

New York, May 7, 1920

Mrs Elizabeth R. Hunt,
Evanston, Ill.

My dear Mrs. Hunt:

I have just returned to New York from three months' absence and find in my accumulated mail your letter of March 31st, which I see has been acknowledged. You say you want to know how I estimate Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln."

Like you I take it seriously and the more seriously because I hold it high. Instead of its being a criticism upon it that it is the work of a Britisher, who used purely English sources, in his study of Lincoln, it seems to me it is enormously in its favor. It should be a matter of pride to us that a writer so detached could draw so noble and impressive a character as Drinkwater has.

Of course the details are wrong, but if we ~~xxxxx~~ judge human achievements of any sort by their details and not by their spiritual and intellectual content and intent, we lose ourselves in the unimportant. He may not get the right interpretation of all the great questions at issue in the Civil War, but what he does give, and the thing in my estimation most important, is a conviction that here was an honest man, struggling courageously against tremendous odds to see the right thing. That is why the play has taken hold of the public. It is a man, a noble man, trying to live a just and unselfish life, moved by a passion for the Union, and at the end, giving his life for it. I don't know that you can get over a bigger thing to the public. I don't suppose that Drinkwater was trying to interpret state laws or slavery. He was trying to build up a great character, and it seems to me that he has done it. For my part I am perfectly willing that the public should say, "That is Lincoln." You do not need to fear but that they will take care of the details. The very fact that they passed over obvious absurdities in some of the details shows the gift the public has of getting great essentials.

Thank you for writing to me.

Very sincerely yours,