I would take an apartment in the Latin quarter 
up high where I could look over the roofs, see the sky. I 
would have a Salon like Madame Harilier's. She would find 
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and perhaps Lucien Herri. Madame Marillier, Seignorbe's and Louis Lapique would come. 
I would be very choice about my Americans; I would study and 
study and try to clear my mind as to women and revolution.

It was with this baggage and a terrible thirst 
for a long drink of family life that in 1894 I went back to 
America. My friends sent me off grandly. It was "Au Revoir." to my 
friends! I felt sure it was Au-Revoir.

add: 195 & 196 [A.]

[Note: The handwriting is difficult to read, but it appears to be a continuation of the text or a note added later.]
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It was with this baggage and a terrible thirst for a long drink of family life that in 1894 I went back to America. My friends sent me off grandly. It was "Au Revoir." I felt sure it was Au Revoir.
The first two months after I reached America in June of 1894 I spent at home convincing myself that my family in spite of the trials it had been suffering was unchanged in its ways, its loyalties and its philosophy. If life was not as easy materially for my father and mother as their long years of labor and self-denial gave them the right to hope I found that they were enjoying that most precious experience, the evidence of the continuity of their lives. My brother and his fine wife with three children, two girls and a boy, lived only a few doors away and were as much at one home as the other. They gave, I found, a continual fresh zest to the household and its doings.

My father again had the legitimate excuse for going to the circus which our growing up had taken from him- "The children want to go." My mother had as strong a justification for family picnics and birthday and holiday celebrations. "The children enjoy them so," she would say in self-defense when we accused her of tiring herself out in preparation. But the children did not enjoy these family festivities more than their elders. As a matter of fact those of us left still keep them up though the third generation is far away.
RECOLLECTIONS
1894 - 1890

Part IV

The first two months after I reached America in June of 1894 I spent at home convincing myself that my family in spite of the trials it had been suffering was unchanged in its ways, its loyalties and its philosophy. If life was not as easy materially for my father and mother as their long years of labor and self-denial gave them the right to hope I found that they were enjoying that most precious experience, the evidence of the continuity of their lives. My brother and his fine wife with three children, two girls and a boy, lived only a few doors away and were as much at one home as the other. They gave, I found, a continual fresh zest to the household and its doings. My father again had the legitimate excuse for going to the circus which our growing up had taken from him - "The children want to go." My mother had as strong a justification for family picnics and birthday and holiday celebrations. "The children enjoy them so," she would say in self-defense when we accused her of tiring herself out in preparation. But the children did not enjoy these family festivities more then their elders. As a matter of fact those of us left still keep them up though the third generation is far away.
For me those children were a challenging experience. Three years had made the youngsters keen observers and I found them appraising me in the fashion of natural unspoiled children. Launched on one of the long narrative monologues to which I was addicted with intimates I would suddenly be checked by the cool impersonal stare of nieces or nephew. They did not know it but I knew they were taking my measure. They were not only an unending interest and joy to me but a salutary correction.

But before I was really sure of my standing with them though quite reassured as to that with their elders I was snatched away by a hurried letter from Mr. McClure. I must come at once to New York and write a life of Napoleon Bonaparte. The base for this remarkable order lay in a promise I had made to Mr. McClure as I passed through New York to join the staff of his syndicate and magazine after my vacation, not for any particular task but for general magazine activity, chiefly staff writing on themes he thought fit. He would give me forty dollars a week. I had never expected to earn so much money. My care I could save enough to carry me back to Paris and I could at the same time learn more of the needs of the McClure organization - what I could do for them abroad. In promising to join his outfit I had tried to make it clear to Mr. McClure that the relation would be temporary, that I did not intend to tie myself ever again permanently to any organization. I preferred freedom even if it meant scarcity. I do not think he took me very seriously. I had done my best to meet his needs in the two years since he had first come to see me in Paris and he trusted now to his power of
persuasion and my good humor and necessity in case I proved as useful as he hoped.

The Napoleon situation was pressing as I found when to the disgust of my family I promptly went to New York in the blistering August heat. The Napoleon Movement, as I had heard it called in Paris for a couple of years, had reached the editorial desk of McClure's in the form of an invitation to publish a stupendous collection of Napoleon portraits, the property of a distinguished citizen of Washington, D. C. - Gardiner Green Hubbard. Mr. Hubbard was popularly known as the father-in-law of Alexander Graham Bell the inventor of the telephone. He was really the father-in-law of the telephone chiefly since it was largely through his faith in the invention, long before it was recognized as a practical utility and his shrewd and indefatigable work in securing patents all over the earth, in enlisting supporters and in fighting rival claimants, that the telephone had been developed and secured for Mr. Bell and his family. Mr. Hubbard had long been a Napoleon collector. The revival in interest in the man in the early '90's had made him feel that his collection ought to be reproduced for the public. But he insisted a suitable text, that is, one he liked, must go with the picture. Mr. McClure had secured one firm, an able Englishman Robert Sherard, a grandson of Wordsworth, but it was so contemptuously anti-Napoleon that Mr. Hubbard would not allow his picture to go along with it. And here it was August and Mr. McClure with the head-long speed in which he conducted affairs had announced the first installment for November.
I was both amazed and amused by the idea that a popular American magazine could think of such an undertaking. Why? I asked myself. I had seen the Napoleon Movement start and grow in Paris in 1892 and '93. I had read everything that came along in the way of fresh reminiscences, of brilliant journalism, particularly that of Figaro and I had tucked away in my clippings a full set of the Caran d' Ache cartoons which so captivated Paris, but I looked on it as a political movement pure and simple, an effort of the Bonapartists to revive the popular admiration of the country's most spectacular figure. If the revulsion against the Panama brand of republicanism could be kept alive, fed, might there not be a turning to Bonaparte? Just as the anarchists took advantage of the situation by hurling bombs so the Bonapartists turned to blazoning France with the stories of the glory that had been hers under the Little Corporal. It is an amazing record of achievement and one had to be a poor Frenchman or human being for that matter not to feel his blood stir at its magnificence.

