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# Letter: Ida M. Tarbell to Clarinda P. Lamar, May 25, 1939

Tarbell, Ida M.

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May 25, 1939

Dear, dear Mrs. Lamar:

I have just come home from five weeks teaching - think of that - in my old College - Allegheny - in Meadville, Pennsylvania. I talked on the writing of biography illustrated by my experiences with Lincoln, and incidentally a good deal of Lincoln as I see him.

That is all to explain why your letter of May 13th has not had an earlier answer. I was so pleased to get it. I am flattered that you have read "All in the Day's Work" and found it interesting enough to go through it without "skipping a word." I never intended to write an autobiography; I stumbled into it as I have into so many things in my life. I had two or three good friends and an editor who believed in it much more than ever I did and it has been a great satisfaction that many friends like yourself have been good enough to read it and to write me.

I should have so much liked to have had a talk with you before I wrote what I did on the Washington experience. You and I think Agnes Nestor were my two mainstays in that Conference. You are right in what you say about Mrs. Catt. I do not think she was interested in the war or the committee. All her activities there had behind them the self-relation calculation of how much they might do for suffrage. I always felt this. Then Mrs. Catt believed so much in mechanism and I so little. With Dr. Anna I felt it was different. She was so human, as passionately devoted to suffrage as Mrs. Catt, more so I think, but it did not absorb her to the exclusion of human relations. I wish we could talk over these things.

I am so sorry to know that you are laid up. Diabetes and anemia are ugly enemies. The last three years I have suffered a good deal with the latter, also a miserable case of paralysis agitans in my left side which keeps me aching night and day.

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Shahm

And then I so dislike to see people looking and wondering. However, by going ahead I think much less of it.

Outside of that which the Doctors tell me will be a companion for life I am really getting stronger and better than I have been for at least three years. I had a bad time for a good many months, finally took to two hours of work a day and was practically all of the rest of the time in bed. Very aggravating because I could do so little of what I wanted to do. But to want to do things and resent the fact that you are not able to is certainly something.

You ask what I thought of Mrs. Wilson's book. I thought it very young and amateurish for the most part, but very interesting at the same time. I have not read it carefully but mean to do it. I really am eager to get at the whole Wilson episode, go over it. I am amazed more and more of how I live through things and know so little about them.

I think we are going to pull through in spite of Hitler and Mussolini. The world's problem is to get itself on a basis of give and take. Not so easy. I still pin my faith, so far as I have faith in mechanism, to a reformed League of Nations. I believe the world must come to it, and I rather think that it is working out. I do see some signs, however - the fact that we have kept to a point of having a League. Isn't that a sign that there is something in this demand for world unionism? I think so.

I think I shall have to go down to Atlanta and talk things over with you. I remember how we used to sit opposite one another for an occasional meal and talk and talk.

Thank you again for your fine letter,  
Mrs. Lamar. It does perk me up.

With much love

A devoted friend

Mrs. Clarinda P. Lamar  
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