It's an old game, this of putting words into Abraham Lincoln's mouth which he would have been the last to have sponsored. It began, certainly as early as the campaign of 1858, with Douglas' attempt to connect him with a Convention of radical views, with which Mr. Lincoln did not sympathize.

In 1860, there was widely circulated in Illinois something that was called "Lincoln on Jefferon," in which Mr. Lincoln was made to say (p.161 of Tracy Letters)

That Lincoln was angered by this his letter of protest shows.

During the suffrage campaign, he was made to say on this side and the other, things that he never had said.

The same is true about Prohibition and corporations.

The latest is expressed in a broadside circulated recently in New York, evidently by sympathizers of the Klu Klux Klan. In this broadside Lincoln is made to say

This ~~is quite as "base a forgery~~ certainly deserves as well the characterization of "base forgery" as the scandal that he was made to repeat about Jefferson.

This is one of the ways that men in the heat of controversy do things. It is one of the things that those who are trying to get at the truth of matters must expect and be prepared with documents to fight. It will be many decades before in every hard contest we will not find people falsely rallying Abraham Lincoln to their aid.

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XVIII

One questions whether such charges as this, such misrepresentations, misquotations, malicious gossip, are ever helped by denial. It is out of the period, but the case is in point.

For years there has been running up and down the country a paragraph on Prohibition, credited to Lincoln. Every reader of newspapers has met it:

"Prohibition will work great injury, etc.

In speaking of Mr. Lincoln's attitude on temperance in Chapter of this series, I did not take the trouble to refer to it. I thought it had been squelched; but when so important a newspaper as The New York World, publishes a letter from a correspondent, giving what looks like chapter and verse as authority for the quotation, I cannot keep quiet, though speaking, I am convinced, will have little effect.

On June 2, last, the World published a letter from a Massachusetts correspondent, quoting the above paragraph "as found in the Congressional Record." Since when was the Congressional Record authority for anything? If there is one publication in the country that needs to be checked up for facts and authorities, it is certainly the Record. The writer goes on to say that Lincoln made this statement in a speech in the Illinois House of Representatives, of which he was a member, and that the facts can be found in the Journal of the House of Representatives, under date of Dec. 19, 1840.

Many years ago I had had the Journal searched for the statement, by so careful an investigator as J. McCann Davis of Springfield, Ill., and he found no remarks whatever from Mr. Lincoln. But, lest something had turned up since Mr. Davis' researches, I wrote to the Illinois State Historical Library, and this is what has come back.

The extract from the Journal of the House of Representatives which Miss Osborne, the Assistant Librarian of the State Historical Library was good enough to send me, is as follows:

Let nobody suppose, however, that in printing this I have any notion that I am checking the circulation of this paragraph.

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