

Typed by C. Tupper

Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
April 12, 1946

(Letter from Ida Tarbell
to her Family. Bourg, France
June 2, 1893.)

50T My Dear Family:-

I am laboring under the peculiar experience of being lost to the world. I think there is one person who k-nows where I am beside myself, but I'm not sure of even him. It is 10 o'clock and I am tired and I begin again at 6 A. M. and so ought to go to bed, but I feel so forlorn and far away that I absolutely must write to somebody. I came here from Geneva this afternoon stopping to see a church which is one of the wonders of France, the church of Brou. I had all sorts of bother getting here, starting at 11 o'clock this morning from the house and finding I had the wrong train, waiting
51T around in G. until 3. When I did get off I found at the first station that my directions repeated by 3 different men at G. were wrong and that I was on the wrong road. As I could get here by staying on the train and going some 50 miles around I persuaded them to let me go on without paying extra. As I travel 2nd class and look poor they let me alone. I reached here at 7:30 and started out immediately after finding a room, to get a glimpse of the church. It is a half hour's walk from the town. The exterior is all I could see tonight, but it is wonderfully interesting, and entirely unlike anything in its details I have ever seen. The style is 16th century Gothic. It has no tower on the church proper but a bell tower at
52T side in Italian style. The oramentation is p~~o~~mpuse and very delicate. It is marvelous what these people did 400 years ago in stone work. The interior contains some of the marvels of the time they say, and I hope to see them all in the morning. This church is the work of a woman and erected in honor of a mother-in-law, so I feel I must take it all in, both for the sake of the sex and my

Paris
264.

-2-

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future condition in life. I didn't know that I should be able to get in very early in the morning so inquired on my way back of an old peasant woman who was passing me. She assured me 'yes' but that there was no mass, but that I could have one said by applying to the sexton and paying for it. It is great fun to talk to the people in shops and streets. Generally I get along well with them. This evening, however, I had an "experience." I stopped to buy a pair of tiny sabots in a shop I passed and the man had been drinking. I wouldn't have minded if the man had been hateful. He wasn't. He tried to be agreeable, having sold me the shoes, he began to ask questions and ventured to say that I was an Alsacien. I told him 'no' I'm American. "Is it possible?" Are the girls pretty there then as well as in France? I never knew it before." Not being used to that sort of thing I asked for my check, but before I got it, he asked "Do people fall in love in America." I assured him with great dignity that such a thing was unknown in the U. S. and left. Coming in I got lost. I had an notion that the town was only a cross roads, but I found my mistake and wandered through all sorts of little streets for half an hour. Now I'm safe, thank fortune.

I have so much to tell you that I do not know where to begin. I think I wrote my last letter to you from Lyon and left there May 22 in the morning going to Geneva.

Cluny - June 3. I was overpowered at that point by what I had to tell you and by my sleepiness so that I went to bed. I was called at 6 A. M. this morning and hurried out as soon as possible.

Paris
265.

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(Letter from Ida Tarbell
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- 55T The proprietor who was half-tipsy was so astonished to see me that he insisted on calling me "Monsieur". I went to see one or two things on my way back to the church but after seeing that, the former are almost forgotten. It is a wonder of wonders - the inside of the church of Brou. I have seen a great deal of beautiful sculpture in my little trips, but nothing before so frantic as this. I do not know how else to characterize it. It is a wealth of detail, indescribable. The church itself is very airy and graceful. It is the Jube(?), the tombs of Marguerite of Austria, who built the church of Philibert of Savoy, her husband who is buried there and of her mother-in-law Marguerite of Bourbon in whose home it is built and an
- 56T altar which are the wonders of the place. These pieces are simply festoons of stone lace. They are cut from the solid stone and undercut in a most remarkable way. For example here will be a cornice of leaves which stand out from the foundation three or four inches but which are a part of the original stone. The initials of Philibert and Marguerite - their arms - her motto (fortune, infortune, forte une (?) which means "I was fortune. I was unfortune, now I am strong. -"forte une") various flowers, symbols of the church, etc. are worked into these decorations. There are a series of stalls for the choir boys which are simply extravagances of wood work so elaborate are they - nearly the whole Bible is worked up in its carvings and
- 57T it would require a knowledge of all those terrific chapters on the begotten to name the figures. The church stands away at one side of the village and it gives one a kind of startled feeling to come out from

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its wealth of sculptures to see a commonplace barren road with a few low houses near. It is like finding an angel in somebody's kitchen. I do not know why it was built there. Just outside the door is a droll sundial - made of stone set into the earth. The numbers are about a foot square - the dial is 15 of my paces across. It is arranged this way. The sun lies across the letter of the month, then in June touches J at the top of the dial at noon.

