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Letter: Gordon Abbott to Ida M. Tarbell, February 25, 1932

Abbott, Gordon

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17 Court Street
Boston, Mass.

February 25, 1932

Dear Miss Tarbell:-

Thank you for your letter of the 19th with its enclosure - which straightens out my mind a good deal about what was evidently the real reason why Mr. Coffin started after Young. I have never heard of Hammond's book, so that the account of the trial is all new to me.

I think I told you that on the 10th of March, 1912 I went to bed with a very severe attack of what was called in those days rheumatic fever, and for three months I knew nothing of what was going on in the world. After that, I was convalescent but unable to walk, or, in fact, to turn over in bed for another two months, so that it was only about the 1st of September that I was really convalescent, and I didn't get back to the office until some time in October. I have forgotten the date at which Mr. Coffin made an official move to get Young, and it may very well have been during the time that I was laid up. In any event, I have no recollection of talking with him on the matter, except in a very general way after I got back to work.

It is also true that at that time I knew Young

rather slightly, because Mr. Tyler had a way of keeping in the background when he could. What I said to you about Young is my sincere opinion of him; but it is an opinion formed after twenty years of pretty constant contact with him, and I couldn't have expressed myself as clearly or strongly at the time that Mr. Coffin asked him to come into the General Electric organization.

It is also true that for some years before 1912 there was, for various reasons (into which it is useless now to go), no very cordial feeling between the Tyler office and the General Electric people, which may have kept, and undoubtedly did keep me from having a better knowledge of Young than I had.

Also, I had nothing to do with reorganization of electric matters until after I went on to the General Electric Board and Executive Committee in the Spring of 1894; but after that date I was up to my ears in that sort of thing for at least ten years.

Perhaps it would be better if you didn't quote me, because it is awkward to quote one friend about another in a sketch of the other's life; but, if you can work the

- 3 -

opinion in without mentioning my name, it is, as I have said above, all true and I think a just judgment.

With very kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

Gordon Abbott

*P.S. I would have written you before
but for a bad cold which laid
me up in bed for three days*

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York,
N. Y.