

Nov. - Dec. 1728
Women's Problems Old and New
Discussed by Ida M. Tarbell

Life isn't interesting to a woman who is idle," remarked Miss Ida Tarbell at Whiting Hall last evening in her first general talk to college women. The subject of her discussion had been announced as "Vocational Training for College Women." Continuing concerning the married woman without employment outside her home, Mrs. Tarbell said:

"A woman who marries and does nothing becomes pitiful. She has no interest nor breadth in life. She seeks employment in order to preserve her self-respect."

Miss Tarbell repudiated the idea that women as economic possibilities are anything new in the world. She reminded her audience that women have always done their share of the world's work, stating:

"The world has always needed the activity and helping hand of the women. In the old-fashioned home, we made a very substantial economic contribution to her home. She raised many of her own vegetables, and prepared all of her bread-stuffs, even making her own yeast. She also manufactured the garments worn by her entire family. In those days women were busy and extremely useful."

"But nowadays, there is no need for women to do things which they once did, and they have thrown themselves into other activities in order to do their part in adjusting the inequalities of wealth which are so great."

Here, the famous woman lecturer and writer who has come to spend six weeks at Knox college, gave a very well-thought-out analysis of the present day situation when she said:

"I don't believe it is possible for the married couple of today to get what they want in life unless the wife works. The high standard of living which the two set for themselves demands that the wife work."

Miss Tarbell emphasized the fact that compared to the age when she set out to make her contribution to

the world's work, the age of today presents few problems to the would-be economic contributor. Only a very small percentage of the gainful occupations listed in the latest census were tabulated as unavailable to women. The field of her endeavor is wide. She may pick and choose.

The very interesting speaker who termed herself as one of the early crusaders for women's careers, did not omit from her intimate discussion at Whiting Hall a warning to those who were listening. She advised:

"Whatever it is that you want to do, and most of you have some 'hunch' within you, what that is, do it! But don't think that you must go to New York before your career begins. Do that which you long to do, near your own home first. Because, although you scarcely realize it, perhaps the family, the town in which you have grown, and the group of friends who have come up with you, are all your valuable economic assets, without whom you may feel strangely lost."

And Miss Tarbell told of the many girls who come to New York unprepared for the career which they have adopted, without money or friends who are wealthy and influential enough, you will probably find a place—but if you have neither—that is tragic."

Miss Tarbell was invited by Knox college to be the first to lecture for the William K. Honnold Lecturship course, which has recently been established here. She is considered absolute authority on economic business conditions in America and is the author of many well-known works, among which are:

"Life of Abraham Lincoln," "The Business of Being a Woman," and "The Growth of Big Business in American."

Her presence at Whiting Hall, at Seymour Library, and at Old Main, is a distinction of which all who are connected with Knox are most proud.