Personal.

I4I Washington St. Hempstead, N.Y. January 29th I9I0/.

Dear Miss Tarbell,

I sent you an article founded on our knowledge of Miss Anna C. Dickinson, a few months ago, and received a kindly reply advising a magazine article, founded on our acquaintance.
Since then, I have found her. She is much the same, barring what might be called, an obsession of hate against the newspapers, because they did not take her part when she was seized and put in an asylum, she says, by politicians, on the eve of an election, to prevent that tongue of hers (based on "inside" knowledge) throwing a bomb-shell into the campaign. The facts are, the papers believed her insane, and her actions strengthened that belief. She came to New York, and in a disconnected speech, attacked John Wanamaker, Whitelaw Reed, Grover Cleveland & others so libelously, that no newspaper dared to give a report on it. She may have been, as she says, "fighting with her back to a wall, naked, and with a double-edged sword"- but it was a crazy thing to do, and she had with her a man she supposed was a friend, Dr Seward of the Goshen institution, who said, in her highly wrought nervous condition she was "not responsible". Later she sued the Associated Press for calling her "insane," and won her case. Since then, and on account of the vigorously expressed hatred directed by her against every paper but The Sun and Times, she has been "tabu", and you know what that means. General Butler used to say that "so long as the papers pounded him he knew he was doing something in the world. The only thing he would dread would be their ceasing to pay him attentions. Then he would be down and out."
She came here, feeling that perhaps our acquaintance might help her to the one object now of her life- getting a book published she is writing on Personal Liberty in America. She is a forcible writer, but her work needs vigorous editing- which she would not stand for- the sentences are long and involved, and the subject matter full of personalities that no

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publisher would print, even with the abundant proof she furnishes for every assertion. But that I felt, was up to a publisher to decide.
For example, there is the old matter of Horace Greeley be ing crowded off the Tribune. That is ventilated. Since then, Mr Reid ha s become an ambassador and an attack upon him would be more than unwise.
In the heyday of Anna's bloom, and days of eloquence, Mr Reid, and Mr Hay, were among her suitors. She has letters from them, discussing phases of national matters, interspersed with sentiment. There are letters from Colfax, and Henry Wilson. I have urged her vainly to take up some personal recollections, collected when the war was on, allow them to be carefully edited, and take her place again among the worlds best-known women. The book she wants to put forth now is too personal, too abusive.
However, my daughter, Edith, who is on The Times staff, tried to open a door for her. It took some time, because everywhere she encountered some unpleasant experience emanating from Anna herself. Publishers said "If she will come out, on some public question of the day, say suffrage, and give us evidence, for a few months, that she is a normal woman, able to hold in check that temper of hers, and restore her reputation, so as to make a book from her pen desirable, we will send some one to discuss the matter of her book, but we promise nothing. Further, her attitude to the press must change for where would her book be without circulation through reviews and notices in the newspapers?" Edith finally had an order, for an interview, on Miss Dickinson's views on the present aspect of suffrage. The paper, Times, is conservative, and not very anxious to enlarge its present scope of the discussion, but the man high up who granted the request happened to be on The Herald at the time of Anna's trouble. It was a concession on his part, because he doubted her ability to recognise an opportunity to reenter the present world, and take an honored part in its doings. She could, well enough, but would she? Here was her chance. "You can have all the space you can make interesting on the subject," he promised.

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It was also arranged that if all things worked right, the dramatic critic should have a talk with her about her play-righting. You know this meant free-advertising for her. And what she did was to walk out, and slam the door shut, in a rage, when she heard the name of the authority that granted the opportunity. Now the newspapers were commencing to crawl to her feet. It is so stupid, and she is so bright, in other respects. Wendell Phillips summing up of the girl who was a favorite of his, spoken in our home, comes back. "She is a natural orator, as was her father. A genius in verbal expression, with the rare imagination of a genius. Educated, her wonderful mental powers trained, her volcanic temper controlled, her powers of hate and vituperation curbed, the whole woman bitted by the Reason, that is in her, but not uppermost, she could prove Americas most remarkable woman. Beginning her career in her teens, flattered, spoiled by statesmen in a way that fostered conceits, giving rein to moods and tempers, it looks as if she would wreck all her possibilities of greatness ".

There is no question of her troubles or wrongs, but they are all connected with her being a law unto herself. If you wish to know about her, my daughter Edith, who wrote you yesterday, would be glad to furnish you with the information. We want to see her restored to a place of usefulness, but are at a loss. When asked about the suffrage question in which she was formerly keenly interested, she replied, "What do I care about it?" She knows so much, in many ways, and has such a mine of "stuff" we want her to use, for her own benefit, but it seems hopeless. Please consider that anything we may know of her bright side, at your service.

Sincerely Yours.

(Mrs) Agnes D. Robinson.

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