58T I did not find out anything about what people do in Bourg, except that my old peasant woman told me of a candle factory that they make sabots and drink whiskey I learned by observation, but I ought to say that this is the first time I remember to have been annoyed in the least by a man who had been drinking since I have been here. I rushed to my hotel as fast as I could go and had fifteen minutes to get my traps together, drink my coffee, pay my bill and get the train. I succeeded and went to Macon. I wanted to go straight on to Avallon where I am going to see another monument, but my ticket is a wretched round about affair and I fancy I shall spend the most of my time between here and Paris stopping over. At Macon there is really nothing to see, though out of deference to Julius Caesar one ought not to begrudge a wall there I suppose. That enterprising gentleman succeeded in swallowing up its original owners. The Laone runs through Macon and is superb here. I walked down and was glad enough I did for I found one of the most curious markets I ever saw. All the magnificent park on the quay was filled with a Rag Market. On the ground the merchants spread big squares of dark cloth and on these they pile their wares - purely and simply rags - bits of cloth of all kinds no bigger

Paris
267.

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(Letter from Ida Tarbell
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60T than your handkerchief - fragments of ribbons - bits of braid - of velvet - cloth of all sort. I don't know what people do with these things, but they must buy them since there are scores of merchants. There are second hand clothes too, hung on lines stretched between the trees, boxes of old nails, bottles of all sizes, half worn corks, scraps of iron, old dishes, books, engravings, furniture, everything, even sabots. At the foot of the statue of Lamartine which adorns the place were scattered hundreds of pairs. I bought for ten cents the smallest pair I could find. When I go home I'll give them to the girl with the smallest foot. I presume it will be Sara from the way Esther and Clara must be growing.

61T. The only other thing of interest I saw in Macon was a butcher shop where the curtains were painted with historical scenes in which the noble pig has figured - no Bible stories included - there was an animated representation of a trick Duguesclin played in 1356 in the siege of Rennes when he turned loose a flock of furious hogs on his enemy which particularly took my eye. I felt like going in and shaking hands with the man who knew how to write history and butchering so well. From Macon to Cluny it is an hour's ride, most of it through a country which is exactly like that of Clos, indeed it is the same general style and in the same geological region - the valley of the Saone. I've been at Cluny two hours. I had a romantic interest in the place for here it was that the monastery was situated which built the Hotel Cluny of Paris of which I think I have sent you a picture. But things are not what they used to be in Cluny. The mighty are fallen and the magnificent old buildings are either torn down or turned into schools

Paris
268.

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(Letter from Ida Tarbell
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garrisons, etc. The houses are old - the doors so low I should have to stoop to enter, the floors in stone. I looked into numerous houses where the front room, opening on the street, contained dinning table, cooking stove, bed and all the family ornaments - some
63T of these have little remanants of Gothic carvings still left on the facade. Everything in sleepy here - I dont know how people live. They make sabots and they plait straw chair bottoms and there is a card board factory but that is all I know. It is still as Hatch Hollow. I'm in the restaurant of the hotel with a woman folding clothes near by and a dog snoring on the floor and if I dont change my subject I'll go to sleep myself.

I ought to tell you about my stay at Geneva. I reached there May 22 and Mr. Bergeand, my Swiss friend, came to meet me and took me to my pension. I was very glad to find him there for it makes such a difference if you know somebody in the town you visit. I had letters from Mme Dentzon to an author who has made a considerable reputation by
64T his novels - a professor in the University - and to a woman, also. I presented them at once and was very kindly received at both places and invited to dinner. At M. Rod's, the novelist, I was very much interested. He gave me his books and he invited me a second time, but I did not go as I was too busy. I hope to make arrangements with Mr. McClure to translate some of his stories, but do not know. At any rate it is an excellent connection for me.

The second family was not less interesting or kind. Mlle. Reine lives with a nephew and his wife in a country place. M. Ferriere, th nephew is a pastor and very bright. He invited me to dinner to meet

Paris
269.

