THE ATHENIUM

N. 2516, Jan. 15, 76

Und limited at all. Possibly something might be said, if one pointed the view of expediency, in favour of it, for the sake of authors' children for life. Mr. Dickey justly remarks that it is only exceptional works—the few, in fact, which create a name for posterity—when the public is chiefly interested. A thousand greater effort—that are worth anything at all beyond the term which the law now allows; but it is precisely the producers of works of that rare and valuable character, on which the interest of the State to encourage. His objection that "descendants" might arbitrarily and capriciously suppress valuable works, is to be met by the answer that such suppression—improbable as it must always be—is already forbidden by law, under pain of forfeiture of rights upon a simple contumacy. In the Council of Lords, and Council of the Privy Council. Mr. Dickey seems to have forgotten this, as a fact, copyrights are often vested in descendants for an uncer generation, without any of those consequences which he regards as practical grounds of apprehension.

Neither "copyright by right Divine," to use Mr. Dickey's expression, nor perpetual copyright, is, however, really a question of the day; and to place these matters, therefore, as in "the politics," as ultimate principles, is clearly calculated to mislead. What the literary classes is now asking for, is greater security and extended area of protection for literary property. Underlying all the most plausible objections, I will venture to assert, that we shall find, I think, a reference, expressed or implied, to those familiar principles which are the foundation of all our institutions and their relation to human welfare, which Mr. Dickey is so much pains to establish. Nothing in Mr. Charles Beagle's letters in the Fullill (to which Mr. Dickey probably here imbibed the conception of the great injury inflicted on American literature) makes me one of those great interests of the American people, by the neglect of the legislature of that country to recognize the principle of international copyright. The narrowness of view on this point which pervades Mr. Dickey's article is the more remarkable, because Mr. Beagle's argument, with reference to the depressing influences which the absence of international copyright exercises upon American literature, is therein set forth with perfect candor. If it is admitted that American literature "struggles in vain," I think it manifest that "the possession of a national literature is an object to which great importance is attached in this country, and should seem to be the duty of Mr. Beagle, even on the best ground of national interest. In point of fact, Mr. Dickey concedes, I believe, that the object of protecting a national literature, is to be the only alternative. This may be proved from the English point of view; but that is confessedly only part of the question. As far as we see, the half lost to the English author would not only leave the American author with none. The admitted evil is that it is in America cheaper to reap the fruit of literary labour by not paying royalty, and that hence—political journalism apart—the population of the United States are deprived of their country's literature, which the intellectual life of a people. Mr. Dickey's proposition of annual royalty, as far as I can see, will leave it cheaper, and therefore must be expected to curb the desire of the desired evil. His argument that the Canadian Government proposed last year such a "per-cent," to beget an interest in his own English work, is at variance with the fact. The Canadian publisher was "to return the price of reproducing English books without the consent of the author. The Canadian publisher had no power of altering his own price; and the Canadian Government last year proposed a per-cent. The further observation that "any system of international or colonial copyright must be based on the understanding that the British author has no power of deciding whether, and at what term, his books shall be reprinted out of England," is in the fact that the very power was confirmed to the English author, as far as Canada is concerned, by an Act of the Canadian Legislature passed last year, which has since received the Royal assent. It has never been disputed, either by English or Canadian lawyers, that the operation of our copyright Acts extended, in their terms, expressly enacted, not merely, as Mr. Dickey imagines, to the "countries within the four seas," but to all our colonies and possessions; and likewise, I believe, unauthorized reprinting of English copyright works in Canada has been entirely unknown. Indeed, the long standing and just conclusion has been, that whereas they have been rigidly precluded from reprinting English copyright books, the publishers of the United States have, by our own Government's annexation in Canada, been allowed to send their unauthorized editions into Canada upon the mere payment of a duty levied in the interest of the English author. This, it will be observed, is a widely different position of affairs from that which the Portmouth Reviewer gruellingly tells us has been the case since it is now, and must continue to exist. The truth is, Mr. Dickey's exposition of the legal rights of English authors in the colonies, together with his suggestions for amendment, are not founded on the facts of the case.