But write his life - it was laughable. And yet how could I refuse to try. The forty dollars a week was a powerful argument. Moreover, I had been talking largely about devoting myself to French Revolutionary history. If this wasn't that what was? But there was something else. This man had pulled France out of the slough where she lay when Madame Roland waiting her turn at the guillotine had murmured, "Oh, liberty, how they have tricked you." I had a terrific need of seeing the thing through, France on her feet, order, decency, common sense, returning, and he had for a time done that.
I would try, I told Mr. McClure, at his expense, but I would have to go back at once to Paris. Where else could I get sufficient material? And perhaps that idea encouraged me to try but first we all agreed I must go to Washington, talk with Mr. Hubbard, see what was to be had there. Promptly an invitation came from Mrs. Hubbard to come at once to their summer home out Chevy Chase Way on Woodley Lane almost opposite the Rock Creek Zoo. President and Mrs. Cleveland had their summer home on the Lane and the Maclean place where Admiral Dewey was to go when he returned the conquering hero from the Phillipines was across the way. Twin Oaks, as the Hubbard place was called from two big oaks just in front of the house was altogether the finest country estate in the Washington district, as well as altogether the most beautiful and elegant home into which I had ever been admitted. Mrs. Hubbard, herself, was a woman of rare taste and cultivation, a really great lady, and what she was showed from end to end of that lovely sunny house. Maids, butler, gardener, all took on something of her dignity and gentleness. Mr. Hubbard who had opened his Napoleon collection to McClure's was a man of some seventy years then, wiry, energetic, putting in every moment of his time serving his friends and family and in worshiping Mrs. Hubbard. I think he tried her preference for quiet and dignity and for people of her own kind. It must have made her a little uneasy to have a strange woman with a meagre wardrobe and a preoccupied mind drop into her carefree gaily bedecked society, but she took it all in
the best nature and with unvarying kindness, and understanding. I liked her particularly for the way she accepted Mr. McClure in the days to come. He would burst unexpectedly into the house at tea time or at any moment which suited his convenience. His bag loaded with proofs of the Napoleon prints and almost before he had made his greeting the bag was open and the proofs spread helter skelter over the carpet. Being very much on my good behavior I was a little horrified myself and then I did so want them to like and appreciate Mr. McClure. When I tried to apologize for the dishevelment he wrought Mrs. Hubbard laughed, "That eagerness of his is beautiful," she said, "I am accustomed to geniuses." And so she was as I was to find.

It did not take me long to discover that there was plenty of material in Washington for the Napoleon sketch. Mr. Hubbard had the latest books and pamphlets. It was easy to arrange that I have proofs from Paris of two or three volumes of reminiscences that had been announced. In the State Department I found the full Napoleonic correspondence published by the order of the French Government. Files of all the leading French newspapers of the period were in one library or another. In the Congressional Library there was a remarkable collection of books gathered by Andrew D. White when he was minister to Germany from 1879 to 1881, the bulk of them in German, French and English. And item of this collection not to be duplicated was some fifty volumes of pamphlets made in Germany during the Revolution and covering the Napoleonic era. They were in at least a half dozen different languages. They were for the most part the hasty
agitated outbreaks of vox populi - protests - arguments -
prophecies - curious personal adventures, but among them were rare bits. Taken as a whole they reflected the contemporary state of mind of the people of Europe as nothing I had ever seen.

Convinced of the adequacy of material I reluctantly gave up Paris and settled down to work in the congressional library. It was not so easy to find a spot there in the early '90's for a writing table and it took some persuasion to convince the ruler of the place Ainsworth Spofford that I was worth the effort, that is, that I was there to use his books day in and day out until my task was done. Certain of that he tucked me in though stacks of books rising from floor to ceiling had to be moved to find room.

I wonder if students in the United States know how much they owe to this man. He gave his life to making a library first to serve Congress for he held the firm conviction that congressmen generally needed educating and that books handy in which he could find materials for their committee work and their speeches would contribute to the process. He made it his first business to provide them as near on the instant as possible what he thought they needed. In return for this service he used every opportunity to wheedle, shame, beg money from them, money for books, equipment, an increased staff, and always for better accommodations, for Mr. Spofford had a great vision of a national library, educating not only congress but the
people. To realize that vision he had become what he was when I knew him, a devoted, domineering, crabbed, czar of his realm. He worked incessantly doing everything, knowing everything. He paid little attention to the irritated criticisms of those who saw only the inconveniences and dust and over-crowding of the old rooms and who charged him with inefficiency and tyranny. His mind was on the arrangement and administration of the marble pile already under way across the square. This was what he had been working for - a worthy place for books. His sharp irritated, "There, maybe you can find something in that," banging a dusty volume on my table, has often sounded in my ears as in later years I worked at the commodious desks of the library he had dreamed and which to my mind is a monument to him more than to any other man, naturally enough since he was the only man I ever knew who had anything to do with its existence.

Six weeks and I had my first installment ready. I had done it with my tongue in my cheek. Impudence, it seemed to me to write history on the gallop. I had kept myself to it by repeating in moments of disgust, "Well, a cat may look at a king. I'll sketch it in and they can take it or leave it." But Mr. Hubbard liked what I had done and that meant Mr. McClure hurried it to the printers while I in hot haste went ahead with my sketching.

