

John H. Clarke
El Cortez Hotel
San Diego, California

August 31, 1937

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East Nineteenth Street,
New York City.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Replying to your good letter of August 20th. I shall be glad to read the article which you have written concerning Robert Walker, and am asking the Vindicator to send me the copy of August 13, 1899 if it is available, and if they have no copy other than the office files that they have the article copied and sent to me.

I am rather surprised to have you say that you think it was publicly believed that Mr. Walker's failure was a dishonest one. I am perfectly certain that so far as I am personally concerned I never thought such a thing of Mr. Walker and, nearly as I can recall, the general impression at Youngstown at the time of the failure was that Mr. Walker, probably encouraged by McKinley, went into the tin plate business with the expectation then general that the McKinley tariff act would make those rich who got into the business promptly. Beyond this the feeling was, as I recall it, that Mr. Walker was ^{irresponsible} ~~irresponsible~~ in such business, and of course McKinley was without experience in any kind of business, and that their experiment was under-capitalized and unfortunately managed so that the competition of stronger and better managed concerns rendered failure inevitable.

I moved to Cleveland in 1897, but I have always retained my interest in the Vindicator and occasionally, after going to Cleveland, I wrote articles especially for the Sunday edition so that it is quite possible that I ~~did~~ wrote the article to which you refer. However, I shall write you after seeing it.

I recall that McKinley's financial condition was the subject of a good deal of discussion, particularly prior to his nomination for President. Indeed, I remember that some newspaper, I carry it one of the New York papers, but it may have been the Vindicator, said that it was the first time in our history that an insolvent man had been a candidate for President. I remember also quite distinctly that it was the general understanding that Myron T. Herrick, afterward governor, and Mr. Hanna in some manner raised a fund to pay McKinley's personal debts so that it could not truthfully be charged that he was insolvent.

As I have said, I shall be glad to read the article you have written, and to be of any service in my power toward

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clearing up what you say is still an impression in that community that Mr. Walker was dishonestly involved in the failure.

Hoping that you keep well, and that all goes well with you, I am

Sincerely yours,

John H. Clarke