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Typed by M. Cloud

Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
Sept. 24, 1946

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell
to her family, 1892)
(Says at top of letter '92)

194T My Dear Family:

I am starting you a letter which I want to make decently long while waiting for an interview with Mr. McClure. I think I wrote you on my card that he was coming to Paris and had said he wanted to see me. He reached here ~~Saturda~~ Friday night and came to see me the next morning. We had a good talk and he comes back this morning so as to finish up. I like him very much, a young man, about 35 and what we call a "hustler", enthusiasm all through. He is going to start a new magazine in the fall, and I think I am pretty sure of something to do on it occasionally. I also think I shall make arrangements with him for regular work in his syndicate. He said yesterday, "I wish you'd go back and help me in N.Y." It would be a joke on the Mogul, wouldn't it? to go back into an editorial position as good as the one ~~with~~ McClure will have-in a year after my scalping. But I shall not do it. I'm going to make this literary business go if there is anything in me for it.

So the stories are back. Eh bien. That's the fun (?) of writing for a living. I'm rather glad nobody took the "Sen. Experiment." It's stuff, I'm afraid. Send it back to me. As for the little story, try Christian Union, N.Y. Independent, N.Y. Congregationalist, Boston, in that order, please. Simply say that Miss Ida M. T. asks you to submit this for their young folk's column, at regular rates. Enclose stamps for return. A stamped and directed newspaper envelope will do, mark it M.S. in the corner. I shall be more careful about sending out unfinished things ~~hereafter~~. Did I write you that the

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Dispatch asks for more letters, two a month anyway and raises the pay from $5.00 to $7.50 apiece. Not enough to buy swell gowns on or eat meat more than once a day but quite enough to prevent my starving. It is marvellous how little money one can be rollickingly happy on! I do have an astonishingly good time. I'm working the hardest since I came. Am alone all day and read nights and every week take an outing. Am seeing a great deal that travelers even don't find. Our trip for the fourth was a very fine one. We I wrote you how we got lost and wandered around the north of France all day. When we found our mistake they put us off at a little place which evidently hadn't long been dignified by a railroad station. We had an hour and were nearly starved so they sent us down the little one-streeted village where there were walls the entire length and the barns opened on the street until we came to the town hotel. All we could get was bread and cheese. A big round loaf was put out on an oil cloth topped table, each one was given a knife and everybody dipped in. The cheese was delicious and we made a mighty good meal. While we ate a donkey stuck his head in at the window for the room opened on the court which served for a barnyard, and a rooster sat in the window seat. Back at the depot I started to gather some red poppies and blue bachelor buttons. The fields are full of them now and nothing in the world could be prettier. The woman at the station came out and took me off to a field and gave me an enormous bunch. They say these French people are always after your money, do nothing save for that but if you could have seen these villagers take care of us, you would have never repeat the slander. We were nearly moved to tears and went off waving our

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hands and hats while they cried Bon Voyage V.

Monday Evening.

Mr. McClure came just then and we talked for three hours. I don't know exactly what will come of it but I think I have the chance at last, that I am looking for. He will let me write him a letter a week. If I can get the right sort of subjects, there is no danger but the work will go. He will give me a cent a word up to 2000 words. I presume my articles will most of them reach that length. He starts a magazine in the fall and I am to have a chance on that. Then he is deeply interested in the question of French morality and its relations to America and we are talking of a series of articles which I am to edit to make a book. Altogether it looks like a good chance and it certainly means that you needn't worry any more about my money affairs. I went to see him again today and tomorrow am to have another interview. All this is at his request, so you see he is in earnest. So am I you better believe. I think I could have a good position with him in N.Y., but I want to keep clear of the desk if I can. If I can work out a purely literary career, so much the better in the long run. I know you will be pleased over this. I'll let you know more about it as it develops.

But my Pierrefond story is still unfinished. We went back to the place where we ought to have changed and did it. After 5 hours lost we reached Compiegne. This is the place where Napoleon III. held his court. There is a beautiful chateau which we did not enter and several fine buildings. We took a one horse cab and the 5 of us -- 6 with driver, drove through the forest to Pierrefond. Don't think that is cruel on the horse. It is the way everybody drives here. The more behind the horse, the faster he goes. The forest is a marvel

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of beauty, but we were thankful enough to reach Pierrefond and get our dinner. I cannot describe P., it is a little village in a valley, at the side of the high ground on which the chateau stands. It is white and quaint and little like all French villages. There is a lake at one side, the remains of the old moat. The hotels are very good. But it is the chateau which is the glory of the place. I have never seen anything so beautiful. I scarcely ever expect to again. It was restored by Napoleon III. after standing in ruins some hundred years and is a perfect example of the highest order of the feudal castle. In every respect it's a delight. We hung about it until midnight in the moonlight on Sunday evening and spent Monday examining it in detail. I want to send you a large photo of Pierrefond when I can afford it. I think you will agree with me that it's one of the most beautiful things on earth. Monday we returned to C. where we staid for 2 or 3 hours in the forest reading. We've an ideal crowd for work. No one ever bothers anybody else for we are all absorbed in our work. Came home by night train. I've been on the run ever since.

Tuesday visited schools in preparing work on French education -- very entertaining -- saw little dresses made by girls no bigger than Esther and finished beautifully. Saw a contest between the pupils of 24 schools -- conducted queerly, -- each child was brought in alone by her mother -- there were 4 inspectors and my friend and I. The children readee beautifully, and never shout. I hope you will all try to <u>keep down</u> the voices of our youngsters. The American girl over here is the scandal of the French and of thoughtful Americans because of her horrible loud

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(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell to her family, 1892) -5-

Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
Sept. 24, 1946

and shrill voice.

When going to my school on Tuesday some one called me on the street "Ida Tarbell". It was Miss Boice. She with her sisters were here for a week. I spent 2 evenings with her, very delightfully. She is well and is spending the summer in England. I told her the story of the "late unpleasantness" and she thanked the Lord that I had escaped. So do I now I'm out of it. But what astonishes me is that the Lord evidently means to let me have a chance in spite of the Dr. I didn't believe for a while he'd dare if the Dr. was "agin" me. That sounds profane but actually it isn't far from the way I felt.

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Our plans are about made. I'm going out of Paris for only a few days -- to the sea shore. I want a change and a final visit with the crowd. I shall go to Amiens while I'm gone and see about my Mme. R. work from there. Shall write a letter on "How the French live at the sea shore" for McClure, etc., and get back here to begin my year's work by the 5th to 10th of August. I think I need the change for Paris, though delightful, is not quite healthy. The water is poison. I don't drink it at all, mineral water or beer all the time. There is no cholera here as the papers have been saying so don't worry about that. There is a serious diarrhea epidemic but not in my quarter. I shall take [care] of myself don't fear. Write me at 17 Rue Malebanche. I'm going to stay with Mme. Bonnet for a time.

Give my love to everybody -- don't worry over things and keep well. I do hope the children (her brother Will's children) are keeping well and that Mother is letting them wait on her. Give my best love to Ella. (Will's wife) Dear girl! What a time she's having. I'm going to write to

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Will and Sara soon. I think I owe everybody letters but I get so little time to write that I can't attempt anything more than a family letter usually.

I enclose some flowers from Pierrefond -- lost the poppies they gave me at the village.

I must stop -- do write me often. Do you know it is almost a ~~month~~ year since I left home. What a short year it has been. Love to everybody.

Yours Lovingly,

Ida M. T.

PARIS
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