

LITERARY NOTES.

Senator Ryan's Copyright Bill received the Royal assent at the close of the late session of the Dominion Parliament. This new Act ought to prove satisfactory to all the parties interested—the British author, the Colonial publisher and the reading public of Canada. The subject was so fully discussed in the April number of this Magazine, that we are spared the necessity of referring to it at any length on the present occasion. The injustice inflicted upon Canadian industry and enterprise under the old system was manifest to every one who gave the subject a moment's consideration. The English publisher issued his works at a price beyond the means of the mass of Colonial readers. The American publishers reprinted these works, in many cases, without remunerating the author. These reprints were published at a cheaper rate; but, in addition to the publishing price, the Canadian reader had to pay the *ad valorem* duty, ostensibly as a royalty to the author, although, in fact, it seldom, if ever, found its way into the author's pocket. The Canadian publisher, with superior facilities, cheaper materials and a lower rate of wages, was virtually shut out of the competition. If a work of general interest issued from the English press, negotiations with the author were necessary before he could venture to undertake its republication. Meanwhile, before a "form" of the work could be put in type, he found the market fully supplied by an American reprint. All our publishers asked therefore was, not to be protected against foreign competition, but that foreign publishers should not be protected against them. The chief credit of the recent change in the law belongs of right to Mr. John Lovell, of Montreal. He proved, conclusively, by a *reductio ad absurdum*, that he could do in exile what, as a Canadian, he was not permitted to do at home. The provisions of the new law may be briefly stated as follows.—Any publisher, having a license for that purpose from the Governor-General, and having deposited \$100 as security for the payment of an excise duty of 12½ per cent. on the wholesale value of the work when printed in Canada, may within one month of securing the copyright, republish any British copyright work. The period of one month may be extended, for sufficient cause; the importation of foreign reprints of such works as are published under the Act is prohibited; and the excise duty is to be paid, not nominally but actually, to the party or parties beneficially interested in the British copyright. The question still remains whether our Parliament has not acted *ultra vires* in passing the new law. It is true that the B. N. America Act gives the Dominion legislature jurisdiction over the subject of copyright (30 & 31 Vic., c. 3, sec. 91), but it does not appear that any power was intended to be granted thereby in addition to that possessed by the old Province of Canada. The Imperial Copyright Act extends to the colonies, and it would seem, therefore, that Imperial legislation is necessary to give validity to the new Act. According to the Hon. Mr. Campbell, our Government is satisfied that the Act is constitutional; but

as it only comes in force after a proclamation by the Governor-General, it is probable that the opinion of the law officers of the crown in England will be taken upon the point. In any case, there is no occasion to doubt the ultimate confirmation of so necessary an enactment.

As the summer advances there is a noticeable falling off in theological literature. We do not regret this, as it enables us to devote more attention to a few works of merit now lying before us. The latest instalment of Lange's Commentary—The Books of the Kings (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co.), is the work of Dr. Karl Bähr, of Carlsruhe, translated by competent American scholars. Like its predecessors, this volume is a monument of the critical power, thorough scholarship and unwearied industry of German theologians. Without attempting a general review of the work here, we may take a crucial example, which will at once occur to the student of Scripture—the sign given to Hezekiah on the sun-dial (or more properly, the steps) of Ahaz (2 Kings xx. 9–11 and Isaiah xxxviii. 8.) The commentator and his American editor (an Episcopalian) are far from being Rationalists, although they do not seek to cloak the difficulties in the text. It is admitted that there is an inconsistency in the statements—(1) that Hezekiah had recovered, and (2) that, after his recovery, he desired a sign "that the Lord would heal" him; and further, that the parallel account in Isaiah is "disjointed," and attributes a different reason for the giving of the sign. On the other hand, the opinion of Bosanquet, Adams, one of the discoverers of the planet Neptune, and other astronomers—that the recession of the shadow on the stairs of Ahaz can be fully accounted for by a partial eclipse of the sun—is summarily repudiated. To those who think it a sound canon of biblical criticism that no phenomenon explicable by natural causes should be attributed to causes ultra-natural, we commend an article in the June No. of the *Sunday Magazine*, on "The Eclipses of Scripture Times," "Paul of Tarsus, by a Graduate," (Boston. Roberts Brothers) is an American reprint of an English work which has attracted considerable attention. It is a book which may be earnestly recommended to the general as well as to the theological reader. The author evidently possesses considerable acquaintance with classical, rabbinical and patristic literature, and he is at the same time master of a lucid and attractive style. We do not know any work which, within the same compass, contains so accurate and life-like an account of the apostle and his surroundings, of his enemies within and without the church, and of the heroic energy by which he overcame them all, and thus, humanly speaking, saved Christianity from the fate which seemed to await it—that "Judaism, the cradle of Christianity" did not also "become its grave." We are bound to confess, however, that some of the author's views, notably those on the Sunday question, the atonement, and dogmatic theology generally, will scarcely pass muster in orthodox quarters.