

From A.W. Swan (see Life, III, 22)

(1)

July 9, 1861

Millington, Tenn

In company with a gentleman who was employed in the office of Maj Taylor, Paymaster for discharged Soldiers I was on the way to the War Department one day. Our way lead through a small park between the white House and the War Department building. As we entered this park we noticed Mr Lincoln just ahead of us, and meeting him a ~~soldier~~ private soldier on crutches who was evidently in violent passion, as he was swearing in a high key cursing the government from the President down. Mr Lincoln paused as he met the irate soldier and asked him what was the matter. "Matter enough" was the reply "I want my money! I have been discharged here and I can't get my pay" Mr Lincoln asked if <sup>he</sup> had his papers saying that he used to practice law in a small way and possibly could help him. My friend and I stepped behind some convenient shrubbery <sup>where</sup> we could watch the result. Mr Lincoln took the papers from the hands of the crippled soldier and sat down with him at the foot of a convenient tree where

with him at the foot of a convenient tree where  
he examined them carefully and writing a line on  
the back told the soldier to take them to Mr Potts  
Chief Clerk of the War Department who would doubtless  
attend to the matter at once. After Mr Lincoln had  
left the soldier we stepped out and asked him  
if he knew who he had been talking ~~to~~.

with. "Some ugly old fellow who pretends to be a lawyer"  
was the reply. My companion asked to see the papers  
and on their being handed to him pointed to the  
endorsement they had received. This endorsement  
read "Mr Potts attend to this man's case at once  
and see that he gets his pay A. L." The initials  
were too familiar with men in position to know  
them, to be ignored, and we went with the soldier  
who had just returned from Libby prison and  
was given a hospital certificate for discharge to  
see Mr Potts and before the Paymasters Office  
was closed for the ~~week~~ day he had received  
his ~~of~~ discharge and check for the money due  
him ~~so~~ he in the mean time ~~to~~ not knowing  
whether to be the more pleased or sorry to think  
he had cursed "Abe Lincoln" to his face ~~if~~ pleased  
to think his meeting with the President had saved  
him from the circumlocution incident to such cases  
and given him an opportunity to see Mr Lincoln  
and sorrow to think of the hasty language he  
had used in his presence.