

Typed by M. Cloud

Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
October 3, 1945

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell to
her family - 1891)

5 Rue du Sommerard, Paris
November 29, '91

My Dear Family:

I am staying in the house today, Sunday, resting from my week's work and feel that this is a good chance to write you a long letter. I have not been feeling well for a day or two and so have been lazy, even getting Jo to take my Sunday school class for me. I shall be the better for the rest next week I am sure.

I received Sara's letter of the 15th on the 26th, Thanksgiving morning. What a shocking thing Mr. Kepler's death is! I am sick at heart thinking of the poor family. Wasn't it bad enough to have to face the assignment without his adding a tragedy like that! But one cannot blame a dead man, I suppose. To think of such a common little individual as he looked to be having the courage to blow out his brains.

Sara said something about father having to meet a note of Mr. K.'s. I don't want you to keep any hard times or troubles from me. If Mr. K.'s failure and death involves father and Will I ought to know, for I shall come home at once and go to work at something where I can help. Here I presume I can keep myself in bread and butter, though I am not sure, and I feel certain that after two years I can learn much more than I could now either teaching or in journalism, but if I am needed there to help, that is the place for me to be and all I want is for you to say so. Don't let things go on getting worse and worse and let me stay here. I know times must be awfully tight and I suppose you all feel that if I get "swamped" so to speak you must help me out but I don't want to add to your cares. I want to help

Paris - 25.

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell to
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-2-

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lighten them. I cannot go back to M. under any consideration for any salary but I can get something else to do, I am sure, and will any day when you need me.

Sara's letter was a great comfort coming Thanksgiving Day in spite of its bad news and in spite of the fact that another came from the Dispatch saying they had rec'd my second Syndicate Letter on Street Sweeping too late to use it. I am afraid I lost the whole lot though I do not know. It makes me groan to think of it for it was a hard letter and the pictures, photos, copying, postage, etc., cost money, which I could not well spare. Never mind, perhaps somebody did use it and if nobody did I'll call in the copies and try my luck again. I send off No. III in the morning. It is on the Parisian Beggars and ought to appear Dec. 20. The Dispatch wrote me a very kind letter and said my stuff was good. Mr. Mix send his brother's address also which means I suppose that he feels kindly disposed to me and he is managing editor now. Have I had another letter in the Union Signal? I have sent three. I told the Dispatch to send Sara a letter on cheap living in Paris, if it could not use it, and if it does, send it to the Commercial Gazette, Cincinnati, Ohio, with directions to send pay to me if used.

I have made a good point since I wrote you last. My French teacher is a woman of great force and takes unusual interest in her pupils. She found I was interested in Political Economy and asked me to meet M. Chevallier, a big man over here on that subject who has written a book crowned by the Academy. I met him last Wednesday and he has given me a host of pointers on the my subjects. I am to go to Madame's every week and help them translate an English book into

Paris

76.

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell to
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-3-

Ada P. McCormick
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French, an exercise which will help my French and help me on with the "big man." It is the most profitable acquaintance on the line of work which I have made since I came and I am counting a good deal on it.

I must not forget to tell you all about my Thanksgiving.

YST

It really began on Wednesday evening when Mr. Baussman, a musician whom we know here, invited us to spend the evening with him. He lives up six flights of stairs in a pension. Mr. and Mrs. Emery, two young doctors from Hopkins and a young man attending lectures here were there with us four. We had a very jolly time singing college songs and telling stories. Then we had refreshments, chocolat and cakes with all sorts of funny oddities and wine, of course, and cigars for the gentlemen. The crowd is a very nice one and we enjoyed it all immensely. We drank your healths, in chocolat, and ended the evening singing "America." Thanksgiving Day I worked until 3 p.m. and then dressed for a reception given at the rooms of the Woman's Exchange. We all went. There was a musicale which we missed but we were there in time for the supper. It was splendid, turkey, cranberries, mince and pumpkin pies, cake, coffee and ice cream. We couldn't get enough was the only objection I had to it. The supper was donated by a wealthy lady, a Mrs. Jackson, an invalid. Her niece, the Countess D'Azarado, received the guests. She certainly is as beautiful woman as I ever saw, very tall and large and with a beautiful face, healthy, merry and good. She is married to a count whom they say is domestic and manly. I believe she attends the American Church though I never saw her before. In the evening we went to the Newells where we had another supper. Mrs. Whitelaw Reid gave that one. There were about

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-4-

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150 artists present and such a jolly time as we had! I sat at the head of the first table and poured the coffee and the rest of the evening visited. We had the same bill of fare here as at the other place. After supper there were songs and charades, and the evening ended by the doxology and a prayer which set everybody crying. Oh, it's awful to be in Europe - sometimes. If I ever stay away from you people two years it will be because I haven't money enough to get over - that's all. I want to stay but I am actually counting the months until my return now. It isn't four months since I sailed until Saturday, Dec. 5.

