

BOOKS.

To pick a man's pocket, is generally considered rather a small thing for one to do, and to pick a man's brains cannot be much bigger. The Law says, that a man has a right to his *thoughts as well as to his money*, and so forbids the reprinting in any shape of a book written by either man or woman, that the writer may receive the whole pecuniary profit that may result from his labor. But what shall we say of a government, that becomes a very "Fagin" in this line, for the sake of a few dollars a year? Yet this is what our own Canadian Government has been doing for some time. It allows a Canadian publisher to reprint here any book written by an American writer, that our community may get the benefit of his thoughts, and lays no tax on such reprint. It thus practically encourages our people to steal, and then, goes into the plunder game itself, and when that writer sends in a single American copy of his book, it insists on a "divide" of the profits, and makes the poor author pay it so much per copy. In other words, it picks that poor fellow's purse of part of his hard won earnings and *pockets the amount*. This it does under pretence of "Protecting" and thus "encouraging," our native talent! If it really meant to do that, the money thus collected would be regarded as a special fund for the developement of Canadian writers, say, given as a special contribution in aid of some branch of popular Education. As, however, this money simply goes into the common purse of the Dominion, the Government, in levying this tax, is merely plundering the author,—who is forced to share with the Government, the profits of his writing, and also plundering the writer, who has to pay in the end all the duties and charges that have to be met before the book can reach him.

A movement is being made at present, to get our Finance Minister to allow books intended for Public Libraries and Colleges in free of duty. Such a movement is marvelously contemptible. It is, as if these corporations thought only of themselves, and provided they can get what they want, do not care about the mass of the people.

The whole amount collected is so trifling that the Government with its immense surplus, can easily afford to abolish all duties, and since the Publishers and Booksellers in Toronto, have moved on *this* line, being satis-

fied that the free admission would tend to increase their business, we go in for their movement, and say as we have said repeatedly,—LET US HAVE CHEAP BOOKS.

THE RAILWAYS.

The tone of hope long deferred in which the question of safety on Railways is treated by such leading papers as the *London Spectator* and *Saturday Review* is very remarkable—and this arises from a sense of the immense social power of the great Railway Companies, who will consent to nothing in the way of improvement that will be likely to add to their expenses, and even will with a cruel cynicism, set the costs of compensation for injury against outlays to prevent accident—and take what seems at the time to be the least.

These are the social traits that will shock posterity when it comes to read the history of our time—and those readers will certainly contrast them with the immense pretensions to practical benevolence which the age makes. The very men who act in this way can be benevolent in other things—why then do they act thus? Because they have cast their thoughts into the monetary mould so skilfully prepared for them by the economists of a century past. They will only look at this most serious matter for a modern state and for society from a monetary point of view. PLUTONOMY is the word that best expresses this state of the mind—all honor to the man who coined the word thirty years ago. The monetary view will be right enough, in certain committees of the thinking powers—if I may so express it. But it is wrong—altogether wrong—to bring money into competition with the public safety. And it is really as wrong, economically as it is in morals. Destruction of all kinds transmits a deep constitutional infection. Its effects spread to the right and left and over the long future—what shall be said of Railway managers and shareholding bodies who will thus allow their fellow citizens to be ruined and killed through their breach of contract? It is just a breach of contract and nothing else—for they stand bound to carry their clients safely from