4515 University Station
Tucson, Arizona

February 27, 1940

Dear Mrs. McCullough:

Your letter of February 13 has found me in Arizona where I am trying to pick up a little more strength than I left New York with. There is marvellous air and sunshine. It is a beautiful spot, and the liveliest place that you can imagine for those who want society -- but I am simply loafing and seeing only my friends.

Now, about Harriet Blackstone -- I am glad you are getting on so well. You certainly have done a thorough piece of preliminary investigation. I am afraid it is a mistake to ask me to write something for the front of the book. I knew her so little, though, as I have told you, she made so strong an impression on me.

Enclosed you will find a few notes. Possibly you may suggest how they could be improved. Possibly you might ask me a question or two that would bring out something more. At any rate, you will know whether, out of this, you can make anything which is worth a place in your book.

With all good wishes,

Affectionately yours,

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library

Harriet Blackstone

I knew her very little so far as the usual measures for knowing people go. It was only three or four years before her death that I first came in contact with her. We both were taking meals irregularly in the dining room of the National Arts Club, and the first time I laid eyes on her I knew there was an unusual person.

I think we began nodding to each other across the room and stopping at ~~the tables~~ each other's tables for a few moments conversation. It seemed natural for us to come together. I do not know whether she knew my name or my profession. I did not know hers. It was a very cheerful acquaintance to start with. We laughed together, told each other jokes.

Then gradually there came more revealing talks. Before I had ever seen a picture of hers, she sat down in desperation one day at my table for a moment. "You don't know what a termagant I am. I slashed a canvas this morning, shook my fist at it and said, 'So you won't come! You won't come! I will make you!' You see I am a wicked person."

I did not know at first what she meant by 'So you won't come!' But the first picture of hers hung at an exhibit at the Club made me understand. More plainly than in any picture I had ever looked at, there was something trying to get out of that canvas. It seemed to me so clear

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