

now. During the past year the work of the American Copyright League, for three years ably carried on under the secretaryship of Mr. G. P. Lathrop, has made, under the efficient direction of his successor, George Walton Green, Esq., marked and practical progress, both in the general forwarding of the reform and in the forcible presentation to the attention of Congress of a simple and workable measure. The press of the country—which, from the establishment of the League, has borne a most honorable part in the movement—has responded with vigorous aid to the latest calls upon it. The merits of the reform have been made clear to President Cleveland, and he has added his exhortation to those of his predecessors for speedy attention to the subject. The committee of the League, representing the large body of American authors, has advanced the reform by the spirit of friendliness which it has exhibited toward other interests, while at the same time it has very properly declined to consider it a part of its duty to urge their case; nor has anything been done to impair the confidence of the writing fraternity that its interests and honor are in safe and prudent hands. For the first time in the history of the movement a full hearing has been accorded to authors as such by a committee of Congress. In the conference which was held before the Senate Committee on Patents in January last, the League was fortunate in having for its chief spokesman an advocate who—to the credit of the guild of authorship, be it said—was in nothing more entirely their representative than in demanding the reform on the highest ground of morality. By those whose political code never rises above the stop-gap theory, Mr. Lowell would perhaps be called derisively an idealist. It is not the provision for the present emergency which enlists his interest, but the final establishment of the principle involved. He is not one of those (to quote his own words)

“Whose love of right is for themselves
And not for all the world”;

and as ideality always excites emulation (and sometimes blushes), his resolute speech before the committee put the question on a higher plane in the minds of his hearers, and, along with the reinforcements of other friends of the reform, has advanced the cause to the point where it can no longer be ignored by Congress. Another practical result of the conference is that it has committed to the principle of International Copyright the chief body from which opposition to the principle was to be expected; so that, if we except a theorist or two of inherited economic squint, all parties concerned have now virtually declared themselves before Congress in favor of the reform. It is therefore difficult to see how—without unpatriotic, almost criminal indifference on the part of Congress—the requisite legislation can be postponed beyond the present session.

2. Another reason for prompt action lies in the fact that during the past year the rest of the civilized world has put the seal of shame upon us anew by uniting, at the Berne Copyright Conference, in an international arrangement which is at once the most definite recognition and complete protection of literary property in existence. From this honorable compact the United States Government alone has excluded itself, the State Department not having felt at liberty to commit itself

to a convention the subject of which was at the time prominent before Congress in the form of the copyright bill of Mr. Dorsheimer. During the past summer England, in addition to her action with the other powers, adopted a comprehensive, and in the present condition of English affairs, a most statesmanlike, measure of intercolonial copyright, superseding all her previous legislation and making uniform for the mother country and her dependencies the provisions relating to the ownership of copyright property. In both compacts the way is left open for us to obtain their advantages at any time. That the present shameful condition of affairs is not likely to exist for many years longer is evident from the daily increasing injury it entails upon the legitimate book trade. When would be a better time to terminate it than now? The committee of the Senate has with most praiseworthy interest and patience heard all sides of the copyright question and is probably ready to report. *Why should it not report both bills to the Senate* and let us have a full, free, and final consideration of a subject which, with the most honorable support from the cultivated classes, has never yet reached in the Senate the point of discussion on its merits? This is all that the friends of the League bill have asked, and this, it seems to us, is not an unreasonable demand. It is to be hoped that no senator will be found who will not be willing to devote time and attention to the practical consummation of so good a cause, and that the measure will not be left till the last of the session, to be swept aside by the appropriation bills.

3. A cogent argument for immediate attention to the subject lies in the recent growth of the communistic movement in America. The laws of property which give stability to life and hope to the worker have never been so formidably attacked as within the past year. The chief argument against International Copyright—an argument which appeals not so much to the reason as to the indifference of legislators—is that the absence of copyright makes books cheap. But is not the League right in urging that this is in itself a communistic principle: that we may refuse protection to foreign property if the uncompensated appropriation of it be, as is alleged, for the public good? Reduce communism to its least common denominator, and it is simply wanting something for nothing—a sentiment at war with self-respect, and thus an element of weakness in any individual or nation. It is unbelievable that this sentiment should affect to any great extent the Congress of the United States, the curator of our national honor. And what obligation has Congress to give the people cheap books more than cheap beer? Let us hope that, in the coming political conflict with communism, when Senators and members of Congress shall rise from their seats to denounce it, this blot on the escutcheon will have been removed, so that there will be no occasion to say to them: “Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone.”

How Prohibition Grows.

