

31s. 6d.—equal by mere difference in money to \$7.50, without counting duty and freight. This book may be had at the present instant at our book-stores for \$1.25, in a handsome library volume, and at 40 cents in paper. Had the English publishers' bill become law all editions but that at \$7.50 would be contraband and liable to seizure at the frontier and in the bookstores. Some time next year there will no doubt be an English edition at 6s. ; but by that time we shall have forgotten all about the book. We can not wait in Canada until all the circulating library folks in England are quite done reading a book before we commence to see the 6s. edition of it, and that price even is too high. If, however, we choose to wait for forty-two years we shall be able to get a 2s. or 50c. edition from England.

Then again, if such a bill should ever pass, we shall have to do without Blackwood's Magazine or pay 75c. a month for it. The quarterlies will all cost \$1.50 each number. Littell's Living Age and the Eclectic and all periodicals which contain anything selected from English sources will be contraband. The sale even of the New York papers with Dr. Mackenzie's account of the Emperor Frederick's illness would be illegal. The consequences of such legislation would reach to the most remote settlement in the distant North-west. It would compel the employment of a special staff to enforce it and throw this country entirely, for its reading, upon the original productions of American authors.

(From the Montreal Gazette, Oct. 23.)

### Copyright.

We publish in another column a report of a meeting of the Canadian Copyright association held in Toronto on the 18th inst. The report, with the resolutions adopted, states the facts very clearly. It is beyond a doubt that if such a bill as that brought in last session ever becomes law the interests of publishers, booksellers, printers, and readers will be very seriously injured. As the law stands now Canadians are able to import from the United States the cheap editions published there. The original editions in England are made at a very high price and are aimed to supply the circulating libraries. Very few even of the wealthy buy these books. The circulating library does the work of the bookseller until after some time, if the book meets with favor, a cheaper edition is brought out so that a novel originally published at 31s. 6d. is, after a year or two, issued at 6s. In the meantime we in Canada have read the book in the United States edition long before the 6s. edition has appeared in England. We should even be debarred from obtaining those cheap editions which the American agencies of English houses often prepare for the American market. The 6s. edition of Robert Elsmere, for instance, prepared for the American market by MacMillans, is not yet out in England. The days of cheap literature would be over and Canadians would read in the English and United States papers reviews of books which they could not see for years.

In the case of patents the National Policy has demanded manufacture in Canada. The Govern-

ment will protect any patentee on condition that, within a certain time, he will manufacture his patented article in the country. It is only reasonable to apply the same rule to books. The Canadian Government laid down, in 1870, the following principle. It was embodied in a minute of Council and forwarded to England long before the National Policy was thought of: "The important point of issue, and one on which the views of the London publishers and of the people, both of Canada and the United States, are irreconcilable, is, that the former insist upon the extension of copyright without local publication, and to this the latter will never consent." It will be a very remarkable thing if a Government pledged to a national policy goes back on this principle, laid down so long ago as 1870, and adopts an anti-national policy in such an important matter as that of copyright. The Berne convention requires that the citizens of each concurring country shall have all the privileges of a native in every other concurring country; the Canadian law already grants that, but the proposition now is to radically change the whole law to suit the London publishers. It is time that Canada made her own copyright laws free from the dictation of the English Parliament. The Imperial Copyright act of 1842 is a relic of a by-gone time, the only one remaining on the Statute book. Any attempt to enforce that act under cover of the Berne convention must be an utter failure and will lead to intense irritation. No doubt the subject is one of great difficulty, and is very little understood. Very few can realise how far-reaching the effects of a change would be. In such cases governments have usually adopted the plan of appointing a commission to report upon the matter. Such a course should be adopted here.

(From the Toronto Mail, Oct. 25th.)

### The Copyright Law.

At the last session of Parliament the Minister of Justice introduced a bill accepting for the Dominion the provisions of the Berne Copyright treaty. Whether the Minister had in advance fully considered the nature of this treaty and its effect upon Canada is doubtful. But this much is certain, he soon learned that its acceptance would be hurtful to the Canadian publishing trade, in that it would increase the price of books and be injurious to the reading public. Under the existing law the English copyright holds good in Canada. But a foreign reprint of a copyrighted work—the cheap editions printed in New York, for example—may be imported and sold on the payment of a Customs duty of fifteen per cent, and an authors tax of twelve and a half per cent. *ad valorem*. The receipts from the authors' tax are payable to the English author. The circumstance that these editions may be imported on the terms mentioned is an incentive to the author to transfer to Canadian publishers the rights to print and publish in Canada, which carries with it the exclusion of the foreign reprint. In numerous instances the rights of English authors are purchased, and though this purchase the author receives some return for his labour, while the Canadian publishers, printers, and bookbinders profit by the preparation of his book