October 7, 1922

Mr. Frank B. Copley,
Southlawn,
Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Copley:

You know of course that your manuscript on Mr Taylor's life was sent to me for reading. It came, however, at a moment when I was simply overwhelmed in work, getting ready for a six weeks' trip which begins this afternoon.

It was not until two days ago that I was able to get at the manuscript. Of course I have not read it all, by any means; but I have run through it all, and yesterday I had a talk with Dr. Person, to whom I understood I was to return the manuscript. I told him what I am going to tell you, that I think it a very remarkable piece of work.

I would not like anything better than to read it "all." Wherever I did read I wanted to go on. That is, everything I tried - and I tried something of every chapter - kept me interested. It gives me the impression of a most thorough investigation and of a sustained reverence for your subject, a conscientious sort of passion to interpret truthfully.

Now, that is the way I feel, dear Mr. Copley, about the manuscript as it now stands. But - and I cannot tell you how sorry I am to come to this conclusion, - from a publisher's point of view, it seems to me almost an unmanageable piece of work. Here I am talking about the general publisher. While I, knowing a little about Mr Taylor's life, am not lost in the manuscript, I am convinced that the construction is of a nature that would confuse the general reader.

You have got a book before you get to Taylor'slife, and a book which your reader is not prepared to understand. Moreover, dear Mr Copley, the general reader is not going to take a book as long as this is - at least, that is my judgment.

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There is a chance for the work no doubt with the technical publisher, where you would have an audience that is already more or less familiar with Taylor's life and work, and an audience, too, that know thatit has to understand that life and work. I told Dr. Person that my judgment was that they should exhaust all the publishingresources possible, with the manuscript as it stands, both general and technical. It is a mine of digested material that you have there.

I wish, and I told Dr. Person this, that it could be published as it stands, and that some day, when you are farther away from it, with three or four years' work at other things back of you, that you would sit down and write straight away, say seventy-five or eighty thousand words. I believe you would get a wonderful story.

Now I am writing you all this, as I am sure you know, as your friend because I think you have done a wonderful thing; but, as I fear, unmanageable.

If I were not just starting off, terribly rushed, I should try to have a chance to talk to you. If, six weeks from now, when I come back, it would mean anything to you, I should be glad to have a talk with you.

Dr. Person told me what disturbed me very much, that Mrs. Copley has had a serious accident. I do hope that it is not as bad as he seemed to think it might be.

With all good wishes to you both, believe me

Very sincerely yours,

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