

Digital Image, 2013. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

I doubt if I should have withstood as well as I did the shock of this tragic break, its unspoken anxieties and regrets, if I had not about this time acquired an engrossing personal interest. I had started out to make a home for myself.

I had already made three major attempts to establish myself, first in Meadville, then in Paris, then in Washington - and all had failed. When in 1898 it became evident that if I were to remain on the McClure staff I must come to New York I was in no mood to adopt a new home town. New York might be my writing headquarters, but Titusville should be home. Finally I would return there I told myself. But Titusville was five hundred miles away. There were no airplanes in those days. The railroad journey was tedious and expensive, week-ending was impossible. I soon grew weary of the week-end makeshifts of a homeless person in a city. I wanted something of my own. And at last by a series of circumstances, purely fortuitous, I acquired forty acres and a little old house in Connecticut.

I had meant to let the land and the house run to seed if they wanted to. I had no stomach, or money, for a "place." I wanted something of my very own with no cares. Idle dream in a world busy in adding artificial cares to the load nature lays on our shoulders.