

1885: «Your evidence was of great value to us in determining the guilt of those parties. You were unimpeached, and came off the cross-examination leaving the conviction in our minds that you had told the truth.» Judge George P. Fisher, who presided in the trial of John H. Surratt, wrote, under date of February 3, 1892: «Your letter of the 12th ult. was duly received, in which you request from me an opinion as to your testimony

and conduct in the trial of John H. Surratt for the murder of Abraham Lincoln. I have no hesitation in saying that your conduct on the witness-stand all through on that occasion was that of a perfectly honest and truthful witness.»

We take pleasure in printing these extracts, which show the estimation in which Mr. Weichmann was held by officers and members of the trial commission.

OPEN LETTERS

President Lincoln and the Widow of General Helm.

THE following appeared in THE CENTURY for December, 1895, under «Appeals to Lincoln's Clemency»:

Mr. Lincoln's absolute impartiality when dealing with affairs wherein he was personally interested is well illustrated in the following despatch to a Union general:

«WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C.,
August 8, 1864.

MAJOR-GENERAL BURBRIDGE, Lexington, Ky.:

Last December Mrs. Emily T. Helm, half-sister of Mrs. L., and widow of the rebel general Ben. Hardin Helm, stopped here on her way from Georgia to Kentucky, and I gave her a paper, as I remember, to protect her against the mere fact of her being General Helm's widow. I hear a rumor to-day that you recently sought to arrest her, but was prevented by her presenting the paper from me. I do not intend to protect her against the consequences of disloyal words or acts spoken or done by her since her return to Kentucky, and if the paper given her by me can be construed to give her protection for such words or acts, it is hereby revoked *pro tanto*. Deal with her for current conduct just as you would with any other. A. LINCOLN.»

This despatch is a surprise to me, since I was never arrested and never had any trouble with the United States authorities. The circumstances of the protection paper given to me by President Lincoln were these: I had lost two of my brothers: one was killed at Corinth, the other died at Vicksburg from a wound received at Baton Rouge; at the battle of Chickamauga my husband had fallen. I had accompanied my husband South, and after his death I received from Mr. Lincoln a permit to return to Kentucky under flag of truce. Upon reaching Fort Monroe, a United States officer came on the boat and told me he had orders to require an oath of allegiance to the United States from every one who landed. I asked for permission to proceed to Washington on parole, stating that I would return in case I was called upon to take the oath. I had just left the friends in arms of my husband and brothers, with tears in their eyes and hearts for me in my great bereavement, and they would have felt, if I had taken the oath, that I had deserted them and had not been true to the cause for which my husband had given up his life. My refusal was therefore not bravado.

Soon after my conversation with the officer I was allowed to go on to Washington, and I immediately called on President Lincoln. Both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln (who

was my half-sister) received me with every sign of affection and kindness. Since I had last seen them they had buried from the White House a little son who had loved me very much; on each side we had had overwhelming sorrow, which caused our meeting to be painful and agitating.

I told Mr. Lincoln my object in coming, explained my position, and stated that I did not intend to embarrass him or make myself conspicuous in any way, in case he allowed me to proceed to my home in Kentucky. I was his guest for several days; when I left he gave me a paper worded to protect me in person and property (except as to slaves), and as I thanked him he said, «I have known you all your life, and I never knew you to do a mean thing.»

After I arrived in Kentucky I was careful that no act or word of mine should make him regret being so considerate of me. Every one was kind to me in Kentucky, irrespective of opinions; and I do not think I made any enemies on account of my opinions. I had no occasion to use the paper except once, when asking a Federal officer to keep his soldiers, who were camped near me, from trespassing upon the grounds and taking our meals as they were cooked from our kitchen, which he did in the kindest manner. It is possible that he reported the fact of the protection paper to General Burbridge, who was his superior officer; and the latter, perhaps, desired orders from President Lincoln as to what he ought to do in case I made myself conspicuous. I was not arrested; I gave no cause; I could never have been so lost to my sense of obligation to President Lincoln. That he did not believe that I had been imprudent is shown by the fact that in March, 1865, under the escort of his son (my nephew), with Mrs. Bernard Pratt, a relative of General Zachary Taylor and General Singleton of Illinois, I was allowed to go South on some private business of my own; but finding it impossible to go farther than Richmond, Virginia, and being advised by friends, I returned to Baltimore, where I had been only a short time when Richmond fell.

Emily Todd Helm.

Remington's «Bronco Buster.»

«THE CENTURY'S» AMERICAN ARTISTS SERIES. (SEE PAGE 265.)

A GOOD deal has been said and written about American subjects for American artists, and some fault has been found with such of our painters and sculptors as prefer