

ness affairs, appear to believe that a lawyer is justifiable in resorting to any kind of falsehood and trickery to gain *their* cases. Such men can do more to elevate the morals of the profession by employing none but such as they believe to be honest — of whom there are as many as in any other calling, with perhaps one exception — than can be done in any other way. So long as lawyers are employed because they are regarded as being dishonest, so long will the profession be subject to reproach because it has bad men in its ranks.

That persons outside of the profession begin to think seriously of assisting to rid it of such lawyers is a good indication, and their efforts should receive every encouragement.

John D. Works.

A Letter of Lincoln.

THE remarkable popular interest in everything that throws light upon the character of Abraham Lincoln, which the serial publication of his life in *THE CENTURY MAGAZINE* in part finds and in part creates, emboldens me to believe that a recent discovery of my own bearing on the matter may be accepted by many readers as a contribution not without its value to the growing public fund of Lincoln *memorabilia*. I use the word "discovery," although that word may seem not fit, when I say, as I must, that what I discovered was already public enough to be seen framed and hanging on one of the interior walls of the fine State Capitol in Nashville, Tennessee. The documents to which I refer are now no longer to be seen where I saw them, they having, since my visit to Nashville a few years ago, been removed to a much less frequented place of custody in the same city. Through the intervention of a friend I lately found them again, though not without trouble, and here show them for the examination of the curious.

They consist of two letters, one written to, and the other written by, Abraham Lincoln. How they came into public keeping, and with what history, in the case of the illustrious writer of one of the letters, they may be associated, I have sought in vain to learn. But the letters happily explain themselves. Perhaps the enterprising authors of the biography now being published in the magazine may be able to bring these letters into their proper setting in the circumstances of Lincoln's life.

One thing was very noteworthy in the autograph letter of Lincoln, and that was its immaculately neat and correct mechanical execution. The manuscript had the physiognomy and air of one produced by an habitually fastidious literary man. The handwriting was finished enough to be called elegant; the punctuation, the spelling, the capitalizing, were as conscientious as the turn of the phrase may be seen to be.

It is a Mr. W. G. Anderson who writes a covertly threatening letter to Lincoln — little dreaming at the moment that it was an historic document that he was so seriously inditing. The date is Lawrenceville, October 30, 1840. The address is stiffly, meant perhaps to be even formidably, formal. It is "A. Lincoln, Esqr.; Dear Sir." Mr. Anderson straitly says:

"On our first meeting on Wednesday last, a difficulty in words ensued between us, which I deem it my duty to notice further. I think you were the aggressor. Your words imported insult; and whether you meant them

as such is for you to say. You will therefore please inform me on this point. And if you designed to offend me, please communicate to me your present feelings on the subject, and whether you persist in the stand you took."

And Mr. Anderson sternly signs himself, "Your obedient Servant."

There now was a chance for Mr. Abraham Lincoln. How will he meet it? Will he chaff Mr. Anderson? Will he give him stiffness for stiffness? There will surely be an interesting revelation of character. The actual fact is, if Abraham Lincoln had known, in writing his reply, that he was writing it much more for the whole world and for all future generations, than simply for his personal friend Mr. Anderson, to read, I do not see how he could have written it better for the advantage of his own good fame. Here is his reply:

LAWRENCEVILLE, Oct. 31st, 1840.

W. G. ANDERSON.

DEAR SIR: Your note of yesterday is received. In the difficulty between us of which you speak, you say you think I was the aggressor. I do not think I was. You say my "words imported insult —" I meant them as a fair set off to your own statements, and not otherwise; and in that light alone I now wish you to understand them. You ask for my "present feelings on the subject." I entertain no unkind feeling to you, and none of any sort upon the subject, except a sincere regret that I permitted myself to get into any such altercation.

Yours etc.

A. LINCOLN.

What more satisfactory light on the manly and gentlemanly spirit of the future President could one wish for than that? It certainly lacks nothing — unless it be a grace of distinctively Christ-like winningness, such as Paul could have given it.

I will venture to hope that when the Lincoln biographers come to publish the biography in book form, they may secure a facsimile reproduction of the original of this interesting letter.

William C. Wilkinson.

The Life of Lincoln — a Letter from General G. W. Smith.

IN their discussion of the battle of Seven Pines, in *THE CENTURY MAGAZINE* for October last, the biographers of President Lincoln have fallen into several errors, some of which will be briefly specified. They say, in substance:

1. That General Johnston made his plans without any reference to the possible initiative of General McClellan, with no thought of an offensive return, and that Johnston's purpose was put in action with great decision and promptitude.

2. That it had been the duty of the forces under G. W. Smith to strike the right flank of the Union army as soon as the assault of Longstreet and Hill became fully developed.

3. That if General McClellan had crossed his army, instead of one division, at the time that Johnston's entire force was engaged at Seven Pines, the rout of the Southern army would have been complete and the way to Richmond would have been a military promenade.