

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

THE undersigned, Men of Letters and Citizens of the United States, interested in many ways in the cause of Literature, petition your honorable bodies for the passage of a law for the proper regulation of the copy-right of books. Having considered the matter in all its various aspects, and under all the light shed upon it by the repeated discussions of the last few years, they beg respectfully to represent,

That the tenure of literary property in this country is an anomaly among the tenures of every other kind of property, for which no good reason has been or can be assigned; which is unjust in the very nature of it, and extremely injurious in its practical operations.

That the author of a book is the sole and exclusive owner of it, as much as the farmer is of his land, or the merchant of his bale of goods; and that, whether he be a native of this country or of a foreign country, the Republic is bound, by the recognized morality of every enlightened and christian people, to guarantee and defend his property against invasion, as much as it is bound to protect the ordinary commodities of commerce.

That the American government, by denying to foreign authors the copy-right of their books, while it is grossly unjust towards them, inflicts an irreparable injury upon its own authors, by compelling them to enter the market under a system of the most disadvantageous competition; and thus fills the channels of circulation with an unpaid and often corrupt foreign literature, to the partial exclusion, if not to the entire extinction, of all sound and healthful native products.

That the reading of the American people does not, at this time, harmonize with their just desires, their wants and their institutions.

That American authors who can best satisfy these, some of whom have grown gray in the honorable service of the country, and others entering upon what they hoped might be a useful career, will be and are crowded aside, not only from lack of remuneration, but from want of general sympathy in their pursuits, into other pursuits from which they cannot be recalled.

That the business of book publishing, which is one of vast public consequence, has become an irregular and uncertain traffic, discouraging to the employment of sound mercantile industry and skill.

That American authors, while they deprecate a merely dollar and cent discussion of this question, —as they desire, nothing more, the good will and affection of their countrymen, would at all times desire that books should be furnished to them at such rates as to secure the widest circulation and most general usefulness.

That a native literature may be said, without disparagement to other and more generally recognized branches of the public service, to be of at least as much national consequence as the navy, the army, the public beacons, and the establishment of public highways and means of intercommunication.

That experience, which has been long and ample, teaches us that there is no other rectifying influence of a sufficiently potent character to amend these evils and justify the good results hoped for, but the law now sought.

For these considerations, for every consideration of Right, of Honor and National Self-respect, your memorialists ask at your hands a bill to equalize all copy-rights, native and foreign, of books printed and published, originally or simultaneously, in this country and abroad. They ask this bill now, of the Congress now in session; and they ask instant and careful heed to their prayer, for they aver that upon your decision hangs in no humble measure something of the better and higher life of the Republic, not seen yet strong beyond account, for good or evil, impalpable to the eye, yet filling the future with shapes of apprehension or joy, as your honorable body may find it in you to determine.

Wm. W. Campbell
John C. Calhoun

MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives

of the United States, in Congress assembled :

THE undersigned, citizens of the United States, respectfully represent, that an effort is now making to induce your honorably body to pass a law entitled an "International Copy Right Law," for the protection of authors in Great Britain and the United States. The undersigned beg leave to present to Congress their views in relation to such a law, and to ask that the demand (for the language is not that of petition,) of those persons for this law may not be complied with.

Your petitioners do not think it necessary to go over the arguments of the demandants, but will only observe, what is plain to all, that in neither country is the perpetual right of an author to his published writings acknowledged, but that in both it is distinctly denied that they have any such right, and as your petitioners believe, with perfect justice.

