

12(2)
January 21, 1933

Dear Rices:

I hope you will forgive me for having neglected so long your letters, but as usual things have been rather thick in my little world and it seemed to me that I was neglecting most of the things I most wanted to do. Certainly one of them was to write you.

I knew you would want to know about S. S. and would be quite frank in the matter of helping out. Your whole life is spent in helping out people and it was perhaps cruel of me to suggest that you come in on this which really is our job here at home. I felt sorry I had written you, because I realized how pained you are to have your resources so drained that you cannot do anything and everything under the sun that people ask you to do.

As to the fund it is provided for the year so Mr. Phillips tells me. Whether we will attempt to do anything beyond this year will depend upon whether or not the younger generation of McClures will succeed in placing themselves again.

has I saw S. S. the other day for the first time in some three years I think. He called me up. Columbia College Historical Department have invited him to speak there next week and invited me to introduce him. The magazine is to be the theme. I had him come to lunch with me and it was wonderful to see the jest with which he was reviewing the beginning of McClures. He revived a hundred, yes a thousand memories for me of those early days. They were so full of vitality and hope and laughter, those days. Anbody who thinks that we sat around with our brows screwed up trying to reform the world is far away from the truth. What we were after was, as Mr. McClure always insisted, interesting reading matter and if it contributed to the general good so much the better. At least we held that one of the great needs of the world was cheerful literature which is in my judgment still one of the great needs of the world.

S. S. began our conversation by insisting that his health was never better and he looked like wrath, I thought - so thin. He went on most interestingly through half our lunch

and then his obsessions began to come to the top - Hattie. He carries certain letters with him, the most ardent of love letters, written some of them at the time when he was his worst. He has canonized her, but canonization now as always allows for any vagaries of his fancy, I imagine.

He was pathetic beyond anything in speaking of the separation from his old associates and said as he spoke of it, "It couldn't have been otherwise. I was impossible." His elapses into self-abnegation are heart-breaking. Well, my dears, what a stupendous human tragedy.

I am so thankful that in this general calamity you are going to be able to save your home. Don't let that go. Things are going to right themselves someday - slowly. I think myself that everything will be on an entirely different basis of values - pre-war. There is going to be a great shifting. But I don't know that that matters so much. All that matters is that we should take it on the chin and smile.

I am still able to keep my corner on Nineteenth Street and the farm and all that means. In the Pecos Valley Scott and I have a little ranch in New Mexico. I am learning something about the farmer. Prices certainly have smashed our careful estimate into bits, but Scott is plucky. He has four fine children coming on. The schools are good out that way and I thank the Lord that they are out of the city.

There is so much I would like to say and cannot. In the first place there is my thanks for the "Causes of War." It is an interesting collection. I am glad to see my old friend, Steed, in it, but after all said and done the cause of war is this strange creature - man. He is born belligerent, the center of a little personal world that he fights for from the day he arrives. Civilize him, that is to the point of keeping himself under control and being more interested in making a decent person of himself than he is in what his neighbors do. Well, I don't know if that is the recipe or not, but it can be discussed when the subject is the causes of war. Just at the moment I have bleak moments when I see, as I have since 1914, the Orient combined with Russia in a holy communistic war coming down on

us in floods and wiping out leagues, Empire Buildings, and Rockefeller Centers, exterminating all that ever had a remote connection with us as we are. But I am not feeding this gloom. I am getting to the country just as often as I can, reading Detective stories when I am too tired to labor and loving always my friends and wishing always that I could see the Rices in particular.

Affectionately