

THE EMPORIA GAZETTE

W. A. WHITE, EDITOR AND OWNER
W. L. WHITE, ASSOCIATE EDITOR
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EMPORIA, KANSAS

May 11, 1931.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Mr. White is on a ranch at Jemez Springs, New Mexico taking a complete rest. He is nearly a hundred miles from the railroad and communication even by phone is difficult and he has no stenographer. For several years writing by hand has been difficult and he has asked me to address each of his associates who are passing on the manuscripts for the National Arts Contest telling them how he feels about the manuscripts he has read. They are "The Biography of An American", "The Soul of America", and "The Challenge of Tomorrow". He does not like at all "The Biography of An American"; not that it is not a good piece of work, for it is. He is delighted with it. But he feels strongly that it in no remote way fulfills the requirements set for the prize. It is provincial. It is not related to modern industrial America and her problems; being the study of a rural figure tackling problems of the Nineteenth Century and entirely ignoring the realities of this century. The whole book he feels is as out of key with today's America as the Bigelow Papers or the Hoosier School Master. Indeed he feels so strongly opposed to this manuscript as a winner that he asks me to say specifically that if it is accepted he would like to ask the Committee for the privilege of stating in its award that it is made over his protest and to allow him a few words to explain why he protests.

#2--Miss Tarbell.

He feels that either "The Challenge of Tomorrow" or "The Soul of America" is better suited to the purposes of the award. He feels that "The Soul of America" is pretty academic but that it does aim directly at the problem raised by the terms of the award; even if the aim misses the target. He feels that "The Challenge of Tomorrow" is a straight away answer, an intelligent attempt to state the case for America optimistically. Moreover he feels that an optimistic answer seems to be required by the rules under which the manuscripts were submitted as he recalls the rules. He feels that "The Challenge of Tomorrow" strikes a clear, new, important note and will satisfy all the requirements of the Arts Club offer. Which does not mean he would object to "The Soul of America" or to some other manuscript in the lot which he has not read. But he asks me to urge the other judges to read carefully "The Challenge of Tomorrow" and to consider it as one of the important contestants.

Mr. White will be either in Emporia or in Colorado by mid-May and will be able to answer then any replies to this letter which may come.

I know he is particularly anxious to have your opinion of the "Challenge" book and I shall forward your letter to him immediately if you will address it to him at Emporia.

Miss Ida Tarbell,
120 East 19th St.,
New York, N.Y.

Truly yours,

Minnie Yearout

Secretary.