

The Associated Literary Press.
McClure's Magazine.

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S. S. McClure, Limited,
30 Lafayette Place, New York City.

CABLE ADDRESS, "Aiddecamp, New York."

LONDON OFFICE:
Robert McClure, Manager,
33 BEDFORD ST., COVENT GARDEN.

New York, May 22, 1896.

John H. Holmes, Esq.,

Boston Herald.

My dear Sir:

In the Herald for May 17, I find an article "Lincoln in Massachusetts", in which you call attention to the fact that the speech reprinted in my article in McClure's Magazine for May with the claim that it had been hitherto entirely overlooked by the biographers of Lincoln has been already published in the Herald, and that the second edition of the Herndon's Life of Lincoln contains a reference to it, as well as much more valuable matter on Lincoln's visit to New England in 1848.

I must confess at the outset that I had never seen this chapter in Herndon's life until some two weeks after the May article was published. As soon as I discovered the oversight I called the attention of the Editor of McClure's Magazine to it. This was before I had seen the editorial in the Herald. To overlook this chapter in Herndon's Life was of course a serious carelessness on my part, for I own a copy of the second edition. Unfortunately I have constantly used in the Astor Library in New York where I work the first edition as well as the lives by Nicolay and Hay, Arnold, Lamon, Morse, and others. But it was not through any biography that I came upon the speech.

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It has been my policy in securing material for these articles to go to original sources whenever possible. In studying Lincoln's campaign in New England it was natural that I look over the files of the Boston papers for September, 1848. This I did in February last, spending three days in Boston and one in Worcester, where I found much more matter than my space in the Magazine allowed me to use. Before going to Boston the only clues that I had as to what might be found in the press of the period was a foot-note on page 281, Volume I., of Nicolay and Hays Life of Lincoln, the account of Mr. Seward and Mr. Lincoln's meeting after their speeches on September 22nd, found on page 79 of "Seward at Washington," by Frederick W. Seward, and a foot-note on page 173 of Vol. III. of the "Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner" by Edward L. Pierce. The latter foot-note says that "a liberal summary of the speech delivered at Worcester appeared in the Boston Advertiser Sept. 14th." These were my only indications so that the speech came to me in the course of independent research. When I made the claim that the speech was hitherto unknown by Lincoln's biographers, I supposed that I was correct. That I should not know that the matter had been discussed in the Herald I think even you, my dear Mr. Holmes, will not consider strange, as I am not a Bostonian and

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never read the City's papers. That I was guilty of inexcusable careless in not having examined Mr. Herndon's second edition I frankly admit. I must emphatically deny, however, that I used the researches in that volume and represented them to be my own as intimated in the Herald article. I am neither ^{so} naive nor so stupid, even if I were so dishonest, as to use as my own researches published only four years ago in a book which is in the library of every reader which I myself own and keep on my office table and whose contents on this particular point I had overlooked partly because I had come to rely on the first edition of Herndon's Life and partly because of the common assumption that the contents of a book which is always before one's eyes must be familiar.

Do not consider this letter as in any way a complaint because the Herald called attention to the matter. In justice to Mr. Peirce, Mr. Weik and Mr. Herndon you certainly should have called attention to their labors. There is no one that insists more strenuously than I that it is a wrong to the public to allow a supposed fraud to go uncovered. All I wish to do in this letter is to deny that I am a fraud in this case, and to repeat that I came upon this speech in the course of independent investigations of exactly the character that I have followed throughout in gathering material for this series of articles, and that my error was due to care-

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less and not to any intent to deceive.