

Lambert Island
Penetang, Ontario, August 4, 1924

Dear Harry,

Weren't we the "innocents"—the way we used to be so sure a war simply couldn't happen? I remember perfectly that for a whole week after the war started, while the Germans were marching thru Belgium, I was still maintaining to Orv and Griff, who was with us all that summer, that there would surely be enough sane people in all the governments to prevent a real war. Orv and Griff would say "But the war is actually started". So I am not a bit surprised to find that I expressed the same opinion to you. But it makes me realize anew that I don't always know what I am so sure about!

I am so glad you are doing something about the book. My own opinion is that some publisher will want it—if he doesn't, well, let me know and I'll tell him what he is!—But, seriously, I am so glad to have you try something of that sort. There are several reasons—one of which is that we surely need a book or two, now and then, that has some sensible, unaffected ideas; another reason is that I should like to see you get more general recognition for what you do. But I was just saying to Orv, this very morning, that I think you are really much appreciated as it is.

I haven't read much of Mencken and so oughtn't to express an opinion, I suppose. But I think Walter Page was pretty nearly right in his reply to the woman who accused him of rejecting the article she offered to the World's Work without reading it through. She had posted together some sheets to see if he would open them to read through. She found those pages untouched and wrote a saucy letter to say that she had suspected that editors were in the habit of rejecting articles unread. He replied "Madam, when I get hold of a bad egg in the morning, I do not have to eat it all to find out that it is bad!" That is [the] way I feel about Mencken. I have never read one single thing of his that wasn't vulgar, in some way or other; smarty, and full of ignorance about the things he was talking about. He may understand New York and the general trend of opinion and character of New Yorkers but he doesn't know any other part of the country at all and is as ridiculous, in his way, as the most unsophisticated country bumpkin is, in his way. His social ideas be those of his crowd of "intellectuals". They are not the same as the pretended ideas of those boys in Chicago but the one is the other varied to the extreme. I have thought that the Chicago performance is the perfect flower of the trend of the modern ideas, particularly of such as Mencken, Theodore Dreiser, Lewisohn and so on. Those who consider themselves intellectually superior are a law to themselves and have a right to get whatever they can for themselves at whatever cost to others. I don't know how much judgement is related to intellect. Certainly that bunch has very ordinary judgment. I am not surprised that Ed Howe is not offended with Mencken. He has some of the same characteristics but has many redeeming qualities and a lot of good sense. I like that Monthly of his, though I am sometimes shocked and sometimes perfectly outraged by his comments! I don't object to his kind especially. But all I have to say is that there may be two sides of the story as to his wife's deficiencies. He makes some remarkable remarks about women.

Oh, about the Sunday Magazine. I never opened the five days' collection of Stars and Times until yesterday. I saw some mention of it in the first one I glanced at so I

immediately looked for it. I haven't really read it yet so I don't know what is in it, more than a glance told me. I always like Edna Ferber and I was pleased to see her occupying the first page. The cover page is certainly exquisite and the whole thing is lovely from the standpoint of "looks". I am lazy and do not read much but I shall look over the Magazine more carefully. By the way, have you read Edna Ferber's "So Big"? I haven't, yet, but several people have told me it is very good. I think she is one of our best writers.

I was interested in the party which Ollie gave, "with slight cooperation from us". I can imagine it all. I hope Ollie will continue to keep you straight on the kind of people you invite. As for "ladies that smoke", I think they may as well smoke as men but I must say I don't particularly like it. But everyone to his own taste.

I understand perfectly your feeling about going out anywhere. But, of course, we both know that we can't change a thing by refusing to accept any pleasure we may be able to have. I think, that underneath, it [is] a feeling that you would be so glad to do without any thing, if you could only bring back what you have lost. I know exactly what that is. I am so glad you and Henry are having some people come in. You can do a lot of that—just one or two, often—after Henry is gone. I think myself that six is the ideal number of a dinner party, unless you go in for ten or more. Eight are hard to manage—perhaps for the reason you give.

I have never enjoyed a summer up here so much as this one—for several reasons. I am feeling very well and there is not hot weather and I fear I like to have a "slave"—as John McMahon (of the Liberal Club in N.Y.) calls all people who work for others. I'm not near through but we are going to Penetang this afternoon unexpectedly and I must write another letter or two. Maybe we could give Henry something nice for travelling?

As always,

Katharine