

THE VARIORUM SHAKESPEARE. The Winter's Tale. By H. H. Furness. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. \$4.00.

The fact that so many volumes of this work have appeared before rather increases than chills the enthusiasm with which the eleventh is now welcomed. It is a series which any student of the poet must be miserable without. Dr. Furness would hardly be called imaginative, but he is cautious and sane and thorough, and each volume which he compiles gives practically all of importance there is about the play which it contains—interpretation of particular passages by the leading editors, sources of plot, date of composition (now certainly fixed as 1610 or 1611), and interesting criticisms on the play, the characters, and the most famous

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actors who have taken the rôles. . One interest especial to this volume is the light which is thrown on the principle of absorption by the unusual use of apostrophes in the printing, due to an exceptionally excellent set of compositors. "That goes to bed with sun," for instance, and many similar passages show clearly that the supposed fault of construction in such places as "There lies more danger in thine eyes than twenty of their swords" is nothing but poor printing, the apostrophe being omitted after "than." The editor is mild with the strange mutilations of the play concocted by Garrick, Dryden, and others, and lays down the naïve principle that when managers hack up a masterpiece and the public approves all the blame should be put on the public. What he is most severe with is fancy. George Brandes's belief that Shakespeare treats youthful love in this play as if it were outside of it, whereas in earlier days he treated it more from the same level, Dr. Furness looks upon as a sign of the inability of foreigners to understand adequately. Surely Brandes's perception is simple and just, and when we remember the remarks of Pope and Dryden on this play we should be chary of international dogmas. However, this is comparatively unimportant. The essential point is that this edition is by far the most useful in existence.