Atlanta Ga.
1218 Springdale Road
July 12

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Some time ago I wrote a book which included a sketch of McClure's Magazine as you and I knew it about 1900. (Don't be suspicious; I shan't send you the MS) I was stumped on the spelling of Jacacci, and decided, if the book should work out, to write you for it. Recently your book came out and in it was the name correctly spelled.

But it was not for that alone that I took the book home to read. I knew you would have something to say about McClure's and I wasn't disappointed. It brought back a very vivid memory of my youth in New York and in all respects, aside from my personal interest, gave me more pleasure than any book I have read for years.

You don't remember me of course. I had the ambitious title of assistant art editor at $10 a week. I recall a vast stack of Tisset's Life of Christ electrotypes. These illustrations seemed to me to be uninspired stuff, which was doubtless the reason they were never published in their entirety. The following extract from my book may set the scene for that period when I humbly collaborated with you and the others in the making of the magazine:

"Our competitors said that McClure's was bedlam. Most of the staff, like the owner of the magazine, were Westerners, and like the magazine were young and aggressive. No one walked leisurely from desk to desk in the conservative New York manner. You bounded and leaped. Orders were given sharply and quickly excuted. The only quiet and deliberate person in the office was Ida M. Tarbell, a gracious and sympathetic lady. (Strange I never went to you for sympathy; I needed it at that time) Jack London came around occasionally; he was one of our discoveries. I recall the

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butcher-like figure of Castaigne the French illustrator, also Christy. I am also under the impression that we were nursing O. Henry. Boyden was my immediate boss, Jacacci was the art editor.

"I soon realized that nothing is more dreary than editorial routine. I was little more than a billing clerk. Boyden bore with me and tried his be best to train me. But before a week had gone by I knew I was doomed. All that saved me was the sudden departure of McClure and Jacacci for Europe on one of their foraging expeditions. Changes were not made during their absence. I was at least safe until their return.

"McClure's had a newspaper syndicate. One Marshall, former war correspondent, was its editor. He was a breezy, happy-go-lucky newspaperman, easy to approach. I showed him clippings of my Evening Post articles and stories I had contributed to the paper back home. He scanned them casually and handed them back to me without comment. I asked him if he could use a similar New York feature.

"'Something about Broadway and the crowds,' I suggested; ' and the theaters and the queer and interesting spots in the city.'"

He threw up his hands.

'"Oh, my God, no," he cried. 'My dear boy, the people out in the sticks are fed up on the Bright-Lights-of-Broadway and the Gotham Gossip stuff. It's out of date. Our papers wouldn't touch it.'

"I took his word for it. How was I to know that editors were fallible? How was Marshall to know that O. O. McIntyre had stolen my thunder, or soon would?

"McClure and Jacacci returned, bringing with them the manuscript of Kipling's Kim, for which I was told we paid the staggering sum of $25,000 for the serial rights. Things began to hum in the office; they

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always did when S. S. came to town. Some of my associates spoke vaguely of leaving soon to accept other offers. I believed the axe was falling. It was.

"'Boy,' Jacucci called to me one morning. He called us all 'boy', never by our names. I bounded into his office. 'Boy', he continued in his Spanish accent, 'you will have to find another place. You've been half starved in New York until it has affected your brain. Take my advice; go back to the farm and build yourself up.'"

The photograph of yourself sitting at your desk is fine; it is exactly as I recall you. I enjoyed the rest of your book even more than the McClure portion. Your account of the semipioneer days of the middle west with its Rockefellers and Flaglers is better than any history with its conglomeration of dates and dull documents. It was a most vital period, and I am glad you set it down in perspective so humanly.

What surprised me most in the book was Cleveland's letters. I never imagined he was so human. As a Southerner and a Democrat I always believed he was a great man. Until I read your letters I never thought of him as human. Pity he couldn't have sent these letters to congress. All the great presidents—Lincoln, Jefferson, and in lesser degrees the Roosevelts and Wilson—have been writing men and their fames rests largely on their writing.

It must be a satisfaction to you to be able to look back on a life so successful and useful and—most remarkable of all—to be still in harness. My congratulations to you on your all-round achievement !

Sincerely
Hal Steed
Hal Steed

Assistant art editor (for 3 months)

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