June 12, 1931.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th St.,
New York, N. Y.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

Your comments on my Lincoln paper deserve an answer from me. You will, therefore, pardon me for taking the liberty of writing to you. Let me say that your comments on my paper pleased me very much indeed. But, you made two qualifications which I would like to explain to you. First, you cite Dr. Warren that "Tom Lincoln was neither as illiterate or as shiftless as most of his biographers would like to have us believe". I will admit to you that I did not know this authority, but in making the diagnosis of constitutional inferiority, it makes no difference to us psychiatrists whether a person is illiterate or a college graduate. Our diagnosis is based on the person's adjustment to life. As such, I would say that Tom Lincoln showed an unsteadiness and a lack of accomplishment in his mental and emotional spheres, which justifies my diagnosis. Without being a psychiatrist my feeling is that anybody, who reads a number of books on Lincoln will come to the conclusion that Lincoln's father was not the average adjustable person.

The second qualification refers to the "OEdipus situation". I could have given much more material to prove my case, but as I tried to confine myself to Lincoln's sense of humor, I selected only a few items. The whole thing revolves on Lincoln's attitude to his father's serious illness. It was the way he behaved when he was informed that his father's illness was very grave and that he was going to die. At first he did not answer Johnson's letters, and when he finally wrote to Harriet Hanks he did not state that he was detained by virtue of this and this, but gave reasons which to me indicated that he had no love for his father. Had he written in the first place that he was very much affected by his father's illness, etc., etc., and that is was impossible for him to come, I would not have selected this episode to prove the OEdipus situation. However, I am very grateful to you for having written a very fair review of my paper.

Hoping to have the pleasure of meeting you some day

Very cordially yours,