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Salina, Kansas, 8/4/29.

My dear Miss Tarbell:

I am enclosing the corrected copy of "A Jazz Age", etc. Please destroy the faulty one I sent you a few days ago. The manuscript I sent to the Atlantic has of course been returned, and I haven't the nerve to send this more correct article, so am sending it to the Wichita Eagle. I don't know whether Vic will want to use it or not. It may be too long for the paper, and there may be other reasons.

I have not yet heard from my brother. He is in very poor health, and there has been some delay, perhaps, in getting a copy of the paper in which his article was published. If I can do no better, I will give you some of the details as he narrated them to me. I'll write you again in a few days, and hope to have the clipping.

I am reading Dr. Barton's Life of Abraham Lincoln, and find it most interesting. He touches you up a little bit. But how he does go after Mrs. Hitchcock! The reference to King Tut is simply killing, and is enough to justify a suit for damages to the amount of a million dollars. I hope that Mrs. H. will bring suit, and collect the money.

I had an odd experiance with Dr. Barton. I wrote him, askihg if he would care to read the "Abraham Lincoln, Exemplar of the Common Virtues." The letter reached him at Cairo, Egypt, and he wrote me that he would like to have it. In the mean time I had written the "Lincoln and Fundamentalism" lecture, so I sent him copies of both, addressing him at Provincetown, I believe it was, - the address he gave me - but received no acknowledgment. After some weeks I wrote him, asking him if he had received the articles. I think that I had seen a report that he had returned to this country. Still no reply. Many weeks passed. Again I wrote him, and I have net yet had a word from him. That was years ago. My letters contained my address, and were not returned.

I am looking forward with much interest to his appreciation of the character of Mr. Lincoln. A few years ago I was in my old home town, Jacksonvill e Ills., and passed a couple of very delightful evenings with Mr. Enslay Moore, the local historian, who has died since, and who knew my Lincoln, though not intimately. He was much better informed about him than I, and quite agreed with me that you gave, in your book, the truest appreciation and showed the clearest insight into his character, of all who had written of him, so far as he, Mr. Moore, had read. S. I hope that you are not much disturbed by what Dr. B. says about you. Indeed, I think that you do not deseve more than half a million.

And that correct appreciation of character, and the clear representation of it on the printed page, is the most important thing in biography. Dr. Barton has done a wonderful work in research. He deserves high praise for this. But if he fails in his characterisation, he has failed. I hope that he does not fail.

Very sincerely,

Walter Graves.

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Submitted by

Walter Graves M. D.

307 South Main Street,

Wichita, Kansas.

About 2000 Words.

A JAZZ AGE or JAZZLET SCRIBES?

by

Walter Graves M. D.

In a book recently published, "Meet General Grant," some statements are made of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln that afford an opportunity for justice to Mrs. Lincoln, on the one hand, and on the other, the correction of a very prevalent though most erroneous view of Mr. Lincoln.

The writer says of Mrs. Lincoln that she addressed Mrs. Grant in language that was unprintable, accusing her of attempting to usurp her place in the White House, and that Mr. Lincoln was greatly distressed, but found the situation beyond his control. He says further of Mr. Lincoln that at this visit to General Grant at City Point he refrained from telling obscene stories, probably because of the well-known almost maidenly modesty of General Grant.

That Mrs. Lincoln was habitually intemperate of speech and vixenish of manner is far from true. That she did sometimes indulge in expressions that would have to be rendered on the printed page by dashes is true. My

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older brother, Capt. C. H. Graves, of Mound City Missouri, told me of an instance. Mr. Lincoln had summarily punished some children of the neighborhood, of whom my brother was one, for mishandling some dogs, and Mrs. Lincoln reproached her husband in language that made an ineffaceable impression on the mind of a child unused to such words from the lips of a woman.

But such incidents were the rare exception. She loved her husband a and her family. And many were the candy-pullings in the Lincoln home, to which neighboring children were invited. Mr. Henry B. Rankin, in his "Personal Recollections," tells of her charming courtesy to young people.

