough of it.”

On November 11th the superintendent of the Chicago office of the Pinkerton Detective Agency wrote to me to come to Chicago as soon as possible to have an interview with them.

I left for Chicago the day after I received the letter and had a conference with Supt. Schumacher and Asst. Supt. Barton. Mr. Barton said:

“Things have developed to a point now where it isn’t safe any more to send you through the mail all the information E. P. A. receives. A letter might get lost or accidentally get into wrong hands and our whole scheme be spoiled. Furthermore our operative needs some instruction which we can’t possibly give him by mail. You see all the letters he receives from us are written in such a way that he must get all his information by reading between the lines. One of the office girls writes all letters to him, and she writes as his sweet-heart. She mentions your name in the letters and says, ‘Now my dear, that man Rohrer you write about may be a crank in his way of trying to reform his town, but please do not get mixed up with his enemies who seek to do him harm or damage his print shop. For heaven’s sake don’t urge them to any bad act. They are persecuting him enough without you helping them.’

“From this he is to understand that he must be extremely careful that he is no party to any conspiracy

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and that he does not lay himself liable to prosecution. He must do nothing to persuade your enemies to take any radical steps against you. He must never counsel the doing of any violence to you or to your establishment; but he may arrange it so that he is drawn into the affair, and is made aware of the intentions of your enemies before the commission of the crime. He may allow your enemies to concoct some scheme to injure you, and let it go along for some time and then inform you of it in time to let you get ready and catch the guilty parties red-handed.

"We instruct him in this manner so that in case he should happen to lose a letter, or in some way by mistake a letter should get into wrong hands, the person can make nothing out of it. He addresses all his letters to this same girl that writes to him. Of course, we do all the dictating.

"Now he reports that the plot is ripe to blow up your printing office, and you want to have everything in readiness to catch the rascals red-handed, and for this reason we ought to have a meeting with E. P. A. to confer with him and give him encouragement, as he needs it for this work, because he is young yet, he is only 22 years old, but we had him in this work here ever since he wore knee pants, and we know if we can see him and talk to him, he will do this work all right for you. You are to have the sheriff there that night and be ready to catch the fellows just when they are ready to touch off the match. We will instruct E. P. A. to be on the outside and give the signal by discharging a revolver when you and the sheriff must come out from your hiding place. Then he must quickly tie a white handkerchief around his right arm

so that you will know him from the rest and let him run. Pay no attention to him, he will get out of Berne as quickly as possible, perhaps walk to Bluffton and from there come home.

"Now, of course, when the men have their trial, the court will ask you how you came to know that your place was going to be blown up that night. Then just tell them that you had a detective employed who kept you posted. When they ask for his name, you just give it, and then, as soon as you can get out of the court house, you wire us, 'E. P. A. is wanted,' signed Fred Rohrer, and if E. P. A. is here we will send him to Canada, and there he will be out of the court's jurisdiction. You see the men arrested and the saloon keepers will put all the blame on him and swear that he was the instigator of the plot and got them into trouble, and he being alone would be unable to clear himself.

"But now we must arrange for a meeting with E. P. A. Where can we meet without arousing suspicion?"

"Well, the nearest place to Berne where it is safe for us to meet and not be detected is Fort Wayne. We could meet, for instance, at the Randall Hotel."

"All right, I'll write to E. P. A. at once to be at the Randall Hotel at Fort Wayne next Monday forenoon, and I'll be there and you meet with us. As soon as you get to the hotel you see if I have registered, and if I have, you just stay in the lobby until you are called for. I'll be up-stairs in my room and when I get ready, I'll send for you. Be careful that nobody sees you in the streets with E. P. A."

"There is no danger unless he follows me without

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my knowledge, because I don't know him."

"What, you don't know E. P. A., and he has been in Berne all this while?"

"No sir, I don't know him. I could know him if I wanted to. Several times I might have gone to the place where I knew he was working, but I didn't do it because I thought it safest for both of us if I didn't know him, then there would be no danger of me giving him away when we meet in the street."

"He knows you all right. He wasn't in Berne long until he found out who Fred Rohrer is, and he is keeping his eye on you all the time.

"Well then, we will meet next Monday, good-bye."

