

unpaid labour; and the community that profited by their gains has awakened to a sense of moral obligation. The recently enacted American copyright law, meagre as are its concessions to the British and Canadian authors, may be fairly welcomed as a recognition of what the old moral law teaches as our duty to our neighbours. But the acquisition of the choicest English literature on such easy terms is a very seductive temptation. On one occasion when I was setting out on a visit to Europe, I was addressed by a New England lady who begged me to convey to Mrs. Oliphant an assurance of the grateful appreciation of her American sisters for all the pleasure her writings have given them. I duly delivered the message, and carried back to her appreciator a reply which, while acknowledging the compliment, suggested that the most practical evidence of the estimation of an author's works would be some share in the profits of their sale. To my surprise the message—though conveyed in all good humour,—was seriously resented, with the blunt comment that anything that interfered with the cheap circulation of popular literature would be opposed to the general interests of the community, and an encroachment on popular rights.

It is a noble incident in the life of Emerson, his turning to account the absence of a protective copyright to win for Carlyle some fruits of his early and still unrequited literary toil. Nor is that by any means a solitary instance of such generous sympathy with struggling genius. American authors have cordially sympathized with the wrongs of English writers, and none the less so that the latter have always resented the idea of any English retaliation. But of the profits made in America by the sale of Carlyle's writings the share that fell to their author was insignificant indeed; of small worth, in truth, except as a manifestation of brotherhood from a kindred spirit, wafted in kindly sympathy across the ocean. What Carlyle himself thought of the marauders in the field of unprotected copyright he had left on record in his most graphic style, when, in 1839, some threatened legislation by the British Parliament evoked his "Petition on the Copyright Bill." It expresses in effective fashion the righteous indignation of an aggrieved author.

"To the Honourable the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, the petition of Thomas Carlyle, a writer of books, humbly sheweth:

"That your petitioner has written certain books, being incited thereto by various innocent or laudable considerations, chiefly by the thought that said books might in the end be found to be worth something.

"That your petitioner had not the happiness to receive from Mr. Thomas Tegg, or any publisher, republisher, printer, bookseller, bookbuyer, or other the like man or body of men, any encouragement or countenance in writing of said books, or to discern any chance of receiving such; but wrote them by effort of his own and the favour of Heaven.

"That all useful labour is worthy of recompense; that all honest labour is worthy of the chance of recompense; that the giving and assuring to each man what recompense his labour has actually merited, may be said to be the business of all legislation, polity, government and social arrangement whatsoever among men; a business indispensable to attempt, impossible to accomplish accurately; difficult to accomplish without inaccuracies, that become enormous, insupportable, and the parent of social confusions which never altogether end.

"That your petitioner does not undertake to say what recompense in money this labour