Most Americans are as yet rather indifferent on the subject of the license or prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors. Either they see little of immediate importance in it, or they are waiting to see whether Prohibition can be enforced, if it is enacted into law;

or they are still content to adopt without much question whatever position their customary political party may see fit to take on the question. There is, however, an increasing number of persons whose minds are distinctly made up, who are pronounced Prohibitionists; and the fact that their numbers are increasing ought to make it interesting to consider the influences through which this increase is taking place. For these influences are quite different from those which affect the ordinary political fortunes of the country. Political parties usually find speeches and contagious enthusiasm good, but printed documents better; oratory and the printing-press are their legitimate weapons of warfare. How many men have been converted by a Prohibition speech or a Prohibition document? Very many, no doubt; but no extended investigation will be necessary to show that such conversions have been more commonly due to some organized effort of the manufacturers or vendors of intoxicating liquors to protect their own interests. When a National Brewers' Convention or a State Liquor Dealers' Protective Association, or any kindred body, interferes successfully in an election, or raises a fund for the legal or political protection of its interests, or passes a series of resolutions which seem calculated to act as a menace to doubtful voters, the telegraphic dispatches are not only carrying the news through the country, but are everywhere operating on the feelings of men hitherto uninterested, and preparing them to vote at the first opportunity against the "Liquor Interest." The results come in every variety of form. In most cases they probably produce only a feeling of anger against the party which has been the agent of the organization; in a smaller number there appears a somewhat vague willingness to appear as the public opponent of "the saloon in politics"; a still smaller number will account for the steady increase in the absolute Prohibition vote. But the process is the same in all, and almost any man can verify the statement of it within the sphere of his personal acquaintance.

The situation is a startling echo of some of the features of the anti-slavery contest. In that struggle, also, the attacked party was a body of men, not formally organized, but bound to common action by great common interests. Its consequent discipline gave it the ability to secure great initial advantages; but it never gained one of these without having its success reflected in a rise of the tide which opposed it. Its true policy was to seek sedulously the shelter of retirement from public view, and to sacrifice almost any advantage, however tempting, which would bring it into public collision with an opposition whose moral aspect could not but be respected, however troublesome it might be in practice. Such a policy was its only possible salvation or reprieve; and yet it was just the policy which was impossible of adoption as soon as the number of slave-holders ceased to be small. The larger it became, the more impossible was it to prevent organized or common action by a number of slave-holders so considerable as to force the bulk of their fellows, with or against their will, into reëncoring them; and so the struggle went on widening to its inevitable conclusion. Who can avoid seeing the parallel in the present case of the liquor-dealers? The larger their numbers become, the more difficult is it to check ambitious or heedless individuals in their efforts to precipitate pub-

lic conflicts which can operate only to add to the pronounced opposition. Organization means action; and every public action is but a step on the road to destruction. It does not follow that the parallel must necessarily be carried to the same conclusion. If the question is presented often and strongly enough, it may be taken as certain that the mass of voters at present uninterested will side against the liquor-dealers; an American people committed, after full deliberation, to the support of drunkenness, is hardly conceivable. But everything will depend on whether the stream of opposition is to remain a narrow torrent of absolute Prohibition, or is to spread out into the broad reservoir of high license and moral opposition to "the saloon."

The settlement of this final question will depend very much on the power, for it is a power, which is now engaged in the defense of the manufacture and sale of intoxicants in the United States. It may, if it will, make this a Prohibition country. Its best friends, if the expression be permissible, could not, to be sure, induce it to pursue the only policy which would insure it a peaceable, though unostentatious, existence; but its most eager enemies could not ask a more happy dispatch for it than will certainly come from a violent resistance. Buying legislatures is bad; buying voters by wholesale is worse; but to undertake to check the Prohibition movement by shooting its apostles or setting fire to their houses is simply suicidal. One such case in Iowa last summer probably made more Prohibition voters than all the Prohibition speeches up to date. Nothing but this policy is wanted to prevent Prohibition from ever thinning out into some modified remedy. It is not difficult at any time to prove "the saloon" to be an enemy of morality: let it now prove itself to be a public enemy, and the end will no longer be difficult to predict.

Much may be done by the Prohibitionists also to determine the final question. The common charge against them is that of unreasonableness. A very large measure of this criticism has certainly come from the anxiety of politicians that their party necessities or convenience shall rank as modifying circumstances, to be tenderly considered by the Prohibitionists, and from the refusal of the Prohibitionists to do anything of the sort. Quite apart from all this, however, is there not ground for the criticism in the frequent refusal of Prohibitionists to make allowance for the existence of universal suffrage, and for the absolute necessity of popular backing for laws? He who, having control of the destinies of a savage and drunken tribe, should first grant them universal suffrage, and then declare that he will accept from universal suffrage nothing but absolute Prohibition from the beginning, would be thought not reasonable, perhaps not sane. What is the difference when he merely finds universal suffrage in existence, instead of being himself its grantor? He must at least recognize its existence. If he cannot limit the right of suffrage for a time, he would do well, in either case, to accept from it the nearest approach to his final object which he can get from it, not making this an excuse for stopping his own work, but not balking his own work in advance by refusing to consider circumstances which will not cease to defy him simply because he ignores them. Why should not a sincere Prohibitionist accept from time to time the best he can get for the

state, without thereby giving up the special work in which he must always find success, that of forcing issues upon the "liquor interest"?

