4160 Broadway, New York.
Dec. 19, 1911.

Dear Miss Farbell:

Many, many thanks for your good letter which I keenly enjoyed. Here was I shortling over Miss Addams's mistaken zeal over stage children, as I was quick to think it, whereas all I know about stage children is that we still point with pride out in our town to the house where Maud Adams was born and still throw out our chests as we tell how she was carried onto the stage for her debut upon a large platter when she was only a few months old. We are proud of both the theater where she was carried on and of her, and I had a little cousin once who used to dance on her bed before the bureau looking glass, and have never such happy times as x when she skirted in the amateur shows in the Meeting House. She was a child actor every time she got a chance until she grew up and now she's a leading lady. And from those two single instances I set my head and heart against Miss Addams.

And no doubt that was very wrong of me, as you have set your head and heart very much the other way for no doubt perfectly good reason. The earliest thing I remember was a baby boy was finding a little red wagon on Christmas morning in my stocking, so to speak, and being informed that it was from Aunt Susan." Aunt Susan, a sister of my grand-mother, was one of Brigham Young's many wives. I used to pull my little red wagon up to her house and play down the hall — it was the Lion house— while
various "aunts" would appear in various doorways, as there were some 10 wives of Brigham Young in the building, each in her own suite of rooms. In after years I knew these women as the most aged of women, and one by one wrote many of their obituaries as they died and a newspaper reporter could thereby gain an assignment.

May I therefore intrude a letter on you? It is an im-pertinence to take your time, or ask you to give it to the theme, but it is a theme which has kept our country in turmoil for fifty years and I would rather see it adjusted, since I came out of its environment, than to see almost any other human thing happen. I have studied it from every angle I could bring my mind to comprehend, always hoping to find some key to the situation that would spell peace instead of the old and very keen warfare. I feel to-day that the keenest need is that more people in positions like yourself shall know more about the situation on which the off-hand conclusion is so obviously what yours is that it is almost impossible even to get such a person to look further or retain an open mind past the point of first impressions.

The result is that the people out west, Mormon and Gentile alike, are constantly doing things that appear incomprehensible to people who judge matters there from afar. At one time 4,000 Mormons were in jail—now you see I am starting on my story, and you must read the rest at your extreme leisure if at all, and I won't feel bad if you do not do so then.

These 4,000 Mormons were in jail for having more than one wife. That was in 1889. Now whatever questions may be in dispute as to polygamy the fact that the Mormon families were large families is not one of those questions. Gentiles who had fought the Mormons faced the condition where large families were providerless and fatherless and babies and children were suffering with intense keenness. And there was no question as to the devotion with which the Mormon father—he walked much of the old Patriarchal family—labor to rear and support his children.
For the most part the Mormon families were scattered about town in homes apart, one for each wife and her children. These homes from which the bread winner had been snatched for a prison sentence, created a situation which touched deeply every heart in the land. And when the Mormon leaders in 1890 came to camp—when they issued the Manifesto agreeing to prohibit any further plural marriages within the borders of the United States, there was a regular wave of Christian compassion swept over the land. Judge Goodwin, who had been the most stern in denouncing the Mormon marriage scheme, and insisting on the severe prison sentences, was first to appeal for clemency for those fathers or families who were in prison. There joined him practically all of the prosecuting officers—the judges who had sent them there—the district attorneys who had prosecuted them.

The 4,000 men were turned out. That isn't an exact statement as the thing was done gradually, and some sentences were up before the pardon board acted, and all that but 4,000 families in all felt the polygamy problem, to be exact. If those men rejoined their families they would be subject to prosecution under the law. Yet sentiment had softened; it was the almost unanimous agreement that if polygamous marriages had been cut out at the point of the ceremony, it would be best for all concerned if the old families should be allowed to work out their own destinies without further molestation. And hence events took a certain course. All the great Gentile leaders fostered that course, although a radical few among the Gentiles, mostly clergymen who made a business of Mormon bating, objected.

As things worked along there came to Utah a Hearst newspaper reporter, bent on a yellow assignment. He dug up the old families, found the grey old men of the old warfare and swore out warrants. There was the law on the books; here was a warrant, what was to be done? The men were arrested and the people turned out to pay their nominal fines en masse. Now the legislature, Gentiles who knew the situation, taking a leading part, drew up a law confining the right to complain in such cases—drawing the law to fit these old cases—so that only an aggrieved wife, a neighbor, or kinfolk could complain. YET THAT BILL CREATED A STORM THAT WAS NATION-WIDE. The Governor had to veto it, although 95 per cent of the Non-Mormons in Utah probably would have stood for it. The Hearst reporter kept up his prosecutions until Hearst tired of it and then he became a detective for the Presbyterian church. His "dope" was what fed all four of the magazines that recently broke out on the Mormon issue, and his close associates started the biggest silver service fuss. His name is Charles Mostyn Owen. So you see how hard it is to prevent, on the one hand, the people of Utah from doing what is the sane and sensible thing there, and to prevent, on the other hand, eastern folks acting on first conclusions from first impressions, from raising a real furor over what is done.
And another phase of this same situation is that it is utterly impossible for one who has seen much of polygamy as the Mormons knew it, to get into his mind the idea conveyed by "prostitute" and similar words of characterization. Fortunately Judge Powers, who was sent to Utah to send Mormons to jail, and did so in great number, and Frank B. Stephenson, who acted as prosecuting attorney, covered this whole matter fully at the Smoot Investigation, so that a conclusion that may seem Mormonistic from me, is from them certainly not that. Their conclusions and mine are identical, and I think normal to the informed population. I first came into contact with vice as a soldier in San Francisco on my way to the Philippines. A jaded, hollow-cheeked, horrible-appearing woman came up to a group of us who were touring the free dance halls. And contrasting her condition, as a victim of sordid life—of the kind of life you conclude Brigham Young stood for, you have in his case, a group of women who lived to happy nineties, and went to their graves with the generations of their offspring smiling back up from the years toward them. You remember that each one was a good deal of a sahit in her ministrations to the poor around her, that she was always well cared for, and that those of the wives who had no children of their own had families adopted for them so that they might know the joys of rearing little ones.

