

Lincoln & the theater.

See 892.V. II of L.S. letters
to J. H. Hackett.

Note in L.S. N 405-v.2. Dana's
interview with Gen. Johnson in Sept 63.

President Lincoln's theater-going was usually confined to occasions when Shakspeare's plays were enacted; for, although he enjoyed a hearty laugh, he was better pleased with the stately dignity, deep philosophy, and exalted poetry of Shakspeare than with anything that was to be found in more modern dramatic writings. But I remember a delightful evening that we once spent at the old Washington Theater, where we saw Mrs. John Wood in John Brougham's travesty of "Pocahontas." The delicious absurdity and crackling puns of the piece gave the President food for mirth for many days thereafter. At another time we saw Edwin Forrest in "King Lear," and the President appeared to be more impressed by the acting of John McCullough, in the role of Edgar, than with the great tragedian's appearance as the mad king. He asked that McCullough might come to the box between the acts; and when the young actor was brought to the door, clad in his fantastic garb of rags and straw, Mr. Lincoln warmly, and yet with diffidence, praised the performance of the scene in which he had just appeared.