

NO fewer than four comparatively new editions of Balzac in English are now before the American public, with sufficient differences in form, style, degrees of completeness, textual accuracy, critical helps, artistic features, and price, to require some discrimination and care in making a selection.

The Saintsbury Edition is published by J. M. Dent & Co. of London and the Macmillan Co. of New York, in forty volumes of medium size, and has a superior typographical appearance. The translations are by various hands, including Ellen Marriage, James Waring, and Clara Bell. Mr. Saintsbury, the well-known English critic, is the general editor, and his part is helpful to a reader undertaking a knowledge of Balzac and his work. These forty volumes are sold at \$1.50 each, and we have reviewed them one by one in detail as they have appeared during the past few years.

The same remark holds true of the Centenary Edition, published originally by Roberts Brothers, then by Hardy, Pratt & Co., and now under a special arrangement with the latter firm by Little, Brown & Co. This is in thirty-three volumes, all from one translator, Miss Katharine Prescott Wormeley, and sells at \$1.50 a volume. If the edition first-named is preferable mechanically, we should give preference on the other hand to Miss Wormeley's translations. Both editions are illustrated.

With the third of the four editions now referred to we are less familiar than with either of the others. This is the "Edition Definitive," so called, published by George Barrie & Son of Philadelphia, in fifty-three volumes, illustrated with etchings, and sold only to subscribers for the entire set. It is claimed for this edition that it is neither abridged nor expurgated; that it presents the French original as completely and exactly as Balzac wrote it as it is possible to convey it by means of another language,

* The Works of Honoré de Balzac. The Trent Edition. 16 volumes. (Two volumes in one.) Illustrated. Medium. T. Y. Crowell & Co. \$16.00.

though without slavish and mechanical rigidity; and accordingly, that it contains both matter and spirit not secured in the other editions. To some extent we are inclined to think this claim is just, however much many readers may prefer for practical purposes the form in which the original is presented by Miss Wormeley or the Saintsbury translators. The translators of the Barrie edition are not named. That circumstance is a distinct disadvantage.

The same disadvantage attaches to the new Trent Edition just received entire from the publishers, a formidable row of large and good-looking books, two volumes in one, sixteen in all, enclosed in a neat box, and making bulk enough to fill a spacious shelf. The anonymity of the translations is offset in some measure by the name of Prof. William P. Trent of Columbia University, who is the general editor, and whose work consists of a biography of Balzac, a bibliography, and an introduction to each volume. There is also an article directing the reader how to take the "Comedie Humaine" so as to get its best effect. Professor Trent's part is distinctly critical, and of a high order, and will be found most helpful. Indeed, the critical apparatus accompanying these sixteen volumes is of great and almost unique value. The illustrations are numerous, and include photo-gravures as well as half-tones; and the typography is excellent, the print being large, the plates new, the paper good, and the binding in good taste. As compared with the other editions this is to be commended for its completeness, while its low price is certain to carry it where the others have not gone.
