

memory one or more cases of ruined credit and blasted prospects owing to the 'jump-on' tactics of the present. The danger of damage suits is no bar to such action, and every day we see men forced into insolvency when by every right they should have been saved the stigma. The fear of one creditor that another will step in and freeze him out has ruined more business reputations, and injured commerce more materially during the past ten years than a fair and equitable bankruptcy law could possibly effect in a century." The need for national regulation of this matter has been more plainly recognized in the neighboring republic during the financial crisis that has obtained this year. Creditors forced their debtors to the latter's disadvantage. A proper national insolvency law would have prevented this by making any action by a creditor subject to the approval of all the creditors. It is as much needed in Canada as in the United States, and for similar reasons.

It is not fair, much less is it honest, that one creditor should be paid in full and another get nothing. The creditor who would take his debt in full to the detriment of other creditors is not much better than a common thief in everything except in the eyes of the law, which makes his action legally proper and just. The debtor who gives preferences is an accessory before the fact in the court of Common Justice—not in a Canadian or United States court.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES AND THE BOOK-SELLING TRADE.

MECHANICS' Institutes were established in this country to give poor mechanics and the children of such an opportunity to attend night schools to secure practical business training and to read such scientific works as would be instructive and elevating. They were designed to furnish instruction to the poor. But they have been subverted from their original purpose, and have become mere circulating libraries. For this reason they have become instruments of destruction in regard to the book-selling trade.

The bookseller now finds his trade in the books of current fiction reduced to a very low volume, owing to the fact that all the books can be secured at a much lower cost through the Mechanics Institute Library. The patrons of this library are not the mechanics so much as the other wealthier classes of the community, people who have greater inclination and more leisure for reading. The institutes are mere circulating libraries, supported by grants from the Provincial Governments and the municipality in which they are situated.

Being thus the recipients of public pay they are able to supply books at a much smaller cost than independent circulating libraries and the booksellers find it necessary to charge.

It is the current fiction from which the bookseller expects to make his profit. The circulation reports of the mechanics' institute libraries show that about 80 per cent of the books taken out by their patrons is of this class. Instead of buying these books for their own use and for the formation of private libraries, the public go to the libraries and obtain the free reading. The institutes have fallen so low in their competition with the booksellers and newsdealers that they even keep the fashion magazines on their files.

There can be no doubt that this competition of the mechanics' institute libraries has been an immense factor which has accentuated the decadence of the book-selling profession. The bookseller of to-day is fast becoming a vendor of the cheapest classes of literature—5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 cent novels. The bookseller is again a sufferer by the extension of paternal government.

If the bookseller of Canada wishes to remain a bookseller, let him be jealous of such encroachments on his domain. The lawyers jealously guard their sphere of labor; the medical profession similarly guard against all encroachments; the teaching profession have their safeguards, and why should not the book-selling profession be careful in the preservation of their legitimate preserves? But they must be their own guardians, relying on their own exertions, not on those of other classes.

THE FUTURE OF ALUMINUM.

THE progress made in the manufacture of aluminum during the last few years is an interesting study. At the beginning of this decade the process of manufacture was so crude that the initial cost of the metal prevented the goods made of it being put upon the market at anything like reasonable prices. Experiments, too, in the working of the metal seemed at first to be very discouraging, the outcome of which was that for two or three years very little has been heard of its products. This year, however, a decided step forward seems to have been made. The raw metal rolled into sheets is being turned out of the mill for less than one third of the price asked for it two years ago. The rolling process has been made so perfect that sheets of any gauge can be had. This, of course, greatly facilitates the manufacture of specialties. The next progressive step has been in the different modes of ornamenting these articles, which, until now, have been universally plain in appearance, being left a dull matte finish.

Now the engraver's tool is given an opportunity to show its skill, and very handsome some of the results are. The polishing wheel, too, is being brought into service, giving a brightness even deeper than silver, with the advantage that it does not tarnish. There are a number of other modes of "brilliating up" the surface, but we will content ourselves with the "clouded" and imitation "wood-grain," both of which styles are very pleasing. The extreme lightness, combined with its great strength, are the two first essentials of aluminum, but the rich appearance, coupled with the fact that it does not tarnish, are of even greater importance in "articles de vertu."

Alloyed with copper, Aluminum gives a substance many times lighter than any cheap metal, yet as strong and elastic as Bessemer steel. If the price can be lowered and some satisfactory method of soldering discovered, aluminum will rival nickel as the great commercial metal of the future. We have recently seen some beautiful fancy articles made of pure aluminum in one of our Toronto wholesale houses. The goods were so new and yet so handsome that we found it difficult to come away without taking some to show "the folks at home." Being solid, they are, in our opinion, far ahead of silver-plated goods of a similar nature, and cannot but materially injure the status of platedware with the general public.

NEW MUSIC BOOKS.

WHEN a music book sells in Canada at the rate of from 50 to 100 per day it must be an exceedingly popular one. But such is the record of "The Ideal Folio of Music for Piano or Organ," published by Whaley, Royce & Co. One important feature is that every part of the work of producing the book was done on the premises except the binding. The handsome lithographed cover is a sample of the work now produced in this large establishment, while the plate work is much above the average. From the printer's standpoint the work is first-class in every respect. Not less excellent are the contents: Eleven waltzes, four marches, three schottisches, three galops, two polkas, seven transcriptions, and thirteen miscellaneous pieces. The book, on account of its superiority, will no doubt increase in favor as the musicians learn more of its merits.

A new publication will appear about October 15, entitled, "The Favorite Folio of Comic Songs," uniform in size and price with the Favorite Song Folios published by the Toronto News Co. The Favorite Song Folios have been exceedingly successful, and the new comic collection will no doubt be equally so. The cover has a very taking design and the whole work will be of a