

arrangement with an American publisher at its first issue, secure the privileges and benefits of copyright. The second section contains a paragraph to which some exception may, we think, fairly be taken. It says :

"If an American publisher shall neglect, for the space of three months, to keep the book so published by him on sale, or obtainable at his publishing house, then it may be imported or reprinted, the same as might have been done before the passage of this Act."

There is an element of sharp practice in this stipulation that seems to be a contradiction of the general principle of the proposed measure. The object to be attained is, as we take it, to secure the foreign author in what are now conceded to be his rights, and to place him on the same footing in the United States as in his own country, where no such restrictions are imposed. If a book is in large demand, it is true such a lapse in the production is not very likely to occur, and, therefore, the necessity for the proviso can scarcely exist. But it might happen that, where laborious revision is required by the author, or commercial embarrassments supervene on the part of the publisher, not to speak of many other possible temporary hindrances to the issue of a new edition, it would be most unjust to peril the copyright by enforcing so stringent and exceptional a rule. Before noticing further the terms of the bills we have above described, it may be well to observe that the conference was far from unanimous in adopting the last named measure. According to the *Tribune* "The whole body of Boston and Philadelphia publishers, as well as those of New York, had been invited. No one appeared from Philadelphia, the tradesmen of that city having declared themselves opposed to all international copyright ; and only fifteen prominent city houses were represented, the Harpers and nearly all the school book publishers being absent. All the gentlemen in attendance were desirous of an international

copyright law, but their opinions differed widely as to its construction. Mr. W. H. Appleton presented the report of the Committee of five appointed to frame a bill, which was approved by all members of the committee with the exception of Mr. Seymour, of the firm of Charles Scribner & Co." From this statement we may safely conclude that the question of granting the foreign author the protection he demands at the hands of the American Government and people is still of very uncertain accomplishment. The dissenting member of the committee presented a minority report strongly combating several of the provisions of the bill, which he declared "was not an international copyright law at all, but an Act to protect American publishers such as they have no right to demand, and one that the British Government would not recognize as giving any claim to reciprocity." The report of the majority was adopted by nine to five, two delegates refusing to vote, and others, while favourable to the general principle, suggesting amendments. We now know, therefore, what is the utmost extent of the boon that, if Congress be not far more liberal than the traders most directly interested, the people of America may be expected at present to grant to the foreign authors—to whose labours they are so largely indebted, and for which they have hitherto paid so little.

It is strictly and exclusively an authors' copyright that is proposed to be conceded. But if, whilst offering a tardy measure of justice to the English author, the Bill erects a "Chinese wall" between the American and the foreign publisher in the interest of the latter, such a course is not without a certain degree of justification. At the conference we have just mentioned a letter was read from a number of eminent English authors in which a very strong argument was presented in favour of the position assumed by the American publishers. After expressing the opinion that the interests of the British author and those of the British publisher are