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April 1, 1901.

My dear Sir:

I am sending you by to-day's mail, a copy of the April number of Mc Clure's Magazine containing an article on "The Disbanding of the Confederate Army." In gathering the material for this article I have become deeply interested in the condition in which the disbanding Confederates found themselves at the close of the war, and in their struggles to start in life and to build up the South again. I am anxious to go on with my study of this situation and to do a more extended piece of work than it was possible to do in the limits of a single magazine paper. I realize that the only source of the information which I want is in individuals, and I have determined to ask certain persons, whose addresses I have received, from their friends for the most part, to write out for me a long or short account, as they may see fit, of their struggles at the close of the war. The points which I should like to have covered are suggested in the magazine article. I want to know particularly the condition in which you found your own home, the extent of the ravages in your town or district, the condition of your neighbors, what opportunity there was to do business, and by what process you were able to get started comfortably again in life.

If you are willing, my dear Sir, to take the trouble to cover these points for me, I shall be very grateful and shall hope to use the material in a way that will be satisfactory to yourself. My whole object, of course, is to call attention more forcibly than has ever been done, to the fine heroism of the Southerner in building up the South after the war.

Hoping to hear from you at your convenience, I am,

Very truly yours,

Ida M. Tarbell

Mr. William W. Patterson,
Box 245,
Staunton, Va.

P. S. Your name was given to me by Mr. J. J. Williamson.

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