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Typed by M. Cloud

Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
October 2, 1945

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell
to her family - November 13, 1891)

5 Rue du Sommerard, Paris
November 13, 1891

NOT My Dear Family:

While I am waiting for the woman to bring in the roast for dinner I'll begin my weekly letter. I sent only a postal last week because I was so busy. Just after I had written it I received a lovely long letter from Mother. I do enjoy the letters so much. I am getting actually interested in your cats and am hoping they'll live until I can get back. Will's illustration of his cat before and after its bath were very "taking." I think I'll accept his suggestion and use them in one of my letters. 5 cents a piece is cheaper than I get photos for here.

Tuesday.

I have not had a moment's time to write since I made the above introduction. I have just finished a letter to the Dispatch and now I am going to write to you in order to get it off before the 5 o'clock mail which makes tomorrow night's steamer at Southampton. There is so much to tell you that I fear I'll forget something. Of course the work is the first thing. I was made happy last night by receiving my first money. It was not much ^{Six} \$6.00 (How the doctor would scorn it!) but I was glad to get because it is a start. It came from the Times-Star of Cincinnati. If anyone should send my cheques to T. send them to E.J. Mathews and Co., No. 2, Wall St.

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N.Y. City with orders to send to Cheque Bank, London. I get checks for the amount which are almost as good as gold here in Paris. Please let me know if the Dispatch publishes a letter on the opening of the Chamber and the French newspapers, and if they use any pictures with it. Since I wrote I have sent a little story to Wide Awake, an article on the Paris Mission to the Jews to the Christian Union and a third letter to the Signal and beside have gotten together most of my matter for my third syndicate. If things will only sell I can work. I'll enclose a note to Sara about things which are sent back. I am going to try to get a series of monthly articles with the McClure Syndicate. My money holds out remarkably because I don't buy anything. I must spend a little now for French lessons and must have a pair of new shoes but if everybody pays me I can easily enough.

I begin my lectures in the Sorbonne this week if the professors get back. It is the funniest way of conducting a university that I ever heard of. The people come and go as they please absolutely. Last week Thursday they managed to open the courses. The exercises were in the Grand Amphitheatre of the Old Sorbonne. A building put up in Richelieu's time. The students who average 30 years I should think, packed it about 1000 in all. They were like American college boys in their fun. They all stood hats on until the faculty appeared, which was a long time. Every time a girl, a soldier, or an odd hat came in they cheered and stamped. They don't dislike women students but they jeer them. One old lady entered late, the boys nearly broke the glass cheering her. The faculty, nearly 100 in all, filed in. They took their seats and plunged into the opening without a word of introductory service. Important announcements were made and a

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speech of a half hour followed, the speakers keeping their chairs. A long table ran the length of the platform, on it were 3 plates holding a carafe of water, a plate of sugar and a glass with a spoon in it. This is always put on the prof's table they say. My first course begins this week. I shall not be able to understand everything but enough to get on I am sure.

72T Of course, I have seen a great many things I should like to tell you about. The first comes in the line of a confession. I am not going to do anything I daren't tell - if I can help it. But here goes - I have been to see the Can-Can. Read Mark Twain if you want a description. We all went, one at a time with a gentleman in whom I have great confidence and who I think quite understood our desire to see a little of the fast side of Paris. It was intensely interesting you may be sure. We went to a place called the Moulin Rouge (Red Mill). The outside is built like a mill and painted red. The huge blades of the wheel, which revolves, are filled with red lights. There was a stage performance which wasn't at all bad and a great deal of good music. There was no noise, drunkenness, or disorder. We walked about, drank coffee, saw the whole thing through without any annoyance. One doesn't care to go more than once, but one is not sorry to see it once. When I get home I'll tell you what I saw. Someway I don't like to write it. Strange, isn't it? Don't tell Brother Jesse this either.

A thing I can write about with more enjoyment is our last Saturday's excursion. Our trips are becoming popular with our friends and a large party joined us. Mr. and Mrs. Emery and the Summers and their friends. Miss Henry and Miss Towle were both unable to go.

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We started at 10 in the morning for St. Germain, which is 13 miles from Paris, going through the town where the patron saint of Paris Ste. Guinevere ¹ is-buried was born and through Riveil where the Empress Josephine was is buried. We had a compartment to our selves at starting, but a Frenchman insisted on getting in and the crowd determined to talk him out. We did it too. There were five guide books in the party and we all read the descriptions aloud at once from them. I presume he'll go through life telling about the odd way the Americans have of all reading at once from their books. St. Germain is one of the royal summer homes - the oldest save Fontainebleau. It has a chateau built in the 16th century, a forest of 11000 acres and the most wonderful terrace I ever saw running for nearly 2 miles and commanding a magnificent view of the Seine. One can see Paris, the hills on either side, several towns and the river for miles. St. Denis where the tombs of the kings of France are - I wrote you about our trip there I think - is in sight and Louis XIV was so disturbed by always being in sight of his future resting place that he gave up St. Germain as a summer place and built Versailles to the south. He started to bring the water from north of St. Germain 31 miles away. You can see the remnants of the old viaduct on the hill near St. G. now, a series of tremendous stone arches (sketch of arches) but he gave up the task and constructed pumps on the river by which the water was driven there. A new pump works was put in ~~at~~ in 1855 which drives the water $3/4$ miles and 505 ^{feet} up hill. We didn't have time in returning to stop and see it. The chateau at St. G. contains a museum of early Gallic