I expected nothing for myself from it more than the forty dollars a week and the inner satisfaction of following the thrilling drama from the terror of '93 down to St. Helena. That satisfied me. But to my surprise I did get the last thing
in the world I had expected, the approval of a few people who knew the field. John C. Ropes wrote me he liked the treatment. "Come and lunch with me when you are in Boston and see my Napoleon collection." I couldn't believe my eyes. Of course I went.

Charles Bonaparte, the grandson of Jerome Bonaparte and Mrs. Bonaparte invited Mr. Hubbard and me to lunch with them in Baltimore to see their collection. Curious the little things one remembers of long ago experiences. Out of that visit I recall only that Mrs. Bonaparte told me that in the garret when she came into the house where Jerome and his American wife Elizabeth Patterson had lived, there were literally barrels of string, short lengths, neatly rolled the accumulation of a lifetime. Why remember that when the home was full of treasurers on my subject? Probably because I have never been able to cut and throw away a string without a pang.

Something better worth remembering was the startling resemblance in a certain pose of Charles Bonaparte to Napoleon. As he stood talking unconsciously, hands behind his back, slightly stooped, he was the counterpart of Raffet's Napoleons, the most natural of them all.

A bit of consolation for my hasty work came from the last source I would have expected, the author of an elaborate study the outcome of years of research recently published by the Century Magazine. That was the way biography should be written, years of research, of note-taking, of simmering and saturation. Then you had a ripened result, I said, something of this once to Mr. Stowe.
"I am not so sure," he replied, "that all the time you want to take, all the opportunity to indulge your curiosity and run here and there on by paths, to amuse yourself, to speculate and doubt, contribute to the soundness or value of a biography. I have often wished that I had as you had the prod of necessity behind me, the obligation to get it out at a fixed time, to put it through, no time to idle, to weigh, only to set down. You got something that way - a litig sketch."

I couldn't have listened to more consoling comment. There must have been something in his characterization of "living" for now over forty years since it first appeared in book form I still receive annually a small royalty check for my "pot boiling" Napoleon.

What really startled me about that sketch was the way it settled things for me, knocked over my former determinations and went about shaping my outward life in spite of me. It weakened my determination never again to tie myself to a position, to a group, to keep myself entirely foot loose, it shoved Paris into the future and substituted Washington. It was certainly not a return to the security of a monthly wage alone with the possibility that the wage would soon grow that turned my plans topsy-turvey, though that had its influence. Chiefly it was the sense of vitality, of adventure, of excitement, that I was getting from being admitted on terms of equality and good comradeship into the McClure crowd.

The Napoleon had given the magazine, now in its second year, the circulation and boost it needed. My part in it was
not exaggerated in the office or by me. We all agreed that it was the picture that had done it, but the text had framed the picture, helped bring out this value and it had been done at a critical moment.

"I must stay with them," declared Mr. McClure. And the more I saw of Mr. McClure and his colleagues the more I wanted to stay. Of my first impression of S. S. McClure in Paris I have spoken. Closer views emphasized and enlarged my first impressions. He was as eager as a dog on the hunt—never satisfied, never quiet. Creative editing, he insisted, was not to be done by sitting at a desk in a comfortable office. It was only done in the field following scents, hunts. An omnivorous reader of newspapers, magazines, books, he came to his office daily primed with ideas, possibilities, and there was always a chance that among them was a stroke of genius. He hated nothing so much in the office as a settled routine, wanted to feel stir, alertness, from the door to the inner sanctum. And he had great power to stir excitement by his suggestions, his endless searching after something new, alive, startling, and particularly by his reporting.

He stood in awe of no man but dashed back and forth over the country, back and forth to Europe interviewing the great and mighty. He brought back from his forays contracts with Stevenson, Conan Doyle, Anthony Hope, Kipling. The pages of McClures from the start were enriched by the greatest writers of the Day. But he was as keen for this new as the established
and this keenness meant a long list of distinguished American
names first appearing in McClures.

He was always peering over the Edge of the Future.
It was this search for what was coming that brought to McClure's
the first article in an American Magazine on radium, the X-ray,
Marconi's wireless. In my field of biography and history the
Edge of the Future meant to him the "unpublished" or the so poorly
published that its reappearance was equal to a first appearance.
The success of a feature spurred him to effort to get more of
it, things which would sharpen and perpetuate the interest. And
he was ready to look into any suggestion however unlikely it might
seem to the conventional and cautious minded. He was never
afraid of being fooled. What he really feared was missing
something.

His quick taking of a hint, his warm reception of new
ideas, new facts, had its drawbacks. If they were dramatic
and stirring Mr. McClure was impatient on investigation. He
wanted the fun of seeing his finds quickly in print. At one
point in the publication of the Napoleon he caused me real
anxiety by his apparent determination to print a story for which
I could find no authority.

Among the contributors to the Syndicate at that time
was a picturesque European with a title and an apparently endless
flow of gossip. He pretended to have been a member of the Court
of Napoleon III and in the confidence of the Emperor. This
relation accounted for his having been invited to join a
strange secret party made up by the Emperor who was worried
over a rumor that the body of Napoleon did not lie under the
dome of des Invalides. It was not known who did lie there or
what had become of Napoleon. To reassure himself the Emperor
decided to go with a few chosen friends and open the tomb. They
gathered in the dead of night. The tomb was opened. There
lay Napoleon, unchanged. The Emperor's mind was at rest. He
swore the group to secrecy, but took affidavits to be used in
case of political necessity. The fall of the Empire seems to
have made the gentleman feel that his oath was no longer binding
and that he could cash in on his adventure.

