

Divonne les Bains (Ain)
le 24 June 1904
Friday

My dear Miss Tarbell—

Your letter came yesterday, and I thank you for it. I know you are quite right, that we must not talk about a sore subject, and we have given up doing so. At first there was nothing else to talk about, and we both had to suffer it through. But as soon as possible we left it alone, by mutual consent. But one very terrible thing came up on the ship, and I wanted to put it into Mr. Phillips's hands, but Sam would not let me. I write you about it to-day, because he is in Geneva, and need not know it. It was this:— Sam said that I must write Miss W. in order to enclose a letter from him, that he must write, and

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She would not read it ~~unless~~ if addressed by him. I said 'no; what more can you possibly need to say after all the last words of those days in N.Y.?' He said he wanted to get back his letters. I was horrified to know that she had his letters. How terrible are all the possibilities implied in that circumstance! I said to let Mr. Phillips know what he wanted, and have him manage it. But he was wild at that idea. So I consented. When we were in Paris, May 27th, he wrote a letter which I saw, asking for all his letters, saying that all the objections she had raised to their course during the year were just, and that he knew she was right, and that he was now happier with me than he had been for years. I wrote my little note, endorsed his, and mailed it. Perhaps I did a wrong and mak thing. Sam, of course, is very difficult for me to manage. I have some years of absolute submission to slight and wrong behind me,

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and though I am taking the upper hand as fast and as well as I know how, I have to be very indulgent and careful, to keep any real advantage at all. As the time approached when an answer could be expected to that request, Sam fell into a terrible condition. He lost flesh, nearly a pound a day for nearly a week. He rose early in the morning, and went out without greeting me, avoided meeting me at the table, would come up and go to bed in the dark when he saw me coming out from my dinner. He always watched to intercept all the mails, but where he hid himself I do not yet know. He fretted continually too, about his health, and changed his regime every day. But I was patient and quiet, waiting for a turn in the tide. I suffered intensely to see him so wretched, and yet always avoiding me, and accepting no care and comfort. But I did the best I could learn how to. These last two or three days he has been better, concluding, I

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believe that his letter would have no effect. He went to Geneva with me one day, began to take regular meals at the table again, and last evening walked on the Leave with me and talked to friends. When I said I must leave him because it was so cool, he said he would not enjoy staying out without me, and came in and sat down with me to hear the music. Two Dobbs Ferry friends are here, Miss Masters, the elder, and her little German teacher from Carlsruhe. They are very fine and interesting, and have been friendly to us both. Miss Masters is so strong that she interests Sam greatly.

Now this morning Sam had to go to Geneva again, and he left me saying he would be back before luncheon. On his way down he met the postman, sent me two letters by a little girl, with a message that he would not be back till late. He had three letters for himself. So I am thinking anxiously of him to-day, not knowing what he has to meet, or what effect it may have on him. I can only

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rest in patient confidence in God, to whom I can look now for guidance in matters that are no longer blind and incredible to me. He will be strength and salvation to us all. I am sure that when this anxious point is settled, Sam will quiet down completely, and will become humane and natural again. The newspapers which have begun to come, with accounts of the terrible Young tragedy, have been a great trial to us both. He spends his time with them in a way that makes me heart-sick. Perhaps it is salutary to him, just what he needs; but I shall be thankful to have him at length breathing a calm, sweet atmosphere, and thinking on "whatsoever things are pure and lovely, and of good report."

Letters from home are common property, of course, and all that is said to me is said to Sam. The two letters he sent up to me this morning he had opened and read, although they were perfectly trivial, from strangers. I was awfully sorry that Miss Bean mentioned that interview, and I wrote her a letter

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telling her how very bad it was for Mr. McClure to have that matter mentioned, but I burned the letter. I never referred to that item in her letter in any way, and I am sure she will understand that I don't want it to come up.

