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Oct. 17, 1896.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

I accidently met Hon. George Lincoln, of London, O., the majr. He has been a judge (Com. Pleas) in Ohio, for many years, and has ranked high as a lawyer. He was in Springfield, Ill., in 1859, or 1860, I think, and met Abraham Lincoln. His story of his conversation with Mr. Lincoln is quite interesting. It was soon after the decision of the courts in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue cases. The Supreme court of the state — Judge Swan presiding, and reading the decision of the court — took the ground that "Whatever difference of opinion may now exist in the public mind as to the power of Congress to punish rescuers" (of fugitive slaves)" as provided in the acts of 1793 and 1850, no such vital blow is given either to constitutional rights or State sovereignty by Congress, thus enacting a law to punish a violation of the Constitution, or to demand of this court the organization of resistance. If, after more than sixty years of acquiescence by all departments of the national & State governments in the power of Congress to pro-

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vide for the punishment of rescuers of escaped slaves, that power is to be disregarded, and all laws which may be passed by Congress on this subject from henceforth, are to be persistently resisted and nullified, the work of revolution should not be begun by the conservators of the public peace."

Judges Scott and Peck agreed with Swan and Judges Brinkerhoff and Ritchie dissented. All were Republicans. The ~~abductors~~ slave-hunters were, finally in the course of time, arrested for kidnaping, and by a compromise between the parties, both the kidnapers & the rescuers were released.

Judge Swan was defeated for ~~the~~ re-nomination on account of this decision. No doubt he was conscientious in not merely his opinion but his Conviction that the Fugitive-Slave Law was Constitutional but Public Opinion — not always based upon ~~the~~ Constitutional law and precedents — was, in Ohio, for the Higher Law, which recognized the ~~rights~~ natural rights and the moral rights of the fugitive slave.

Mr. Lincoln (George) declares that Abraham Lincoln ~~he~~ said to him, in

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a very decided way, that Judge Swan was right and that ~~it was wrong~~ ~~wrong~~ the Republicans did of Ohio did wrong in not re-nominating and re-electing him.

Now Mr. George Lincoln is willing to have a statement of his interviews & of what occurred, to go into your book, and I told him if he would make a careful & full statement concerning the affair I would send it to you. I told him you had talked of coming to see us, & he then said if you would come his wife would come over & give you a full statement. She is a remarkably fine woman — was President of our Ohio Confederated Women's Clubs, last year. But if you come here & think it worth while I will go to London with you & get the thing out of him. I tried to get the statement for my book but he was then on his ranch with the grip & did not respond. I have a full record of the legal proceedings (& all others) of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue cases. ~~too~~ If you wish to do anything in this matter, I am unreservedly at your services. You know we should be very glad to have you here. Mrs. Nichols, who is well, joins me in the kindest possible expressions of regard.

Very Truly Yours, Clifton H. Nichols.

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