

July twenty-seventh.

Dearest Miss Tarbell: It has been a wonderful experience, reading your autobiography. First of all it is a great book, beautifully written. Many of us read the lives of great men and women and I suppose they do leave an impression, but with you I have the feeling that you have taken the best part of those lives and incorporated them into your own, especially in your studies of Lincoln. And how fine and generous you are to all your associates! I know that John would have been very proud of your account of your association with him, and I am proud for him. I dare not often indulge myself in the luxury of living in the past for even tho time heals all wounds some scars will always ache and even tho I am a white-haired woman old enough to be the mother of the man whose picture is always near me I try to live in the future. But living in the past with you really brought me a kind of peace and more than ever the conviction that worthwhile personalities do carry on somehow, somewhere.

D.A. MacKinlay and his wife spend several months in Tucson every year and I see a lot of them, and Mac and I write to each other occasionally. In my last letter I told him how much I was enjoying your book and what a contrast I found between it and Edna Ferber's braggadocci (I don't guarantee the spelling of that word), and in his reply he says "You are so right in your comparison of the autobiographies of Ida M. and Edna Ferber. Miss Tarbell has the humility of great wisdom and all Edna has is the ego of a smart Yid who makes a lot of dough." Doesn't that sound like the old Mac?

Your young great-niece, Ella, is a very interesting and likable girl. She has lovely manners, and a delightful speaking voice. Sometimes I wonder if she isn't going to be the modern, stream-lined version of her great-aunt Ida. I have a gay young nephew who is a perfect extrovert. He feels really literary when he reads the Reader's Digest, and his usual speed is the

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Saturday Evening Post or Colliers. He has the use of the loveliest swimming pool in Arizona, on an estate about five miles from Tucson. He decided to give a swimming party last Sunday afternoon, and called Ella on the telephone to invite her. She very regretfully refused, giving as her reason that she had saved that time to read a book on the Russian Revolution which she had to finish before Monday morning. Reading a book on the Russian Revolution when she could be floating around a tree-shaded pool with the thermometer over a hundred in the shade sounded to him as if she were slightly demented, and he put up a howl of protest, even offering to fit up her book with a pair of water-wings, but she sweetly refused, and there flashed through my mind the picture of a tall, shy, fun-loving young Ida Tarbell at Allegheny College who would let nothing come between her and her goal, and I wondered and hoped.

So greetings, dear Miss Tarbell from my wheel-chair to your arm-chair, and let me tell you again what a privilege it has been to have you for a friend, and now I feel that I know you better than I ever have before.

Very affectionately,

Frank J. Siddall.