Still less rational is it to make up the issue against those who conscientiously hold that large communities may need different treatment from small ones; or against those who are possible converts even to extreme views—instead of against the "liquor interest"; or to attack opinion through the lowest methods of the boycotter, and to endeavor to gain a doubtful vote by denouncing its possessor in public

and private as a "friend of rum." And the lowest depth has been reached in those few cases in which the lawless methods of their worst opponents have been imitated, and violence has been resorted to as an agent in converting opinion. Opinion is not successfully controlled in that fashion. Neither pro-slavery nor anti-slavery men ever succeeded in so dealing with public opinion, least of all with American public opinion. It will yield to instinct, to persuasion, or to reason: it has never had anything but defiance for compulsion or menace.

OPEN LETTERS.

Greek and Latin—Shall they Stay or Go?

NOTHING stays settled. Everything flows. Here is the old question, ever new, of classical culture to be discussed again—and yet again.

I have been considering whether there is not a rational view of the matter in which, could we all get the true standing-place, we all might agree. Let us, point by point, see what are some of the things wherein, upon mere statement, without discussion, we shall generally concur.

First, we all know well enough that few, very few, college students learn their Latin and Greek so as to be able to read and understand text at sight. Nearly all graduates must puzzle out the meaning of their classic author with much recourse to lexicon; and at that it is not the majority that succeed swimmingly.

Secondly, for most of the practical purposes of life, it is not to be reckoned loss to a man than he cannot read Latin and Greek with vernacular facility. Except for a limited number of persons, Latin literature and Greek are far less profitable than the living literatures of to-day.

Thirdly, the best Greek and Latin works have all of them, or nearly all of them, been translated into English. Of the versions accessible, some at least are scarcely inferior, as literature, to their originals. I have just been reading "Thucydides" throughout in Mr. Jowett's translation; and I am ready to pronounce that there is therein little lost from the simplicity, the terseness, the point, of the Greek text; while assuredly even the best of our Greek scholars would feel that of clearness, smoothness, coherency, there was actually some gain—fallacious gain, perhaps, not a few might say. This praise is of Mr. Jowett's work considered as literature. That it represents faithfully the sense of the original is a merit which it shares with many translations from Greek that, considered as English literature, are far inferior. It is the indisputable fact that the substance of classic literature, whatever may be the value rightly placed upon that substance, is open to be secured by any English-reading person through the medium of his own tongue.

Do I seem thus to have been giving reasons why Greek and Latin should cease to be studied? Well, that has by no means been my purpose. Have I been pointing out imperfections that ought to be remedied in our ways of teaching and studying Greek and Latin? That also has been far from my aim. Perhaps

there are improved methods of classical education possible. Professor Shumway, with his admirable *Latine et Græce*, certainly thinks that there are. I hope we shall be willing to learn from him, if he can teach us.

I emphatically do not admit that Greek and Latin should be displaced, or replaced, in our schools. There is nothing suitable to replace them. Let them stand. But if they are removed, it cannot be for long. There will follow a revival of letters. But we cannot afford even an interregnum.

Why is the maintenance of the classics in their place as part of education desirable?

I answer, because the study of language is important, and to study language, *in* Latin and Greek, and *through* Latin and Greek, is the best method available. There is a strong set of tendency now toward studying things, as the phrase is, rather than words. The phrase itself is an argument—but it is an argument existing in words, and in words only. In short, the phrase is a capital instance of precisely what it ostensibly condemns; namely, barren practice in empty words. But not all dealing with words is such. For words are things, in a most true and most momentous sense. When we study words, if we study them right, we are studying things. And words are things eminently worth studying. They are the highest natural product of the highest animal in the circle of nature. To distinguish words, as it is often sought to distinguish them, from things, is unscientific.

But besides this, language is the great instrument of life. Nearly everything that men do in the world is done with the use of it, and I venture to say that there is no other single study whatever so immediately and so immensely practical, fruitful, as is the study of language. In this you undoubtedly could get along without Latin and Greek, and accomplish much that is desirable. But these tongues furnish us the best means existing to the study of language, and our own language is itself largely rooted in these ancient tongues. Once more, the process of translation is an unequalled exercise in two important activities of the human mind, namely, the obtaining and expressing of ideas through words.

The mind may be comparatively remiss in studying French and German. Of course, to acquire knowledge enough of them to use them freely for conversation is not easy, or rather, it takes time, and a condition not to be supplied in any scheme of general edu-