The fact is that the Mormons in Utah struck a problem harder than any other people in this country struck, I firmly believe. You know they were hurled out of Missouri and Illinois when all the country beyond was known as "The Great American Desert." They had to make camp on this desert, in what is now Iowa, send outposts forward to plant crops further on, and shift the whole body as rapidly as possible beyond the Rocky Mountains. Once there was only sagebrush and sand and desert. On the way the rigors of the trail, the ambushes of the night guards, the call for volunteers for the Mexican war, had taken away or stricken down many of the men. The Utah colony's only hope of survival lay in the children, for with California gold on one side and Cripple Creek's gold on the other, it was preposterous to hope for an inflow of immigration into the Intermountain desert. By the hard economies of the situation every woman without children was a heavy encumbrance, and every child meant a hope for acres to be tilled, the hope of tilling acres and irrigating them through Brigham Young's discovered process of irrigation was the only hope for the community.

To one who knows the hard work of Brigham Young and the women who walked half the continent with him, it is impossible to fit in those pictures of oriental sloth and all the laziness of mind and spirit that goes with the off hand impression of what polygamy is—what it actually is if practised in such an environment, for instance, as that prevailing here, and at this time in Utah, as contracted to what prevailed in Utah when Brigham Young married his wives.
the early

To get the just view of Utah domestic life you have
got to picture women coming home at night from beating
flails all day in the fields to kill the crickets that
were devouring their crops, and men coming home from digging
trails all day in the canyons, and cutting timber against
the coming of the winter's storms. You have got to picture
women helping their husbands with their own hands to rear mud
huts in the desert and then to plan adobe houses, and children
hurled by the very environment armound them into the sage-
brush about them as soon as their arms were strong enough
to swing a hoe or dig an irrigation ditch. You have got to
picture them singing their hymns in devotion each Sunday,
starting each simple meal with a blessing, and gathering for
family prayers each night.

And into the midst of the adobe house era you have got
to picture the coming of the United States marshals, the
plucking off of the men, and the prison sentences, and the
added want and cruel punishment in the homes, and then the
glorious end of it all in the manifesto and the pardons that
succeeded it, and the permission of Community Sentiment for
the old families to be retained intact until death should
settle all of the old score.

I am confident that the opportunity to wave the Bloody
Shirt, to borrow a Civil War simile, over Utah affairs, is
exactly the opportunity that was afforded to do that very
thing in the two decades following the Civil War. How
Lincoln's stand against that thing looms up in contrast
to the low, mean stand of other men, we all know who know
the war. And how Roosevelt's stand against a low, mean,
attitude towards the Mormons has worked to the vast benefit
Utah we all know who know its problem. There are
men who have violated the Mormon pledges, but all
that is necessary is to let such a man become known and the
entire spirit of the community, solidly Gentile and almost
solidly Mormon, is upon his head forcing him into social
ostracism. I have seen almost a score of them go that route
and I know the contempt in which they are held—a contempt
however which in no way extends back to Brigham Young and the
policy with which he met the need of conquering the desert.

Unfortunately for your wish, that you should not
be required to see Brigham Young's name on anything that the
government owns, the name—Young part of it at least—is
on some things the government owns, --headboards, for instance.
I saw two of his descendants shot down in the Philippines, and
he is the son of a father who fought through the Revolution.
The battery in which I served in the Philippines was commanded
by a grandson of his who was born of a polygamous mother, and
12 other such children and grand children of his and his
brothers served in the Spanish-American war. Lincoln saw
fit to put his name on an urgent telegram imploring him to
raise troops to protest the telegraph routes during the
Civil War, and which same was fully complied with, and three
different Presidents saw fit to put his name on commissions as
Governor of Utah. So you see we have our own viewpoint about
honoring him, and are quite insistent about our rights.
as insistent as I suppose Jane Addams is about her right in honoring him.

When a woman has achieved all that you have achieved in the world comes out flatly against this right, then it is hard to give due allowance for all the different data in your mind, forming the back ground for your conclusions, as the data in our minds forming the back ground to ours.

At one stage of the Silver-Service squabble Col. D.C. Jackling, chairman of the committee which picked out Brigham Young to be honored, and a leading Gentile of Utah, slammed his fist down on the desk of the Secretary of War and told that dignitary that he'd either take the silver complete and without a single alteration, or he'd never take so much as a pickle fork of it, the whole going into permanent exhibit in a museum as a standing protest from Utah against the government's conclusion. And that's how set Utah was in its way.

If you are interested at all in the polygamy question as it affected Utah, Senator Cannon's new book, composed of the articles in Everybody's, gives according to our Times Book Review, a vivid picture of polygamy that was as pure as the polygamy of Father Abraham in the old days of Brigham Young, while he draws a terrific indictment of that of the latter era. Cannon sees red on everything connected with the administration of Joseph F. Smith, but he does bring out the fact that everybody who knows Utah life of Brigham Young's time brings out, that he isn't what you think him to be.

With many thanks to you for reading this, if you ever get this far with it, I am

Cordially and sincerely,

[Signature]

Miss Ida Tarbell,

The American Magazine,

New York.