On Monday morning, November 16, 1903, I went to Fort Wayne and met Asst. Supt. Barton at the Randall Hotel. E. P. A. did not arrive. He had missed the train. For a long time we studied what to do. Finally after I assured Mr. Barton that he could come to Berne without being detected or attracting attention, he said:

"All right, we will go to Berne at noon. You pay no attention to me whatever, no matter where or when you see me. I'll try and get E. P. A. as soon as I can. This evening you be at the station about a half hour before train time. If, in the meanwhile, I have seen E. P. A. and succeeded in making the necessary arrangements with him, I'll be at the station and let you know, and will then leave again on the 5 o'clock train going north. If it is necessary that you or both of you come here again for another meeting, you be ready to leave Berne with us. I'll cross your path and let you



know in a word or two what to do. If I don't get to see E. P. A. before train time, I'll not be at the station, and then you leave your house open tonight, stay up, but have no light, and E. P. A. and I will call at your house about midnight, or as soon as we can safely."

We went to Berne in the afternoon and from the time we left the Randall Hotel acted as perfect strangers to each other, until about twenty minutes before 5 o'clock when I went to the station he passed me on the railroad crossing on Main street and said:

"All O. K., saw E. P. A., he will instruct you."

E. P. A. was at the station with a lot of loafers in the afternoon when we arrived from Fort Wayne and saw Mr. Barton step off the train. Mr. Barton did not see him and went to the first saloon he came to, that of Jacob Hunziker, to which place E. P. A. followed him. As soon as their eyes met and Mr. Barton had taken a glass of beer he went out and walked south on the railroad track out of town, E. P. A. following him at a safe distance. There they met and had their consultation.

On Tuesday afternoon, November 24, 1903, I received a letter from E. P. A. stating that I could meet him at 9 o'clock that night under the tree in the field south of the brick yard.

At that time my family and I were sleeping at C. C. Sprunger's home, because my wife was afraid to stay in our house after dark without protection. I was not permitted to walk the streets alone at night, and I had some difficulty in getting my wife to agree that I should meet the detective without telling her a story, as she knew nothing of the work of the detective. When I left my office at 7 o'clock in the evening my

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partners and hands in the business would not let me go alone, but insisted that someone go home with me. I consented finally and when my guard was out of hearing, I went around the house and started out of town, walking in the middle of the darkest streets to the west corporation line. Then I went south to Ashliman's ice pond and from there east across the fields to the meeting point. I was there nearly an hour too soon. I spied around in every direction, going up as far as the brick yard to make sure that no one else was watching for me, and that I would not fall into the hands of a hiding mob.

Up to this time I had never, to my knowledge, met E. P. A. I did not know what kind of a man he was, whether I could trust him or whether he would tell my enemies of the meeting he had arranged, and thus give them a chance to murder me. I was prowling in the darkness like an Indian, and if I had heard anything suspicious I would have run to the nearest house for assistance as fast as my feet would carry me. The night was dark and cold. I could hear people walking and talking on the railroad near by and the only lights were those of the town.

As I shivered with cold I could not help saying to myself, "If you saloon keepers knew where I am, wouldn't you rush out like mad dogs and tear me to pieces — if you could?"

It seemed to me that I waited more than two hours. Finally I heard footsteps along the nearby fence. I listened closely to ascertain if it were the steps of one or more persons. Presently I saw a form climb over the fence and a man walked slowly in my direction. I called, "E. P. A.?"

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"This is E. P. A., Mr. Rohrer," came the answer, and I felt safe. I was so cold we had to keep walking all the time in the field while we talked.

E. P. A. assured me that I need not be afraid of having to suffer any more bodily harm, although one of the saloonists insisted they would have to kill me or do something to get me out of town. He said:

"They will not come to your house any more and they will no more try to touch you. They are afraid of you. My, but they admire your nerve! The night they tried to mob you, after the marshal had chased them all out of your office, they all assembled in ——'s saloon, where most of them spent the night, presumably, I was there until after 11 o'clock, and —— ——— cursed and swore and pounded on the bar with his fist and said, 'Why, that fellow has more nerve than any man I ever saw in my life.'

"But they will stop your printing if they can, i. e. if the fact that some of them are now placed under bond has not scared them out too much. They are rather timid since Saturday. Whatever they are going to do will be done soon, and very likely it will be —— ——— alone who will blow up your office. We want the saloon men to furnish the dynamite and have it in one of the saloons, and, of course, we have trouble in getting them to do this, but we will not undertake the job until they come to these terms. I will let you know by mail the day before it is to happen. Then you go to Decatur that evening and bring the sheriff to town. Don't let him know anything about it before you go after him, and don't let him get away from you after he knows what is up. You can drive to Berne and leave your horse outside

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of town somewhere so that you will not be noticed."

