

reasonable time, become the reversioners of literary property is sufficient indication of the difference which the law has intentionally created."

As the English law secures the author not only a life-rent property, but certain rights as to its disposition thereafter, the contrast between those rights, and the proposed Canadian wrongs render any detailed discussion on the point unnecessary. Literary property, like property in land, requires special legislation just because it cannot be put in the pocket or locked up in the safe. So long as Homer and the old minstrels carried about their epics and ballads in their brains their property was safe in their own keeping. Shakespeare and his brother players of the "Globe" and "Blackfriars," did their best to protect their popular tragedies and comedies,—the "Hamlet," the "Lear," the "Romeo and Juliet," the "Tempest," and "Midsummer Night's Dream,"—from the piratical appropriators of such wares in the Elizabethan age, by keeping them out of the printers' hands. But once the beneficent printing press has multiplied copies of our "Hamlet" and "Midsummer Night's Dream," our "Alices in Wonderland," or our "Idyls of the King," they are not only available for the delight of thousands of readers, but also for the dishonest gain of a good many misappropriators beyond the reach of statute law.

An honest Canadian Copyright Act will place the author's rights foremost. The fact that he has disposed of the copyright for the British market is no reason why he may not negotiate with the Canadian printer and publisher for its issue here. Native Canadian authors are as yet few; but they are growing in number, and we may hope for a more intelligent and honest recognition of the author's interest being supreme in the right of property in the creations of his mind, and the products of his pen. It is a small return to ask of the civilized world for all the pleasure and the profit it owes to its historians, poets, biographers, scientific discoverers, novelists and other authors, that it shall protect them in the same right to an honest payment for the fruits of their labour, as it extends to the manufacturer of dry-goods or hardware, to the baker, the brewer, the farmer or the tailor.

It is creditable to Great Britain that she has never yielded to the temptation to retaliate on the American author, and deny him any right of property in his works. We shall do well and wisely if we follow the honourable example of the mother country, whose authors have a much stronger claim on us. If they are provoked to insist on retaliation against Canadian authors, Canadian literature is just reaching the stage when its effect might prove most adverse. It will be in the true interest of the Dominion if we are compelled to reconsider the basis on which a Canadian Copyright Act should be framed. In doing so such bodies as the Royal Society, the Canadian Institute and the Universities should be consulted, as well as the booksellers, printers and publishers. The result may be the adoption of a measure framed on broad principles of justice and honour—principles that pay better in the long run than those of a mere narrow selfishness.