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March 4/1865

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February 24, 1927.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
130 East 19th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell:

Pardon this line from an entire stranger, but I am seeking to prove or disprove an alleged historic fact connected with the life of Lincoln.

Many years ago an old friend and teacher, an officer in the Union army, who was in the City of Washington on the day of the second inauguration of Abraham Lincoln, told me the following facts:

The 4th of March, 1865, opened dark and gloomy and rain poured down almost all forenoon, utterly breaking up the plans of Northern Leaders for a great demonstration to show to the South the unity and determination of the North. About 11:00 o'clock the very dense clouds arose from the east and when the President took the inaugural oath, about 1:00 o'clock, the clouds had risen just past the zenith and were so dense that they totally obscured the sun and the people observed over head a bright star shining at that time. I am not certain whether the statment that the oath was taken at 1:00 o'clock is correct or not--it might have been at 12:00 O'clock, noon. The statment further recited that immediately after the inauguration, Bishop Mathew Simpson of the Methodist Church, addressed the assembled Congress and referring to the star said, "We all trust that it is the star of peace!" At my request, my friend, who was a member of the faculty of the Kansas State Agriculture College, published these facts in the college paper, "The Kansas Industrialist", about 1900. I have written the librarian of Congress to see if he could verify the statment by finding the address of Bishop Simpson

in the Congressional Record. He replies that he does not find the address, but writes me a quotation on Page 294 of "The Latest Light On Abraham Lincoln" by Ervin Chapman, in which he states that about 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, he and many others saw the star about an hour from the sun and that "It has been stated that President Lincoln and his attendants saw the star as they were returning from the capitol to the White House." Can you shed any light on this question, or can you refer me to any living person who was present on that occasion? I shall greatly appreciate hearing from you relative to the matter.

With thanks for requested favor, I am

Yours respectfully,

VHB/M

W. H. Biddison

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