

their part in fostering the literature which has been developed in this country within the past generation; and we have reached the point at which American authors look abroad as well as at home for a public, and the time is rapidly approaching when the whole English-speaking race will be the natural constituency of the American no less than the English author. To promote the cause of American letters now requires that we should take such means as will insure the fruits of our literary labor in foreign countries. The continuance of the present system would merely mean that our Government, for the sake of permitting the robbery of the citizens of other countries here, is glad to have its own citizens robbed abroad.

American authors have, besides this, another direct stake in the matter, which is sometimes strangely overlooked. The facility of indiscriminate pillage afforded by the present condition of the law between the two countries diminishes the interest of the domes-

tic publisher in the literature of his own country. As long as he can republish the latest novel or the latest history or book of travels without paying anything for it, why should he be at the trouble and expense of finding a market for American books, for the copyright of which he has to pay? If this does not have the effect of diminishing his interest in American literature, there must be something in the business of publishing books which makes the love of country a more powerful motive than it usually shows itself to be in other branches of trade. The publisher is governed, after all, by ordinary human motives, and if his love of gain does not lead to the absolute rejection of American books for the sake of the greater profit to be made by piratical editions of foreign works, it must at least tend to reduce the royalty which he is willing to pay to the home author, and in this way the general value of American copyrights must remain below their natural value until international protection is assured.

THE FLEMISH BELLS.

[The bells cast by the famous molder Van den Gheyn, of Louvain, are said to have lost all the sweetness they had a hundred years ago.]

SADLY he shook his frosted head,
Listening and leaning on his cane;
"Nay—I am like the bells," he said,
"Cast by the molder of Louvain.

"Often you've read of their mystic powers,
Floating o'er Flanders' dull lagoons;
How they would hold the lazy hours
Meshed in a net of golden tunes.

"Never such bells as those were heard,
Echoing over the sluggish tide;
Now like a storm-crash,—now like a bird,
Flinging their carillons far and wide.

"There in Louvain they swing to-day,
Up in the turrets where long they've swung;
But the rare cunning of yore, they say,
Somehow has dropped from the brazen
tongue.

"Over them shines the same pale sky,
Under them stretch the same lagoons;
Out from the belfries, bird-like fly,
As from a nest, the same sweet tunes;

"Ever the same,—and yet we know
None are entranced these later times,
Just as the listeners long ago
Were, with the wonder of their chimes.

"Something elusive as viewless air,
Something we cannot understand,
Strangely has vanished of the rare
Skill of the molder's master hand.

"So—when you plead that life is still
Full, as of old, with tingling joy,—
That I may hear its music thrill,
Just as I heard it when a boy;—

"All I can say, is—Youth has passed,—
Master of magic falls and swells,—
Bearing away the cunning cast
Into the molding of the bells!"

BISMILLAH.

FORTH from his tent the patriarch Abraham stept,
And lengthening shadows slowly past him crept.

For many days he scarce had broke his fast,
Lest some poor wanderer should come at last,

And, scanty comfort finding, go his way,
In doubt of God's great mercy day by day.

But deep contentment in his calm eyes shone
When he beheld, afar, a pilgrim lone,

Fare slowly toward him from the flaming west,
With weary steps betokening need of rest.

When that he came anear, straightway was seen
An aged man of grave and reverend mien.

"Guest of mine eyes, here let thy footsteps halt,"
The patriarch said, "and share my bread and salt."

Then calling to his kinsfolk, soon the board
Was laden richly with the patriarch's hoard.

And when around the fair repast they drew,
"Bismillah!" said they all with reverence due;

Save only he for whom the feast was spread:
He bowed him gravely, but no word he said.

Then Abraham thus: "O guest, is it not meet
To utter God's great name ere thou dost eat?"

The pilgrim answered, courteous but calm,
"Good friend, of those who worship fire I am."

Then Abraham rose, his brow with anger bent,
And drove the aged Gheber from his tent.

That instant, swifter than a flashing sword,
Appeared and spake an angel of the Lord.

In shining splendor wrapt, the bright one said:
"An hundred years upon this aged head

God's mercy hath been lavished from on high,
In life and sun and rain. Dost thou deny

What God withholds not from the meanest clod?"
The patriarch bowed in meekness. Great is God.