

Typed by M. Cloud

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Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
April 24, 1946

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

5 Rue du Sommerard, Paris

6/17/'92

166T My Dear Family:

I have read Mother's "flood and fire" letter over three times, have devoured the paper Will sent, have had a long cry of thankfulness and now am bracing up for a letter. It is useless to try to work until I have written. I have put in a pretty tough ten days waiting for news. It seemed as if I never would hear. Thursday is usually letter day but this time nothing came until Friday. I have tried hard to work naturally, have gone with the "crowd", etc., etc., but I have felt horribly all the time. Now that I know that you are really uninjured and that the house is left I am satisfied. I am so thankful you could keep it from Ella. I feared that she would have to know it, perhaps have to be moved and that it would make her worse. I never was so thankful in my life. There is a poor little gushing artist that I have met over here and who confides his joys and sorrows to me sometimes and his favorite expression is, "Oh, I am afraid I am not thankful enough for my mercies." I have laughed at "little Pecky" as we call him (Peck's his name) a dozen times but I won't any more. I know what it means now to be thankful from my toes up. I do hope you will all get over the thing without nervous prostration.

I quite sympathize with Mother about the Stafford's party.

167T It was out-and-out indecent not to withdraw the invitations, father was right to go to "keep peace" and Mother to stay at home to show

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that she "didn't approve."

The crowd have been very kind to me since the catastrophe though they have laughed at me for worrying. The cablegram convinced them that all was well. Mr. Hazen knows about the Chautauguan affair, (the girls told him, not I) the Weed affair and now this and he guys me about being the center of all the convulsions of society and nature. It is remarkable how a plain, steady, digging creature like me gets into so many wildly exciting places. I seem so out of place.

I received a letter yesterday from Jo at New York. She implores me not to "get into anything" and declares that she will not feel safe about me until she ~~she~~ sees me in my "Mother's very arms." Don't let her disturb your souls. I am in clover now with the best company in Paris, I think, and it will be the last of July before I lose them. We don't see much of anybody but ourselves but we have a good time together. Last Sunday we spent at Beauvais, north of Paris, ~~at~~ It is a Cathedral town. There are four Gothic Cathedrals in France, which have parts which if put together, it is declared, would make a perfect Gothic structure. At Chartres we saw the spires of this fancied church. At Beauvais the ~~ceeur~~ choir. We went up Saturday evening, that is Mrs. Vincent, Mr. Hazen and I did, the Emery's had been there through the day, and Saturday evening did the "monuments" by moonlight and saw them again by daylight the next morning. The famous choir is no cell. It is immense. There are only the transepts and choir built, though those were made so large that it was thought wise not to attempt the nave. The height is remarkable, about 150' to the vaulting and it is almost solidly in

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stained glass in the clerestory. We attended service there Sunday morning and after service saw the relics of the church. Beauvais makes a tapestry which is the only rival in France of the Gobelin tapestries and all the public places there are decorated with it. Saturday night we went to a café about midnight and actually found the walls hung with Beauvais tapestries.

There is another church, part of it dating from the 10th century. There is a court city on the site of an old Roman building, which has the beautiful Middle Age round towers, and the streets are sprinkled with Middle Age houses with overhanging stories and with plastered and tyled fronts.

Besides the tapestries and stained glasses in the Cathedral 169T there is a famous clock, a larger and more complete one, they declare at Beauvais, than the better known one at Strasbourgh, and some of our party who had seen both agreed that the claim was correct. It is composed of 90,000 pieces and has 90 distinct movements. It shows the tides, the hours of the day all over the earth (at noon when we saw it, it said 6:45 for America), the movements of the stars, the seasons, the phases of the moon, the hours of the rising and setting of the sun, etc., etc. To end up with it gives a dramatic and awe-inspiring (?) representation of the last Judgment. Angels, some 5 inches in height, sound their tin whistles and the good and bad come forth to be weighed. The first candidate "gets there" and an angel in pink plaster comes in, wheels around à la Delsarte and marches off with the lucky fellow. The next has a harder time, tips the scales the wrong way and is pitched out by a black devil with a bloody eye. The Almighty on the top of the clock views all this with a placid countenance and when the job is done blesses

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the spectators. The angels drop their horns, the wheels don't go around any more, you pay 10 cents and the show is over.

170T We spent our afternoon reading on the hill overlooking the town, took a final walk in the evening and came home by a midnight train. We travel 3rd class on these excursions and sometimes suffer a little for it. The other night a drunken soldier with a drum got in. He commenced to beat as soon as seated and kept up an ear splitting clatter for a half hour. The gentlemen cried "Assez, assez" (enough) a dozen times but it did no good. We were all in a cold perspiration when he left us. Going up a funny thing happened. We were gliding peacefully along when there were suddenly 2 loud explosions, a blue smoke rose, the train stopped. The majority of the passengers tumbled out in a hurry sure that the anarchists were after us. It turned out that there were small bombs put on the track to stop the train at that point. In a few moments a woman (the switchmen are women here) came up with her flag and dispatch and we went on. It is a rather noisy way of getting orders to a conductor but it is effective.

171T I am busy, of course. Just now I'm getting material for a series of short articles McClure has asked me for on How Noted French People Educate Their Children. I am not sure how I shall succeed. It is very difficult to get material for such things but I am going to try and I have another place where I can put my matter if I don't find it suitable for him. The "School and College" of Boston wants a correspondent from here next year. Mr. Emery has been writing for them. They don't pay anything but it gives us advertising and I need that as much as anything. I seem to be getting a good deal free,

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don't I? The N.Y. World editorial was fine. Please thank Mr. Truesdale for his kindness. I am going to write to the N.Y. World and thank them.

I had a letter from the Dispatch this morning. They have been paying \$5.00 a letter. Mr. Mix says that they'll do better in the future though the business department can't pay as much as he thinks it ought. He also says that he can use more letters so I shall try them on two a month, that will be a help. I need it. I'm sure I've still \$100.00 left and at least \$50.00 due. If I can sell the story and the little folks tale I'll be very well fixed. I've enough to dare to go away with this summer, I think. I do live cheap, get nearly all my own meals, and since I stopped going to church don't have to have clothes, as I should have to, especially at Rue de Berry.

I'm working on another story which I have more faith in than I have in the "Sentimental Experiment." I'm also getting my material together for my Mme. Roland. Rec'd last week a beautiful photograph of a bust of her which is in the Salon this year. The sculptor himself gave it to me.

Won't you see if I left my insurance policy at home? The fire made me feel as if I ought to look after my small possessions. I hope your policies are all safe. Try to get over this thing without nervous chills. Do be very careful, Mother, about tiring out with the children. I hope they are good. Love to everybody. I'm going to write Sara in a day or two. Write me often.

Lovingly,

Ida M. Tarbell.

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