May 18, 1933

My dear Mr. McClure:

I have your note of May 9th enclosing the paragraph from Mr. Steffens' book.

My experience in trying to find out what really happened when a group of people were trying to accomplish something, as for instance nominating Lincoln in 1860, has convinced me that no two persons associated tell the same story. Each has seen and felt something different from the other.

I haven't the least recollection of this "disagreement" of which Steff speaks here. I remember only one instance and that I think was long before Steffens came to us, of being called in as a peacemaker and I haven't the least idea of what it was all about. I only know that both you and Jac wired me in Titusville the day before Christmas to come at once, and to the disgust of my family I came, only to find as I might have known would happen, that whatever the difficulty was you had settled it and were both ashamed of having called me back. Now that recollection may be twisted. You see the only thing I remember about it is my personal disappointment at having lost my Christmas at home - not anything at all of the really important matter what you and Jac had disagreed so decidedly about that you wanted to talk it over with me.

The office of course was always a place of the livelist, frankest discussion. Your idea, as I recall it, was to find out how to get the best for the magazine out of the subject which one of us was to tackle. One reason that everything came out as well as it did was that you incited us to discussion, to fresh efforts, that your reactions to do the work undertaken, were always frankly and honestly and vividly put. You had in mind the magazine, not an individual. It was the finest and most interesting cooperative undertaking that I have ever had a part in.

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You must remember that Steffens in his work was stirred with something like a holy zeal, that his point of view was personal. Whatever discussion was had, and I must say I do not remember it at all, over the studies of the cities he naturally remembers the thing which effected his part of the work most deeply; took the discussion as personal and looking back remembers the divisions of opinion which you and I have utterly forgotten.

That's the way the thing strikes me and I would not be too concerned about it, if I were in your place.

Mr. S. S. McClure
Brookfield Center, Conn.

McClure's Magazine speaks for itself and anyone who knows anything about it knows that you were the inspiration that founded it and carried it on. You better laugh at these people's recollections and explanations that seem so wrong to you.

I hope you are quite well and enjoying the work. Yes, thank you, that sinus difficulty is cleared up, and I am trying to be very careful.

Faithfully yours

Mr. S. S. McClure
Brookfield Center, Conn.

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