"We can come in from the north and drive up the alley between Sprunger and Jefferson streets and leave the horse in the Orphans Home sheds. Then we can just come right up through the alley and go into the ware house back of the printing office."

"Yes, that's what I mean; I want you to hide there in that shanty back of your office, and try and be there not later than 11 o'clock. We will break in through the rear door or window."

"I can leave one of the windows unlocked, so that you will have no trouble in getting in. I don't think the night watchman ever tries the large windows to see if they are locked. But don't you think I'd better get one or two more besides the sheriff, to help?"

"O no, I think you two will be enough, you have enough nerve for a half dozen men and the sheriff ought to be no coward. I'll make — go inside and I'll do the watching outside. I'll keep close watch on him and wait until he has the dynamite and fuse in place and is ready to strike a match, then I'll shoot and run, and that will be the last you will hear of me. When he hears the shot he will be so scared that you can go right in and take him."

"Don't you think he will show fight and be prepared to shoot?"

"He may, but you will have no trouble in handling him. I tell you, he is a fellow that is everlastingly boasting about his nerve and what a brave fellow he is; and such men, when they are put to a real test, their nerve usually fails them. You will have no trouble in taking him. The sheriff will handcuff him

at once and then you take him to your buggy and drive to Decatur with him. The saloon men will wonder in the morning what became of us and why the office wasn't blown up, and you will have a sensation in town the next day when you go back that will beat your mobbing all to pieces."

"I guess that will cause an excitement."

"Yes, all you want to do is to keep cool; go about your work as if nothing were happening, just as you have been doing so far, and everything will come out all right. I tell you, you stood everything remarkably well so far. Not everybody can do it. I don't think there is a single person in town that has the slightest suspicion who I am."

By this time we had walked across the fields and almost reached the road leading south from the Menonite church. There we scared two boys going home from town, just as we climbed the fence, and they ran down the road just as fast as they could go. And they nearly scared us. We had not noticed them and were afraid perhaps they might have heard some of our conversation. As soon as we reached town we separated, he going back to the saloons and I went home in a round-about way.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, the saloon men did not come to terms. The fact that some of them were under bond took the ginger out of most of them. For this reason I wrote to the agency on November 24, 1903, to discontinue the operations. In his last report from Berne, dated Friday, November 27, 1903, E. P. A. wrote:

"I told the saloon keepers and their friends that I had decided to go to St. Louis, as I had no work in

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Berne, and was going south for the winter.

"I left Berne at 5:00 p. m. and rode to Ft. Wayne, Ind., where I had to remain all night owing to the train schedule. Before leaving Berne my acquaintances requested me to write them as soon as I arrived in St. Louis."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### DID IT PAY?

People who are not acquainted with the present conditions in Berne may wonder if such a saloon fight pays. On February 1, 1908, I published an article on "How the Removal of Saloons Has Affected Berne, Indiana." When the remonstrance campaign was begun in 1902, many of the business men were afraid it would hurt the trade, nevertheless some of these signed the remonstrance on the general principles that a man ought to do right because it is right, no matter what the consequences will be. Many thought then they were sacrificing dollars and cents for moral gain, and some did it reluctantly. The article mentioned showed whether we received what we expected, and deserves a place in this book.

#### "THE MORAL PROGRESS.

"For more than twenty years prior to the remonstrance campaign Berne never had less than three or four saloons, and because we had saloons we had to have a calaboose, the doors of which were opened as often as 42 times a year while we had saloons, to lock up men who were drunk or had made a disturbance. In 1906 only five arrests were made and in 1907 only one, and that was a burglar brought in from the country, who is now serving time in Michigan City. The last time the doors of our calaboose were opened

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to incarcerate a man arrested in town was on July 4, 1906.

### “RELIGIOUS IMPROVEMENT.

“But a still more important, and really the most important gain has been made in the religious life of Berne. While our population is about 1350, the combined church membership in our four churches is about 1250, including many from the country; and about that many are found nearly every Sunday attending our Sunday schools and preaching.

