I heard a new story about Abraham Lincoln, and best of all about Abraham Lincoln's reading, which of all sides of him is perhaps least known A friend of mine now in the city, who had the good fortune to know Lincoln well for two years before his election as President says while sitting in his hotel in Bloomington, Ill., early one morning thirty years ago, the landord came up-stairs and asked him to come down and he introduced to Abraham Lincoln, known and loved of all landlords in the region about Springfield. My friend went down and found the tall, smooth-shaved FULLEST AND MOST COMlawyer, to whose face he says, no engravings or portraits do justice to its wonderful and expressive power. He was reading Homer's "Iliad," in a translation, of course. Liucola held the book at arm's length after a word or two had passed, when he laughed and said: "I have made up my mind that I have got to read Homer's 'Iliad,' " and the quaint look which has become historical spread over his face. "You know a man might as well be out of the world as not read Homer's 'Itiad.'" It was the summer of the hot campaign between Lin. coln and Douglas, and this lawyer politician, whose public reputation was probably as far] removed from the classics as any man who has reached eminence in our annals, had selected as the book with; which he would fill up a gap in his mental edus, cation during the intervals of this hot political debate Homer's "Iliad."

There is or ought to be somewhere a travel-worn Shakespeare which deserves to be shrined at Washington Robert Lincoln-to return to Abraham Linco n's reading-is fond of saying that his father never traveled without his copy of Shakespeare pack. ed in a box with him. In the odd moments of cases and trials, in desolate court-house, in the cheerless rooms of more desolate hotels, in the dirt and discomfort of railroad traveling-and few of us know what railroad traveling was on the long stretches of Illinois roads thirty years ago-Abraham Lincoln read and reread this worn-out copy of Shakespeare, committing great stretches of it to memory, until, as most men know, he was able to match the average acquaintance of most actors with greater ges of the great plays. Judge Kelley took one of the actors of the day. John McCullough I think it was, during the war to see Lincoln, and was amazed to find the President as familiar with the poet as was the actor. It is of still more interest, in connection with Mr. Wilson Barrett's theory of "Hamlet," that 'Abraham Lincoln once asked [Hackett, whose Falstaff was the delight of an early day: "Why do you actors always play Hamlet as an irresolute, vacillating, vague, middle-aged sort of a man?" "Because he was," replied Mr. Hackett, with the acute certainty of the actor. "But he was not," said Lincoln; "he was young impetuous, full of action, prompt. He is always doing some thing. The play is ful! of it, and he ought to be played as a young man."

I was privileged the other day to hear Walt Whitman express his opinion of these conflicting theories of "Hamlet." "Is not that," said the old man, in a slow, ponderous, hesitating tope in which he often pauses for a word, but never stops for an idea, "is not that the mystery, the wonder, the fun of it, as the slang word would have it, that Hamlet combines both these phases, the uncontrollable impulse, aggressive temperament, and at the same time the meditative, philosophic, anxious, hesitating man? Is not this the interest of the character which has caused it to be overlaid with great accumulati, which bave hidden the poet's real purpose-if he had one ?"-Philadelphia Press.

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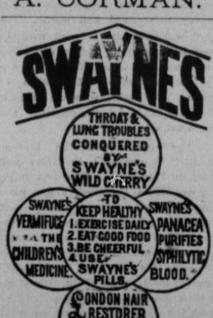
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