The New York Tribune noticed the foregoing letter and published the facts it contained under the heading of "Personal of Abraham Lincoln," giving credit to no one.

Thus by an accident, a fact was discovered, that afforded the republican party a political cry, that doubtless contributed somewhat to the result of the election of 1860. In my next letter I will give an account of an evening spent with Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln at their Springfield home just before starting to Washington.

George B. Lincoln.

Tenafly, N. J., Oct. 14, 1890.

THE CALEDONIAN.

St. Johnsbury, Thursday, Oct. 23, 1890.

REMINISCENCES OF LINCOLN.

Hitherto Unpublished Facts Relative to the Martyr President.

(Special Correspondence of the Caledonian.)

These sketches will consist mainly of reminiscences and recollections of conversations with distinguished persons and the relation of facts known only to the writer, and not hitherto published. Conspicuously among these will appear the names of Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley. With both of these remarkable men I enjoyed what might be called "a lively acquaintance." Intimacies, outside their own families, neither had any, I think. From the identity of name, and travel over the prairie country, I became early familiar with the characteristics of Mr. Lincoln that made him a popular idol among a rather rough population. This the year before I made his acquaintance.

In 1851, at the convention that met in Philadelphia to nominate candidates for president and vice president, Mr. Lincoln received 110 votes for vice president, standing next to Mr. Dayton, who was nominated. This gave evidence of the estimation in which he was held by Western men. Being already aware of the elements of popularity which he posessed, I then declared my belief that he would become the next republican candidate for the presidency. Being at Springfield the following winter I sought his acquaintance. At that interview I told him my belief that he would receive the next republican nomination for the presidency; that he had a party in his favor already started, for I had espoused his cause. At this he laughed heartily and said "I think they all want Seward." Meeting as I did from time to time the leading republicans of his state, I became satisfied that Mr. Lincoln would prove a formidable candidate before the next nominating convention.

Little things sometimes prove important. In this connection I will relate an incident that of itself had little importance and yet the discovery of the fact, gave to the friends of Mr. Lincoln the most powerful political war club known in American elections. The fact discovered was that Mr. Lincoln in his young days had been a rail splitter. It was about the new year, winter of 1859-60, that one night just at sunset, I crossed over the Illinois river to the little town of Naples on the east bank. I had taken my supper and sat dozing over the sitting-room fire when the landlord appeared. "Where am I to sleep tonight?" I enquired. "I don't know," he amswered, "unless the old gentleman over there will take you in with him. He has a double bed."

"What is your name?" asked the man across the room.

"My name is Lincoln," I replied. "Lincoln!" he explained. "You can share my bed on account of your name. Do you know 'Abe'?" he asked.

I have a slight acquaintance with him, "I said. "And do you know him?" I asked in return.

"I think I ought to know him for when a young man he lived with me and worked upon my farm. The country was new and we were trying to fence in some of our prairie land. To do this it was

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necessary to go into the woods and cut the timber and split the rails for the purpose. Young Lincoln would go with us and work all day at this, the hardest of all work. At night after having his supper he would strike a light and go to studying, and in this way he acquired the surveyor's art." Continuing the old man said: "I chance to know Gen. Ewing, the surveyor-general of the state, an appointee of President Jackson. Meeting him one day I told him of the young man who had become a practical surveyor by night study in my family, and asked him to give him a job. The general took from his pocket a memorandum book and after looking over it said: 'There is a portion of a neighboring county that I would like to have surveyed, and if your young friend is as competent as you think him, he may do the work. It will give him about six hundred dollars.' Much pleased with the result of my interview, I returned home, and calling up Abe told him of it. He listened attentively and then dropping his head thoughtfully for a moment answered: 'I am greatly obliged to you, Mr. Simmons, for what you have done, but if I do that work the Jackson men will demand money for their political fund. This I could not give. Therefore I think I must decline the job,' and he did."

At my last interview with Mr. Lincoln, at which I spent an evening with him in his office at the White House, this story of the rail splitting came up, when he said "Pollard Simmons was about the best friend I ever had." This was about six weeks before his assassination.

Already, at the time of my interview with Mr. Simmons the name of Mr. Lincoln was upon many lips in the West as a possible presidential candidate. I saw at once what a powerful political war club I had discovered and determined to make the story of the rail splitting public. From Sandoval, Ill., I wrote a letter to the Press and Tribune of Chicago, a part of which was as follows: Sandoval, Ill., Jan. 9, 1860.

Editor of Press and Tribune:

Sir: I find in your paper this morning an article headed "Presidential." My business takes me over the West two or three months each winter, and I rarely spend two nights in the same place . Hence I hear much said for this and that candidate for the republican nomination of the coming campaign. But among them all I hear no name so kindly mentioned as that of your own good citizen, Abraham Lincoln of Springfield, or in hotel phrase, "Old Abe."

I then gave in detail the conversation with Mr. Simmons as already related herein.

Another man who knew him well said to me:

"When a young man, he would walk ten miles into Springfield to buy a law book and when he had made himself familiar with it he would return it and get another, and thus he acquired a knowledge of the legal profession. And although he never read law in any office, he is now the most eminent lawyer in the state."

A lawyer at Springfield says: "Lincoln would scorn to take advantage of any man. The veriest boy in the profession can meet him in court, and if he does not know what to do "Old Abe" will help him out."

If I was asked who in my opinion would make the strongest republican candidate before the American people, I should say unhesitatingly Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. Yours, etc.,

G.B.L.

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