A year or two before the World War, I met a gentleman, Mr. Maxwell, in Salt Lake City, who lived hear the Lincolns in Springfield. I had read Hay and Nicolay's "History," and having in mind the almost brutal severity with which those authors speak of Mrs. Lincoln, I referred, I fear with unbecoming levity to the lady's temper. Mr. Maxwell was very indignant, and came loyally to Mrs. Lincoln's defence. He told me that as a boy he had furnished the family with milk, carrying it himself to the door, and delivering it to Mrs. Lincoln. Morning and evening for years he had done this, and had never seen or heard anything of the kind described as "unprintable." On the contrary, Mrs. Lincoln was always most cordial and kind, frequently inviting him into the house, and giving him something particularly good to eat that she happened to have on hand.

Mary Todd was a victim of a nervous, emotional, unbalance. Mr. Rankin tells of her dancing with Mr. Herndon, and says that Herndon complimented her, or meant to compliment her, on the ease and smoothness of her

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movements in the waltz, comparing them to the sinuous grace of a serpent's glide. Miss Todd did not accept the compliment as intended. Drawing herself away from her partner, her eyes flashing, she expressed deep resentment at his comparing her to a snake.

She was born into a wealthy Kentucky family, in a social order that set woman on a pedestal, and all-but worshipped her. Her training did not contribute to her sense of responsibility, or the repression of her emotions. She contracted a marriage which estranged her family, and endured a life of comparative poverty. No doubt she felt the truth of Mary Owen's observation, though she may not have known of it. Mr. Lincoln had previously made a proposal of marriage to Miss Owen, who rejected him for the reason that he did not possess the art of giving to a woman those delicate attentions which she so highly prizes, the lack of which Miss Owen feared would mar her happiness. While Mary Todd may not have foreseen this, there can be little doubt that a woman of her temperament and training must have felt the lack that the other Mary had observed, and it is not at all improbable that her somewhat erratic nature was irritated by it.

With all this background of tempermental unbalance, she was suddenly elevated to the highest position in the land. Her husband was President of the United States. Three of her brothers were in arms against the government of which herwas the head. She was in the midst of cabals and treasons. She had lost one of her children since coming to Washington, and she was harrassed

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by fears for her husband's health, and even for his life; for Mr. Lincoln was simply reckless of exposure, often dodging the guards provided for his protection, going about the streets alone. A short time after the City Point incident, as she sat at his side in the theatre, she saw his head sink to his chest, as the assassin's bullet entered his brain. Is it any wonder that this unstable equilibrium became more and more uncertain until it vanished utterly under these accumulated strains nad woes?

Shortly after Mrs. Lincoln was taken to a sanitarium, I was talking with a gentleman who had known the family well in Springfield. "This," he said, referring to the removal to the sanitarium, "explains many things that used to puzzle the neighbors."

Is it not time to draw a veil over the poor lady's woes, or at least to refrain from unsympathetic discussions of her frailties?

Now to the so-called "Lincoln" stories. The paragraph above referred to is the only reference I have seen in book or magazine article which indicates that the writer believed that the nauseous putrescences that pass from mouth to ear as "Lincoln" stories ever passed Mr. Lincoln's lips. That he told stories that ought not to be told in mixed company, is doubtless true. There are stories which may properly be told by men among men which would be very improper in the presence of women. Mr. Lincoln did not tell them in mixed company. Moreover, such as he told, like all his stories, had a point to them. They were characterized by the quintessence of wit or

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humor or logic that went to the heart of the subject under discussion, and fitted into place so exactly that many of his friends believed that he invented them. This was the opinion of Dr. Stevenson, his family physician, who is quoted hereafter. But these stupid, filthy concoctions of a diseased imagination, which no man of intelligence and taste would bring into his conversation any more than he would bring the scrapings of the barnyard to his dinner-table, were of a kind that was impossible of composition by a man of Mr. Lincoln's mind and spirit.

What was the character of that mind and spirit?

This may best be indicated by a reference to some of his accomplishments.

He read regularly the most authoritative Southern papers, and very early entertained a suspicion that a conspiracy was under way to dismember the Union.

Miss Tarbell, in her book "He Knew Lincoln, and Other Billy Brown Stories," tells us that the news of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise came to him one evening in "Billy Brown's" drug store, where he was wont to foregather with some of his friends. Billy, who was a Democrat, shouted "hooray!" The others did not seem seriously concerned. But Mr. Lincoln, after assuring himself of the truth of the report, grew stern of face, and went out without a word.

