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RYERSON PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

July 26, 1913.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,

Care The American Magazine,

381 Fourth Av., New York City,

Dear Miss Tarbell:

I have your good letter of July 23 together with Rabbi Braun's paper which was enclosed.

It seems to me that you ought to write an article on the philosophy of shoes. This would appeal to an immense number of people, and it has never received the consideration that it deserves as is indicated by the budgets of wage workers which we have been looking at. Besides the economic aspects of this subject it might also be treated from more or less of a psychological point of view. Miss Pollard says that it is a favorite pastime of hers when waiting for a car, to watch the feet of people approaching, and then try to size them up from their shoes before seeing the rest of them. I am sure that there is a large field for psychological investigation of feet, even though we usually associate psychology with the other end of our bodies.

With reference to my own practice concerning shoes, I have been using exclusively for many years, long before I came to Grand Rapids, the Crawford shoe. I was attracted to this shoe at first because of the fact that the first day I put a new shoe on I can walk the whole day without discomfort, which has never happened to me with any other make. I started in by getting a \$3.50 pair, but

the prices have been raised with the increase in the cost of material, and in the last few years I get a \$4, \$4.50, or a \$5 shoe. The \$5 shoe is usually patent leather, where one gets less for his money in service than any other kind. These can rarely be half-soled, but the other leathers stand for re-soleing and re-heeling usually two, and sometimes three times. In this way my shoe bill, including repairs, rarely exceeds \$7 a year. I think, however, that most women do not like soles as heavy as in a man's shoe, and when shoes are half-soled they are usually heavier than when they are new. Personally I find a heavier sole easier for walking, and I can walk further and with greater ease than with a thin sole. This is particularly true for mountain climbing and things of that sort. I have been with a number of persons who have been all used up for a long tramp over rough country, simply because of the fact that the soles of their shoes were too light.

And now about the photograph, I have consulted Mrs. Ranck with reference to it, and she feels about the same as I do. We both feel immensely flattered with the idea that you should think it worth while to have it for use in the magazine in the way you suggest. Nevertheless in all my library work (and this is the attitude of nearly all the librarians of the country) the constant effort has been to keep before the public the institution rather than the individual, with my own personality in the background as far as possible. This is not always possible. Nevertheless from my observation of librarians and their work, as well as school men, and others at the head of institutions, it seems to me that the public is likely to get the wrong attitude toward what such men are trying to do if the personality of the individual at the head of an institution is too much in the spotlight. I have in mind right now a school man whose splendid work is being hindered by the great featuring

in the newspapers of the man rather than his institution.

I think that I am not unduly sensitive about publicity either personal, or any other kind. I am always interested in the personal side of other people, how they work, what they do, etc., and I read such things about people every day. Nevertheless I do feel that one who is at the head of an institution and especially an institution that represents such varied elements in the community as a library, must consider most carefully the possible effect of everything of this sort in connection with the work he is trying to do through his institution.

I do not know that I have made myself clear to you in this matter. I fully appreciate your point of view, for I know that the outside public is almost always interested in an individual more than it is in an institution; but after all so far as the people of Grand Rapids are concerned it is their library they are most interested in, in the long run, rather than the librarian who happens to be at the head of it for the time being, and I can't help but feel that the possible effect of such an article on Grand Rapids is the thing I should keep most in mind. I believe you can understand and appreciate my point of view and feeling with reference to it. I can assure you that there is no one in the whole world I should prefer ^{to} do that sort of thing ^{to} ~~than~~ you yourself.

I am enclosing herewith another reprint which I find on my desk which I forgot to send the other day, and also a copy of Mr. Whitworth's last annual report which we are distributing widely through the city. Also an editorial from the News and one from the Press.

Hoping that you will be in Grand Rapids soon again when we can discuss the thousand other things we did not get to last time,

I am, as ever,
L.N.J.

Very sincerely yours,

Samuel H. Penick