

Typed by M. Cloud

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Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
October 8, 1945

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell to
her family, Dec. 20, 1891)

("Egyptian" written at top
of first page)

American Chapel
Sunday P.M. 12/20/'91

89T My Dear Family:

I am at the church using the interval between morning service and Sunday school for beginning my weekly letter. This three hours I spend over here each week are among the pleasantest I have. I get away from everything, work and all, and feel as if I had gone off on a vacation. There are four of us who stay, Miss Towle comes with me and 2 gentlemen, artists, students. Sometimes we bring a friend and enliven our tea and cakes that way.

Winter has begun in dead earnest, for several weeks past it has been warm and rained incessantly. Today it is clear and freezing. It is so hard to keep warm at night. I wear everything but my sealskin to bed and I don't know but my love of comfort will get the better of me and I'll put that on soon. I understand now why people in these countries sleep between feather beds. I'd give anything for one. If I could afford it I would buy an eider quilt. It is very odd to see the contrivances for keeping warm which people use. Almost everybody has a little hand stove to carry around for their feet. The cabs are nearly all warmed and in a few weeks the omnibuses will be. There are the most wonderful fur-lined shoes and such heavy underclothes! I find the knit skirt Sara gave me three years ago a wonderful comfort and I am going to put on the knit skirt soon over my flannels. I shall keep warm here if nothing else. I dare not do otherwise for I have not gotten over my susceptibility

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October 10, 1945

to colds yet. This last week I've been fighting the fourth which has grappled me since I came. It was not so bad this time though for a day or two I thought I had the influenza which is prevailing throughout the city. All the girls are pretty well. Miss Towle came near leaving us last week for a month in a family but concluded to stay. Everybody told her she was foolish. We are considered a very interesting experiment and have had several applications for admission. We cannot take anybody more. Miss Schmidt has decided to remain another month and has taken the only vacant room in the apartment. Do you know I had a letter from Lucy McClintock the other day. She wants to come over to study art. I am going to write her today to come to us. I'll have a mate then in case Jo and the other girls leave in the Spring, which is probable. Jo will go to Berlin, also Miss T. Mary will go home I think. She ought to no doubt for Mrs. Henry is very sick at Clifton and Mary is not earning much. Poor little girl. She is so brave and works so hard. She will be hardly able I think to stay more than two months longer even if Mrs. H. is well enough for her too. She cannot save like the rest of us either. Has spent nearly 50.00 since she came for clothes which she could have gotten on without. You'd be surprised to know how economical I am. Actually I've bought myself only one pair of gloves and a 35 cent ^{ribbon, veil, blouse?} for my old walking hat since I came. I don't need things, though, shouldn't buy them if I was rolling in wealth. Going in society here is a humbug. Will remarks that you are concerned about my finances. Don't be at all. I have \$75.00 in the bank. The

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92T Union Signal owes me \$20.00 but Miss is very sick in Boston and the letters have not appeared. When she gets well, they will go all right. Then there is still something coming to me from my first and second syndicate letters and from my third which appears today, at least 30.00 in all. McClure owes me \$10.00 and then there is the pay for the Scribner article which of course I don't know the amount of. Remember, too, that I'm working all the time and that it will be easier each month now to get my stuff in. I have not done so badly for a start. Do you think? I wrote you in my last letter about the sending an article to the Christian Union. I did not do it because that day Mother's letter came saying that they had returned my first. You may forward the article on the Jew Mission to The Congregationalist, Boston, to Rev. A. E. Dunning. If it is returned send it to The Advance, Chicago. Simply say that I "request you to submit it for publication at regular rates" and ask that it be returned if not available. I am going to stop writing these scrappy things except when I have an engagement. If I can do one or two good pieces of work and get them into a good magazine it will be worth more than a dozen scraps.

Since writing the above I have had all my usual Sunday work. Dr. Thurber came in to S. S. bringing us each an American apple and of course we stopped writing to visit and eat our apples. After that came Sunday school. My little folks are going to sing on the Xmas Sunday school service which takes place a week from today so that we spent the hour today practicing. It is almost dark when we get out of S. S. and since then I have had my

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Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
October 10, 1845

93T dinner at the restaurant and the girls have all gone to the Newells. I came home to write letters. It is such a luxury to get the room to yourself once in a while. We have another American in our party, Walter Case, who used to be in college. Both Will and Sara will remember him I think. He came a week ago. He is travelling. The poor boy has had a dreadful series of troubles. A year ago his grandfather who had been a father to him died. Soon after, he lost his mother. In June he was married and in August his wife died. He came away because he had to have a change. We got him into the house with the Emery's and he is having a good time if sight seeing and going will give it to him.

