Edwardsville, February 7, 1876.

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Your favor of the 5th inst. is received, and I hasten to reply. T The remarks of Mr. Lincoln to an inquiry made by me, to which you refe were as follows: I told him that I called upon him to getinformation respecting the probable duration of the war from headquarters. He said that as certainly as that the sun would rise the rebellion would soon be crushed out. I remarked that that was gratifying news, and I furthe asked what would ve done with the rebels? * "Well," said he, "some think that their heads ought to come off; but there are too many of them for that, and, for one, I would not know where to draw the line between those heads (it might be said) ought to come off or stay on. "My policy," said he, "would be different. I would prefer to follow the e-ample of King David. I have been reading the history of the rebellion of Absolom. "You know," said he, "when David was fleeing from Jerusa-lem, Shimei cursed him. After the rebellion was over Shimei craved a pardon. Abisha, the son of Zeruiah, David's sister, said, "this man ought not to be pardoned; he cused the Lord's anointed." David said, "What have I to do you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? * *

The above are the words, as nearly as I can remember them, used by Mr. Lincoln. I know that he was very decided in his own mind that, so far as he could exert an influence, it should be on the side of mercy, for he considered wisdom and mercy as amounting to the same thing, as may be evidenced by another remark of his. Joshua F. Speed, of Louisville, Ky., andmyself spent the night at the Soldiers' Home with Mr. Lincoln. During the evening a delegation from New Jersey called to get Mr. Lincoln to pardon some young man from that State who had deserted, been recaptured, court-martialed and sentenced to be shot, which was to take place in a few days. Mr. Lincoln told the del-egation that he would not give them his decision until the next morn-ing at 9 o'clock at the White House. Before retiring I told Mr. Lin-coln that I could not sleep unless I had some inkling as to how he was going to decide in rgard to these poor fellows. He said "I can't tell you; but I will say this, that I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice." That was the direction in which his mind always leaned.

Yours, truly,
J. Gillespie.

* From a private letter of Judge Gillespie kindly loaned by his daughter Mrs Josephine D. Prichett of Edwardsville, Ill.

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