I did not believe it, but when I expressed my doubt
all I could get out of Mr. McClure was a severe

"What

a pity you don't know something about Napoleon." No new idea
to me since it was the first thing I was thinking every morning
when I went to work. What I did not know as I worried over the
possible publication of what I believed a fake was that in spite
of his quick and enthusiastic acceptance of a good story
S. S. McClure was wary. Moreover, he had a contempt for the
thing that wasn't true, a contempt for mistakes. Good stories -
yes - but they must be true stories. Moreover, he knew what
I did not as yet that he could go the limit in his enthusiasms
since he had at his side a partner on whom he counted more I think
than he then realized to pull him back at the edge of a precipice.
This happened now. The story was in type, scheduled.
Mr. McClure was going to Europe. "While you're over there",
said this partner quietly you better verify that Napoleon story.
We'll hold it until we hear from you."

A few weeks later came a laconic postal card. "Don't
publish the story of the opening of Napoleon's tomb. It wasn't
opened."

I never heard the matter referred to after that. by
the time he returned he had forgotten what to me was a near
tragedy, to him a joyful bit of editorial adventure.

I came later to feel that this quick kindling of the
imagination, this untiring curiosity, this determination to run
down every clue until you had it there on the table, its worth
or worthlessness in full view was one of Mr. McClure's greatest
assets, one of evidences of the authenticity of his genius.

By a strange providence, so I came to believe,
Mr. McClure had by his side a partner who believed in his genius
and who made it his business to guard and foster it. This was
a friend from the period when the two had been classmates at Knox
College and partner in all sorts of radical student activities -
John S. Phillips. After Knox Mr. Phillips had graduated at
Harvard and followed it by two years study in Germany, returning
to join Mr. McClure in the syndicate which he in the meantime
had founded. From the beginning of his editorial and business
relation John Phillips seems to have given himself unselfishly
to supporting and rounding out Mr. McClure's undertakings. It was not friendship, though the friendship was there. It was not self-interest for he was forced to do constantly that which was foreign to his own fine cultured tastes and intuitions. It was rather the consciousness of the sacredness of the gift of God that was in S. S. McClure. This steady, quiet, understanding colleague of his made it his business to catch and develop it as he could. Mr. McClure, himself, was more or less conscious of this less perhaps then than now. He knew he could rely on John Phillips as on nobody else. Nothing in the varied relations of the McClure crowd in the years in which I was a member seemed to me so big and fine, as well as rare, as the unselfish devotion of this man to the genius of his erratic and amazing leader.

The one member of the staff beside Mr. McClure whom I knew, when I began to find myself so to speak absorbed, was already by virtue of his unusual gift for comradeship a friend as well as a species of boss — that was August J. Jaccaci, a brilliant artist and art editor as well as one of the most versatile and iridescent personalities I have ever known. I first met Jac, as he was called by everybody, in Paris, an advance agent of the new magazine sounding out possibilities for writers and illustrators. Our first meeting was in the Reception Room of the American bank. Not having a salon of my own and being so far away from the center of things I usually made my appointments there. Jac had taken me to dinner and paid the addition. We talked until late then he simply put me on my omnibus and let
me come alone. Here was established the modus operandi for our frequent visiting in the future - in Paris - in New York - in Washington - with one revision. After that first dinner I paid my share of the check save on special occasions when Jack a knowing epicure with all sorts of flourishes selected the dinner and treated me.

It was he who showed me the first copy of McClure's, that of August 1893, showed it to me at five thirty in the morning at a Cafe across the square from the Gare Se Lazare where he had ordered me by cablegram from London to meet him. For nobody in the world excepting a member of my family would I have been willing to go at that hour to the other side of Paris, but I couldn't afford to show a lack of interest. Moreover, I must confess that this preposterous request flattered me a little. It was taking me man to man I said to myself. And so I was there. He had to bully the garcon to get a table out on the sidewalk and make us coffee.

I was not enthusiastic enough over that first number to please him. He thumped the table, called me names, forgave me later when we got down to business and he found that I was ready to undertake two or three rather difficult jobs of picture gathering, his business, but he knew well enough it would take a great deal of time and red tape and he was in a hurry. All this was a good basis for a comradeship which lasted to his death. It lives in my memory as something quite apart in my relation
with men. Jack had a certain superior appreciation and wisdom
never quite put into words but which you felt. I for my part
was always straining to understand, never quite reaching it.
Part of his charm was his confidence in his own superiority
though he couldn't quite make us see it. And then there were
his rages. They came and went like terrible summer thunder
showers. He would roar down the corridor of the office while
I sat and watched him enthralled. Those rages, whether
directed at me or somebody else, never made any other impression
on me than that of some unusual natural phenomenon.

Here then were the leaders in the crowd in which I
found myself admitted by virtue of a hasty sketch of Napoleon
Bonaparte done on order. I had not finished the sketch before
Mr. Moulure had a new job for me, not writing this time, but
editing, editing according to this receipt. "Out with you —
look, see, report." Abraham Lincoln was the subject. My
heart fell. "If you once get into American history," I told
myself, "you know yourself well enough to know that will finish
France. You will give up your determination to solve the woman
question and determine the nature of Revolution. They will go
the way of the microscope and your search for God. Are you to
spend your life running, now here, now there, never follow a
path to its end?" I was very miserable. Or was I taking my
ambition too seriously? It seemed probable. However, I was
to have five thousand a year if I went along. There was no
question in my mind but it was my duty to earn that money.
Lincoln was one of Mr. McClure's steady enthusiasms. I once saw him in one of his frequent efforts to find the reason for the continued life of certain great American magazine going through the file from the Civil War on, solely to find out what attention had been given to Lincoln. "Not a Lincoln article in this volume, nor in this," he cried. "It is not a great magazine, it has overlooked the most vital factor in our life since the Civil War, the influence of the life and character of Abraham Lincoln."

