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General Correspondence

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Letter: Ida M. Tarbell to James W. Kinnear, Jr., January 12, 1924

Tarbell, Ida M.

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January 12, 1924

My dear James Kinnear:

For six months now I have had in my file of unanswered letters one that you wrote me last summer. It was one that interested me very much and I have always intended to write you, but my time has been more than mortgaged for these last months with a piece of Lincoln work which had to be put through just so much a week and a book that had to be put through the press. Both are off my hands now, I am glad to say, and I am attacking neglected business, and - more important still - neglected friends.

I knew of course of the arrival of Miss Susanne Kinnear and meant to properly welcome her. I wanted to send her something that I love to send new babies - a little nursery picture, of which all the new mothers that I knew were particularly fond of; but, though I looked high and low, I could not find a copy of it. They tell me that it has gone out. So now that I am freer I am going to see if I can find something else for Susanne, which I hope her father and mother will like instead of the little picture.

In your letter you interested me very much by what you tell me of the way the men gave you a hand when you first went on to the open hearth job. I have always believed that there was much more of this spirit of help to the other man among workers than they receive credit for. As a matter of fact, most of us know very little of them and of their spirit; we take it for granted that if they do heavy and dirty work they cannot have much sense of other men. I have never believed it.

I suppose you are an 8-hour shift plant now, at least I hope so. If so, I wish that some time, at your convenience, you would give me your impressions of the change, how it was received by the men, how the men adapted themselves to it, whether or not you have seen anybody the worse for it in any way. I can conceive that there are workers to whom it would be perhaps a worse state, particularly at first.

I remember my visit with you in Pittsburgh last spring with a great deal of pleasure. I cannot tell you what a satisfaction it is to me to know that you are carrying on your father's work in the way that you are, and that all of you are rallying, as you are, to your mother's support and comfort. Please give my love to Mrs. Kinnear and little Susanne, as well as to your mother.