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December 19, 1922.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York City.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

I was as much surprised as pleased to receive your kind letter of the 12th; pleased of course, and surprised that you should take so much of your busy time to answer a volunteer correspondent.

I read every line of your Life of Lincoln when it appeared and when I said you dismissed Herndon's story with a paragraph I was repeating the impression left on my mind. I know that after reading your account I still felt that the weight of evidence was in favor of Herndon's story. It was so positive and circumstantial and so aptly confirmed and fortified by the quotation from Lincoln's Kentucky letter; his reference to the "tragic first of January", apparently referring to some well known act of that date, was all but conclusive. If you set out that the widow of Joshua Speed to whom this letter was written, was among those who contradicted the story, it has escaped my recollection. At the time, I am sorry to confess, I got the idea that you thought it well to make a concession to the family sentiment which was in favor of burying the details of disagreements between Lincoln and his wife. I already had the impression, derived from the suppression of Lamon's Life of Lincoln and from various facts reported to me by Springfield people, that Robert Lincoln was principally Todd in his make-up, mental as well as physical, and that he was secretly ashamed of the "Old Abe" part of Lincoln's personality and that in his heart he admired and preferred his mother above his father; and I did you the injustice of thinking that you were willing to compromise with this feeling on the part of people with whom you had come in contact in collecting material, and, therefore, slurred over this particular incident. It was not until I read your letter that I realized that you believed Herndon's story was historically without foundation. If, in fact, it is not true it ought to be cut down root and branch, utterly demolished. The best evidence at this time would not be anybody's recollection but the files of the Springfield papers for a month or two preceeding the date alleged to have been set for the wedding. If such a ceremony was announced for a certain date at the Governor's mansion, the newspapers prior to that date would be full of it; and if they carry no mention of it I would think Herndon's story was completely discredited. If I were in or near Springfield

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I would undertake the search to satisfy my own curiosity, and I hope it will be made by somebody.

I must ask you to excuse this long letter on the score of my interest in the subject matter, and I beg you to believe that I do not expect any answer to it. You have already done more for me in that way than I could ask.

Very truly,

T. Frank Jones

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