

1922-09-26

# Letter: Ida M. Tarbell to Clarinda P. Lamar, September 26, 1922

Tarbell, Ida M.

---

<http://hdl.handle.net/10456/19835>

---

Allegheny College. All rights reserved.

*All materials in the Allegheny College DSpace Repository are subject to college policies and Title 17 of the U.S. Code.*

the use of them as I suggest: - a sentence or two run into the narrative when it will contribute to that narrative, and either footnotes or an appendix for the complete quotations which you may feel are valuable in the book.

This same suggestion I should like to carry on to the use of Mr. Lamar's letters. Many of these letters contribute to the dignity, the strength and the clearness of your story, but I still think that in certain cases you would do well to tell the story from the letters rather than with the letters.

In chapter V I think there are too many of these letters, taking them together with the newspaper clipping; and it gives a scrappy appearance to what is an excellent chapter. The story of his revision of his code is in itself splendid, but it is a little choppy in the way it now stands.

I like very much your picture of Mr. Lamar as a lawyer. You really portray him.

I am inclined to think that the quotations from the addresses are a little too long, and yet I found them uniformly interesting and important. My idea would be that you go over them, rigorously cutting out any sentence or line which you think you can spare.

I thought the chapter on Augusta, Ga. and the one on Mr. Lamar's appointment to the Supreme Court particularly happy.

When you come to the life in Washington, I am quite firmly of the opinion that you would improve your chapters, which I found of really absorbing interest, by using your journal purely as material, telling your narrative from it. It distracts the reader. The lists of names, interesting as they are to the Washingtonian of any period, are not realized by the general reader. This getting away from the direct entries in your journal is of particular importance in the final chapters where one begins to feel Mr. Lamar's declining health. Your narration is so good, so much more interesting to the general reader than the quotations from your diary that I am quite convinced that you will add much to the value of the book by treating your diary purely as material. †

There is a change in the arrangement of the three last chapters which I would like to suggest. The one on personal traits interrupts your story. On page 381, you are in White Sulphur Springs, in August and early September. Your journal breaks, and you insert the chapter on personal traits. I think you destroy

from 2. I find some more from 17. High - low

a good deal of that delightful chapter as well as interrupt the holding power of your story by this arrangement. What I would suggest is that you make chapter XXII become XXI and chapter XXI on personal traits conclude your narrative. This will make considerable shifting of material, but I believe it will vastly improve the story. The tributes to him I think come in this last chapter.

Probably what this would mean would be that the three chapters be put into two. I hope I make myself clear on this point, dear Mrs. Lamar.

One thing that interested me was that in a narrative where there were so many threads, you have left almost none loose. There was just one that I would like personally to have seen tied up a little tighter, and that is a word as to how and when you received the news of the death of Archie Butts. I was looking for it. I might have skipped a page for I have had to read at intervals as I could steal an hour, but I think not.

I hope, dear Mrs. Lamar, that this frank letter will be of some little use to you. I feel so strongly that you have a fine, high minded, sweet story here that I should like to see it put into a form where it will reach the largest possible number of people.

And as for you, dear Lady, I have felt again and again in reading your manuscript tender admiration for your courage and your understanding.

Faithfully your friend,

P. S. I am now preparing to bring my History of the Standard Oil Co. up to date, and I have taken the liberty of having copied for my notes the reference that you make to Mr. Lamar's excellent opinion in the case of the U.S. v. Midwest Oil Co. This case is one that is of importance in connection with the Wyoming field and the Tea Pot Dome - scandal, I think it, I shall want to quote Mr. Lamar's opinion, and I dared copy out these pages knowing that your book will be out long before mine will, and that if I have them I shall not overlook the case. I hope you don't think that I am poaching.