

right is rather curious. By some ancient licenses from the Crown, the Universities are empowered to print books in general, these licenses being granted at a time when no person could print anything without the Royal authority. A hundred years ago, in an action brought by the then King's printer against the University of Cambridge, for an infringement of his patent, it was decided that the license gave the Universities a concurrent right to print Bibles; this modified competition sufficed to prevent, to some extent, the evils of the monopoly, but not entirely. The present patent is for a term of thirty years, and dates from 21st January, 1830, consequently it expires next January, and the most strenuous efforts are being made by the friends of free trade in Bibles to prevent a renewal. England enjoys at this moment the unenviable distinction of being the only portion of the Empire where the monopoly exists. In Ireland, the sale for the Bible was of course small, and the patent was rendered of the least possible value by a clause permitting the English Universities to export Bibles to Ireland; the whole thing there came to an end so far back as 1794, when the patentee applied for an injunction against a printer who had published an edition of the Scriptures. It was refused by the Lord Chancellor, who decided that the patent could not mean to give an exclusive right to print Bibles, as the King had "not a prerogative to grant a monopoly as to Bibles for the instruction of mankind in revealed religion," but that it applied solely to the printing of Bibles, &c., for the use of Churches and other particular purposes. In Scotland the monopoly ceased in July, 1839, the patent which then expired having been granted in 1798, for a period of forty-one years. The absurdity of the thing, for any practical purpose of good, is shown in the fact, that after the death of the original owners of the patent, the persons to whom it descended by right of inheritance—a gentleman in one case, and a lady in the other, themselves entirely ignorant of the business—employed a manager to carry it on for them, to whom they paid £800 per year, they dividing the profits, which averaged £10,000 annually. Another fact will illustrate the working of the monopoly in Scotland. We give it in Mr. Thomson's words:—

"The Edinburgh Bible Society, and other Bible societies throughout Scotland, had been in the habit of sending a portion of their funds to the British and Foreign Bible Society, and, in return, received from that Society a portion of their Bibles for home distribution. In particular, they received copies of an octavo Bible in large type, to which the Scotch patentees had no corresponding edition, and which was much prized by persons in advanced years. The monopolists rose to vindicate their sacred rights, and proceeded in an action at law against the directors and leading members of the various Scotch Bible societies. The societies defended themselves, and a long and expensive litigation ensued. The courts in Scotland decided against the societies, and in favor of the monopolists. The cause then went by appeal to the House of Lords, which confirmed the judgment of the courts below. The decision of the House of Lords was given in 1829, and, from that time until the abolition of the Scotch monopoly, ten years afterwards, every Bible which crossed the Tweed was contraband."

It required, however, a great amount of agitation and determined opposition to prevent a renewal of the monopoly, but, thanks to the unwearied efforts of Dr. Thomson, (father of the author of the Essay before us,) it was finally accomplished, to be followed, as we fervently hope, by a like result in England. The arguments by which it is sought to perpetuate the monopoly are briefly these: that it secures the purity of the text, and enables the Bible to be produced at a cheaper rate than would otherwise be possible. To the first of these arguments