Monday, May 21, 1917.

Miss Ida Tarbell,
132 East 19th Street,
New York City,-

My dear Miss Tarbell;-

Several years ago I wrote you, sending you a Lincoln story told to me by my dear old friend, (and very distant relative) Major James B. Merwin. I had entirely lost track of him, until, to my great pleasure, I saw in the Century Magazine of last February, a Lincoln anecdote written by him, - and then I was able to find him in Brooklyn, where I went to see him. Unfortunately, however, he died in April; although, notwithstanding the fact that he was nearly eighty-eight years of age, he was fully in possession of his memory and other faculties and apparently able to enjoy life for several years longer. It seems a pity that you could not have seen him and saved some of his valuable recollections of Mr. Lincoln, - with whom Major Merwin was closely associated and to whom he was deeply devoted.

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My purpose in writing you now concerns two papers left by Major Merion, now in the possession of a Miss Fitzsimons, who with her mother cared for Major Merrin for many months before his death. Perhaps I should say at once that I am not interested personally in disposing of these papers, but am only making whatever effort I can, in order to help Miss Fitzsimons. She is herself in very poor health apparently, and I believe that they have received little or nothing for their care, and, besides, need whatever they can get. Major Merrin himself spoke to me with much feeling of their devoted and loving care.

Miss Fitzsimons would like to sell these two papers, — and, naturally, to get all that they should bring. I have thought it possible that you would kindly give me the names of any Lincoln collectors of whom you might know, — it has seemed to me that she would probably do better dealing directly with a wealthy collector than with a dealer, who would, no doubt, drive a hard bargain. She has been offered seventy-five dollars for the two papers, but I should judge that this was not as much as she ought to get, — especially

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2/ for the letter written in President Lincoln's own hand, accompanying the picture given by him to Major Mercur.

The enclosed paper will show you a fac simile of the two letters. The General Scott letter carries on its back the indorsement of Mr. Lincoln, also of General Butler and of several other notables of that day. Major Mercur — as you possibly know, — was given, on Lincoln's advice, a special commission, to work for the cause of temperance among the soldiers; and did so work during the four years of the Civil War. He dined with Lincoln on the day of the assassination, and told me that the President said to him then that, now that slavery was ended, Temperance must be the next great problem.

The two papers, — which I saw in Brooklyn a few days ago, when I went over there to see them before coming to the country, — were in an excellent state of preservation; it would seem to me that they should be of much interest, — do you not think so?

Anything that you might feel moved to do to help, — in suggesting Lincoln collectors or in any other way would be very gladly received. You could communicate with me, or

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directly with Miss Louise Fitzsimons, 1732 Iron Steel, Brooklyn, - as you prefer. I was sorry not to be able to accomplish something for them before leaving the city for the summer; they are somewhat unsophisticated, - and find it difficult to go about in the city. I should say that there could be no question of their being most deserving; and Major Merwin himself, in the one interview I had with him in March, gave testimony to their great goodness to him.

Sincerely Yours,-

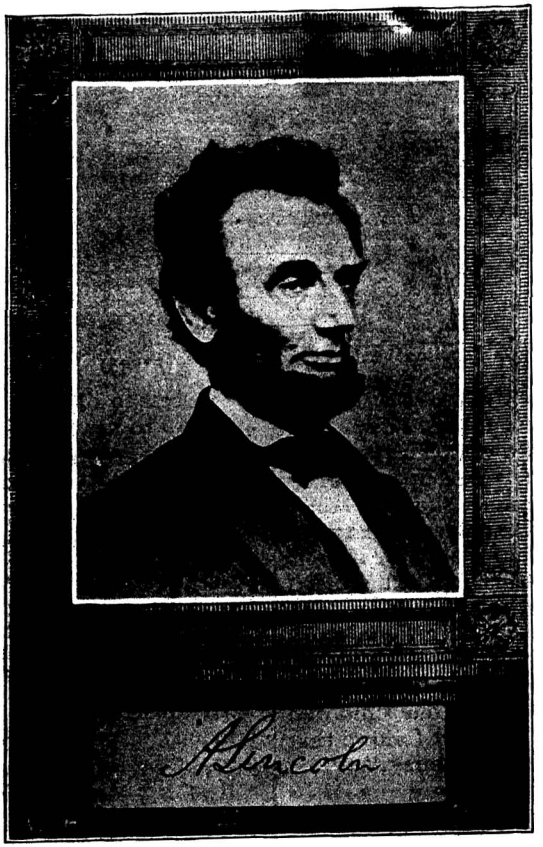
Martha Prentice Merwin,

R.D. Box 36,

Croton-on-Hudson,

N.Y.

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President Lincoln's Military Order

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
WASHINGTON

Surgeon General will
cause Mrs. Merwin when
ever she may think the
Barbers services may
require—

A. Lincoln.

July 24, 1862.

The above is a fac-simile of a military order, issued by President Lincoln, to the Surgeon General of the United States Army, after Lieut. Gen. Scott, had, at his own request been retired.

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