

Typed by M. Cloud

Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
September 26, 1945

(Letter from Ida Tarbell
to her family - 1891)

(Say on back of letter
"First letter from Paris")

5 Rue du Sommerard, Paris
Aug. 25, '91

My Dearest Folks:

It is just a week since I sent the letter from Brussels. It seems like a year. The time has been spent in that hardest of works, getting settled. After spending Wed., Thurs., and Fri. in hunting rooms where we found bugs at one, odors at another, hard cases at another, endless stairs in another, we took a place in sheer despair. The address is above and you will find it on a map if you can get a large one. It is not all we wanted but it has its good points. The street is quiet and very near the grand boulevards, the finest this side of the Seine, St. Michael and Germain. We are surrounded by great buildings, within 5 minutes of us are the Patheon, Notre Dame, the Sorbonne, the University, the Cluny, the Luxembourg, etc. We are on the second floor; the madame of the house is charming and likes us. The first night she gave us a plate of the finest red and white currants I ever saw. She put the fruit up in the evening and gave us a glass of jelly which we all nearly weep over declaring it was "just like Mother's." Mme. Bonnet is her name. The rooms are very small and do not connect. I think they are about the size of Mother's without the closet. We pay 20.00 a month for the two. They contain heavy beds with canopies, wardrobes,

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writing desk, little commode which we use for table, mantel and wash stand, not much room for girls but we make it go. They contain bugs also, but tell it not in Titusville. Everything has bugs here and nobody knows how to clean decently though our bonne makes a great pretense of doing things thoroughly. Jo has been sighing for a good American Irish woman to scrub a little. But we get on beautifully. Of course we took our meals at the hotel while the . With Sunday we began "housekeeping." It is very funny. We buy just what we want for a meal and not a morsel more. Everything is fixed for that sort of living here. By going around the eeffee corner we can buy for 10¢ enough coffee with hot milk for breakfast, a step further and we find a good bakery, where we get bread "by the yard," great sticks 2 and 3 feet long. It is awfully funny to see people running around with it under their arms. We saw one woman beating a boy with her stick the other day. Butter they sell by the quarter of a pound. It is not salted a particle. So far our breakfasts have cost about 5¢ apiece, our lunches 6 or 7 and our dinners 25. Yesterday for lunch we had 1 qt. of bouillon = 8¢, bread = 5¢, tomatoes and cress = 6¢, butter and vinegar about 4 more, divide by 4. The restaurants where we dine are very good. We can get a huge piece of beef with pickle for 9¢, a beef steak for 12. We buy together and manage an excellent dinner for 25. But not everything is so cheap. Peaches at the cafe costs 12¢ each. The fruit is delicious. We have no such plums in America as I know and the grapes are luscious. A lamp chimney costs 3¢, a pair of rubbers \$1.25. So you see you pay more at one time and less at another.

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Already the trades people have our address from the Bank where we registered and I have received 5 letters offering to make me gowns. I have not had time to see many gowns yet but my impressions are that people dress about as we do at home. The skirts are many of them quite long but not all. White gloves are worn some in the streets. All the shoes are pointed. Long coats prevail. I'll write more particularly when I get to it. It is just a week and we have done some sight-seeing. The truth is everything is a sight. We walked in the Tuilleries the other night, a wonderful place, radiant with lights and splendor. Sunday we attended vespers at Notre Dame and saw its splendid statues and altar as well as heard the music. We have been in the Pantheon whose mural pictures Sara would spend days looking at. We have walked the length of the Champs-Elysees, etc., etc. The people interest me most. They are not vicious. I never saw a city-full of such decent looking people, and everybody is polite. At the shops where we buy we have made several friends. At the coffee store where I go in the morning I made the acquaintance of a wee little French madame with lovely eyes. She told me how she had a daughter who wanted to talk English and would we let her come to us: I said yes and last night they called. Her English is very good and she will come every morning and exchange an hour of French for an hour of English with the girls. I shall not take French lessons just yet for lack of time. I have begun work and already sent one letter to the Union Signal and one to the Dispatch. I hope they'll go I'm sure. It takes time to get hold of material but I think I shall succeed.

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Later:

Since writing the above I have been out getting my first idea of the Seine for my syndicate papers. We took the little steamers which ply the river and went to Chaunton, a suburb several miles out, and then back through the city: It is a strange sight. The river is paved into the water and the quays are massive and elegant. The bridges are works of art. It is a sad river though for no day passes that somebody is not dragged out from it. I saw two funerals leave the Morgue on Sunday. We have not had nerve to go into that place yet. After leaving the boat we went to the great store of which Americans are always talking, the Bon Marché. I bought a pair of gloves of their best quality for 1.85. They have plenty at 50 and 75¢ but I suspect them. Some things are cheap, principally dress goods. I find that my clothes were not mussed much by our trip. My new dress almost none. I shall not wear that soon unless our steamer friends get around here. Then I shall dress up in their honor. Now I am too busy. I work from 8 to 12 after going out to buy the breakfast, then help to clear up lunch, dress, go out for pointers and sight-seeing, eat my dinner, read and write. The girls are all well and enduring the fatigues very well. I am doing splendidly but getting anxious to hear from home again. I have had only the letter written on the 6th and now it is the 25th. Perhaps there is something at the office. It is so far that I did not get there today. Of course after this send my letters to this address, 5 Rue du Sommerard. I wish I could know now what is going on at home. I am about six hours ahead of you in

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time so I presume you are visiting ~~our~~ or resting after your dinner.
It is about 8 P.M. now here. Do write me all the particulars about
everything and all of you write. Tell father he must get me his
picture. I have a family group on my wall with all but him in it.
How you would enjoy a time over here visiting the sights of the city.
You must come. Establish your ginger jar!

Good-night, write often. Give my best love to everybody.
Don't forget to tell Uncle Jesse that I am not yet fallen into the
hands of the Philistines.

Your Loving Daughter and Sister,

Ida M. Tarbell.