

February 15, 1927.

My dear Mark Sullivan:

I am ashamed that your letter of the 14th should have found me before I had answered your earlier one in regard to the school books that I studied. I am amazed to learn how little I know about those books. There was the McGuffey Reader and the Greenleaf Arithmetic and the important Webster's spelling book and a whole series of something by Murray, readers and grammars, I think. There probably were others but they do not come back to me. One book that I remember with pleasure was Colton's Common School Geography. It had many woodcuts, very good ones too they must have been, for they fixed in my mind the determination to see certain of those places before I died. Versuvius, for one and the Natural Bridge for another. Four years ago when I was on a Lincoln pilgrimage in the Shenandoah Valley I went a hundred miles out of my way to see the Natural Bridge, just because of that picture in Colton's Geography. I never saw Versuvius until last summer and it was not half as thrilling as the picture itself was to me.

You asked about the American history I studied. I cannot remember. As a matter of fact it seems to me I had very little history in either high school or college. The history I studied made little or no impression upon me with the exception of one book and that was Smith's History of Rome; that I read and re-read. Perhaps the reason the school histories made so little impression is there were in my father's library certain books that I never got tired of reading. One was Ridpath's "History of the United States from Aboriginal Times". "Aboriginal times" was one of the most impressive phrases I had ever come across. Then there was Chamber's "Information for the People", to which I was devoted, and a remarkable big book on the Geography of the World, by whom I do not know. It must have dated back to the '30s at least and had the quaint woodcuts of the time. Those books rather made the school histories that I studied insignificant. The most impressive high school book was Hart's Rhetoric. That really did get hold of me, not its principles but its quotations.

As to the school, the school was always the teacher to me. When I first went to school it was in a pioneer oil community, Rouseville, the scene of the first great oil development in Pennsylvania. There was no public school so the pioneers joined forces and started a school with a remarkable woman at the head, one that made a deep impression upon me, and I had a succession of

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teachers after that who won my respect and I know now how well they deserved it for their intelligence, their devotion, their wise handling of a young generation, on the whole as disquieting as the one we have now. I graduated in our high schools in Titusville and then went into Allegheny College, a nearby institution, small, scholarly and just opening its doors to women. There were only five of us when I went in. There was something of the crusader spirit in this choice. I was all for co-education and wanted to make sure that this conservative old college never went back on the decision that it had taken with much groaning to let in women. I have written a long letter, dear Mr. Sullivan and I remember so little that is definite. Possibly if I should examine my mind more carefully things would come but just now I do not seem to have time for that.

And now, as to the letter of the 14th. Of course I shall be glad to look over the proofs of the trust portion of your monumental and justly celebrated history. It will not be a burden at all but an interest and an advantage. I am afraid there will be a little delay. I am leaving for the West Friday to be gone probably three weeks. If you can send them so they reach me before I leave Friday evening I will try to sandwich them in as I go. If you are not ready you better send them when they are and my secretary will forward them to me.

I think it is fine that you are taking hold of the contemporary history. No one is better equipped.

With all good wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Mark Sullivan

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