307 S. Main St.,
Wichita, Kansas, 8/26/27.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

I was delighted to get your letter yesterday, and shall adopt your suggestion to send the "Xantippe" to the women's journals. I have no doubt that it will travel far and on frequent journeys.

Yes, I have idealized Xantippe. When I decided on that subject, I went to my cyclopedia, and found a short paragraph giving very meager information. I searched others cyclos at the city library with the same result. I read Hamilton Wright's article on Socrates in my Warner's, and called my little friend Miss Elise Isely a sophomore at Fairmount, to bring me a copy of the Memorabilia, portions of which she read to me. In the mean time, I was reading the Phaedo. I made some deductions, some assumptions, from which came more deductions, and then gave my fancy free rein, perhaps urged it on with the lash, and behold the idealized Xantippe. I was so delighted with it that I almost believe it to be true. Did you ever feel that way about a beautiful fancy? You know that the old sophists believed everything beautiful to be true. Socrates took issue with them, and worsted them. Midern science has done the same thing more thoroughly. And yet, is it not so in the spiritual world? Is there always to be a discord between the good and the beautiful and the true? We don't know much about the spiritual world. But is not humanity developing a spiritual sense, by which it knows without knowing how it knows, just knows, as one sees?

Socrates was undoubtedly a very exasperating husband. I think that if he had been his wife she would have liked it better than his serenity of soul in the midst of difficulties that might have been mended. Anyhow, I am going to stick to my idealized Xantippe until I find something more alluring.

I think that when winter comes, I shall, if I am able to do any work at all, start some familiar talks with certain Biblical characters, as Abraham, Moses, David, &c., something after the fashion of the Xantippe article. These will shock some of my Fundamentalist friends, if they ever see them. One evening I listened to a lecture at the First Meth. church on Judas. It was one of a series on Some Great Sinners. The next of the series was to be on Pilate. As I shook hands with the speaker, Dr. Lowther, at the close of the service, I expressed my disappointment that I should not be able to hear the Pilate lecture, for Pilate is a great friend of mine. I am sure that he was greatly shocked, and I am sorry not to have had an opportunity to talk with him on the subject. He left Wichita soon afterwards.

I expect to have an operation on my eye in a few days, which will give me greatly improved vision if it is successful, as it probably will be. If not,- well, I am just out o' luck, that's all. Give me your good wishes. Who can tell what effect they may have on the operation? Who knows the ultimate power of the will, projected through space, space which is annihilated in the spirit world? And man is a spirit as well as an animal.

Ruth is in Normandy, at the seashore, this summer. She complains of the rain. It seems to have been very rainy in France since she went there. Even when she went down to Algiers the rain followed her. More rain than they had ever known before, they told her.

Very sincerely, Walter Graves.

Digital Images, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.