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HARPER & BROTHERS
PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

ESTABLISHED
1817

CABLE ADDRESS: HARPSAM
TELEPHONE: ASHLAND 4-1900

49 EAST 33RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y.

January 22, 1935

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
Bethel,
Connecticut.

My dear Ida Tarbell:

I have asked the Committee to let me write you, but I hope you will consider this official as well as friendly. Under the chairmanship of Nicholas Murray Butler, the formation of a committee has been undertaken for a purpose which seems singularly stimulating and helpful in a time of unrest. Mark Twain was born November 30, 1835, and this year brings the opportunity to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the author of "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn."

In times of prosperity this would have been a joyous occasion. Falling as it does in a period of uncertainty, the anniversary assumes an even deeper significance. There is the possibility of widespread usefulness in celebrating at this time the life of one who has become to so great a degree a symbol of the American spirit and tradition.

Your own position in American life has made those who are organizing the Centennial feel that you, with a few other men and women, would be glad to join with Dr. Butler in forming the membership of the national Mark Twain Centennial Committee. This simple name has been chosen advisedly to maintain the informal nature of the memorial program. Commemorative observances under the program, it is hoped, will be scattered over the entire year, and use will be made of numerous resources both here and abroad to give expression to as many sides as possible of American life.

You may be entirely sure that the demands upon your time will be slight. The life and activities of the Committee are limited to the memorial year 1935. Its charter prohibits any form of money raising or the soliciting of contributions for any purpose whatsoever. The memorial program is financed, so far as its modest needs require, by the Mark Twain Estate, represented on the Committee by two trustees and a counsel and, naturally, with the assistance and cooperation of Clara Clemens Gabrilowitsch, Mark Twain's only surviving daughter, and Albert Bigelow Paine, his biographer and literary executor.

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With this very brief outline before you, we hope that you will find nothing to prevent your greatly desired participation. If it is convenient for you to telephone a telegram to the Western Union at Bethel, would you mind doing that, charges to be paid here. You may be very sure that I shall eagerly await it.

With all continuing personal good wishes, I am

Faithfully,

William H. Briggs

William H. Briggs/sk

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