We have been doing no sightseeing for a week for I have been unusually busy and the last of the week wasn't well. Yesterday I wanted to see the funeral procession in honor of Lord Lytton but couldn't go out. The girls went. It was a magnificent affair. French soldiers, cavalry, artillery and infantry, representatives from all departments of the Government and all the learned societies. All the embassies in costume, and all the English nobility in Paris escorted the remains to the depot. Lord Lytton was a great favorite here especially with the literary men of the city and his place will be hard to fill. Lord Duffuin seems to be the one selected so far but you'll know if you are interested enough to notice before this gets to America.

Probably this week I'll get down to attending one or two courses of lectures. The students from America and other countries who have come here to make a business of attending lectures are feeling very cross to think that everything is so put off. There are people here who have been waiting two months for courses to begin.

Paris

78.

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell to
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-5-

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Sara wrote me that she thought we ought not to try to do anything for Xmas. I hope you won't think of sending me anything. I know you ought not to. I want to send something awfully but cannot afford it and too am afraid I'd get you into trouble. Lucy Pickett from M. whom I wrote you we found here sometime ago is going home soon and I would like to send a package by her if I could afford to, but I can't. She has been very sick with rheumatism and the family cabled her to come home. She wanted to stay but they cabled money home- and insisted she come. It is better for she is in a "home" where there are a lot of ill-natured English girls and she isn't happy and she cannot get work as she hoped to do. I dislike to see her start alone for she is still crippled sadly and I do not know how she'll get along. There are a good many girls who come here as she did hoping to get work teaching or something and never find anything. The French won't take American girls to teach English if they can help it and they won't take a young girl because they say it isn't "proper." I suppose it isn't proper either with their notions. To them any woman not married or chaperoned is lawful prey. It's a great nation - of fools. I had an experience in the library the other day which has put me out of temper with the whole race. I was working as hard as I could and utterly oblivious of surroundings when somebody deliberately placed a hand on mine. The young man at my left had edged his chair close to me and taken that way to attract my attention. I withdrew my hand, and shoved my chair away with an emphasis which certainly wasn't French and which I thought he would understand. He evidently thought it coquetry for he renewed his attentions by laying his hand on my knees. I gathered up my work and moved. He borrowed my pen.

(Letter from Ida M. Tarbell to
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-6-

89
Ada P. McCormick
Tucson, Arizona
October 3, 1945

I didn't look at him when he returned it. He borrowed it again and in returning it seized my hand. I prepared to leave. He began to talk to me. I assured him I didn't understand French. He actually had the insolence to ask for a rendezvous at the Cafe. I turned my back and started out. He followed. I dropped into a chair supposing he'd go out. He came back and besought me to smile on him, I guess. I don't understand the French vocabulary very well when it comes to that sort of thing. I didn't smile. I got up and attempted to leave but when I saw he was going to follow I returned and asked a couple of French girls to go home with me. I haven't been at that library since. Now isn't that an experience for a middle aged woman? I had on my old green suit, too. Don't worry. It's only the French of it and probably nothing of the kind will ever happen again. The girls have nearly convulsed over it because I am acting as chaperon and have always taken the lofty ground that nothing of the kind happened to one if she behaved herself. I can scarcely believe it did happen to me now. Don't tell Brother Jesse. By-the-way, give my love to Florence. Don't fail to write me all the news and write every week. Sara's letter was so interesting and so are all of them. Keep me posted about the Union Signal, Dispatch, and my work which comes back. I am going to send in my article to the McClure Syndicate this week. I want to get in with them for a letter a month. Good-night. God bless you all.

Yours Lovingly,

Ida M. Tarbell.

Won't you some of you lend me a dollar? John Finley whom I knew on the Herald is editing a new charity magazine to which I want to contribute something. I feel as if I would like to subscribe first to the

Paris
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-7-

89
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magazine. Will you send 1.00 to The Charities Review, 52 and 54
Lafayette Place, New York, with orders to send the magazine here
for a six months. I'll write John from here that you'll do it. The
cost of a money order from here is too much. Keep an account of all
these little sums and I'll pay you when my ship comes in.

I.M.T.