

April 29, 1921

Memo. of Conversation with Mr. Briggs in re Browning Ms.

An hour and a half's talk with Briggs. Told him that a general review of the Ms. convinced me that a book of 400 or 500 pages might be made, to be called Diary of P. B. Browning - not to be compared to Wells', but a respectable volume of perhaps secondary, or less, importance to students. At least last two sections in it of first importance, that in regard to the opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation and about the Impeachment of Jackson.

Find that what they want is a Lincoln book. Suggest that one of 250 or 300 pages (this is tentative) might be made, with an initial chapter on Browning himself, to be called, say, An Illinois Friend of Lincoln, in which the man is built up from the way he reveals himself in the diary. Went through the same struggle as Lincoln and Douglas - pious, serious, always trying to improve himself, good lawyer, reluctant to do anything that interfered with his profession, evidently no appreciation of Lincoln's superior character and strength over that of other associates - at least no record of it. Two chapters perhaps, to go up to the time Lincoln went to Washington - these to be followed by the diary, with interpretative paragraphs, parallel citations from Wells and others, explanatory foot-notes, whatever was necessary to give it continuity, to bring out the value of whatever new contribution there is and to develop the real dramatic quality of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Impeachment episodes.

Discussed whether or not the material in regard to Mrs. Lincoln should be used. Told him I want as soon as Robert Lincoln is dead to write a sketch, that it doesn't seem to be quite nice