ASHLEY H. THORNDIKE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK

January 17, 1923.

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

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Would you care to write a volume which would be one in a series on Civilization in the United States?

The project for this series has been developed by several of our younger historical scholars--Professor Carl Becker of Cornell, Professor Schlesinger of Iowa, and Professor Fox of Columbia. They have persuaded me to serve with them as one of the general editors. The series will consist of twelve volumes, discussing the course of civilization from the early settlements up to the present time. Each volume is to be the work of an individual. The plan is to minimize political history and to deal rather with economic, social, and intellectual affairs. We hope that the books will show how the people lived, how they secured a surplus, and what contributions they made from this surplus to the development of art, government, ideas, etc.

I am enclosing a rough outline of the last seven volumes of the series as planned. This will be sufficient to suggest the general scope and nature of the work. It may also suggest the way in which we hope the multitude of details can be combined in a single volume to emphasize one main theme.

Would you care to write either Volume IX, on Big Business, or Volume XI, which might perhaps be called "Progressivism" ? It would be necessary to have the manuscript some time in 1925, probably by the end of the summer. The publishers, The Macmillan Company, who are undertaking the work, expect to pay each author $1,000 flat for the volume. If you cared to undertake the volume, I daresay they would be willing to offer better terms, but I do not think there is a great deal of money in this scheme for any one. What we are looking for is not so much a large popular sale as the establishment of new ideals and new methods in the writing of American history. The books will be written, for the most part, by historical specialists, but we believe it is possible to combine thorough knowledge of the period with an interesting popular presentation.

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It seems to us editors that you are eminently qualified to write one of the two volumes, if you have the time or interest to undertake the work. I shall, of course, be glad to give any further information that you care for, and I very much hope that we can persuade you to give us your assistance.

Very truly yours,

Ashley H. Thorndike

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