National Arts Club 1928 [illegible]

Note:

Miss Tarbell"s talk on the Mussolini Regime is based on observations made in Italy in the Summer of 1926. She spent four months going up and down the country looking into the conditions of cities and towns, watching the people at work and play and sounding out their opinions. Her curiosity and interest were excited at first by what the Italians called the Economic War, an attempt to restore their money to something like its value before the War to curb speculation, to find substitues for coal and iron ore and oil which are not found in Italy, to increase production, particularly of necessities like wheat, to export more and import less, to put an end to unemployment, idleness, begging and parasites. The struggle had been dramatised until hundreds of thousands felt themselves soldiers in a war to make Italy again a great nation.

After the Economic War Miss Tarbell found Italy's attempt to change her government from one based on political theories and elections to one based on the actual productive capacity of individuals most significant. The country is attempting to work out what is called a Corporate State but the old machinery is being used until substitues have been invented that enable the leaders to discard it.

These undertakings Miss Tarbell found of absorbing interest. She realized they were largely inspired and pushed forward by the Head of the Government, the Dictator Mussolini and to a study of him she gave particular attention, interviewing many people both friends and enemies, studying his methods of work and talking with him personally. She looked into the suppression of press and the right of free assembly. She analyses the possibilities of permanent success and of future failure in the regime, balancing the good and the evil in it. She points out the wide difference between the political inheritance, experiences and points of view of the Italian and the American. She finds in the recent Italian experience a

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warning of dangers which lie in the way of all parliamentary government and therefore a thing to be studied thoroughly and dispassionately by those who like herself, believe that in a democracy we have the only hope of government which will ultimately give to all people full opportunities to develop talents and character.

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