

MISTAKE ABOUT LINCOLN'S DEATH.

Correction of Minor Incident Given by Miss Tarbell and Others.

The return of the anniversary of Lincoln's death yesterday, brings up the consideration of another phase of the circumstances of his being taken to the Petersen house opposite Ford's theater, in which he died. Henry S. Safford of this city, who was present, and offered the hospitality of the house to the bearers of the president's body, is interested to correct a piece of misinformation concerning the event, which seems to be in danger of hardening into historical inaccuracy. It is stated in Ida Tarbell's "Life of Lincoln" that the bearers of the dying president were invited into the house by W. T. Clark who, with Mr Safford, was a boarder in the building at the time. Mr Lincoln did die in Mr Clark's room, as he was taken there because it was the most convenient place to lay him. Mr Clark, however, was not in the house at the time, but was out of the city during that night. Mr Clark is now dead, but relatives of his have given out at different times statements concerning his connection with the matter, which are said to have been taken from his letters. But there are at least two men who know that Mr Clark was not in the house the night of the death. One of them is Mr Safford, and the other is Thomas Proctor, a Brooklyn lawyer and naturalist. Mr Proctor in an article in the New York Times has made the statement that Mr Clark, the occupant of the room, was absent on that night, and in a private letter to Mr Safford he repeats this statement and also calls attention to the fact that he would be glad to give her any information concerning the deathbed of President Lincoln, as he was an eyewitness there. Miss Tarbell never took advantage of his offer. Mr Safford also attempted to get Miss Tarbell to rectify this error in detail in her work, but received no satisfaction from her. Mr Proctor in his letter to Mr Safford makes the following statement concerning Mr Clark's presence in the house:—

Mr Clark, as you know, of course, was not at the Petersen house—on the evening, or during the night, or any part of it, of Lincoln's death. To the best of my recollection he did not show up till the Sunday morning following. I am positive, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Mr Clark was not in the Petersen house at any time during the period in which Lincoln or Lincoln's body was there, unless he was hidden away somewhere below the first floor, where it would be very difficult for even a cat to secrete itself.

Mr Safford thinks that it is quite possible that Mr Clark wrote letters home giving the impression that he was present at the time of the death. In fact, he remembers that on Clark's return to Washington from his visit, that he (Safford) showed Clark a letter which he had written to his relatives and that Clark said he liked it and believed that he would write about the same thing to his own people. It is possible that he did this, and thus caused the misunderstanding.