This week is Xmas Day. I dread it a little but we are going to try to have some fun. On Christmas Eve a party of about 20 of us are going to hear the midnight mass at one of the big churches. We girls are going to hang up our stockings and have decided to give each other presents which shall not cost over 25 centimes (5 cents) apiece. We have heard of a place where they sell buckwheat cakes and we may all go there for dinner. Xmas is not so famous a day with the French as Nowel An or New Year's. It is then that they give most of their presents. We have to give presents to the Conciergie and Bonne and already the postman has been around with his calendar just as the newsboys do at home.

There has not much of anything of interest happened this last week to me. I think I have not written you that we are taking dinner two nights of the week with Mme. Bonnet our landlady. We do it for sake of the French. She gives us a good dinner of 6 courses with cider and wine for 40 cents. We make it a rule that the dinners

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94T we get ourselves shall not cost over 12 cents so as to make up for the expense of the dinners. We get a good deal of French. The Egyptians teach us and we give them English. They are very nice to us. One of them calls me his belle-mère (mother-in-law) from a joke we had about his marrying Jo whom I call my daughter. He never says anything to me without beginning "Ma belle-mère." We play all sorts of games in French and English in practicing.

I am getting a good deal of French just now. I take one lesson a week from a madame whom all the girls have, spend every Wednesday evening with madame at M. Chevallier, the political economist I wrote you about, talk with the Egyptians twice a week, attend 4 courses of lectures and do all my reading in the language. I still am congratulating myself on meeting M. Chevallier, he takes great pains to find stuff for me. This week he has sent to the Prefect for a volume of the Statistiques of Paris for me and he has gotten me several pamphlets of value. Besides he answers all my questions. These French are generous souls after all. Sometimes I get so disgusted with them I feel that I cannot endure staying here and the next hour I am lost in admiration of some beautiful, brilliant or generous thing they have done.

95T

Will says in his letter which reached me yesterday morning - (19th, letter written on 7th) that Sara has gotten through with her operation safely. I am so thankful to know that. Please let me know exactly how she is. I do hope she'll be better after this is all over. It is lovely of Mrs. Chamberlain to take such pains to make it easy for her. If I had her address I would write her a little note of thanks. When Mother writes to thank her please

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tell her I am very grateful for her goodness to Sara.

96T We had a letter from Miss Carter this week. She says they have a new girl there. A Miss Margaret Noble, a graduate of De Pauw University who has been abroad, done a year's work in Chicago on newspapers and been two years in Washington in an Government Office. The girls think her very brilliant but scarcely know whether they like her or not. She takes my old place I believe. Ned is to be married in January and the girls seem to think the wedding will be brilliant. I wonder if I get an invitation!!! If I do -- well, I won't send a present. The girls say that our letters make them wild to come over and do likewise. Eida has been sick all the fall with malaria and says if she isn't better in the spring she is going to take a vacation and get the doctor to prescribe a sea-voyage. Well, I must stop and write to . Please write very often. Any delay in letters is an awful trial to me. Tell me all the news of all kinds. Give everybody my love. Don't worry about me. I shall get on all right and if you give me time shall save money enough to get back to America on. I think now that I ^{will} be just about until a year from next May in doing that. I want to be able to buy you each a present to bring home with me as well as to get over myself. Maybe I'll succeed at another story. I'm grinding away at a couple now but I don't know what they'll amount to. I'm hoping Scribner's will publish my stuff soon. It will be such a joke on the Dr. I bet a cooky he'll say he gave me the idea for it. Happily I'd not seen ~~his~~ my hero when I pulled up my roots from the Chautauquin garden. Goodbye. Love to everybody.

Paris

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Tell Ella I'm still bracing myself against the shock of seeing
her handwriting.

Ida M. T.

Will writes me that my second letter, the one on Street-Sweeping
was published in the Chicago Tribune. Is he ~~sh~~ sure? Did you
see it?