

My dear Miss Tarbell. It has been quite
a while since I used you "as the immor-
tal Mr. Bykes would say "under similar
in circumstances" My friend Diller asked
me to write to you in reference to Mr. Lincoln's
Chewing Tobacco. I told him I would
give him my personal knowledge by
giving my personal experience, as the
best proof that he did not. I have smoked
nearly all my life - on this mundane
sphere - and I have to do the same
in some other sphere for indulging in
this one. But I don't desire to. I used
to indulge in the use of the weed in a
meaner way, ^{chewing} but mastered that "in a
measure" as the fellow said when he
quit drinking ^{whisky} out of a pint measure.
When I was sheriff of the Supreme Court
of Illinois, I was in the library room
and was about to take a nip of consolation

As I regarded it then, and as I did so I saw Mr Lincoln looking at me, and I said: "This is something you are not guilty of." He promptly replied "Only when I am compelled to choose between one of two evils, the weed or worst, ~~the~~ the toothache.

That lady who became so disgusted at Lincoln because of "tobacco juice & m-ming," must have been looking at some ancient trap, who ^{was proper to the} looked like Lincoln. families which are quite numerous now a days, but one of the family who did what Lincoln never did in his life - Chew tobacco. There is just about as much truth in her "filthy" story of Lincoln, as there was in some pivotal clerk's in Washington, who said "Old Abe used to, ^{take} about 4 fingers of whisky every morning". That clerk must had the "Jim Jam imagination" bad.

I was very much amused the other day when reading of some old Colored woman who used to do so many things for Old Abe before he was president, and ^{then} wound up by saying "she was set free by the proclamation ~~and~~ ^{at once} moved to Indiana, and had lived there ever since." I am not prepared to believe that Mr Lincoln walked to Kentucky ^{in his} sleep, or visited that old Aunt, who I expect had a mother or father who was "cook or bray servant" for Geo Washington.

I have read your production with a great deal of pleasure. When you were here I had a wife and lovely daughter living and I was in active life. ~~My~~ My wife and my six children are side by side in "Oak Ridge".
Yours Kindly
March 17th 1904
Thos. W. S. Kidd