His insight told him that people never had had enough of Lincoln. Moreover, he believed that there was to be had for the seeking a large amount of "unpublished" reminiscences. It was on this conviction that he started me off.

He was right about "unpublished" material. Lincoln had been dead only about thirty years and hundreds of those who had known him in one connection or another were still living. His secretaries Nicolay and Hay had finished their great documentary life of their chief. They should have personal material not in their volumes. There were members of his Cabinet still living, members of Congress in his time, editors like Joseph Medill of the Chicago Tribune, Horace White of the Chicago Tribune and New York Evening Post, the time of the Colonel McClure of the Philadelphia. There were scores of men in Illinois towns who had traveled the Circuit with him, for whom he acted as counsel, scores of people
who had as a youth heard the Lincoln Douglas Debates and had been stirred to say that "Lincoln's got it right." They had followed him in his fight against the extension of slavery and later into the war to save the Union. There was indeed no point of the short trail he had followed from birth to death where men and women who had known him were not still living, colleagues, friends, few opponents, critics.

Also, there had never been a time from the day he had become a presidential candidate to that of his assassination that his life had not been under scrutiny. It had been difficult to find out much about him. "There is not much of me," he told a friend searching for biographical material. But there had been enough always to touch deep springs in American hearts and consciences. Men like William Dean Howells and J. H. Holland, later to occupy high places in our literary life, had written campaign lines of him. Hardly was he in his coffin before his brilliant, if unstable, law partner William Herndon was gathering from all sources reminiscences, estimates, documents on his life up to the presidency and from his gathering had made a story of extraordinary vitality and color. Most important - always to remain most important - was the Collection of his Letters and Speeches and the ten volume History of his Life by Nicolay and Hay.

Why do more? What was there to be had? Mr. McClure insisted that there was plenty if one searched.

I went to talk it over with John Nicolay who with his fine daughter Helen were honored members of the famous old
Washington Literary Society into which I had been admitted. I told him what Mr. McClure proposed. Did he not have something he could give me? He was emphatic in saying there was nothing of importance to be had. The collection of letters and speeches he and Mr. Hay had made was complete; they had told all there was worth telling of Lincoln's life. He would advise me not to touch so hopeless an assignment. I think Mr. Nicolay never quite forgave me for going ahead. Later when the results of my search began to appear and gradually to shape themselves into a Life of Lincoln he came to me one evening to protest. "You are invading my field. You write a popular life of Lincoln and you do just so much to decrease the value of my property."

I was deeply distressed. He thought me a poacher. I told him I believed he was utterly mistaken. I pled that if I could write anything which people would read I was making readers for him. To know a little of Lincoln was for the serious a desire to know more. He and Mr. Hay had written something that all students always must have. I could never hope to make an essential lasting contribution. But he went away unconvinced.

Mr. Nicolay's point of view, if not generous, was certainly honest. I understand it better now than I did then. He had lived through the great years of the Civil War, always at Lincoln's elbow. He had been the stern careful, humorless guardian of a man who carried his mail in his hat and a laugh on his lips. His reverence for him was a religion. He had given years of consciousness and hard labor to the editing of the "Complete Works" and the writing of the History and now he
was retired. Lincoln was his whole life. We all come to rest our case on the work to which we have given our best years, frequently come to live on that so to speak. When the time comes that our field is invaded by new writers, enlarged, re-shaped, made to yield new fruit, we suffer shock. We may put up a no trespassing sign but all to no use. Mr. Nicolay's tragedy was in not having found a fresh field.

How different it was with his colleague John Hay. His secretaryship with Lincoln had been an episode in a diplomatic career of unusual distinction and usefulness and everybody recognized that in 1894 he had a great future before him. His part in the life of Lincoln had been but one of many contributions to the literature of his day. His social circle was the choicest and he was rich. Hay had everything; Nicolay only Lincoln and he looked on all who touched his field as invaders.

Mr. Nicolay's rebuff settled my plan of campaign. I would not begin at the end of the story with the great and known but at the start in Kentucky with the humble and unknown; I would follow the trail chronologically; I would see for myself what sort of people and places those were that had known Lincoln, reconstruct the life of his day as far as living men and women backed by published records furnished reliable material. I would gather documents as I went, bits of color, stories, recollections; I would search in court houses and country histories and newspapers; I would pick up pictures as I went, a picture of everything that
directly or indirectly touched on what I was after. I would make sure that among these people who had known him there might not be letters not in the "Complete Works" and if I were lucky it might be that somewhere on the trail I would turn up the important unpublished reminiscences in which Mr. McClure was so certain existed. It was a gamble, the greater because I was so profoundly ignorant of American life and history.

It was in February of 1895, the Napoleon work still unfinished though far enough ahead to give me a month for a preliminary survey when I started for the Lincoln Country of Kentucky to begin work on this program. It was characteristic of Mr. McClure to take sudden alarm for my comfort, as he saw me off in the deadly cold. "Have you warm bed socks?" he asked anxiously. "We'll send you some if not. It will be awful in those Kentucky hotels." It was - Louisville aside - and awful in more than one hotel and train I was to use in this first month I put in Lincoln hunting.

The results were not exciting. They were too fragmentary; bits of unrecorded recollections, a picture, a letter, a newspaper paragraph, a court record which had passed notice. What was to be done with them? Here was no smashing new contribution such as an article of unpublished recollections from Mr. Nicolay would have been, but here were bits of value if you were to enlarge and retouch the popular notion of the man Lincoln. It was soon clear to Mr. McClure and Mr. Phillips that what I was collecting must be dovetailed into the published records and that they told
me was my business, and so before I knew it I was writing a
Life of Lincoln though the first three chapters carried the
legend, "Edited by Ida M. Tarbell." The office seemed gradually
to have concluded that the editor had become the author though
I think they were ahead of me in this conclusion.

