

OFFICE OF
THE EDITOR



8 ARLINGTON STREET
BOSTON, MASS.

The Atlantic Monthly

October 18, 1937.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

I cannot remember any manuscript of recent years that has given us as much concern as your autobiography. The early chapters, I admit, we found rather slow going, even though it was clear that the apprenticeship had well prepared you for the work to come. But as soon as Ida's horizon begins to broaden, from the moment she begins to appraise mankind with the eyes of an editor, the Recollections begin to move with a pace and objective thoughtfulness very engaging to the reader. Ida's four-square integrity, her willingness to fight doggedly for what she wants, her capacity to earn the respect of men like Frank Munsey, Steffens, Ray Stannard Baker, McClure, and Henry Rogers -- these qualities make themselves felt in the writing and in their development they bring the reader to a friendly understanding of those causes which you loved to champion.

I will be frank with you when I say that your style is not a nimble style, that your characterizations, in their avoidance of criticism sometimes evoke a rather pale likeness. And finally, I do miss in your recital the alleviating touch of humor -- or rather, I find so little of it that I wish there were more. But more prevailing than any of these deterrents was the conviction which grew upon us as we experimented, -- the conviction that your book was all of one piece and that it would be next to impossible to isolate four portions of it in such a way as to give each the emphasis and carry-over value which one looks for in a major serial. This, you will agree, is criticism of an extrinsic nature, which has nothing whatever to do with the success of your book. Yet in the end, and most regretfully, it was the decisive factor so far as the Atlantic was concerned.

I am returning your manuscript to you. We much appreciate your allowing us to hold it for so long a consideration.

Faithfully yours,

Lawson Weeks

Miss Ida Tarbell
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