

then as the metaphysician and theologian of Browning's poem. We will not, however, do Dr. Wilson the injustice of attempting to give in brief what must be read in his own graceful and eloquent words to be properly appreciated. We will only say that no cultivated mind can fail to feel the living charm of our author's analysis of the poetical conceptions of Shake-

spere and Browning; whilst the work will be welcomed by every scientific man who believes in the ultimate victory of the Spiritual as opposed to the Materialistic Philosophy. The world has to thank Dr. Wilson for a work which is in itself both a poem and a valuable contribution to science.

LITERARY NOTES.

One of the subjects connected with colonial affairs which has been long pressing for consideration and settlement in England is the question of Literary Copyright, and the right of Colonies to traffic in foreign reprints of English copyright works.

Without opening the subject of the nature of Copyright, or desiring to question the right claimed for property so intangible—but which, fortunately, is limited by law in its privilege and operation—we, however, cannot refer to this matter without expressing our disapproval of the policy of the publishing trade in its management of that property.

As the trade regard the character of the property, it is a serious injury to the public, and a mistake in their business administration. Antagonistic to the principle of free trade, it is open to objection on that account; and as a monopoly, especially as it concerns education and intelligence, its policy is the more questionable.

Particularly, however, in regard to Colonial Copyright the action of British publishers, together with the Imperial Authorities, has been most impolitic and injurious to all interests. In the absence of an universal Copyright Act, and especially while with the United States Government no international treaty existed, how short-sighted has been the conduct of the Mother Country in forcing, by its legislation, the conventionalities and conservative restrictions of a huge monopoly on the Colonial book trade, which is legally free, at the same time, to buy the untaxed reprint of American producers.

The position of Canada in regard to this subject, as our readers well know, has been most anomalous; and the fetters which have been placed upon the publishing trade of the country has been a serious check to the intellectual advancement of the community.

That this has been the case, while neither the British author or publisher has profited by the legal restrictions imposed upon the trade, shows the absurdity of the present state of things. We have had all the license to trade in cheap reprints of British copyrights, but we have not had the license to do that justice to the copyright owner which our native publishers would have willingly rendered, had they had the privilege extended to them of producing for their own market, even in competition with the American reprinter. Compensate the author, has always been the cry. But an embargo has always lain upon the native publisher to do justice, under legal penalties, while the American has had it left

to his honour to give such remuneration as he might, from the sales in both his own and the Colonial market. Verily, a strange policy! The Act our Parliament passed last session to remove the disabilities under which the native trade lie, and to protect the author, has been disallowed by the Home authorities, and the situation seems disheartening. The obtuseness and perversity of the official mind at Downing Street is proverbial, but it was hardly to have been expected that, after pressing the matter upon the attention of the Colonial Office for years, as has been done, in the interest of the author, and in justice to our native producing trade, so decided a repression of the liberty of self-government should be advised us. The impolicy of this course is the more apparent when it is considered that, while aiding our own industries, as against those of an alien people, we were, by the Act, making due provision for the author's remuneration, which has been disregarded hitherto. We understand that at last the subject has been referred by the Imperial authorities to the London Board of Trade, and we trust that the practical minds at the head of that Bureau will see the advantage and policy of adapting legislation to meet the exceptional circumstances of the case. Very modified opinions are now held by the British publishers in regard to the question, and we believe that, while conceding local publication of English copyrights in the Colonies—to compete with the American unauthorized reprints, which enter the Colonies under impracticable restrictions,—all that the British publisher now insists upon is to have the privilege, for a short period after publication of a copyright, of placing a popular English edition on the market so as to conserve the Colonial fields to himself. This privilege, we need not say, will be readily granted in the Colonies; and surely there should be no difficulty now in framing such legislation as will continue to the Colonial markets the boon of popular editions—of English or native manufacture, rather than American,—and which compensate the author in proportion to the extended fields secured to him.

The author, we dare say, will find it to his advantage to exchange in England the system of limited high-priced editions for extensive cheap ones; and thus remove the occasion for the charge that the English reader is taxed for himself and the Colonist, while literature would be made a more incalculable blessing to all than has hitherto been dreamt of.

By the time the present number reaches our read-