We had a lucky break at the start which launched the
undertaking even better I think than the big article we were
looking for. Among my Washington acquaintances was a delightful
Chicago woman, Mrs. Emily Lyons. She belonged to the group of
early settlers who were still at this time in the thick of the
exciting struggle to make the city the richest, the finest
physically and socially in the country. Their energy, their
daring, their confidence, their eagerness to learn, to adapt,
was one of the phenomena of the day. Now Mrs. Lyons' husband
was important in the wealth-producing class as she was in the
social. She knew practically everybody. When she learned that
I was interested in new material on Lincoln she said at once,
"Come to Chicago. I'll see that you meet Robert Lincoln and I'll
see that he gives you something." Too good to be true.
Mrs. Lyons kept her promise when I reached Chicago on my first
Lincoln expedition producing Mr. Lincoln at once.

"Now Robert," she ordered as she filled our cups, "I
want you to give her something worthwhile."

There was something so unbelievable to me that I should
be drinking tea with the son of Abraham Lincoln, that I could
scarcely take note of his reply. I searched his face and manners
for resemblances. There was nothing. He was all Todd, a big plump man perhaps fifty years old, admirably groomed, with that freshness which makes men of his type look as if they are just out of the barber's chair, the admirable social poise of the man who has seen the world's greatest and has come to be sure of himself and this in spite of such buffeting as few man had had — the assassination of his father when he was twenty four, the humiliation of Mary Lincoln's half-crazed public exhibition of herself and her needs, the heartbreaking necessity of having her committed for medical care, the death of his brother Tad and more recently the loss of his only son. Robert Lincoln had had enough to crush him but he was not crushed. At the moment he looked and felt I think that he had arrived where he belonged.

The Republican party would have been happy no doubt to have made him its leader if he had shown political genius recalling his father. They had tried him out. Hayes had made him his Attorney General, Harrison had named him for the Court of St. James, but nothing happened. He was not cabinet or diplomatic or presidential timber, but by this time big business wanted him.

It was his field. He was now President of the Pullman Company.

I devoured him with my eyes. He was very friendly. To Mrs. Lyons' order to do his best for me he laughingly replied, "Of course if you say so Emily." But he went on to say he was afraid he had little that would help me. Herndon had taken all his father's papers from the law office. I think he used the word stolen, but I am not sure, at least I knew he felt stolen.
He had protested but was never able to get anything back. As for the presidential period all the correspondence was packed away in Washington but it had been fully used by Nicolay and Hay. However, he had what he believed to be the earliest portrait made of his father—a daguerreotype never published. I could have that.

I held my breath. If it was true. I held my breath still longer when the picture was finally in my hands for I realized that this was a Lincoln which the widely accepted tradition of his early shabbiness, rudeness, ungainliness. It was another Lincoln and one that took me by storm.

Of course we made it the frontispiece to our first installment and Mr. McClure saw to it that those whose opinions were of value had fine prints of it. It called out some remarkable letters. Woodrow Wilson wrote that he found it "both striking and singular—a notable picture." He was impressed by "the expression of the dreaminess, the familiar face without its sadness." Charles Dudley Warner wrote that he found it "far away the most outstanding presentation of the man" he had ever seen. "To my eyes it explains Mr. Lincoln far more than the most elaborate engraving which has been produced." A common enough comment was that it "looked like Emerson." Edward Everett Hale wrote us that he had shown the picture to "two young people of intelligence who each asked of it was not not Waldo Emerson."

A valuable and considered comment came from John T. Morse, the author of a Life of Abraham Lincoln, as well.
as of a series of him or other leading Americans. "I have
studied this portrait with very great interest," wrote Mr. Morse,
"all of the portraits with which we are familiar show us the
man as made; this shows us the man in the making. And I think
every one will admit that the making of Abraham Lincoln presents
a more singular, puzzling, interesting study than the making of
any other man in human history. I have shown it to several
persons without telling them who it was. Some say a poet;
others a philosopher, a thinker, like Emerson. These comments
also are interesting for Lincoln had the raw material of both
these characters very largely in his composition though political
and practical problems so overlaid them that they show only
faintly in his later portraits. This picture, therefore, is
valuable evidence as to his natural traits."

Robert Lincoln was almost as proud as I was at the
color of the comment. If he felt, as he well may, that he
was taking a chance in responding so generously to his friend
Mrs. Lyons' order, he was rewarded by the attention the picture
received from those whose opinions he regarded most highly.
Always thereafter he was quick to see me when I took a
Lincoln problem to him, as I did when I had exhausted all other
sources. He was always frank and downright. One problem I
brought amused him no little. It was the recurring rumor that
Abraham Lincoln had written a letter to queen Victoria early in
the war begging her not to recognize the confederacy. He was
said to have sent it direct. Now no hint however unlikely, no clue however shadowy was passed by in what had become in the McClure office a versatile Bureau of Lincoln research. Anything is possible until proved. I was carrying on a wide-spread correspondence and continually dashing on one direction or another on what turned out often to be wild goose chases but which at the same time not infrequently brought in valuable game. Mr. McClure was especially excited over this letter. The State Department pooh-poohed the idea; the curator of documents in London was non-committal. I interviewed people who were in position to know what was going on but learned nothing. Finally I went to Chicago to see Robert Lincoln. His eye seemed harder to me in his office than over Mrs. Lyons' tea table but he quickly put me at ease. I was certain that my quest was going to seem ridiculous to him. Indeed it had become a little so to me, but he didn't throw it aside. He picked it up and played with it. He had never heard of such a letter and doubted if it had been written.

