

Bloomington Ill Dec^r 30th / 89

Miss Ida M Tarbell

New York

Dear Madam

I have read your life of Lincoln
so far as it has been published in McClure's
Magazine and I wish to say it continues up to
the high standard of the portion first published.
You have much reason to be satisfied with
the good work you are doing. It has received
commendations from some of the best scholars in
our country and from many who knew Mr Lincoln's
character best, and longed. More work is now
an assured success.

I was much pleased with the photograph of
Gov Reynolds. You may remember when you
were in our Library, ^{at our home} I showed you a volume
I had written on Western History that contained

Sketch of his life. It is was a most interesting
character and in his day he bore a prominent
part in the affairs of the State. The portrait of
him which you publish ~~is~~ is not as
good as the one contained Moses's History of Ills.
You know I was personally well acquainted with
having resided near him all my life
and I do not recall that period when he looked
much like the photograph you publish. Of
course it looks some like him but it hardly
does him justice. The feature that I do not
recognize so readily is, that the top of his head
is so much larger in proportion than the lower
part of his face. But I am really glad you
selected it for publication rather than a later
one. for it is something new and gives us
another view of him. The little biographical
sketch below the portrait and is a very good

and accurate^{one} with a single exception which you
will pardon me for suggesting. It is said he
was a man of "much learning". That is hardly
accurate. It would have been better to have
said he was a man of some learning - He was
only fairly a scholar in the schools and never
added much to his Education by after years
study. Of course you would not now think
of making any change in the work used as to
his learning. I have simply made this suggestion
for your own consideration. I was always fond
of Mr Reynolds and had much pleasure in
writing a sketch of his life, but I know he was
not a man of "much learning". He was great
in many respects.

This letter is not intended for publication. It
is written simply to assure you of the interest

I feel in the work in which you are engaged.
I know from my own limited experience
as a writer, the strengthening aid that comes
from candid words of commendation from a
friend. Your work will bring you an endow-
ment as a writer of Biography.

Very Respectfully

John M. Scott

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