“Since 1904, when the licensed saloons were closed for the second time, our churches hold union meetings once a year for a week, having services three times a day, which are always attended by from 500 to 1500 people. We secure some of the most noted speakers and singers for these meetings that money can get, and then we help them along with a home union choir of about 150 voices. Many of our former saloon men have become converted at these meetings and some are holding out faithfully to this day.

“So you see we did gain what we expected, and even more, in the moral and religious improvement of our town.

### “FINANCIAL GAIN.

“Then there are those to whom dollars and cents appeal more strongly—those who are more anxious to know what the effect has been on our business. Let us see if we gained over and above our anticipations.

“Berne and Geneva, the latter five miles south of us, are two rival towns of about one size, Geneva be-



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ing the larger of the two according to the census of 1900, which gives our population 1037 and that of Geneva 1076. Berne has now been without saloons since 1903, and Geneva is a saloon town outright without any semblance of a lid on it. The communities and resources of the two towns being about the same, a comparison of the two places then will plainly show whether the closing of saloons hurts or helps a town financially.

### “Bank Deposits, Etc.

“We will first compare the business done by the banks of the two places. The bank statement published by The Bank of Berne in September, 1902, (then the only bank in town) just before the remonstrance campaign was begun, showed deposits on hand to the amount of \$250,691. The total resources were \$328,866. According to the statement published by the Geneva bank at that same time Geneva had \$198,889 deposits and total resources \$249,289.

“Whether or not the closing of saloons had anything to do with it, three months after two saloons in Berne were closed and the remaining one was about to be closed, the financial condition in Berne and business prospects for the future were such that a number of business men felt warranted in starting a second bank. And what have the two banks been doing during this long dry spell? The old bank has moved out of its old rented quarters into a fine building of its own, one of the finest banking rooms in Northern Indiana. In place of paying a 4% semi-annual dividend it now pays 5%. It has added \$20,000 to the surplus fund, which is now \$36,000. The new bank also owns its  
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building and increased its capital stock from \$40,000 to \$50,000 since it began to do business in 1903. And statements published by the two banks last year show that there were deposits in Berne to the amount of \$411,832 as compared with \$250,691 in September 1902, a gain of \$161,141, or nearly two-thirds. The total resources shown in the statements are \$564,349 as compared with \$328,866 in 1902, or a gain of \$235,483.

"The statement published by the Geneva bank at the same time last year the Berne banks published theirs shows Geneva to have had deposits in the sum of \$188,999, total resources, \$242,602 — a loss in deposits of \$9,890, and in total resources of \$6,687. Therefore the Geneva bank suffered a falling off of  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$  while the Berne banks made a gain of  $71\%$ .

### "Post Office Receipts.

"And not only the bank deposits show that business in Berne has greatly increased because of the absence of saloons, but the post office receipts show it as well. In 1902 our postmaster's salary was \$1400, now it is \$1600. To make a raise of \$200 in the salary of a third class office the receipts must increase \$1200 per year. Therefore it is evident that the post office receipts are now at least \$1200 greater per year than they were when we had saloons. What about the Geneva post office? The postmaster's salary at Geneva dropped down from \$1500 in 1902 to \$1400 in 1906 because business fell off at least \$500. Also the post office receipts at Decatur, our county seat, with its 15 saloons, must have had a falling off of \$2000 per year, because last year the postmaster's salary at Decatur, a second class post office, was reduced from \$2400 to

\$2300. So you see at the same time the salaries of the postmasters at Geneva and Decatur were reduced, the salary of Berne's postmaster was raised. And all this gain has been made in spite of the reaction that set in in 1904 and 1905 when the oil business around Berne began to slacken and since then practically died out.

"But there may be some skeptics who still doubt and think this increase in the banking and post office business is artificial. Those acquainted with banking and post office affairs know that it would be possible to inflate deposits and receipts by offering special inducements to outside concerns, and thus give the business an unnatural growth. To show that this was not the case in Berne we give proof that will at once dispel all doubt even from a hardshell skeptic.

#### "Assessments and Tax Rates.

"In 1902 the valuation of taxable property in Geneva was \$330,935, and now it is \$376,980.. In Berne it was \$521,150 in 1902 and now it is \$700,360.

"Men don't lie to the assessor, 'you know—at any rate not in the way this would indicate! Berne actually has the goods to show for this increase in valuation. When we had saloons we walked in the dark at night, just like the Geneva people do today. Now we have an electric light plant, with all our streets well lit up; a large sewerage system; more brick streets; thirteen new brick or cement block business rooms, and the largest number of fine and costly residences, such as were never built as long as we had saloons.