"If father had done such," he said with emphasis; "and Mr. Adams" - Charles Francis Adams then minister to Great Britain - "had learned of it he would have resigned. Rather knew of course that all communication between governments must be carried on by the credited ambassadors."

And then he fell to talking laughingly of his own experiences at the Court of St. James. He said he had received all sorts of things to be presented to the Queen - patch work quilts, patent medicines, books, sheet music. "I suppose," he
said, "that lots of Americans fancy that their ambassador smokes cigarettes a while every morning after breakfast with the queen. They take it for granted he can drop in for tea any time and present quilts and what not." And he laughed until the tears ran down his face.

That interview put an end for the time being to the search for "the letter to the Queen" as the item had come to be called in the office.

When the Life was finally complete Mr. Lincoln wrote me, "It seemed to me at first that the field had been too many times gleaned to hope for much from the work you were undertaking and I must confess my astonishment and pleasure upon the result of your untiring research. I consider it an indispensable adjunct to the work of Nicolay and Hay." Mr. Nicolay however never agreed.

If Robert Lincoln was always friendly he threw me once into the greatest panic I suffered in the course of my Lincoln work though this was long after the Life was published. I had gone to him to ask if he would arrange for me to consult the collection of Presidential papers. "Impossible," he said, "they are in the safety vault of my bank. I won't allow anybody to see them for the reason that while there is nothing of my fathers there, that is of value, Nicolay and Hay have published everything, there are many letters to him which if published now would pain, possibly discredit able and useful men still living. Bitter things are written when men are trying to guide a country through a war, particularly a Civil War. I fear misuse of those papers
so much that I am thinking of destroying them. Beside somebody is always worrying me about them just as you are and I must be ungenerous. I think I will burn them."

I was scared; I feared he would do it, but Herbert Putman, the head of the Congressional Library, was seeing to that. He did not burn them; the Library got them finally but with the condition that they were not to be opened until twenty years after Robert Lincoln's death. He died in 1926. The papers will not be available to students until 1946 which probably lets me out!

The early portrait set the key for the series and as it turned out a much higher key than I had believed possible. I found that court records did yield unpublished documents, that every now and then I ran on a man or woman that said more or less casually, "Why, we have a letter or letters of Lincoln's written to father in ——. Copy them if you wish." Occasionally I found a speech not in the "Complete Works." By the time the work was put into book form in 1899 I had an appendix of three hundred unpublished speeches and letters. This did not mean that they had never been in print. Frequently they had appeared in newspapers or historical magazines. "Unpublished" meant uncollected. On the whole this collection stood the scrutiny of experts very well, though I think I was swindled in the case of at least one document, a forgery by a man recommended to me by an honest scholar who had used the man frequently for years. Forgery was easy, so was pilfering of documents in those days so
little attention did clerks give to their old papers, so glad were they to get rid of them. There was frequently no objection to a student carrying off anything that interested him. One of the important official documents in the controversy over the legitimacy of Lincoln's mother is now to be found in the Barton collection which the Chicago University bought. Mr. Barton probably asked permission to take it home for examination once, a common enough practice in Illinois as well as in Kentucky and forgot to return it. Probably most of the legal documents in the private Lincoln collection have been stolen. The original thief would have been horrified to have that harsh word applied to him. He simply put it in his pocket with or without saying, "I'll just take this along."

But while I did get together some three hundred pieces I came no where near turning up all the letters and speeches then at large. I was under a time limit. Since I ended my search hundreds of items some of value have been published in one or another collection. I shall be surprised if as time goes on there does not turn up every now and then a genuine letter, though now more than ever caution must be taken in accepting a new piece. The forging of historical documents has been a lucrative trade.

The real fun of the Lincoln work, as well as some of the worthwhile results, came from settling myself little problems. I was curious, for instance, to know more of Lincoln as a speaker. Whenever I found a man who had been with him on the Circuit or in public life I would bombard him with questions. He would tell
me how Lincoln looked, what his voice was like, outline argument, his use of stories. They all talked more about the Lincoln and Douglas debates, naturally enough, than any other exhibit but frequently would conclude by saying, "Well, those were good speeches but they were nothing like the Lost Speech. That was the greatest thing Lincoln ever did." Or a man would begin by saying, "Well, you can never know much about him as a speaker, nobody can that never heard the Lost Speech."

It was they said a speech which so stirred his audience that the very reporters forgot to take their notes. Knowing reporters I was skeptical about that so I looked up some of them. They all told me that when Lincoln finally ended his speech they found themselves standing on, instead of sitting by their writing tables — and without a note!

Still I could not believe but that somebody must remember something about the speech — enough at least to give an idea of the argument. Perhaps, I said to myself, I may pick up some of the phrases — get some real notion of it, so I went prowling about asking questions and finally learned that down in the State of Massachusetts was a man who was said to have taken notes — a cool-headed man — a lawyer not a reporter. His name was H. C. Whitney. He knew Lincoln well, had travelled the Circuit with him, had published a Life of Lincoln with which I was familiar.

Of course there was nothing to do but look up Mr. Whitney and that I did. To my great satisfaction I found
he had a bunch of yellowed notes. He had always intended to write them up, he said, but when he tried it the result seemed so inadequate that he gave it up.

After much persuasion Mr. Whitney did get out a version of the Speech. When he turned it over to me I took it to the men in Illinois with whom I had talked and asked them what they thought of it. There were those who said, "It's impossible to write out that Speech." But there were others who said, "Yes, Whitney has caught the spirit, he has the argument, he even has many of the phrases, as of course he should have if he made notes."

