

October 28, 1939

Dear Helen Burr:

How I have neglected you. Please do not believe you have not been often in my thoughts, but the truth is I wore myself out at Meadville, and instead of at once taking a rest when I came home I pitched into the accumulated things to do. The result was that I had to drop everything in July and sit in a chair for several weeks, sunning myself and resting. I read letters and thought about the Booth problem. I came back after Labor Day and pitched into the notes I had been accumulating. I really found that I had dictated a good deal, a good many of my reactions, and that I had that calendar I talked about pretty well in hand. I found, too, that among my old Lincoln notes there was more material which had come to me, not of my seeking, but because of people's interest in the Lincoln story, than I had realized.

In order to get an article that would be publishable I had to devise a plan of more general interest than focusing on Franklin would have allowed. Then, too, there was my promise to Mr. Mackey not to use his material or get in the way of what he plans to do in the future.

I have got something which my agent seems to think is saleable and I am sending you a copy that you may look it over and tell me what you think of it. I would be greatly pleased if you will go over it and make any suggestions that you have.

What I have been wondering is if you, yourself, would not take all this good material that you have gathered and put it together in such a way that some Northwestern Pennsylvania paper would ~~not~~ use it. You ought to have the credit somehow for all the work you have done and, too, you ought to save that work for future students. I am pretty sure that the Titusville Herald would welcome such an article if you would put it together. I'll do any thing I can to help.

I know how you must be suffering over this horrible European situation. I think it is fine of you to use in the way you have your belongings in Scotland. ~~Those things are~~ of course precious to us but it is better to have them used than to have them destroyed by raiders. And personal possessions are of very little use if one's country is to be enslaved.

I am hoping against hope that the stand of England and France may force Hitler to retire from the field, but no one can tell what awful mischief he may do before that day comes.

Please write me how you are and give me your notions about what I have done with the Booth story.

I see ~~Meta~~ now and then and we always talk of you. I was sorry I did not see you when you were here, but as I say I had gone into retirement. I'll never try anything quite so strenuous again as the Meadville lecture course was.

Affectionately yours

Ida M. Tarbell

Mrs. Helen Burr
Franklin, Pa.