M. THOMAS.

A CASE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

A. Frost, St. Jan. 27, 1756.

Will you kindly allow me to apologize to your columns for that estimable cosecticist whom I so unwittingly put to death in "Girls' Land." I had read in "Omnibus" (Sept. 1753); "Mourn, Bereaved, has just died, aged seventy," and, being out of England, I neglected to verify the report. Mourn, Bereaved, Bishop of Calcutta, was still living when the book appeared, and I venture to wish him this season a happy new year and many of them. R. F. BURRONS.

Some will publish a poem by Mr. W. R. Scott, and in an early number a poem of some length by Mr. Sumner.

Mr. E. J. BEE, M.P., intends to give to the world some of his experiences in his last year's tour of "Letters from Russia in 1756." Mr. Murray is the publisher.

Mr. M. E. GRANT DUFF, M.P., is going to publish a volume, under the title "Notes of an Indian Journey," his papers on India recently contributed to the "Contemporary Review." The publishers are Messrs. Macmillan & Co.

The Life of the late Dr. Skinner, Bishop of Winchester, by the Rev. George Henry Sumner, Honorary Canon of Winchester, is in the press. It is published by Mr. Murray.

Among Mr. Murray's other announcements are a 'Spent' in Abyssinia, on the March and Tackling, by the Earl of Mayo and Capt. Morell's work which we have already alluded. "New Guinea and Polynesia: Discoveries and Surveys in New Guinea and the Eldest Islands." A work in four volumes, and "Visits to the Pearl Shelling Stations in Torres Strait of H.M.S. Beagle." We expect that Capt. Morell's "matter of fact" narrative will form a striking contrast to Capt. Lazard's martial tales of adventure.

The collection of engraved portraits and etchings by the old and modern masters formed by Mr. James Anderson House is to be sold under the hammer of Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge in the spring. The collection, which has been in course of formation during the post thirty years, is believed to be one of the most important in the country. A number of the historical portraits were exhibited at the Guildhall on the occasion of the opening of the New Library in 1872. The modern etchings have also formed part of the exhibition at Liverpool, Birmingham, and Southampton.

Mr. ST. GEORGE THIART will shortly publish, through Messrs. H. S. King & Co., a volume, entitled "Contemporary Evolution." This will be a review of the present course and tendency of philosophical speculation, with some historical and social and political changes; in so far as it affects Christianity. It will also discuss the possible effects upon the Church and society generally of the further continuation of the process of evolution. In its conclusion, it touches on the effect which may hereafter be produced on Christian art by the further evolution of Catholic opinion.

"PEACEFUL EVANGEL" is the title of the new illustrated work which has been for some years in the preparation, and is now about to make its appearance. It will be a description of the most picturesque scenes in Great Britain and the Continent, illustrated by steel plates and engravings on wood from original drawings specially made for the work by several artists. The first part, "Europe," will be published in monthly parts by Messrs. Cassell, Petter & Galpin, and the first part will appear in February.

We wish to draw the attention of Mr. Kerslake, and of higher authorities also, to the following annexations, social and political which we have received since the publication of his letter in our last number:

"The inquiry, signed by three gentlemen, in your paper of Jan. 21st, as to risk of loss by fire or theft, has been so well answered that I have been put up because of that inquiry, but in the roughest way possible. Nor were they fully adequate to the purpose; for though the spectacles were within the barrier, having crawled underneath it, and could easily have taken away books. The fog was dense; and only a few candles for the judge and lawyers, and a military light at the end of the room. Dr. Stephen's candle was fixed on a pile of books, illuminating and burning to the socket, and set up upon a tray. While on this subject, I may add that two years ago I pointed out to the librarian possible danger from the stove—it was bad; and I think the same stove is there now. If the palace is insured, it would be well for this insurance office to see this."

A CORRESPONDENT writes:

"Members of the Society of Antiquaries are beginning to ask themselves if a new President in April is indispensible. You spoke last week of Mr. Davy's being "generously and deservedly popular." So one can deny that; in addition to this, he is not only an efficient financier, but the best conductor of business in the Society, with sufficient knowledge and taste to appreciate good and well-conducted antiquarian work. What more is required?"

The Rev. J. Franck Bright has sent us a letter about our recent review of his, 'History of England,' in which he says:

"It is not, however, the general teater of the