

May 29, 1924

Mr. George F. Lawrence,
Manchester, Vt.

My dear Mr. Lawrence:

Thank you for your letter of May 12. It was gratifying to know that my book "In the Footsteps of the Lincolns" pleased you.

Yes, I have read Kelley's "Lincoln and Stanton" - have it in my little collection.

You suggest that I make a comparison of Lincoln and Wilson. I am afraid that the study that I should make would not satisfy you. I consider Mr. Wilson, as I do Mr. Lincoln, a patriot and a lover of mankind, - actually and not academically - and I see you do not. Mr. Wilson was utterly different in temperament, in training, in intellectual habit from Lincoln. He never went so far in spirit or mind as Lincoln, in my judgment, but he went very far, dear Mr. Lawrence.

came from
Such that would offend you, and offend many people in Mr. Wilson was the need of protecting himself in some way from the awful pressure brought upon him. Lincoln offended thousands, you know, by his attempt to protect himself by stories. You must remember that it seemed to men like Stanton, Adams, Chase and many, many others, little better than a crime that in the awful situation in which Lincoln found himself he should tell them stories which no doubt frequently verged on what we would call vulgar. I certainly believe that this habit, when the stories were not for the explanation of a point of view, were purely self-protective. He had to push people away, and he often offended deeply by the habit.

Wilson did the same in another way, with the same result. He was of course as you say rather less of a ~~commoner~~ *commoner* than Lincoln, but there again it was the way he worked with men. Lincoln, you know,

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was accused, and with some show of reason, though my sympathies are with him on this point, of being too much of a commiserator. Read McClellan's letter to him during the war. Read the New York Tribune. Read the Congressional Record. Ah, my dear Mr. Lawrence, a man who tries to handle this country through a great war has a task before him which no man can discharge without embittering many, many thousands who would do it in some other way - possibly a better way, but, remember, he must do it in his way.

One of the greatest things about Lincoln was that he always remembered this in regard to men. He asked less how they did it than what they were trying to do. I believe myself that Woodrow Wilson was trying to carry on the work of George Washington and of Abraham Lincoln, and that not only this country but the world will come to admit that he pushed their work ahead tremendously.

All of this, my dear Sir, to show you that I see no blasphemy in speaking of Lincoln and Wilson in the same breath.

Sincerely yours,