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history. It is a splendid place to read Caesar. All his campaigns are worked out in plaster models. The towns and besieging works and old fashioned war implements are all there in miniature. One of the most interesting is the model of the defenses Caesar made by means of forked sticks and holes in the ^{ground, wall?}. I never saw a more perfect object lesson than it gave. There is a great deal of old pottery in which I was especially interested. We visited the church in which James VI of England is buried and from whose tomb I stole the enclosed yellow posy, and the Hôtel-de-Ville, where some old fellow has left his collection of pictures and curios, some of them interesting and most of them not. We went home on the train in 1½ hours getting some lovely views of farms and chateaux and cottages. We had the jolliest day yet because of Mr. Summer. He is a perfect clown, don't know a word of French but talks to everybody and reads all the signs.

One of the pleasant things over here is this getting acquainted with people, or would be if we didn't lose them so quickly. The Summers with their niece (a friend of Miss Towle's) and the Goulds are going South soon. They had us over at their rooms last night, had saved all the ends of candles for a week to have enough to light up with when we came, and saved their newspapers for napkins. They served little cakes and grapes out of the cover to a pasteboard ~~beak~~ box and used the wash bowl for a finger bowl. Some of our steamer friends, a Mr. Schwindle and his sister, are here now. Mr. S. sails for New York Saturday, his sister will stay in the house with us until January. She is a very bright little girl but Mr. S. won't let her stay alone which proves his wisdom. While I am talking about people I mustn't forget the biggest news of all. Bishop Winant

75T and Dr. Hurlbut have been here. The Bishop preached last Sunday -
15th. I had a pleasant talk with both of them, but we none of us
referred to the Meadville matter. Mary went to see the Bishop and
had a long visit. He told her that he wanted to go back to Mead-
ville and say to Dr. F. that he had seen us and that the "affair"
was not mentioned. He was utterly amazed to find us looking so well.
I expect from what Dr. had told him that he expected I would be
seedy and thin and emaciated. Instead I was feeling capitally Sunday
when I saw him, had on my seal-skin and brown bonnet which if I have
worn it for two years is becoming, and was in the midst of things
at the church with Dr. Thurber and all the "lights." He didn't
hear any wails from this side, that's sure. They leave tomorrow
for England.

I went yesterday to a swell French wedding at one of the
most fashionable churches. The wedding was at noon. The altar
was lighted by hundreds of candles, and the flowers all white with
green were very elaborate. There must have been several hundred
invited guests. We got into the side with the curious and the
beggars. The bride was dressed in heavy white silk, made perfectly
plain, long train, long high sleeves, high neck, not a jewel or bit
of lace as I could see, veil of course and orange flowers. You don't
seem to be married here without these things. The prettiest part
of the ceremony was taking the collection for the poor. 8 girls led
by gentlemen did it. Two of the girls were in pink-cloth of some kind-
plain skirt, demi train, high waists with yokes striped with broad
76T black velvet, (sketch), black hats with plumes. The girls all carried

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little bags for the money made of cloth like their gowns. One little girl of 12 had a lovely pale green silk trimmed with yellow lace and a big greenish felt hat tied down with green and yellow ribbons. It would have been a charming dress for Esther. We saw the swellest of French society and they didn't look better than the swellest of Titusville would in a crowd. Everything, absolutely, is worn, big and little hats and bonnets, long and short wraps. The dress as a rule are plain, demi train and the basques are mostly short, very.

The music at the wedding was superb, organ, harps, violin, etc., and one of the finest boy choirs in Paris. The archbishop performed the ceremony. He was clad from top to toe in gold cloth. 12 priests assisted, 6 choir boys and 4 sacristans, two of them in magnificent uniforms. But I must stop. I see I have written on only one side of the paper, forgot that you were not a newspaper. I send two or three little French S.S. cards for the children such as I use in my little class.

Write me often, very, very often and tell me all the news. Give my love to everybody. I was glad to hear about the farm folks. If I ever get to America again I'm going to visit Hatch Hollow. Give my love to Florence, poor thing. If I dared I ^{id?} write her a little note but I'm afraid it would do her more harm than good to know her trouble had crossed the ocean. Tell Ella I'm waiting anxiously for a letter. As for Sara I'm going to send her an infernal machine for a Xmas present if she don't write soon. Love to everybody.

Yours lovingly,

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[P.S.]

✓ ?
I received a letter from Claude yesterday. In
it would watch Biglow papers. I haven't seen his
nephew since the first visit.

I find I have left the cards for the children at church,
all save the three alike. Another time,

(This is on back of 4th sheet of letter)

[73T]

15. big Italians not a bad substitute.

Paris

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