The most emphatic and enthusiastic statement came from a man of importance - Joseph Medill, the editor of The Chicago Tribune. Mr. Medill had been one of the reporters at Bloomington in 1856 when the speech was made who found himself at the end on top of the table without a note! He thought Mr. Whitney's version was close to the reality. Indeed, he wrote for Mr. McClure a long and interesting letter giving his recollections of the convention. In that letter he said,

"Mr. Whitney has reproduced with remarkable accuracy what Mr. Lincoln said, largely in his identical language and partly in synonymous terms. The report is close enough in thought and word to recall the wonderful speech delivered forty years ago with vivid freshness."

Well, that seemed to us reason enough for publishing
Mr. Whitney's report along with the story of how I had found it, what the people who heard the speech in the first place said about it, both for and against. And that we did.

But out in Illinois there were a number of people that did not want to give up the tradition. The Lost Speech was the greater to them because it was lost. As long as it was lost you could make it bigger than any speech any man ever made and nobody could contradict you. And so you will find those who claim that the Lost Speech is still lost. And of course you can take it or you can leave it.

More than once when I plumed myself on a "discovery" I encountered the loyalty of men to their legends. There was the Herndon story of Lincoln's failing to appear at the first wedding arranged for him and Mary Todd. He rather lets his "historical imagination" loose in his description but I never had questioned his story until by chance I mentioned it to one of the family, a woman who would have been there if there had ever been such a wedding ready. She froze me with her indignation. "Mr. Herndon made that story up out of whole cloth. No such thing ever happened." Amazed I flew around to see what other men and women of the circle said. They all denied it. A sister of Mary Lincoln was particularly indignant because Mr. Herndon had put the bride in white silk. "Mary Lincoln never had a white silk dress until she went to Washington," she sputtered.

But in spite of all the documents and evidences I collected demolishing the episode, I reaped only sour looks and dubious head shakes. I had spoiled a good story or tried to.
it still remains a good story. Every now and then somebody
tells it to me. A biographer who tries to break down a belittling
legend meets with far less sympathy than he who strengthens or
creates one.

The completion of the life of Lincoln did not end my
interest in the man. He had come to mean more to me as a human
being than anybody I had studied. One great virtue he had was
that he never bored me. Whenever I have the opportunity I pick him
up. The greatest regret of my professional life is that I shall
not live to write another life of him. There is so much of him
I never touched. Lincoln did more than provide me with a
continuing interest. He recalled my flagging sense that I had a
country, that its problems were my problems. This sense had been
strong in my years on The Chautauquan but the period following
we had dimmed it. Now I was beginning to ask myself why had gone
the way he had since the Civil War. Was there not enough of
suffering and of nobility in that calamity to quiet the greed
and ambitions of men, to soften their hates, to arouse in them
the will to follow Lincoln's last counsels - "Malice toward none,
charity for all" - "do all which you may to achieve and cherish
a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."
But greed and hate and indifference to the suffering and rights of
others had been rampant since the war? Did war as a method of
righting wrongs so loosen the controls which man in times of peace
establishes over himself, that he is incapable of exercising the
charity, the peaceful adjustments for which Lincoln called? Was
there always after war an unescapable crop of corruption, of thirst
to punish and humiliate and exploit the conquered? Did you have to go back where you had started, go back with controls weakened and burdened with a load of new and unexpected problems? True, this war of Lincoln's had ended slavery as a recognized institution, given the black man legal freedom, but how about opportunity? And then again was a war necessary to destroy slavery? Was it not doomed? Lincoln thought so. Doomed because it was showing itself unsound economically as well as because it outraged man's sense of justice and humanity.

But were things as bad as they looked? A nice bag of problems were beginning to tease me as I worked on Lincoln's life and out of the corner of the eye watched what was going on in the country. The number of things in America I was beginning to want to find out about was certainly dimming the things in France I had wanted to find out about. Unquestionably those new interests were helping to wean me from the plan on which I thought I had settled. The process was painful. More than once I told myself that the sacrifice of my ambitions, my love for Paris, for my friends there was too much to ask of myself. I could never replace those interests and associations; but slowly I was replacing them and suffering as I realized what was happening, revolting, that nothing in my life seemed to last, to be carried through. By nature I was faithful. To give my time to new friends, neglect old ones in spite of never forgetting them, as I never did, was disloyal. I was beginning to repeat dolefully as well as more and more cynically, "Tout lasse - tout passe, tout cassi."
Washington was helping in my weaning. The city as I knew it in the 1890's is lost in the Washington of the 1930's. The pivots on which it swings, the capitol, the White House, were there to be sure. So was the Washington Monument but they stood by themselves, the nearby flanking unpretentious if not squalid. Today they are almost lost in the piles of marble heaped about them to accommodate the needs of the last frantic twenty years. The town has stretched unbelievably to the Northwest where once were wide lawns, wooded tracks, pleasant walks, are now acres upon acres of apartment houses and hotels. They have engulfed the delightful Woodley Lane where my friends the hubbards lived in summer and they have changed no less the quarter in which their fine town house stood - Connecticut Avenue where it mergers into Dupont Circle. Great houses were only just beginning then to find their way into the circle. George Westinghouse had built there, so had Mrs. Lester of Chicago. Old Washingtonians sniffed at their houses and their ways, laughed at Mrs. Lester's "spiral stair case" as she was said to call it and professed disgust at Mrs. Westinghouse's imported white velvet table cloths. They resented the invasion of rich women attracted by the social possibilities of a diplomatic circle, of rich men attracted by the field for lobbying furnished by a congressional circle.

But of this side of Washington I saw nothing. My social life was shaped largely by the continued kindness of Mr. & Mrs. Hubbard. I had become almost one of the family, was freely invited to meet their friends. Their circle was wide,