Adams Centre N. Y. Oct 28th 1912

Dear Miss Tarbell.

The month's AMERICAN is before me with your picture, which I do not like. I prefer the one I have and which hangs in my memory gallery, alive with color and expression.

That picture tells me much, but I am not giving you a delination of your character, but simply asking you where that" William Johnston" came from, who wrote the article "Get What You Want." in the Interpreter's House

Do you remember my telling you of the unfortunate fact that the men who came here seemed to always fall under some magic spell, as if this were an enchanted place, and proceed to fall in love with some one?

Well, you know, I think, about this one, for I think I told you of a man fifteen years younger than myself, who appeared here in a celluloid collar, and an account of life lived in various more or less inferior positions.

I told you that I had never had such a sense of complete compre-hension and rest, as I experienced in the presecnce of this man.

It seemed perfectly absurd for me to admit to myself that a man with his apparent antecedents could make such a deep impression on my life, but really, I have seldom had anyone go out of my life with such regret as that which I felt when he vanished into the darkness. I think I told you that he looked in my eyes for some sign of reciprocity of the feeling he had for me, and, finding none, he made no plea whatever but simply left.

He did not write to me, or ask me to write to him.

I felt that this was the very highest indication of development that I had ever seen.

It put him away up in my estimation.

I felt sure that he would never write first, and I have not tried to hunt him up, for I am not at all sure that there would not be more pain than happiness in having our paths once more cross each other. Pain to him, I mean.

Well! And now here comes this article, which I think

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may have been written by him, as his name is William Johnston, and those are his ideas.

When we were together, language was unnecessary.

I had never, and he had never, met one with whom there was such complete understanding and harmony.

Under these circumstances, and because I hesitate to write to him thro the magazine, fearing to disturb him in his self imposed seclusion, I would ask you to tell me whether the address of the man who wrote that article is Andover Maine.

If it is, it is our dear old Will.

I have been thinking a lot about you lately, and wanting to write to you. I got an awful dose when I was in New York, of Conventionality, and of Aristocracy.

I have no doubt I needed to see the other side.

I know I am deficient, but really, Gautama is the kind of leader I admire, because he simply put his foot down on caste, and insisted that one man was as gssd as another, and the priests were chosen from any walk of life, instead of waitthing to be born into the priesthood.

It seems to me that " Aristocracy " is a name which is used to conceal a tremendous amount of rudeness and selfishness.

If one is " to the manor born" then one may do anything.

I prefer the "noblesse oblige" principle, but I notice that the first named habits of action, at least in this country, are more ob-served than the last.

I hate to have people say" I would not meet him SOCIALLY" That is, one would meet him at his home, or on some common ground of meeting, but would not invite him into a charmed circle, because he might be guilty of some gaucherie.

Supposing that he was? If he had all kinds of brain, and all kinds of a good heart and pure soul, what difference if he used the wrong fork first?

To me, there is so much more in matter, than there is in form.

Of course it is fine to see both, but in this state of our national childhood, it is haraly to be expected, and besides, it seems to me that I would rather live where we sacrifice a little of the refinements which only the few may have, in order to wait for the many to catch up.

O, I am sick, sick, sick, of this pretence to early environment

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which what I call the Parvenu shows!
I was taking luncheon with a literary man, who has married a wealthy wife. He was originally a poor Western boy.
During the luncheon he was asked if he dressed for dinner.
He replied that he did, because he felt so much more at home in his claw hammer, as it had become such a second nature to him to dress for dinner.
Now I suppose I am hard hearted, but I doubt that very much.
I have some reason to believe that he would feel more at home in his shirt sleeves, tipped back against the wall.
Well, why not say so?
A friend of mine was disgusted with an old man with whom she used to go and play checkers, because he said
" The happiest days of my life were when I used to wear overalls"

That same friend wonders where I pick up my geniuses among my friends
Why, I am a geode hunter. These little gray stones which look so unpromising, crack open, under my little geologist's metaphorical hammer, and reveal sparkling gems.
The man whose happiest days were spent in overalls, and who had the simple straightforward sincerity to say so, gave a plain indication of being a valuable geode. My friend missed out, and, as the man is dead, I unfortunately cannot crack open the geode. And how homesick he must have been for someone just as democratic as I!
For some reason or other, I find myself chatting to you as to an old friend. As no one ever draws such confidences without having magnetic power, and also the knowledge of what use to make of what comes, I have no hesitation whatever in chatting to you in perfect freedom.

That William Johnston was one of those who came in answer to the AMERICAN article, and another young man from Chicago has just gone, who has experienced a great awakening here. who also is an American boy

This younk man was thirty three, and had never embraced a girl that I know of, because he had been brought up in the idea that a virtuous young man should respect every girl as he would that another should respect his sister.
His mother died when he was seventeen, and he always tried to live as she would have him.

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He had a most affectionate nature, and as the expression of it was suddenly corked up, and as the very well spring of a man's vigor is dependent on the expression normally of himself, he dried all up. He lost interest in life entirely.
I do not claim that this was all due to this corking up of his spontaneous love nature, because I cannot prove it, but I feel that it must have had an influence.
I told him that the best thing in the world for him would be to pet and hug and love someone. The young lady who was here was apparently his other half. I saw that, at once.
Of course he fell in love with her, and started out on that same plan of sitting on the lid.
I told him to "put it out", to be NATURAL, for once in his life ---- that it was no worse to hug than to want to, and that he was in safe hands, not only as far as the girl was concerned, but also as far as he himself was concerned.

It took a lot of talk to get him to see it
He said his sister would not at all approve of such unconventionality but I persevered, and at length had the happiness of seeing him getting all the petting his poor hungry nature was starving for.
It was like the Nile, flowing thro the desert and making every thing blossom.
When he went away, I stroked his cheeks, and then he threw his arms around me, with a perfectly divine look in his eyes, and embraced me exactly as he would have done his mother.
Why, if that fellow had never done another thing, all the time he was here, but give me that one embrace, he would have done much toward removing the intangible something which keeps him fom success.
I am simply counting the days, until I hear from his sister, to know whether she considers him improved.
I tell you, Love is what people want in this world, and that is what we try to give them here. We try to have a cordial homelike atmosphere, where everyone who comes feels that he is at once an integral part of the HOME, and so far, it has seemed to work -- only in the case of Will, it worked a little too strong.
We do not want them to fall in love with US, but it seems when the love nature at last feels itself free, it goes around like a morning glory vine, seeking something. if it is even an old

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" beldame" as I love to shock my friends by calling myself.
or the young lady here, who, as I take pains to inform everyone is just about the same as engaged.
Say, it does not do a bit of good!

Well, you see I am in a position where I have to cut my path.
No one else that I know of, has these ideas,
That is, no one who has a strictly moral tone to the community,
and that, I insist upon keeping.
I am not at all puritanical, and I do not judge anyone, but if people want anything different from the continent life, they will have to go elsewhere for it, for one must draw the line somewhere and this place would not stand at all for what I want to do, if there were any sneaking necessary.

I have concluded, since my visit to New York, that I am a hopeless case. I cannot submit to the "metes and bounds" of civilization if it means what it seemed to me to mean there.
I accept no civilization, nor will I consort with anyone who represents any civilization which does not have as its first principle, the idea of the unity of humanity, independent of class station, wealth or education.

I am terribly afraid I am a crank. For that reason, I am very glad of Gautama and Whitman.

You need not answer this effusion. I know you are busy—
Please regard as confidential what I said about the dressing for dinner, and also the inner confidences regarding Will.

Yours sincerely, and glad I know you

Ellen E. de Graff

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