

strength and statesmanship are equal to the task of making and carrying out such reforms, remains to be seen.

We last week made a statement in *The Outlook*, one of the most reliable journals in the United States, the basis of a paragraph commenting on the condition to which many of the industries of the Republic have been reduced under the McKinley tariff. The statement in question was that the Kesbey & Mattison Company, of Ambler, Penn., a firm of manufacturers of chemicals, had posted in its works a notice requesting those of its employees who were in sympathy with the Wilson Bill to hand in their resignation to the superintendent. It now appears, from a retraction in the next number of *The Outlook*, that the president of the company has published an explicit denial that any such notice has ever been given by the company, or that any discrimination is made regarding either the political or the religious opinions of the employees. Thus it appears that the statement was a deliberate forgery, though *The Outlook* had the authority of the *Public Ledger* of Philadelphia, a very reputable journal, for its publication. There ought surely to be some way of discovering and visiting with condign punishment the perpetrator of so criminal a slander of the good name of a firm.

Ample and lamentable evidence is not, however, wanting, of the ruin that has been wrought, let us hope but temporarily, by the protective system in the United States, in making the industries of the country so largely dependent upon the uncertain props of high protection. The paralysis of industry, which is now producing such untold distress throughout the whole nation, and especially in its manufacturing centres, whatever its origin, is now undoubtedly being perpetuated by the uncertainties of tariff revision. How this effect is produced is easily seen. Apart from the cruel tactics of those manufacturers who have shut down, or have restricted operations, for the sake of effect while the Wilson Bill is under discussion, there are many with whom it is, no doubt, the part of common prudence to refrain as far as possible from paying high duties upon any considerable stock of materials, knowing that a short time hence the value of these materials will be reduced by just the amount by which the tariff on them is lowered. Meanwhile the partisans at Washington go on with their debates as if every legitimate argument had not long since been used over and over again, and as if the whole nation were not impatiently and painfully awaiting their decision. Some of the arguments used are decidedly amusing, as showing the lengths to which fondness for an opinion or loyalty to a party will sometimes carry a man. For instance, a Massachusetts repre-

sentative, the other day, actually took the ground that it would be a curse to the country if foreign nations would give the people all the cotton and woollen goods they needed for nothing. Another Congressman, confronted with Mr. Wilson's hard question how protection could be the cause of high wages when only about five per cent. of the workingmen of the country were employed in protected industries, tried to get over the difficulty by replying that it was obvious that the employers of the ninety-five per cent. of unprotected labor must pay wages as high as those of the protected workmen, else their employees would leave them and go into the protected industries!

It is now stated, on what seems to be reliable authority, that on the expiration of the contract of the Education Department of Ontario with the three firms which have hitherto had a monopoly of the publication of the School Readers, the right of publication will be given to all competitors. That is to say, the Department which holds the copyright—subject, it seems, to the prior claims of publishers whose consent was not asked to the use of selections from copyrighted works controlled by them—will sell plates without distinction or reserve to all printers and publishers who will give some guarantee that the books will be put forth in good style and quality. This is, so far, as it should be, provided that the danger of combination can be guarded against. But that will be a real danger, nor is it easy to see how it can be effectually prevented. The trouble is that the one set of books and that only is authorized, so that any combination to maintain or increase prices cannot be met by the substitution of other books. While we cannot deny the force of the argument from public economy, and must admit that parents ought to be protected in some way from frequent and capricious changes of text-books, it is, on the other hand, clear that the style and quality of text-books will never be raised to a very high level so long as there is monopoly in their production. Under the present system, however free the competition may be made in the mechanical reproduction of the one authorized set of books, there is no inducement whatever for competent writers to prepare, or enterprising publishers to produce, better books intrinsically. It is superfluous to add that the question of the contents of these books is of vastly greater importance than that of their mechanical features, and that competition in improving such contents is much more desirable than competition in getting out the one stereotyped text in the best manner.

*Apropos* of the text-book question, it is to be hoped that, the remarkable article in the *Globe* a week or two since, calling for special legislation to set aside the rights of British copyright holders, so far as the Government and the schools are

concerned, was not approved by the leader of the Government, even though it may probably have been "inspired" by the Department of Education, in a moment of annoyance. It is undeniable that the action entered at this eleventh hour, on behalf of a British firm, is vexatious in the extreme. But if the action prevails under the copyright law, there is nothing to be done but to repair the original omission on the best terms possible. Should the prosecuting firm, or any other in a similar position, prove not amenable to reason, a movement to get out a new set of Readers, with all selections from authors whose copyright holders would not give cheerful consent, omitted, would probably soon settle the question. It is highly improbable that any such copyright holders would refuse as unique an opportunity to secure a free advertisement of their wares. The experience of the former Superintendent of Education, in New Brunswick, in getting out a similar series of Readers is in point. He as wisely as courteously took care, we are informed, to ask the permission of the copyright holders of the works of every author from whom he wished to quote, and such permission was, in every instance, if we are not mistaken, cheerfully given. But even if it were practicable, which seems to us exceedingly doubtful, the method of overcoming the difficulty proposed by the *Globe* would be unworthy of any administration. "Leave is light." The only honorable way to procure it in such a case, is to ask for it. When a Government begins to legislate away the property of citizens in its own interest, it will be time for citizens to look well to their rights and liberties.

"Fairplay Radical" returns to the charge with an array of facts and statistics of formidable length. With most of them we were already quite familiar. They have appeared and re-appeared in various forms in the anti-Home Rule journals. As to their conclusiveness in establishing the two propositions which they are adduced to prove, few of our readers, we venture to believe, will be nearly so well satisfied as is our correspondent. The first proposition is, in brief, that the contracting-out clause added by the Lords to the Employers' Liability Bill were not in opposition to the wishes of the majority of the workingmen of Great Britain. It will be observed that the proposition is now so much milder than that laid down or implied in our correspondent's first letter that its identity would be hard to establish. The question was originally one of fact. In reply to the statement that the Lords were actually carrying out the wishes of the workingmen, we referred to delegations from large and influential bodies of workingmen who waited on Lord Salisbury in opposition to the amendment. We pointed also to the most significant fact that at the first bye-election in a workingmen's constituency (Accrington) the Con-