"They talk about saloons paying your taxes. Nonsense! The absence of saloons will soon increase your valuation and reduce your township and county ex-

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penses, and the increased valuation and reduction of township and county expenses will reduce your tax rate. Take the three towns in this county: In Decatur, where they have fifteen saloons the tax rate this year is \$4.02. In Geneva, with their five saloons, they pay \$3.14 and in Berne where we have no saloons, the rate is \$2.44 in spite of our improvements, which excel anything they have in Geneva. In 1902 when we had saloons in place of electric lights and a sewerage system and other improvements we also paid \$3.16, and Geneva \$3.12.

“Now then, to what class of people, mainly, has this increase in business and prosperity come, as shown by the bank statements and assessments? Here is the answer: **Just as Berne has prospered over Geneva because of the absence of saloons, so have the business men in Berne and others who helped the remonstrance movement, prospered over those who opposed it.**”

The publishing of the above article in many newspapers and in tract form caused the people of Geneva to “sit up and take notice,” and on February 20, 1908, the “Geneva Herald” made the following editorial comment:

“The Berne Witness contains a reprint from the Indiana Issue, relative to “How the Removal of Saloons Affected Berne, Ind.” Saloons have been put out of Berne for the past five years and Berne is proud of her growth and development socially and financially, which growth it attributes wholly to the removal of saloons. Comparisons are made with Ge-

## DID IT PAY?

neva, it being a saloon town, and how many advantages Berne has gained over Geneva. The argument by so many that saloons help a town is in this instance and by this comparison shown to be untrue. As we have never had any sympathy for the saloon business and have never yet seen any good come from the saloon, we will not attempt to refute the argument given in the article and are only too glad to see that the prosperity of a community and town are not dependable on such damnable institutions as the saloon evil."

Geneva was receiving a great deal of free advertising, but not the kind that commands respect and brings business. The town wanted an equal chance with Berne in the business world, and thus the people of Geneva followed the example of Berne, and on May 29, 1908, they filed a remonstrance with 54 majority against their saloons, and the saloons have been kept out ever since.

On February 23, 1909, Adams county held a local option election. Many people were then anxious to see how Berne would vote, and even the most sanguine were surprised when the official count showed that Berne voted dry four to one and one over. There were only 81 "wet" votes and 325 for "dry". And today it does seem like there was no more chance for any man to ever again open up a legalized saloon in Berne than there is for demons to play with snowballs in hell.

A new evidence showing that Berne is still making progress and is moving on from year to year is the

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

new Mennonite church which was built in 1911 and '12 and dedicated on Easter Sunday, April 7, 1912.

This church is said to be the second largest in the state. It is built of white pressed brick and the dimensions are 85x158 feet, with a seating capacity of 2000. Fully 3000 people attended the dedication.

In connection with the church a barn was built, 132x180 feet, to accommodate 95 teams and vehicles.

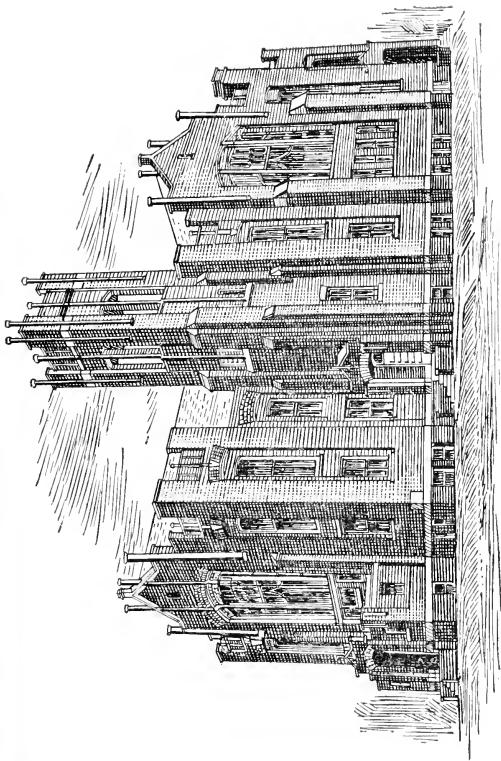
The total cost of the church and barn was \$56,829.20, every cent of which was paid long before the church was dedicated. The building committee had a balance in the treasury of \$70.09.

