(Dictated.

35 Newbury St., Boston.
November 2, 1905.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

You and I have spoken so frankly of Miss Lawton, and we both agree so entirely in recognizing her possibilities, and believing her to be the Real Thing, that I cannot help writing to you to tell you how dismayed I am at this distressing state of things between her and her managers at the Castle Square. As I observe the situation, I do not know whether I am more astounded or amused at the unnecessariness of all the trouble, and pain, and anxiety, which exists -- not only for poor Miss

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Lawton, but for her managers too. As I look at it, it seems a real tempest in a teapot! I am sure you will not think that I am flippant, or that I do not take seriously the very obvious suffering that Miss Lawton is enduring; but I am only thunderstruck, at such a state of things being evolved from so small and unimportant a beginning.

I was not in Boston when Miss Lawton arrived in September and began rehearsing, & I was a little startled when one or another of her ingenuous remarks were repeated to me. She said, for instance, "that Mrs. Fisk's conception of "Tess" was entirely wrong; and

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set ~~this thing~~ the matter all right." I know that was how I felt as I watched Miss Lawton in "Tess". I was irritated at the crudities, and impressed by the power, and my one feeling was, "if that child will only practise a while, on bread-and-butter details, it will be all right." So far, you see, it all looked so simple; ~~and~~ but when Mr. Ames and Mr. Deland pointed ~~this~~ this small matter out to Miss Lawton, her response to their criticism left the two gentlemen absolutely thunderstruck. It was not as if they doubted Miss Lawton's ability, or as if they were in any way anxious to make any radical change in their plans for the winter. It was the most

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simple, and honest, and commonplace suggestion that she should study her English grammar,—so to speak. The proposition that they made was, that she should play seconds two or three times; and then start in again with a great part. I wish now that I had ventured to say something like this to Miss Lawton myself; but when I went to see her, (which I could not do until her last night in Boston, because she was playing twice a day, and of course it would not have been right to interrupt her mornings in which she needed rest;) but when I went to see her, and began, tentatively, to say that I had not cared

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to make arrangements with her,—that she should choose such a part (which should be suitable for a Castle Square audience), take plenty of time for study, have good rehearsals, and then play the part for a week; that with this, she should receive her salary in full for the whole season, and then be free to make any other engagements that she wished. I must say that when I was told of this arrangement, it struck me as fair; but I was bewildered by the fact that Miss Lawton refused to play seconds. It was, to my mind, exactly as if I should refuse to perfect my English if an editor found fault with it. But this proposition plainly offended and angered Miss

a bad word in ink.)

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Lawton. The next step was truly ill-advised, for it put the whole affair upon a fighting basis, which is greatly to be regretted. Mr. Clemens told Mr. Ames that there was no compromise to be considered, and that the matter should be "settled in the courts." Of course this put an entirely different aspect upon the whole affair. Mr. Ames and Mr. Deland had not been thinking of their legal rights. Had they thought of their legal rights, they could, by the terms of the contract which Miss Lawton signed last spring, have broken off their business relations by a two-weeks notice, which would have been very far from

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including their offer to give her her entire salary, and produce her in some play that she might choose. But I am sure you will see how quickly this threat changed their point of view. If Miss Lawton desired to proceed legally in the settlement of her affairs, they would meet her in the same way. They informed Mr. Clemens that they would be very glad to settle the matter in the courts, and they at once wrote to Miss Lawton, sending her a notification saying that they would avail themselves of the terms of the contract and terminate their business relations.

This is the story up to today.

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Really, as I tell it over to you, I am, as I said in the beginning, amazed to think how unnecessary it all is. Why that girl could not, with good humor, have accepted the criticisms of people who were most anxious that she should develop into what they believed she was capable of being, a great actress, I cannot understand! As I look back now upon my own literary work, and think how grateful I was at the criticism of my editors, I am simply incapable of understanding Miss Lawton's point of view. I have not the slightest idea how matters are coming out. In the first place, I have not seen Miss Lawton - & in the second place, I am, of course, as

(I have lost the last dictated page - & cannot add

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for her work in "Tess" as much as I had in "Magda", she kept me at arm's length by saying, with intense decision, that her ~~work~~ Tess was "the most superb thing she had ever done." I am sure you will realize how words of this kind check any friendly suggestion or criticism. When she alluded to her work as superb, I felt that the spirit of the artist, which must be humble, was lacking; and I held my tongue. But from that time the snowball has grown bigger and bigger. The managers urged Miss Lawton to consider playing seconds. Miss Lawton replied that she would "not play seconds to any person, ~~upon any stage~~ at this stage." At last

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the managers were obliged to say ~~responded~~ that her performance of "Tess" had been so unsatisfactory that, in justice to their enterprise, they dared not entrust her with an important part until she had perfected herself in the small technicalities, without which an important part is made ridiculous. This state of things dragged on, as you know, for some weeks; it seemed to be a case of the irresistible body and the immovable body. At last a proposition was made from the managers that, as Miss Lawton would not consider playing seconds, and as she was extremely anxious to show her work in an important part to various managers who might wish

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~~that hers was the right one.~~ One smiles of course, at the impulsiveness of a girl who will say a thing like that, and does not credit it to conceit, (which I confess it at first suggests;) still, she did say several things of that kind, which, had they been said to me by another person whose impetuosity I did not understand, would, I think, have prejudiced me against her on the ground of conceit. However, that was a small matter. The rehearsing proceeded; and then came the play. I was not in Boston for the first performances, but the general feeling in regard to them was that Miss Lawton did not show the finish

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and the charm of her work in "Magda". Nobody questioned for a moment her great ability,—I think some of us would have said her genius. But it did not have a chance to express itself, because her acting was so cumbered by technical defects. I think I felt when I saw her play, as you might feel if one of your contributors sent you a noble and beautiful essay, which was marred by occasional lapses into bad English. I think your feeling would be, "Well, this is very provoking; but, happily, it is easily remedied; the nobility and the beauty of the essay ~~remain~~ are undoubted;— the contributor must merely improve her English; a few lessons in grammar will

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