

December 6th, 1939.

Dear Miss Tarbell -

Thank you so much for what you said in your letter about "Ridgeways". I hope you will let me hear from you again what you think about it after you've read it. I hope very much that you'll like it.

"Judge-Papa", as a small grandson named him, did consider "galloping through a book a reprehensible habit". I've had him say to me more than once, "You couldn't possibly have digested that book, reading it that way!" But I must confess that, like you, I find numbers of books nowadays encourage such a habit. I'm afraid I'm a shameless skipper in certain volumes.

Would you think I was very presumptuous if I asked you to have tea with me some time? I live in a walk-up apartment, one flight after a high stoop, and I should adore it if you would. You could set your own afternoon, any one that suited you, after Christmas. I didn't tell you the other day, considering the fact that you've written a life of Napoleon, that I've always had a sort of yen for him. I don't know just why. I translated his love letters to Josephine from a French volume once and then didn't try to get them published, because I didn't think anybody would be particularly interested. They were published later, translated by somebody else. I have a console table that belonged to the Empress Josephine, and several good prints of the period. There are hardly any other pictures in my living-room. And I once discovered a plagiarized life of him that had been written by taking paragraphs and sentences out of other lives and patching them together without changing as much as a comma, and no quotation marks! I got it withdrawn, finally. It is my only claim to fame! Such as it is. But the "Times" gave the book a full page review and the "Herald-Tribune" half a page, without either reviewer finding out that it was plagiarized all the way through. The "author" used two full chapters from Lord Rosebery's "Napoleon-the Last Phase". It's quite a curiosity and you might like to see it. You see, I'm trying to bribe ^{you} to come to tea with me. But if you don't go out to tea, why, that's that. But I would love to have you!

My inscription in "Ridgeways" wasn't anywhere near nice enough. I still feel deeply in your debt for a delightful afternoon. And I hope with all my heart to see you again.

Sincerely,

Frances B. Fox