John H. Clarke
El Cortez Hotel
San Diego, California

September 29, 1937

Miss Ida M. Tarbell
120 East Nineteenth Street
New York City

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Your good letter of September 17th came in due course and I delayed answer until I might talk with Mr. William F. Maag, Jr., of Youngstown and the Vindicator, who, as chance would have it, was coming to make his first visit to me in California. I also sent for and have carefully read the article in the Vindicator to which you referred me.

When I first read the article I was convinced that I did not write it, chiefly because of one or two statements of fact which I could not recall as having known. My conclusion was that Mr. William Maag must have written it, but he tells me that he was in college at the time and certainly did not write it. Upon re-reading, and having in mind that memories are not very trustworthy in old men, I concluded that there was not any person connected with the Vindicator who could have written it except myself, and it so nearly expresses my present recollection of the public opinion respecting Mr. Walker that I feel increasingly sure of it as I reflect upon the subject.

I am happy to say that Mr. Maag agrees with me that the general opinion, in the community, so far as Mr. Walker is now remembered is favorable to him and is, in substance, as you write of him.

I like your article very much indeed. It is, of course, finely phrased and your restraint in writing upon a subject upon which you must feel very strongly is admirable -- moderation is always more persuasive than extreme statement.

The expression in your letter that you do not remember McKinley's speech of 1881 mildly amuses me. The Major, as someone has said of Webster, was a living figure of false pretense because no man could be as wise as he looked. It stirs the memory in me that for several years it was my function, although considerably younger than McKinley, to answer his speeches in a public address, which I recall was not a very difficult task and pleased my audiences. I do not recall that he ever attempted to reply to my criticisms, which were very pointed, of his tariff and general financial positions, as well as of his Philippine policy.

Mark Hanna was equally reticent when I challenged him to a debate in a campaign in which we were opposing candidates for the Senate. He discreetly said that he was not a trained

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debator and that I was, and that he would not meet me -- I remember the Detroit Free Press said that Mark was a sly old dog and preferred to let his money do his talking rather than to meet me in debate.

All this is from a long-dead past and you will forgive an old man for becoming garrulous. Suffice it to say that it has been a pleasure to me to read your article and that I am very sure it not only tells the truth of the incident which was more important once than it is now, but that it is a fine discharge of a duty which you owe to persons who, as you say, were your good friends. Expressions of gratitude for kindness rendered are rare when those we praise are beyond the possibility of reciprocation.

Hoping that all goes well with you and yours, and that you will remember me cordially to Miss Walker when you write, I am

Sincerely yours,

John H. Clarke

I assume you do not want the copy returned. It need of course not be used publicly being private correspondence.

JHC

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