THE NATIONAL ARTS CLUB
15 Gramercy Park
New York
N. Y.

April 23, '31.

Miss Ida Tarbell,
120 East 19th St.,
New York City.
Dear Miss Tarbell,

At the request of Mr. Henry Goddard Leach, I am enclosing his preliminary report on the Soul of America Contest. He has been quite accessible, and we have had several interesting interviews concerning the choice of the prize winning book. Mr. Leach hopes that the sending on of his report will save the other judges time and trouble in getting in touch with him.

As you note, he agrees with me that "The Biography of an American" is decidedly the best of the lot. As for myself, I believe in the book, and am willing to fight for it. May I add that those concerned in the Contest are extremely anxious that an award be made if at all possible.

"The Biography of an American," and "In Defense of To-morrow" are in the hands of Mr. White. From there, they go to Mary Austin, who will, in turn, return them to me. Should you care to read them, I shall get them to you at the earliest opportunity.

I should like, very much, to have a personal talk with you about the Contest. I know that you are quite busy, and in consideration of this, it may be that the luncheon hour would be the best time for such an interview. If you will, I should like you to have lunch with me some day next week, at which time we can talk over some phases of the award about which it is difficult to write. I'll telephone you the first of the week, and I hope that you can see me.

Sincerely,

Jane Scales

Jane Scales

P.S.
If I can be of further service to you in any way, do not hesitate to call upon me.
J.S.

Digital Images, 2010. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

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Preliminary report on the Soul of America Contest.

Miss Scales has done such a conscientious job reading the exhibits, and her analyses are so convincing that I see no reason for going behind her conclusions. No one manuscript comes through with distinct emphasis as compelling the award of a prize.

The outstanding manuscript is "The Biography of an American." If the other judges feel that this novelette is worthy of a prize, I am disposed to cast my vote in its favor. The book is publishable, though rather limited in its appeal to New England. It might sell as many as three thousand copies. Granted all that Miss Scales says about this exhibit, it is too epic in tone for the material presented. Though finished in chapters, the book, as a whole, is still an outline. The writing is arresting, colorful, at times brilliant, but to many critics will seem over-written.

The best essay submitted appears to be "In Defense of To-Morrow." This is my ideal of what a doctor's dissertation on literature should be, but usually is not. The manuscript is a philosophic digest of a collective range of domestic and foreign commentary on America. It should be published. As collateral reading for colleges, "In Defense of To-morrow" might reach an edition of two thousand copies. I hope the author will submit the chapters on "Religion and Culture" to a magazine.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry Goddard Leach -
by
Jane Scales

April 22, 1931.

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