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WILLIAM FORTUNE
INDIANAPOLIS

November 29, 1922.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

I am sorry your return trip did not inclue a visit to us in Indianapolis, but we shall hope that you will do better by us when you next come in this direction. You certainly must have had a strenuous time. I am particularly interested in your report as to your return to Warrick county and New Salem in Illinois. I have been hearing about the latter. The information has reached me recently that Frederick Landis (one of the famous family and a brother of Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who may have been under the influence of your Standard Oil articles when he imposed that twenty-nine million fine) is deeply interested in a revival of New Salem and is, I believe, endeavoring to finance a very elaborate film reproduction of it. I shall probably know more about his plans soon. The undertaking of the Illinois people will certainly be an extraordinary kind of memorial, and I shall be much interested in the outcome of it.

Your discovery that Lincoln died worth about $100,000 is most surprising. I have always understood that when he was first elected President he was worth not more than $10,000, and if this were true it seems that he managed his finances pretty well after he became President.

Have you yet read Jesse Weik's new book, "The Real Lincoln?" It isn't very well written, but it contains a good deal of information - enough to justify the title of the book. Incidentally, I think you will find in it some information as to domestic and personal expenses. I have found opportunity to read only about half of it since I received it, about two weeks ago.

After it was known that Beveridge had been defeated for the senate he immediately announced that he would devote himself to writing a life of Lincoln similar in scope to his biography of John Marshall. I have been saving a newspaper clipping of his announcement to send you as soon as I could be sure where to reach you. I am enclosing it.

After returning from our trip together I wrote J. Christian Bay, the Chicago librarian, who had undertaken more than two years ago the quest ~~of finding~~ for me a copy of "The King's Jester," as Uncle Natty Griggsby had called it in telling me about the book. Mr. Bay is probably the best available man for such a task. He was long in the Congressional Library before going to Chicago and is a thorough book man. When I first talked with him about the matter he was quite confident that he had seen the book

and could find a copy of it. It seems, however, that his efforts have not yet been successful; he cannot even find that there was ever a book of this title and is now inclined to think that there is some mistake about it, either that Uncle Natty Griggsby was mistaken or that I did not correctly understand him. I am enclosing a letter from him which may be of interest to you. Please return it to me.

An old Warrick county resident who dined with me last evening told me a story about Lincoln frequently walking barefoot from his home near Gentryville to Boonville and carrying his one precious pair of shoes until he reached the village and then putting them on for more respectable and dignified appearance when he entered the place to listen to court proceedings, which gave him his first inclination to become a lawyer. He began his preparation to become a lawyer by borrowing a copy of the Revised Statutes of Indiana from David Turnham, of Dale, and studied it as the only available law book.

I am making progress with my preparations for the trip Around-the-World. The State department has issued our passports and they are now on the way around for vise by the proper officials of the many countries embraced in our itinerary. Our sailing date is January 24th and we shall probably arrive in New York a day or two before. My traveling companion will be Mr. J. K. Lilly, who is the father-in-law of Evelyn. We are not sure whether Evelyn will go to New York to see us off, but she very much desires to do so and is delighted over your inclusion of her in your plans. Nothing could please me more than the good-bye dinner which you propose and the reunion at the same time with my fine traveling companions on our recent automobile trip together. We shall probably not arrive in New York until a day or two before we sail.

Answering your question, the name of the county to which you refer is Warrick - named after Captain Jacob Warrick, a soldier in the war against Tecumseh's Indians; he is one of the heroes in the battle of Tippecanoe.

I shall of course be very much interested in hearing from you whenever you have the opportunity and the inclination to write.

With all good wishes,

Most cordially yours,

William Fortune

Miss Ida Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York, N. Y.

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Copy.

Dear Mr. Fortune:-

When you spoke to me of the "King's Jester", the sound of this supposed book seemed familiar to me. So it did to Mr. Walter M. Hill, who thought he had had the book in his place several times, and wrote to London asking his agents to pick up a copy.

None showed up.

Meanwhile our baby daughter Doris was attacked by a mysterious and distressing illness, and I lost sight of many things which hold my interest. The child, now 8, seems to recover; we have been reassured by the best medical men we could interest in her, and we believe she will outgrow the effects of a toxic condition of her heart. As time passed--ever as I sometimes sat through a night, watching the dear child, my thoughts flitted past the problem of the "King's Jester".

Last winter I wrote several letters about it, but all replies were negative. In May I gave the problem to a colleague who went to Europe. He reported that a personal inquiry at the British Museum gave but a negative result. In August, our eldest son, who is in the service of the Laurentide Co., went to Europe to study lumbering and paper manufacture--he, too, went to the British Museum and to several booksellers, but all search was futile. Then just before leaving England for the continent, my son suggested that what I was looking for might be one of a large number of jest books, some of which he saw at the Museum. I then hired a man to go to the Museum and study the titles of these old jest books, especially of the period 1750 to 1825. The following was reported to me:

Quinn's Jests, or Facetious Man's Pocket Companion, containing every species of Wit, Humour and Repartee, London, 1766,- 104 pages.

This is a collection of anecdotes, some nothing but witty, others a little tart and rebust, but it was a famous book in its day, and I find it figuring in a number of catalogues.

I ordered this at once from London and now have word that a copy is sent.

Now the question is whether I am right or wrong in surmising that the old gentleman who told you about the jest book, made a mistake. After many years, the title "Quinn's Jests" might easily be converted into the "King's Jester". The titles sound alike. I was convinced before that a King's Jester does not exist. What I, and others, remember, probably is the phrase, of title, of king's jester. The book will probably be in my hands in a few days, and I shall send it to you at once.

In our American bibliographies there is no trace of any book with a title even resembling the King's Jester. There is nothing like it in facetiae in the Library of Congress. Now I hate to jump at conclusions, but if Mr. Lloyd and I, one after the other, find that there is no King's Jester on record, and it is still in confesso that there was some such book, we are justified in following the track of the Quinn book. I consider it probable that some of the early settlers in the Ohio valley brought with them copies of "Quinn's Jests" and other popular reading.

I hope to hear that you are feeling well.

With every kind wish,

Faithfully yours,

J. Christian Bay.

The Jon Crerar Library.
Chicago, Ills.
Nov. 5, 1922.

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