I wrote the letter to Mrs. Rice at Mr. McClure's wish, and wrote it twice, till I got it to suit him. We are both glad you did not send it. This terrible thing must be strangled to death. Then I think how awful it would be to have it known, I am afraid of it. I am very anxious to know that those letters are delivered up. I feel that I can't rest satisfied till I know that they are. I'll put a word into this letter after he gets home to let you know if they came to-day. Then if they did not come to-day, and do not come within ten days— by July 5th— when you will receive this letter, do you not think you had better see Mr. Phillips about it and see if he does not feel that he ought to recover them, have them entrusted to him, under seal for Mr.

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McClure when the right time comes to give them to him or to have him consent to destroy them? ~~Do~~ If they do not come to-day, so that I can say so in this letter, but do come by July 5th – I will cable you "Letters received. Thanks."

Sam has a great deal of comfort in talking to me about his work and wants me to go to the office and work with him again, as I used in early days. It is a good way, the best I know of, to get together again. I should like to follow his suggestion in this. But this is not a constant mood with him; even in these subjects he sometimes withdraws his confidence and communication with me. He is constantly proposing separation. He wishes to go to England without me, or he wishes me to return in September without him, and take his desk in his office, while he wanders alone; and he says he will not come back for a year – or for years – and perhaps never again. I do not think

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he has any evil plan in wishing this. I think it is only his dreadful suffering of mind. I do not reject the idea when he talks. I accept what he says, and am willing to do anything for him, without discussion. But I am more and more feeling that I must not leave him at all, – that my first service to him must be in making him the honorable, respectful husband of a wife he needs and can lean on. I thank God for the strength He is giving me. It is only right that for my husband there shall be none like me, and no one beside me; and I am going to sustain all my rights as his wife, and the independence and honor of my position, with all the strength God gives me. I must go to London with

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him, and meet his friends, and be in the business discussions, and be in a position to enter into everything that is important to him. If I am good, and keep ugly things out of sight, he will lean on me absolutely. Sometimes he does so a little already. He was terribly shaken to pieces in Paris when we saw Dr. Magnin, and the doctor said he must have a year and a half of rest and care before he returned to New York. But I think he is getting better now, even with this hourly anxiety about the mails on his mind; and that he may very well come home for a short time in the fall. He says he will not go back till he can meet the woman without a quiver. I asked if the publication elsewhere could not be arranged by Mr. Phillips, so that there need be no risk of meeting her. He said it could be done easily enough; but that there was nothing to fear from her, and he did not wish her to think that anybody feared her. I said, no; but if I go to the office, I should rather feel that

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there was no risk of my ever meeting her there, if even I did not fear her at all. I am quite sure that Mr. Phillips will take care of this. I am sure it would greatly reassure Sam, after all, if it were done, entirely without him or me in it.

Your letter did him a great deal of good, with its firm appeal to his manhood. You are a wise and valiant friend. I can never thank you enough for all you have done for husband and for me.

I am glad to know that you are going to have a restful, pleasant summer in the mountains. You deserve the best this life affords. God bless and reward you! I hope you will rest and be refreshed, even while you bring your book to a successful end.

Your loving friend,
Harriet H. McClure.

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11 Saturday A. M.

No letters were received yesterday. You may know all about this matter from Miss W. and it may be taken care of. I leave it entirely to you, to do, or not to do, as seems best; and you cannot write any report. Sam is very badly broken down nervously. I tried to have Miss Rawlins come from Paris to nurse him, but she could not. Having done all I could to humor him, I am thankful she cannot be here. Dr. Roland has him in bed on milk, and bids him stay there. He was determined to go away to Trient alone. He said he was a hurt animal that wanted to crawl into a hole and hide forever. I make no objection to anything. Dr. Roland put him to bed without consulting me at all, and he will use his authority with him, so far as it goes. But without telling him so, if he goes, I go, too. I humor him tenderly, but my heart is broken to see how weak he is. I shall never yield to his self-indulgent whims again. He must learn over again to live with me and do right. I never intrude. The doors between our rooms are opened only by himself, and he hardly passes an hour without needing and seeking me. It is salvation to us both that he has nobody but me.

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