When the church was dedicated collections were taken in the sum of \$483.82, the bulk of which was given for the purpose of building a church at the Mennonite mission station at Champa, India.

Of the money raised to build the new church and barn only two contributions, totaling less than \$50.00, came from persons not members of the church, and of the members there was no one who gave more than \$1000.00.

The saloon fight during the ten years in which the remonstrance was filed thirty times has cost us \$1323.48. Besides this Berne has contributed to the Indiana Anti-Saloon League in the last ten years the sum of \$3772.91, with perhaps a few subscriptions unpaid, and we consider it money well invested.

Now what has become of the former enemies and what is their attitude today? Many of them became converted and are now friends; many died, some saved, some unsaved, and others moved away. The



Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind.





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small number that remains is left without influence and without a following.

For the sake of those who have not changed their manner of living I will not name those who have. I would rather have the readers think that all have turned over a new leaf and are now living noble lives. The only reason why the real names of enemies, as well as of friends, are published is to make the book more effective in its mission to strike the un-American saloon everywhere a deadly blow.

One incident deserves to be mentioned, however, because of the weight it carries and the force it gives to the statements just made.

When the city of Portland, in the county just south of us, inaugurated a remonstrance campaign in April, 1908, and three days before the last day of the month the "drys" were still lacking many names to cover the whole city with blanket remonstrances, the leaders asked me to come to Portland and tell their business men of our fight and of the effect it had on our business.

They arranged for a meeting at the court house for men only for Tuesday evening, April 28. I asked John Rinaker, one of the three saloon keepers, with whom I had held a conference behind locked doors two days after the dynamiting of my home, to go with me and be prepared to make a few remarks when I would call on him. He consented.

The old court room of Jay county was packed to the doors and standing room was at a premium. In the course of my speech I told of this secret conference with saloon keepers and watched the expressions

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on the faces of the men in the audience. Then I said:

"I see this sounds to some of you like a fish story. But, do you suppose that I would make up a story like this when I know that one of the three men of whom I am talking is sitting in this audience and is listening to every word I say? If I wouldn't be telling the truth, wouldn't he get right up and call me down as a bare-faced liar?"

Then everybody looked around and the men just craned their necks to see where he might be. I asked Mr. Rinaker to arise and tell the audience whether or not he is one of those three men.

Mr. Rinaker arose and addressed the meeting.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am one of those men and I can testify that every word Mr. Rohrer spoke is true. He did put me out of the saloon business and today I am glad of it," and went on to tell that he is now in the restaurant business and likes it much better, etc.

That was making a "hit", and it had the desired effect. The next day the legal voters of Portland signed the remonstrance freely and by Friday following every ward in the city was made dry and the saloons have never returned.

In speaking of the great omni-partisan temperance convention, held in Tomlinson Hall, Indianapolis, December 5, 1911, the "American Issue," in its number of December 12, 1911, said:

"One particular feature before the opening of the afternoon session, and which created great enthusiasm, was the procession around the hall of the forty-six members of the Adams county delegation headed by

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an ex-saloon keeper of Berne, who carried a banner inscribed, 'Adams County for County Option.' By his side was Fred Rohrer, one of the. . . . .etc."

It might as well be stated, too, that Abraham Bagley, the first man who assaulted me in my office and who was going to deliver me into the hands of a howling mob, was the architect of the new "Berne Witness" building, just completed and described in the next chapter. I paid him \$500.00 for drawing the plans and assisting me in superintending the work, for I bought the material for the building and hired the laborers and kept their time mostly myself, and never had a quarrel with any one.

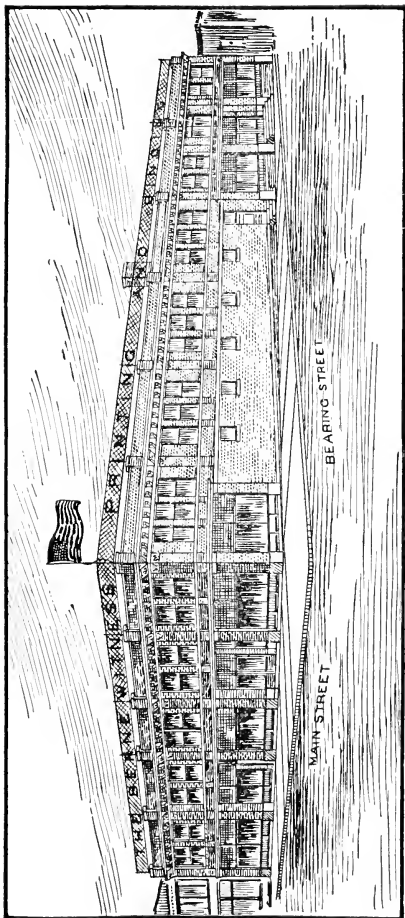
## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE BERNE WITNESS.

