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Typed by M. Cloud

Ada P. McCormick
LETTER
October 10, 1946

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

November 27, '92

My Dear Family:

I am beginning you a letter this Sunday evening because I am alone and rather lazy. I have been out nearly all day in the air for it was lovely and I feel as if I must [be] improving every moment of fine weather now that winter is on my heels. Paris is an abomination some days now -- it rains ceaselessly and your boots and petticoats are perfectly soaked. It has rained a great deal this last week but I've managed to get around a great deal in spite of all that. Wednesday evening I went to the Newell's reading rooms for an hour or two, there being a Thanksgiving feast there. I did not stay for the feast which came somewhere near midnight, but I spoke to all my friends and had a pleasant enough time. My real Thanksgiving feast came the next day -- nothing else than a French wedding. Mme. Bonnet's son. Miss Coan and I both went. We put on our best clothes and left the house at 9:30 A.M. with Mme. B. and Mlle. Louisa -- closed carriage. Our first stop was at the bride's father's. The groom is a young man of 25 -- a sort of wine drummer, the bride a little dressmaker. The family live in a very simple but pleasant apartment and we had a chance to see them all as well as a good deal of the dressing of the bride, we were so early. There were two hairdressers superintending the coiffure and the putting on of the veil and a dressmaker finishing up the gown on the bride. The dress was of white satin trimmed a little with lace, and orange blossoms and there was a large veil. When all was ready the family, guests and bridal party went downstairs and through the court where all the neighborhood was gathered to see the show. Miss C. and I had the honor of riding with the groom and

his mother just to the church. I never saw anybody funnier than the young fellow. He was wso happy he couldn't sit still, so proud that he nearly swelled out of his dress suit and so unaccustomed to his finery that I thought we would never get him to the mayor's without some catastrophe. He insisted on sticking his head out of the
228T carriage window every few moments to see if his bride's carriage was coming and he handled everything within reach with his white gloves. The first stop was at the mayor's office for the civil ceremony which is the only essential one in France. After it was over we went to the church where they were married again, lectured by a jolly priest and had a mass said over them by another who looked like a sepulchre. This all took nearly an hour -- then we went to the side-room where the records were and after the signing came the congratulations. Then we mounted into our carriage again and drove for an hour to the other side of Paris where the dinner was served. This restaurant is a famous one among the working and commercial people. It contains dining rooms sufficient for 15 or 20 dining parties at the same time and its patrons are nearly always weddings. We had a room large enough for a party of 25 and a very handsome table awaited us. As it was 2 p.m. and I had not eaten all day I was thankful to see signs of provisions. It was a dinner of 15 courses and all good. One very funny thing occurred. The French are very fond of crawly things, snails, shrimps, etc. One of the decorative pieces was made up of pink shrimp. Miss Cone was beside me and the things made her nervous she said. When they came to be served I persuaded her to try them. She saw me take th one andshe tried, but her hand trembled and the claws moved in a very life-like way. She thought the things were alive, dropped the knife and spoon, threw her hands up and screamed aloud. The company happened to be still at the moment

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and everybody saw the performance. My, how they laughed! It was the funniest thing I ever saw. She was much distressed but got over it soon. We ate for 3 solid hours. I have had the dyspepsia ever since. The party staid until midnight but I left with Miss C. at six P.M. She had a rendezvous and can't talk French so I go with her now and then to help her out. 229T

I think I wrote you that a couple of former Meadville acquaintances are here, Mrs. Grandin and her daughter. They invited me over for dinner ~~last~~ Saturdayevening and invited M. de Lintner to come after me. He is an awful aristocrat and did not like the evident desire to get acquainted with him which Madame and daughter showed but went all the same. What was my horrow on our starting home to have him tell me that the young lady had as offered him her picture and asked for his ea. It was the second time she had seen him and probably never would again. There is nothing like an American girl to get on in the world. I have to blush for my countrymen over here as often almost as I do over French morals.

Thursday, Dec. I.

I did not get my letter finished up for Tuesday's mail but will do it now for tomorrow's. I have been awfully busy this week with a half dozen articles all in ~~very~~ different stages of unfinish. I went yesterday to see one of the best of the literary women here, Arvide Barnie. She rec'd me very kindly, gave me the facts she I wanted and asked to come to see me. She also gave me a card of introduction to another leading literary woman.

I think it is going to go. McClure is very kind. I sent him an article a short time again on a subject on which someone else had written something. After it had gone I rec'd a m card from

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him saying he had accepted an article and requesting me not to write. I immediately answered that it was all right and that he might return Ms. but he wrote me no, that he should keep it and that I should do nothing for him which was not remunerative. I think now that all I need is a few months more of connection to prove my usefullness and then that I can make a steady engagement on a salary. I am convinced there is a position here for me if I can hang on a little longer. You must not worry about me. I am very well and I am contented. The loneliness is sometimes horrible or would be if I didn't go to bed when I see it coming or d- else cut for a visit to somebody. You must write me often, very often, I simply cannot get on without letters. I had a long letter from Prof. Montgomery today. He tells me that "Dr. F. was defeated by the biggest majority ever known in that county and that enough was said about him to fill a book." A simple and noncommittal statement worthy of Judge H.

I am so glad to know Sara is really better. I sent her a roll of fashion journals the other day and shall write her a letter very soon with lots of things not for public circulation that is gossip for her alone, about myself and the clothes I'm going to have when I get started, (It begins to sound like a don't it? going "getting started?"). I put into the roll some of my McClure articles. I think you'll find them in the Pittsburg Leader always. Kindly see. If you can make the notice of "Paris representative of McC." go with the World (?) don't fail to send marked copy to McClure, Tribune Building. You must all write me letters for

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Xmas. Don't try to send me anything -- unless you can get father to have his picture taken for me. I'll be jolly all day and go over the river and break myself up buying a turkey dinner, I presume. I didn't have any turkey for Thanksgiving but I'm bound to for Xmas. Goodnight to you all. Take good care of yourselves. Please do and don't let father expose himself too much. Love to everybody in [and?] the neighbors.

Ida M. Tarbell.

PARIS
232.

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