

Mr. Crooks' patriotic wish, to which he gave expression from his seat in the House: "That no person should ever be found to mar the harmony of our Educational Institutions, by making political capital out of them." There will always be some who will grumble at their cost, and perhaps not a few who will care more to cavil at, than to aid, their administration, but the high-minded, devoted Minister, who seeks the true weal of the great trust committed to him, heedless of party advantages and party clamour, will find public sympathy always ranged on his side into whatever pitfalls political knavery may lead him to stumble.

MILTON'S PARADISE LOST, (Books I. & II.) by John Seath, B.A., Principal, Collegiate Institute, St. Catharines. Second Edition. Toronto: Copp, Clark & Co., 1879.

LONGER ENGLISH POEMS, by J. W. Hales, M.A. London: Macmillan & Co., 1878.

The two books now under review both belong to the same class of School Classics and profess to furnish the same kind of information and material for the guidance of the student of English Literature.

In both alike the grammar and the style of composition of the authors treated of are elaborately dissected, their figures of speech, their rhythm, their modes of expression discussed and analyzed, their recondite allusions explained, parallel passages collocated, and the derivation of all important words given with considerable detail.

Upon the whole we do not think that Canada need be at all ashamed of Mr. Seath's work as compared with the more ambitious, but perhaps less carefully executed, work of the English Professor. In fact, while we shall have occasion to point out many slips, and, to our mind, erroneous conclusions in Mr. Hale's book, we are constrained to say that a close perusal of the above edition of Milton has resulted in our failing to discover in it more than a few points deserving of adverse criticism.

In the first place Mr. Seath gives us in his introduction a clearly written account of Milton's life and of his great prose and poeti-

cal works, followed by an extremely useful and well selected series of extracts from the principal criticisms which have appeared from time to time from the pens of different great authors upon the subject of Milton's genius and especially as this was displayed in his great poem, the "Paradise Lost." To this succeeds some preliminary notes on the origin, scheme and scansion of the poem—the first two books of which are then given (interleaved for the greater convenience of the student.) The rest of the volume is occupied by the notes, to which we will at once turn our attention. In the first place, we hardly think there was any necessity to explain the word "that" in the line, "of that forbidden tree whose mortal fruit, &c." as meaning "the well known." Such a construction appears unnecessary, since Milton goes on to describe the tree fully as "that whose mortal fruit brought Death into the world." The fact appears to be that no other sense was intended to be conveyed than would have passed by the words "the forbidden tree," and that the word "that" was preferred on account of its fuller sound and the greater power which it has in linking the parts of the line, both in sense and scansion, into one harmonious whole.

Perhaps the greatest and most besetting fault that commentators have to avoid is the tendency that undoubtedly exists to explain and elucidate what is already sufficiently clear. We can best illustrate our meaning by remarking how unnecessary it was to comment upon line 224 by the statement that the "vale" where Satan had lain prostrate on the Lake of Fire, "is not supposed to have become a permanent depression." Surely Mr. Seath can hardly ever have come across a boy so perversely ingenious as to imagine such a thing for a moment!

We must also differ from Mr. Seath in the question of the preference that should be given between the two constructions of the celebrated line in which the East is described as showering "on its Kings barbaric pearl and gold." After giving all due weight to the arguments he adduces, we must say that to our mind the epithet "barbaric" applies to the Kings, and not to the "pearl and gold."