November 2, 1938

Dearest Ada:

Days slip around so swiftly and are finally ended before I have done things that I had put my mind to do when I wake up in the morning. And every morning for a week I have been meaning to write you. I think I did drop you a line to Tucson either telling you that I was going or had gone to Meadville for my semi-annual Trustees Meeting of Allegheny. Did I tell you how pleasant it seems to be able to slip into a room of my own, so very comfortable, so attractive, with my name on the door and ready for me whenever I can use it. Everybody so kind insisting that I sleep in the morning, have the breakfast that I like, not overdo , etc., etc.

One thing I wanted to do out there was to check up on certain facts for these Recollections I am writing. When I came to put down something of my four years at Allegheny there were verifications needed. Did we, as I thought, really use kerosene lamps in class rooms and in Chapel? I thought so, but could hardly make myself believe that I was right, so that had to be looked up. I was right.

And then I think I never told you about one of the places in the old college dearest to me - the great library, ninety feet by fifteen, sixteen feet high, the big walls solid with books, the deep windows looking out over the Valley. I had to go up and find out whether or no I was right about size and years, etc., or whether it was just something I had made up out of my imagination. But I was right; it really must have been better than I remembered it.

And then I went over to Titusville to read the newspaper at the time we first moved to the town - 1870 - when I was thirteen years old. It threw me into a new kind of world where I floundered for some time. It was a lively town in all the excitement of being really rich and believing that it had a long future before it. Of course in those days it was not counting on what the genius of the oil business, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, would do to their development.

Ida

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And so I came back home - I don't think I have written you all this - to find my desk heaped with papers and the first Chapter of these Recollections already in the hands of the editor to be gone over and corrected. I have many misgivings about what I have done, but J S P approves with suggestions and of course I sent the manuscript to Rosie for I am a loose writer and she backs me up so effectively. And to my first joy she sends back within twenty four hours a note that she likes it; she even says that it is "delightful." I never in the world supposed I could write anything about which V R could say that, but it picked me up a lot. One of these days when the first installment is put into shape and I have an extra copy I am going to send it on to you and you can give me your reactions to it. I am sure they will be just as honest if I had not said that these two mentors of mine felt kindly about what I have done.

And now I am off in a day or two to the Farm for three or four weeks working in my files there. It is very amusing finding out what you did which you have entirely forgotten - my two years of school teaching and what it did to me and what I find out about myself. And there were seven years on The Chautauquan and what I found out about editors and how I got headed in an entirely new direction, entirely new set of ambitions, and an entirely new set of plans for carrying them out. The chief element in these plans was transferring myself from Meadville, Pennsylvania, to Paris, France, and having very little money to do it with. I find I have a lot of stuff on Paris at that time, most of it of course would be of little or no use to an autobiography. I wrote all that I was doing; I had a feeling that I had to keep my family thoroughly informed or else they might forget me and that family seemed then to be the chief thing in life to hold on to everything else having apparently been busted up. But Sara kept all my letters to my surprise and so I have almost a journal of those days. What is useful though are the notes on the women I knew and the men I knew and the way I got out my first book and supported myself, and the way I, logically

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enough for a world as crazy as this, walked straight into the McClure combination. It is really great fun racking all this up and when it is ended if it seems to be worthwhile to somebody I shall be satisfied.

You extravagant lady! I got that magnificent quilted kimona from Marshall Fields the other day. Your card wasn't in it, but of course I knew there was nobody else in the world who would do such a thing and I felt as if I had asked for it, too, showing you my cotton one and asking if you couldn't get me another. Id did not dream that you would go off in such an extravagance as this, but it is a luxurious gown and I shall enjoy it enormously. You have no idea how I love warm things; I always was a cold blooded person and needed a lot of cover and as years go on I seem to want more. And such a garment as this is a joy and a comfort. You are a dear to think of me - it is my grandest birthday present.

~~Affectionately~~

A's hand written on 2000. - shall return or sorn or autotypify is accepted & paid for - expect first installment soon.

Nov. 2-1935
To ADA

Mrs. Fred McCormick
University Station
Tucson, Arizona

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