Mayville Oct. 21 — 1872.

Dear Madame:

After your departure yesterday I found it impossible to get you and your errand out of my mind, for it had taken hold of me strongly, so I went at your box of papers instead of going away, wrote as I should have done. I read nearly all of them except the letters and looked over those of Maj. Rollins. You may wonder how I got through so much but when I use my own eyes I work with almost incredible rapidity. It is in this way that I manage to get through so much.

And now I want to thank you

(over)

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for introducing me to your father, his struggles and his time. Whatever may be our relations in the future, you have made me your debtor in this respect. It is a fine, strong, unique life, cast in a mold of circumstance as rare and exceptional as itself. I am glad of ~~three~~ three things (1) That it was strong and rough (2) That it was bloodless (3) That he was not a political success (4) That he was good enough to be admirable and not good enough to awaken doubt as to his verity. I like men; I am not fond of marvels.

And now as to what can or ought to be done. I may as well write now as wait to telegraph on Wednesday, for I must not give the matter another moment's thought now.

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I do not think it is possible to dig up sufficient material to make a biography, pure and simple, which will be of any special interest or value. Such a work, no matter how well done, will not be read enough even noticed widely enough to be of any special value or to have any special influence or effect on others, nor be of any particular credit to the man whose memory you do well to revere.

At the same time, I think a book of his time, a tapestry showing his life-line running through it, clear and strong, even clouded and overwrought, a whole-souled human responsibility, would, if deftly and artistic-

(Over)

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done, be of immense value to the young men of today and tomorrow.

Especially, I am impressed with the conviction that the climacteric period of his life — when his patriotic fervor burned brightest, — can be handled in such a way as to give offense to none, to make the situation in Missouri clear and the South clearer to Northern eyes, and to redound to the credit of the State and perhaps to aid in the solution of the still graver questions on the threshold of which we now stand. It will be a very ~~great~~ difficult work but if done in just the right way will be a ~~new~~ great book. No one can do it unless he is a ~~good~~ literary ar-

(Over)

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tist — great enough, and skilful enough, to forget himself and conceal his art — who also knows the people of the North and the people of the South, to the very core, appreciating the good qualities and sympathizes with the defects of both. Such a book, entitled we will say, "A man of Yesterday", done as it ought to be done, would create a profound impression and, I believe, accomplish much good. It will need time, care, a peculiar persistency and a delicacy of touch which says even unpleasant things, without giving offence and yet without apology, and pleasant ones without imputation of toadyism. ~~If~~ So impressed am I with the character, the opportunity and the prospect of ~~[illegible]~~ helping to achieve what I think

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Gen. Smith would most desire to see achieved; that I am willing to undertake the work upon the terms stated, the same to include illustrations by my daughter (unless her health should prevent) rendering the time of payment such as you may prefer, smaller at first and larger afterwards, if you desire, only remembering that much of it will have to be expended in travel, investigation, books & having an eye to time and subject. I should like to pass some time in Missouri — St Louis, and Jefferson City as well as at Fulton. The latter part of winter or early spring would suit me best for that. Aside from this, I could accommodate the payments largely to your wishes.

I should wish to send you, once a fortnight or so for a number of months a set of inquiries, as they might occur to me, so as to get your own knowledge well classified on the subject. Should this be satisfactory I should try to go to Missouri in February on research, so as to get back here early in May.

over

We ~~were~~ all greatly enjoyed your visit and hope you had no trouble on your journey. I telegraphed to the Nickel Plate agent at Brocton to look after you there. You had a pleasant day and I know would go through a lovely country and I hope the rheumatic devil let up in his attentions so that you could enjoy it, and that you found everything satisfactory on your arrival home.

Mrs Lowry's and the daughter leave tonight for New York for the daughter's treatment. I am greatly troubled about her but trust her beautiful life is not destined to be forever clouded with pain or her promising career cut short.

I wish, as soon as you can decide the matter, you would wire me briefly stating your decision, in order that I may cable to my London publisher in regard to the other work.

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It seems very wonderful, the way the matter has come around and I ~~very glad~~ feel as if there were something more than mere accident in it.

All desire to be remembered cordially to you

Sincerely yours

[illegible]

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