1918-02-27

Letter: Albert A. Boyden to Ida M. Tarbell, February 27, 1918

Boyden, Albert A.

http://hdl.handle.net/10456/18913

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Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
132 East 19th St. N.Y.

Dear Ida,

Just received your good letter written from Washington, giving me all the Washington gossip.

Your people have certainly had a tough winter over there. You should have come over here with me - you would have found it infinitely more agreeable physically and of course no place could be more interesting than this place here. In fact, the more I think of it, the more it seems you have got to come over. I realize that there are millions of things for you to do at home, but when I think what you could do here, I feel that you ought to drop them all and come over.

Of course you would be absolutely perfect put in one of our huts; what I specially want you to do is to come over and go round the different camps and talk to the boys, not only about America, but particularly about the French people, to help the boys to have some humility before those wonderful people who have "carried on" for nearly four years. I have talked to Mr. Carter about your coming; he is very alive to the idea that a big part of our job is to make these boys in the different camps, French English and American understand and appreciate one another. We want to get the right kind of people to talk and help in that game.

Of course, there is an enormous educational field here. I believe they are going to cable John Finley to come over and take that end of the work. I do not know whether he will feel he can come; if he cannot, somebody else is going to, if not now, at least quite soon, but before we do get any educational program made, we can certainly help a lot in getting the right kind of people to talk in our huts.

You see that we have got the greatest opportunity; our YMCA huts are practically the only forums in the armies, and the stuff that goes out from them can do a whole lot in helping the allies to understand one another. It certainly is a very definite way of serving.

When I saw Miss Morgan, she was crazy about your coming over to work with her. That is all right, and it is a fine work, but we have got this war on and we have got to win it, and you can help here more than anywhere else.
On Active Service
WITH THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

You say nothing about your health, but I take it that you are very rugged or you could not have stood the strain. Are you taking care of yourself?

If you think seriously about this, I hope you will get in touch with C.V. Hibbard, 124 East 28th St. New York, or write to John Finley. He will make the whole thing easy for you.

In my letters to Martha, you will get all the news of my movements.

Yours always.

[Signature]

Don't be unhappy, but we always did have a fear that they'd planted lemons instead! Don't let it worry you too much.

Love to all the family.

[Signature]

Wish you were here.