It is not at all strange if this growing suspicion had not a little to do with the occasional moodiness and taciturnity characteristic of him.

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One night, while occupying the same room with his brother lawyers "riding the circuit," he was observed sitting on the side of the bed, his head buried in his hands. On being asked what was the matter, he gave his belief in this threatened dismemberment as the reason for his sleeplessness.

He delivered the "House Divided Against Itself" speech at the meeting of the Illinois State Republican Convention in 1858, and aroused the intense interest of the whole country as no other speaker had done, and throughout the campaign with Senator Douglas, his speeches, published in the metropolitan papers, made him an intellectual and political power that no man rivalled. In February 1860 he delivered the Cooper Institute speech, which showed an acquaintance with the ideals of the framers of the Constitution as to Federal control of Federal territory, that was possessed by no other man, and crumbled into dust the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case. His first inaugural is so strong, so pure, so appealing, that one wonders, as one reads it today, why it did not avert the war. His Gettysburg address is a priceless gem of the loftiest patriotism and appreciation of a measureless devotion, couched in noble diction, unsurpassed as a model of pure English. His Emancipation Proclamation breathes a spirit of devotion to humanity and to God that any Christian may well emulate, while the concluding portion of the Second Inaugural might well be called inspired, and challenges comparison, as to loftiness and purity of aspiration, with any utterance of Prophet in the Old Testament, or Apostle in the New.

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Can anyone with a clean mind and in possession of his reason think that the soul that conceived these lofty sentiments, and the mind that framed them in faultless language; that the man who for four years with scarcely a moment of relaxation labored to save the Union, and did save it, and did it so well that the best minds of the South looked on him as their best friend; that the man who wrote that tender, heartful letter to the mother who lost five sons; that he could compose these verbal pollutions misnamed "Lincoln" stories? The man who thinks knows better.

This is powerful but negative evidence. Positive evidence is not wanting.

It is, of course, too late to get first-hand testimony directly from Mr. Lincoln's contemporaries. They are all dead. The nearest approach I can make to this is to quote a statement by Col. Stevenson, who was chief surgeon to one of the divisions before Vicksburg.

The late Dr. Fabrique, of Wichita, told me the story many times. I loved to hear it. More than once I led up to the subject craftily, letting him think I might have forgotten, just to hear him tell it again.

Dr. Fabrique was Captain of Volunteers during the siege of Vicksburg, and there made the acquaintance of Col. Stevenson. The Colonel, he said, was wont to grow wroth whenever he heard any of these concoctions, and said that he had been Mr. Lincoln's family physician from the time he was married until he left Springfield to assume the office of President; that

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he had been with him at the birth of his four children, and the death of one; that he was in almost constant touch with Mr. Lincoln, and probably knew him better than any other man in Springfield; and that he had never heard him tell a filthy story, utter a profane oath, or say a disparaging word of any woman.

We are going through a strange epoch. In three quarters of a century I have never known such a period of detraction of our national heroes. One writer would have us believe that the man who more than any other man won the war of the American Revolution, and received the proud title bestowed by a grateful people--"Father of His Country," was a gambler, and habitually profane of speech. Another would have us believe that the man who, more than any other, saved the Union, and so cemented together the hearts of men that such an attempt at dismemberment can never again be made, was an habitual teller of obscene stories; and that the man who, more than any other in the field, crushed the attempt to destroy the Union, and who in appreciation of his genius received honors from the whole world to an extent never before given to any man, was a drunkard. And all this without any worth while appreciation of the great deeds of these men, and the virtues which they exhibited.

Is this detraction evidence of a Jazz Age, or is it simply the work of a notoriety-seeking group of Jazzlet scribes, a part of the muck thrown up in the eruption of recent years?

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(a)

He had not sought war. He had not wanted war. He had done everything humanly possible to avoid war. But he had accepted war rather than see the Constitution broken into fragments, and the American Union, the hope of humanity, dismembered.

(b)

"How far that little candle throws its beam. So shines a good deed in a naughty world". Ladies and Gentlemen, you will go far, you will search long, before you find a life whose candle of good deeds has so brilliantly lighted the way to the high plane of fidelity to duty, of human sympathy and fellowship. Let us consider, for a few minutes, the reaction of the American people, and particulatly those of the South, to this life.

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