The history of "The Berne Witness" reads as much like a fairy tale as the history of the saloon fight at Berne reads like a novel.

During my last year at Tri-State College at Angola, Indiana, where I graduated in 1896, I put in my spare hours learning the intricacies of the printer's trade in the Steuben Republican office and after the close of the school returned to Berne, and with the financial aid given me by my brother John I launched "The Berne Witness" on Thursday, September 3, 1896, with only one assistant in a plant that cost less than six hundred dollars.

This, the first paper published in Berne, appeared as a seven-column folio and was printed on an old Washington hand press. A good friend of mine predicted that in a year the name of the paper would be changed from "Berne Witness" to "Berne Quitness", but instead of doing that it was enlarged to a five-column quarto, and the force of two increased to three. In April 1899 it was changed to a six-column quarto, and the force increased to four and soon to five persons. The next year a German edition was added and continued until November 1, 1901, when the two were merged and issued as a semi-weekly for eleven years. On September 2, 1912, the semi-weekly gave place to a tri-weekly, in which form the paper is now delivered to its readers.



Berne Witness Building, Berne Ind.



## THE BERNE WITNESS.

On June 5, 1900, I made a business deal with the Mennonite Book Concern of this place, for the printing of its publications, a weekly, a semi-monthly and a quarterly, which were then printed at Elkhart, Ind. To cope with this great increase of printing matter, not only an increase of the life force from five to eleven in the office was necessitated, but some of the old machinery had to give place to more modern and faster inventions. About \$3000 worth of machinery and material were added to the already fair equipment, and while up to this time I owned the plant alone, I now formed a partnership with a few of the young men who were working for me, selling to them a half interest in the property and I retaining the other half.

In 1905 a book bindery was added to the equipment and the following year the firm heretofore existing was dissolved and the enterprise incorporated with a capital stock of twelve thousand dollars.

The business kept growing from year to year, more machinery and hands being added annually, until a force of eighteen was almost constantly employed until the year 1909, when some of the lady typos were displaced by a new Model 5 linotype.

In 1911, when I held over half of the stock in the Berne Witness corporation, I purchased the old saloon property of Sam Kuntz and the lots to the right and left of it. The old fire-trap frame buildings were removed and where for more than thirty years liquor had been dispensed without interruption, there stands today an absolutely fire-proof structure, built in every way after genuine metropolitan style, as a monument to the "dry" victory in the fight against the saloons in Berne. The capital stock of the Berne Wit-

## SALOON FIGHT AT BERNE, INDIANA.

ness company has been increased to \$30,000, and the "Witness" today owns and occupies two-thirds of the block shown in the picture on a preceding page.

Since moving into the new quarters, a new Model 8 linotype has been added to the Model 5 and other composing room equipments, and also the bindery has been fitted out with considerable new machinery, so that the plant today is pronounced as one of the best between Fort Wayne and Indianapolis.

We are doing job printing and binding not only for firms in larger cities all around us, like Ft. Wayne, Decatur, Bluffton, Portland, Muncie, but our work goes out all over the United States from coast to coast and from Texas clear up to Alberta, Canada, and the different religious papers we print have readers scattered over the whole wide world, in nearly every land on the globe.

Verily, it pays to be fearless in the right, not only morally, but financially as well. And, remember, had God not been in this movement against the saloons in Berne I would never have lived through it to tell the story. Therefore, praise the Lord, O my soul.



## CONCLUSION.

At the semi-centennial anniversary at Gettysburg a Virginian rebel said to a Union veteran of Indiana, who recognized each other as having met as enemies fifty years ago:

“How profoundly thankful we ought to be that we fought out this great question to the finish, and did not leave it to our children to settle.”

Let us do the same with the liquor question and fight it out to the finish now, instead of leaving it to our children to settle. God will help us do it.









