

Ida M. Tarbell  
120 East 19th St.  
New York City

The series of editorials on Our United States which Miss Tarbell is contributing to the Pictorial Review draw their substance not only or chiefly from written records, though these have been freely used when it came to theories, plans and figures, but from actual observations in the field <sup>into which</sup> ~~that~~ she takes us. Going out to look at things as they are has been always a favorite method of Miss Tarbell in gathering materials for her work. She likes to see for herself.

Twenty five years ago she made a tour of the industrial centers of the country, North of the Ohio and East of the Mississippi looking over the attempts then making to meet just criticisms of labor and the public directed at the conditions in factories, mines and mills. She examined the new model factories, industrial towns where cheap and pleasant homes were within the reach of workers - health and safety work - experiments in building up co-operation between management and labor - trends to the shorter day - the higher wage - greater security. This series of observations resulted in a volume published in 1917, called "New Ideals in Business."

It was <sup>a</sup> hopeful volume for from what she had seen Miss Tarbell was convinced that there were forces at work in

our industrial life which if they could be properly developed were bound to overcome many, if not all, of our most flagrant industrial evils. Her conclusion was that nothing could stifle these new ideals in industry, that the human heart and the human intelligence was with them, also human competition was forcing them.

In commenting on Our United States for the Pictorial Review particularly on the attitude of public and industry towards the Governments great social security program now under way Miss Tarbell is making a tour of observation similar to that she made so many years ago. She seeks to see for herself whether the ideals at work twenty five years ago have been lost or enlarged. Her observations convince her that as a matter of fact they are far more generally accepted now than then. Moreover, she finds many things included in industrial programs which twenty five years ago were hardly out of their shell. Such are old age and unemployment pensions, *better* training for work and life. She feels now as she did then that the task of industry and government is to continue to spread these sound and humanizing efforts.

Miss Tarbell thinks little is gained in the great work of making America what we have dreamed by belittling or discarding the efforts of any one class of society. These efforts may be streaked with stupidity, greed, fear, indifference to the effect on a neighbor of what you do providing it gives

you what you want, but there is no class of society, including all our great professions, as well as our industrial and financial classes in which these evils do not exist. They are human not class evils. Sound experiments whenever tried should be segregated and developed.

Miss Tarbell has had a long experience in studying documents as well as in observing things, both of which are essential in such comments as she is undertaking here. Her History of the Standard Oil Company was based entirely on documents though it took a vast amount of field work to unearth some of them. Her story of the making of our Tariff bills from the Civil War to the Dingley Bill of 1897 was a piece of documentary work aimed at demonstrating how high tariffs effect the masses where every penny counts and how entirely they leave ethical consideration out of their calculations.

While these two pieces of work were the most serious documentary studies Miss Tarbell has made, a Life of Lincoln undertaken in the '90's and on which she spent the best part of five years was based on field work.

Not a bad background for any attempt to comment on the United States as it is today, particularly on our vast and important program for social security.