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Tucson, Arizona
April 18, 1946.

(Letter from Ida Tarbell
to her family. Bourg, France
June 2, 1893.)

65T. to meet some of his friends - one in particular, who is going to America as the delegate of the Geneva University to the Exposition. He knows Bishop Vincent. We had a very fine time and I feel sure I have made friends there. I did a good deal of work the 10 days I was in Geneva studying in a new museum of pottery which is there, looking up some matters ~~for~~ Mr. McC. etc. I am in shape now to work there if necessary. The finest water works I ever saw are in G. the force of the Rhone which flows from Lake Geneva here is utilized as a power. The engineer who did the harnessing of this torrent was invited to take charge of the Niagara Falls works, but refused. He is now first Counsel. The firm which makes the water wheels for Niagara is also of Geneva.

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→ see next page →

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April 18, 1946

(Letter from Ida Tarbell
to her family.)

First part of letter missing (probably part of preceding letter)

66T I did not make many excursions at Geneva though I made the acquaintance of the town pretty well. What I did do in sight seeing was to go around the lake one day and another to climb a mountain. The first trip I took alone. The little book I mailed you shows about what it was. I left at 9 A. M. and spent all but about two hours of the day on the boat.

? ? ? 10 P. M. I had to stop at that point and leave Cluny. I am now at ? Last night I and "another man" knew where I was. Tonight neither the "A M" nor I know. I just arrived and having brushed off the dust I am trying to find the way out of my bewilderment by writing. 67T From Cluny to Paray-le-Monial is about 3 hours ride. When I arrived I found I had two hrs to wait and so I went sight seeing. I know absolutely nothing about the place but I came away enchanted. I have never seen in France a small town so trim, so clean, so artistic and so aristocratic. The first thing which attracted me was the canal with an old 10th century or later bridge across it. Then a horse race at one side of the village which seemed so quiet and respectable that I almost felt it my duty to attend. There was a pottery shop which would do credit in Paris and a church. The last is a 12th century Roman affair of great beauty. It is immense and its old yellow stone - the color at Clos - is dark with age and sprinkled with vines and plants. The property is immense, a big seminary and consistory joining the church. I found in leaving that there was a neu-vaine just beginning at church near by so went there. This church is the one where a certain pious sister a good many years ago saw the heart ~~of the heart~~ of the Saviour fastened to the outside of his garments

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Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
Arizona, April 18, 1946.

(Letter from Ida Tarbell
to her Family.)

68T by some mysterious celestial anatomy that don't work here below and
over the door is written: "Dans Cette Eglise N. S. revela son coeur a la
~~Marie~~ ^{B. M.} Maraguerite Marie." Inside there was a service going on by a big
man from Paris. I never saw so beautiful an effect of lights in a church
before. It is small and dark and long swinging censers with tiny red
lamps hung from the ceiling numbers of them on the altar were candles.
It was witchery of light. In the town is a town hall made out of a
charming 16th century dwelling house confiscated in the Revolution.
In the front the chapel which went with the house is turned into the
police court. Every where here, people wear the sabots. Going up
street I heard a sedate clack - clack behind me and turned to see what
it was - a little fellow of Scott's age coming up street in wooden shoes.
Just then I heard a quick clatter - clatter and a little girl who might
have been Esther or Clara if they happened to live here, came running
down the streets. All over the little town there is the most remarkable
69T cleanliness and neatness - a great contrast to Cluny. The inhabitants
are very polite and tidy. A woman came out of her own accord to tell
me I was in the wrong track for the depot. Another went out of her
way to show me a church and explain things like a baedeker. I shall
always keep a charming souvenir of the exquisite little town. From
P. I came to Etary(?). I was nothing but a lifeless wreck, so I
thought, when I reached there at 9 P. M. but I took a cup of tea and
found there was enough life left in me to risk getting on here - Autim (?)
where I can sleep more comfortably and be more conveniently placed for
going on tomorrow. I'll try and write up what I did at Geneva for
you later and also tell you in my next how I get out of this place, if
it is a place. For now, Good night.

Paris
272.

-3-

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I ought to say that I bought this sheet of paper at Chillon at the foot of Lake Geneva in order to write you a letter from there, but did not have time. It is the castle of Byron's Prisoner of Chillon.

Lovingly

Ida M. Tarbell

Paris
273.