

time and study to the condition of that great country. I would like to see Canada strong enough to stand as firmly without Protection as England does with Free Trade. And when Canada has had as much and as long Protection as Britain once had she could so stand. But as surely as the grandeur of Eng-

land only took on its dazzling lustre when the national mind was relieved from the uneasiness and danger of a fiscal revolution, so surely will Canada remain an incomplete confederation as long as the people are confronted with the possibility of a fiscal change of the drastic nature propounded by a well-known political party.

SHAKSPERE AND HIS PREDECESSORS*.

THIS is the latest contribution to the series of University Extension Manuals published by Mr. Murray. Although primarily designed to help the Extension Movement by providing the students with text-books for study and reference in connection with the authorized courses of lectures, these volumes ought also to appeal to a wide circle of general readers. Mr. Boas's book is indeed more interesting than a wilderness of second-rate novels. He has succeeded in combining thoroughness with attractiveness. "Shakspere and his Predecessors" is crowded with facts, yet it is never dry. It is full of a manly appreciation of the greatest of poets, yet is happily free from gush and meaningless eulogy. We confess we were alarmed at the sight of another addition to the huge mass of Shaksperian literature, and doubted that Mr. Boas would be able to justify such an addition. But after reading "Shakspere and his Predecessors," the justification seemed fairly obvious. First, the scheme of the book is original; and secondly, its treatment convinces the most deeply prejudiced opponent of any further book-making on Shakspere that there is always room for a

simple and clearly expressed account of the man who was

"A Cæsar. When comes such another?"

There is a disagreeable pompousness about the attitude towards Shakspere, which Matthew Arnold summed up in the line, "Others abide our question, thou art free." An unquestioning idolatry of the poet is as absurd on the one hand as the eternal questioning of his motives in the minutest details, characteristic of some German critics, is on the other. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that those who want to gain a deep and true knowledge of the character of Shakspere's genius will never *depend* on the judgment of another. They will not attach too much importance to conjectures about his life. But as it is impossible for anyone to read the plays and sonnets carefully and intelligently without a host of wonders and speculations arising in his mind, we think such books as Mr. Boas's, which give a substance to those vague and undefined thoughts, serve a useful purpose even to the people intimately acquainted with the poet's work, while the student's desire for such acquaintance will be whetted, and he, perhaps, guided in the way to make it.

Having settled for our own satisfaction, and that of our readers, that criticism of Shakspere need not be

*Shakspere and. His Predecessors. By F. S. Boas. (London: John Murray. 1896.)