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ELLIS D. ROBB
717 FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Aug 22. 1932

Miss Tarbell:

Prof Drewry has an interesting book review in the Atlanta Journal every Monday. Maybe the enclosed will be of interest to you. I hope so-hence bother you with it.

Hope your success continues.

Yours Sincerely

Ellis D. Robb

Digital Images, 2010. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

New Book News—By John E. Drewry

Professor of Journalism, the University of Georgia

OWEN D. YOUNG is the subject of an important and attractive new biography by Ida M. Tarbell (Macmillan). The theme of the book is suggested by the sub-title, "A New Type of Industrial Leader."

Mr. Young, as described by Miss Tarbell, stands in definite contrast to the "highly individualistic" industrial leader of the past century. His point of view and methods are not those of the executive who held that "business is a private affair and should be protected from public gaze and public regulation."

Commenting upon the inter-relation of the man and his times, Miss Tarbell writes: "As American industry has expanded, leaders increasingly responsive to new economic conditions and new social demands have emerged. In the last ten years we have seen the coming of one who has outstripped all predecessors in his clear understanding of industrial trends, his effort to move with them and to interpret them, not only to those within his own industry but to those without. The leader is Owen D. Young, since 1922 the chairman of the board of the General Electric Company."

Miss Tarbell does not attempt to conceal her admiration for the subject of her book. "I have never been one who felt that the praise of him you believe to be a good man is a shame to a writer, any more than I have felt the condemnation of a man you believe evil is a particular virtue in a writer," she observes. "A biographer's business is to set down as faithfully as he can what he finds and that I have tried to do in writing this sketch. . . ."

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Mr. Young's career, as described by the author, has been one of steady advancement based upon sound and serious preparation for responsibilities of increasing importance. Even as a youth his ability and ambition set him apart from his associates. "Almost from the start he was marked by his teachers," Miss Tarbell reports. "They were not accustomed to having pupils absorb what they had to give them—soaking it in and asking for more—and this child seemed to be of that sort. Soon they were saying about town that Mrs. Young's little boy wasn't quite like other children. He liked books better. Not quite normal!"

As a student at St. Lawrence University and in the law school of Boston University, Mr. Young continued to stand out. One of his undergraduate colleagues is quoted as saying that "he was modest in speech and in action to the point of repression, but gave the impression of inner power, self-possession, mental alertness, a trifle awkward physically, reserved, but . . . master of himself and his surroundings."

In describing an attractive opportunity which presented itself to Mr. Young following his graduation from law school, Miss Tarbell observes: "There seems never to have been a point in his life as a student when an older man did not appear who sensed . . . that here was unusual talent; unusual steadiness of purpose combined with a trustworthiness that men of experience knew well enough to be uncommon in the world."

* * *

More than being a great industrial leader and expert in the adjustment of international problems, Mr. Young is depicted as a good farmer and a potential educator.

He is not, however, a gentleman farmer" or an "agriculturalist." To quote his neighbors, "he is a darn good farmer." This "plow boy of Van Hornesville," moreover, can buy cattle without having to take along some one to make sure that he does not get cheated, notes the author.

On more than one occasion Mr. Young has been discussed as an excellent potential college president. A recent address of his St. Lawrence University has been widely quoted for its succinct and provocative summary of the aims of higher education. These are the questions that this new type of industrial leader would put to the college graduates of the land:

"Have you enlarged your knowledge of obligations and increased your capacity to perform them? Have you developed your intuitions and made more sensitive your emotions? Have you discovered your mental aptitude? Have you learned enough about the machinery of society and history to enable you to apply your gifts effectively? Have you acquired adequate skill in communication with others?"

More important, however, than anything he has ever said or done is Owen D. Young, the man, thinks Miss Tarbell, who pictures him as "highly developed mentally, emotionally, socially—a man able to make thoughtful decisions and to take the responsibility of them—a trustworthy man, tolerant, watchful lest he be trapped by success into destroying himself."

Digital Images, 2010. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1894-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library