

Typed by M. Cloud

Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
October 14, 1946

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell
to her family from Paris, 1892)
(Written at top of page, "192 Panama")
(~~Must be 1892 from context~~)

Merry Christmas!!!

109G-T My Dear Family:

It is Christmas night -- just about 1 P.M. with you. I am trying to imagine what you are doing. You have emptied the chairs in the big parlor I know. I wonder what you had, a big time, I hope, if not many presents. I have had my dinner, celebrated by getting it myself -- toast (great luxury here), 2 eggs and coffee and if it didn't compare very well with what I've been used to having in Titusville at least it was enough and tasted good. I cannot make myself believe that it is Xmas. I've not been out of the house or seen anybody today, but the bonne and Miss Cone whose room is next to mine. I meant to go to church but it is frightfully cold here. Weather changed yesterday to way below zero and the city is all indoors. Indeed for a week one has been generally in the house. We had 4 days of the thickest fog I ever saw. One couldn't see the tops of the houses and often not the opposite side of the street. And cold -- Boo! Then it cleared but the cold staid. I am enjoying myself alone as much as I could be expected to I think. I honestly think one ought not to be hard on me if I were a little blue, but I'm not much. I had it all out on Friday when I rec'd letter from Will. Tomorrow morning I expect my Xmas letter from Mother -- she promised me one. I had ^[a] nice letter from Mamie Farrington Tupper at Minneapolis, yesterday. She has a little girl and is almost too

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happy to live. Jo wrote, too, jolly letter, though the poor girl hates her position and is going to leave soon. She spends her holidays with the Halls at Madison. I would like to be there and hear the setting out Dr. gets. I wrote Jo about The Chant work. She says she'd take every cent she could get out of the only old institution and I think I shall.

Laura Leaver Wheeler wrote me [a] lovely Xmas letter and sent me photos of herself and two little girls. I've had one elegant present. Mme. Goinbaut (my French teacher) and I each received a beautiful piece of Hungarian ware from our departed pupil, M. deLintner. Mine is a large vase about 15 or 18 inches high and very brilliant. I hope I can show it to you sometime.

I am busy of course. Had a letter from McClure last week asking me to send literary notes from here for a weekly literary letter he begins publishing the first of January. It is not worth much in money at first, but I think will lead to something. It's one of the things I've been looking after since I came and wanting to get started on. I have sent an article to Dr. F. -- not one he asked for but one I had on hand. I want to try him. I told him if it was unavailable he might send it to Will. If he sends it you can return it to me, but don't seal it, send it tied in ~~of~~ wrapper open at the ends and marked Ms. There is no use in paying 60 cents for what ought to cost only 3. I rec'd the clippings and am much obliged.

I wrote you on my postal card that I am going to make a visit at Mme. Alphonse Daudet's this week. I dread it a little but it's good for me and I get an article from every such visit.

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Connections are everything here. The greatest find I've had yet was last week. Prof. Darnesteter^{M?}^{A?} gave me a card of introduction to the great-grandson of Mme. Roland and I went to see him. He was just ahead of me on the stairs but I didn't know him. We climbed up together to the 6th floor where he and his wife have a cosy little apartment. He was kindness itself and has put a great quantity of letters and Mss. at my disposal, is going to get me certain pictures, etc., etc. I am more than delighted with the outcome of the matter. I shall make my book now I am sure for there is a quantity of stuff never published. He and a friend are going to publish it verbatim in 2 years but all he asks of me is not to make too long extracts, which I don't want, of course. He will be of great assistance I know in my work. It is a little lonesome now to have so few acquaintances but I know in the long run it will be best. I'll have time to learn my French and to get in with French people. The only ones to know here -- the Americans as a rule are a stupid lot -- rich ones who come here to spend their money, fast ones who have used up their reputations at home, travelers who want to see everything, don't [know] much about anything and are half sick and tired out, and missionaries, who take their revenge on the world by running down rival societies. Eh, I don't love my countrymen in Paris any too well as a rule, though there are some of the loveliest people in the world here, too.

I've not been seeing much lately. I went to dinner the other night at the oldest restaurant in the city -- Procope's. It is a place founded in 1689 and was a resort from last century, wits and writers, Voltaire, Rousseau, Riron, etc., as well as for

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those of the century before. The proprietress take [took] me around to show me the old decorations. She assured me that the portraits were all painted when the restaurant was started 200 years ago. As several of them are of men who were born some 50 years after the opening of this famous establishment, you will see that it is a remarkable case of prophetic painting. This is a great country.

You would think it was a great country if you could watch the Panama now. Almost every great Republican in the country is convicted of taking more or less of the funds for votes, for "pulls," for this or that. The Chamber (House of Representatives) has usurped the functions of the court and is examining ^{the} accused. New accusations, new arrests, new proofs, new imprisonments every morning. There seems to be no hesitation in destroying men's reputations anymore than there was in cutting off men's heads in the Revolution. Carrot is said to have been on the point of resigning several times. It would be like the rest of the business. If there were a man of firmness, energy and eloquence come to the front he could be president, emperor or dictator as he would, and the people wouldn't complain. There is no inbred conviction that a Republic is the best government here, as there is with us. Anything which will lower the taxes and give prosperity satisfies the people. If I were a Frenchman I'd make a coup d'etat as sure as the world. But not being one and there not being a Frenchman with sufficient gumption, I think the Republic will stagger on awhile longer. France losses [are] \$100,000,000 on the 28 of February. The concession of Panama with all the improvements and appliances passing to the government of Columbia in case the work is unfinished -- and they are absolutely doing nothing to save it. Worse, nearly all of this money is from the working people.

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Tuesday Morning:

(night)

I meant to finish this last winter and write a letter to Sara at the same time, but instead of that went to the theatre to see a new play.

I did not get my letter from Mother yesterday so shall expect it Thursday. I had letters from Elda -- with nice little book, Miss Carter, with lovely handkerchief, and from several others with Merry Xmas. You must write me all about your Christmas. I do hope Ella was home and you had a jolly time, all well this year and all happy. I must stop writing for I'm awfully busy just now, more things on hand than I know what to do. It ought to begin to pay soon and I think it is going to. Write me often all of you and keep up your courage.

Lovingly,

Ida M. Tarbell.

Paris
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