vulgar. There is nearly a No public man living who was associated with Lincoln in law or politics who does not corroborate his biographers in their assertions ~~&~~ and there are many who ~~claim~~ ~~to have~~ still repeat such stories in telling their reminiscences of ~~such~~ details. ~~The~~ Whether ~~they say is true~~. Does it follow there that Lincoln was ~~essentially~~ in heart and mind! ~~vulg~~ low

I have never heard an explanation of this practice of Lincoln's which seemed to me so true and so appreciative as that given by Mr Ralph Emerson of Rockford Ill. ~~It~~ Mr Emerson knew Mr Lincoln in from to

- he saw him in his law office and on the circuit. He was associated with him ~~in~~ ~~his~~ ~~the bar~~ various cases. He says frankly that all that is told of Lincoln's habit of relating ~~broad~~ unsavory stories

is true but he adds that no one could ~~know~~ have been born and brought up in the communities where Lincoln had without the habit. ~~[illegible]~~ The people of ~~certa~~ Central Illinois in that day were poor, illiterate, common. ~~They came of~~ They lived in cabins of often but one room - father, mother, children & guests crowded together ~~in the most~~ promiscuous ~~manner~~. Society was in the raw and expression and thought and feeling was unreasonable, they were no refinements to hide the crudeity the nudity of life. ~~There example to show them was~~ Where there is such absolute barrenness of ~~[illegible]~~ in a society - as there was in Illinois in those days there ~~is~~ can be none of that - ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ no concealment. ~~The habit~~ of the effort to be sociable are like the surroundings rough, uncouth, ~~[illegible]~~ awkward. ~~They~~ In the poverty of ideas, of fancies, of

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

amusements, the people who ~~[illegible]~~ try to amuse and please their associates must draw from a limited and coarse stock. The result is ~~the~~ a vulgar displeasing social life, It is with such that Lincoln was worn ~~in~~. Now he was too human, too much in sympathy with those who surrounded him not to ~~absorb their thoughts~~ adopt their ways. They were coarse, he became so. But says Mr. Emerson in a most expressive figure, "It was the dust on the ~~true~~ ~~young free trunk~~ leaves of a tree ~~[illegible]~~ I never heard him tell a vulgar story for the pleasure of ~~telling~~ its vulgarity. His tales were always parables. He told them ~~to~~ as arguments, as explanations, as a clear & convincing way of enforcing a truth or persuading to an action. There was no innate ~~too~~ coarseness in his story-telling.

dust on the shrubbery
by the wood-side

This opinion of Mr Emerson has a large ~~story~~ historical value. It gives the impression made on a Stony Mfill ~~and~~ young man ~~[illegible]~~ who had gone into Central Illinois from a cultivated circle in the east and who had never before heard or seen such a social circle as that into which he fell in Central Illinois ~~at Bloomington & Springfield~~ before the days of railroads. Naturally he was ~~[illegible]~~ repulsed, disgusted by its crudity. ~~But~~ He was ~~a~~ able to judge of his associates and of their life so peculiar to him as no man could do who was ~~[illegible]~~ native to it. He saw immediately the difference between the essential vulgarity of some of his associates & the "dust" of vulgarity ~~which had~~ which lay on Lincoln because he stood in its midst. He saw that in one case it ~~was a the nature; in the other it was on the surface~~ Whose