April 19, 1924

Miss Faye Taylor,
Rathmel, Pa.

My dear Miss Taylor:

I hope you will forgive my delay in replying to your note of March 27 - I have been quite ill and obliged in consequence to neglect my letters.

Now, you are askinga rather hard question when you ask me to send my biography. It is something that I really have never been able to put down on paper. Dates and certain facts you will find in "Who's Who in America"; to help you a little more I am sending you a copy of parts of a letter which I wrote last February in answer to a similar request. These quotations were written for an acquaintance in Meadville, Pa., who knew something about my life in college there, so as a preface to her letter, here is a paragraph.

As I think "Who's Who" tells you, my home was in Titusville, where I graduated in 1876 from the high school. I was eager to do what was not very common at that time for girls to do, go to college. As my tastes were all towards science at that time I had decided on Cornell, but family and church reasons turned me to Allegheny. My particular interest in Allegheny, from which I graduated in 1880, was naturally science, and I never had anything that interested me up to that time as the big binocular microscope, which I was allowed to use freely.

Here are the paragraphs from the letter. I hope, dear Miss Taylor, this will be something that you want.

After I left Meadville I spent two years teaching. I was preceptress of what was known as the Poland Union Seminary, in Poland, Ohio. It was not exactly an easy position for I had classes in four different languages besides English, all the sciences and mathematics up to and including a class in calculus. Just how I sandwiched them all in a day I don't remember; but I did it.

It was not the languages and calculus, however, that floored me - it was the classes in what they called Verb-Grammar and Percentage, composed of district school teachers who came three months every year and had been doing it for many years, to go through the Grammar and Arithmetic. They always used the same text books and knew them backward, while I didn't know them even forward. Some of the worst hours of my life were spent with those classes. It was not until I discovered

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that if you took them out of the text books and tackled them on principles with illustrations with which they were not familiar, that you had them on the hip. When I did find this out, I certainly had my revenge.

After that experience I went home for a year - illness in my family, and I went on the Chautauqua, where I remained for seven or eight years - a hard but useful apprenticeship in my profession, for while I went in without knowing anything at all about editing or publishing, I came out with a pretty good practical knowledge - enou at least to enable me to launch out for myself as a writer.

From Meadville I went, in 1890, to Paris for three years' study. I wanted to make a specialty of historical and biographical magazine writing. A subject in which I was particularly interested was French history. I wrote my first book in Paris in those years - a biographical study of Madame Roland, gathered largely from unpublished family sources.

I supported myself entirely by writing for American newspapers and magazines. It was not what you can call a luxurious support - it was pretty poor picking at times, but there was always the excitement of wondering whether you are going to be able to pay your rent the next month or not. When, however, a thing did succeed it was worth all the anxiety that it may have cost. And of course I wa learning many things which I needed to learn, while I found there th most interesting and stimulating intellectual associations of my lif I never before and never have had since anything quite like that French circle - frank, liberal and highly trained minds, interested in ideas and having a power in expressing them which quite took my breath away, trained as I had been.

From Paris I came back to New York and associated myself with McClure's Magazine, writing for Mr. McClure a short life of Napoleon Bonaparte - a book which has steadily sold, going into a new edition only this last year. Before this was done the editors had plunged me into collecting material on Lincoln's life, material which turned out so "scrappy" that I found myself obliged to write a life of Lincoln to utilize it. I found here the greatest subject that I have handled, one for which I have never lost relish and to which I always gladly turn when opportunity offers. Only last month I published a Lincoln book, called "In the Footsteps of the Lincolns the result of my latest researches.

I remained with the McClure's Magazine until 1907 when, with a group of my associates, we went out and bought the American Magazine, in which all my work for the next ten years appeared.

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including a study of the protective tariff since the Civil War and first hand studies on the more encouraging phases of industrial relations in this country.

Since 1916 I have been free of editorial connections and have given my time to writing books and articles. In 1916 I made my first experiment in a new trade - public speaking, and since that time I have been putting in four to six weeks every year of lyceum work, talking usually on industrial topics.

Sincerely yours,

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