

the private collector would hardly be justified in purchasing a work of this character, there can be no doubt but that in the interests of present and future Canadian scholars, our public libraries should each possess a copy. Not the least drawback to the progress of literary development amongst us is the impossibility of procuring authentic data and of obtaining access to the more expensive class of works of reference. Neither our business nor our literary men are financially on a par with those of the British islands; and what to the Canadian scholar or the Canadian Literary Institute would prove an unwarrantable expense, might, with grace and usefulness, be borne by a Government that has hitherto not been conspicuous for its recognition of the requirements of literature. Nowadays, of book-making there is no end, and instead of spending their appropriations in the purchase of all the ephemeral literary and scientific works of the time, the custodians of our public libraries might, with advantage, provide for the necessities of the future of Canadian research.

To Canadian teachers, however, we strongly recommend those of his volumes which Mr. Arber especially calls *English Reprints*. In the quaintness and freshness of the editor's style and remarks, there is a depth of pleasure which we should gladly know that everyone had tasted.

1. SHAKSPEARE, SELECT PLAYS, CORIOLANUS, edited by William Aldis Wright, M.A., LL.D. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1879.
2. SHAKSPEARE'S COMEDY OF THE WINTER'S TALE, edited, with notes, by William J. Rolfe, A.M. New York: Harper and Brothers; Toronto: James Campbell and Son.

There is no difficulty at the present time in procuring cheap annotated editions of the great works of the great authors. The impulse given to the study of these works, of late years, has been largely due to the very copious supply of school editions, possessing all degrees of merit, from the barely passable to the excellent. Difficult indeed is often the task of choosing. If the reputation of an author is unknown, it is easy to make a

wrong selection, and especially when we have to take into consideration the pretentious character of advertisement or of preface.

We have before us two of Shakspeare's plays, "*Coriolanus*," edited by Rev. W. Aldis Wright, and "*The Winter's Tale*," by Mr. William J. Rolfe. Of the "*Coriolanus*," published by the Clarendon Press, it may seem superfluous to speak, the author's reputation in the field of English scholarship being fully established. In it, as in his editions of "*Julius Cæsar*," and other plays, Mr. Wright manifests his usual care and patience in the elucidation of the difficulties of his author. The introduction is calm and to the point, and singularly free from the theorizing so common among students of Shakspeare. To explain what is before him, to give solid information of the language, allusions, and times of the dramatist, is the editor's chief aim, and he dismisses with contempt the question as to whether Shakspeare had a political object in view in writing the play or not. Another feature of Mr. Wright's method of annotation is his avoidance of the so-called "æsthetic" treatment of the subject. It seems to us that in a school-book, at any rate, the editor has acted wisely in this. What a mass of theory and of, perhaps, unprofitable talk is hereby avoided! The school-room is certainly no place for such discussions, and whatever little of the kind be introduced into it, should come from the teacher himself. For ordinary school-work, then, these editions by Mr. Wright are the best with which we are at present acquainted.

"*The Winter's Tale*," under the scholarly editing of Mr. Rolfe, presents, like all the plays he has annotated, the same industry in collecting and arranging information. What renders this edition of special use to teachers is, that the editor aims at producing a kind of *variorum* edition, and that the introduction contains extracts from the great critics of Shakspeare, native and foreign, such as Gervinus, Ulrici, Dowden, and Mrs. Jameson. We must not omit to say a word in praise of the manner in which the books of the series are printed, bound and illustrated. In these respects they are admirable.