In both countries the extent of the author's right is clearly defined and legally fixed by their respective governments. These facts being borne in mind, it will be seen that all arguments founded on the justice or right of the claim set up, are swept away at once. If in either country it were thought that the compensation of the author was not sufficient, the obvious remedy would be to extend the period of copy right at home. Ten years added to the term there, would add more to its value than any international law. It seems to your petitioners, then, that the ground of expediency is the only one on which this law can be urged. Is it for the advantage of the whole American people that this law should be enacted by Congress? Your petitioners say, decidedly, it is not. For how are we as a people to be affected by it? By far the greatest and best portion of the books read in the United States are, and it is presumed for many years will continue to be, the productions of the living authors of Great Britain. Their valuable works are scattered over our whole country as soon as they reach our shores, and sold at prices unparalleled for cheapness in any other part of the world; and from this source our people gain an amount of information that could be given them in no other way, and a taste for literature is created and fostered, alike beneficial to the reader and the American author and bookseller. To cut off this supply, as this law would entirely do, taking from our newspapers and journals the best portion of their contents, and destroying the great distribution of cheap books; and thus making the whole literature of England a blank to our people, would, in the opinion of your petitioners, retard the cause of popular education in our country more than all the efforts of government could do for its advancement in half a century. It seems to your petitioners that this subject is not to be considered as one between the authors and booksellers of Great Britain and the United States, but as between a great people and those who would deprive them of one of the most important rights incident to their position, for selfish ends; and they would look upon the passage of the demanded law as a great national calamity.

Your petitioners would further advert to the injurious effect the proposed law would have upon several important branches of business in the United States. The increased price of books consequent upon the passage of the law, would reduce the sales at least three quarters; and it can be seen at a glance how vitally this would affect the paper manufacturer, the printer, the type founder, the book-binder, and the various interests depending on them, in part at least, for support. In all the above named branches of business immense numbers of operatives are employed, a large proportion of whom are females. Thousands of these must inevitably be discharged and thrown upon the world for a precarious subsistence on the passage of the proposed law.

For the above reasons, of the many which might be given, against the passage of the said law, we would respectfully remonstrate against the prayer of the petitioners being granted.

Henry B. Allen
A. Fleming

Solou Grant

John Arny

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H. S. Cox

William Sileott

John Arter

J. L. Cox

John L. Bowen

Geo. N. Norton

Thos. H. Hopkins

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That the American government, by denying to foreign authors the copy-right of their books, while it is grossly unjust towards them, inflicts an irreparable injury upon its own authors, by compelling them to enter the market under a system of the most disadvantageous competition ; and thus fills the channels of circulation with an unpaid and often corrupt foreign literature, to the partial exclusion, if not to the entire extinction, of all sound and healthful native products.

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That the business of book publishing, which is one of vast public consequence, has become an irregular and uncertain traffic, discouraging to the employment of sound mercantile industry and skill.

~~That American authors, while they deprecate a merely dollar and cent discussion of this question, — a line designating the road will and the reflexion of their own success, possible in all times, should be forbidden to abstain from such measures to secure the widest circulation and most general usefulness~~

That a native literature may be said, without disparagement to other and more generally recognized branches of the public service, to be of at least as much national consequence as the navy, the army, the public beacons, and the establishment of public highways and means of intercommunication.

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For these considerations, for every consideration of Right, of Honor and National Self-respect, your memorialists ask at your hands a bill to equalize all copy-rights, native and foreign, of books printed and published, originally or simultaneously, in this country and abroad. They ask this bill now, of the Congress now in session ; and they ask instant and careful heed to their prayer, for they aver that upon your decision hangs in no humble measure something of the better and higher life of the Republic, not seen, yet strong beyond account, for good or evil, impalpable to the eye, yet filling the future with shapes of apprehension or joy, as your honorable body may find it in you to determine.

New York

Memorial of Silas Jones
& sixty one other Citizens of New
York for a Law for the proper
regulation of the Copy right
of books.

Feb 5. 1844, ref^d to
select committee on
International Copyright

Fish 4

Select on
Copy

W. Fish

Authors Memorial.

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New York December 28. 1843.

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International Synopses
Action of Albert Gallatin,
William Cullen Bryant,
Graham C. Verplanck,
Nitz Green Halleck,
A. P. Willis, Orville
Dewey & other Citizens
of New York

Feb 19. 1844. adj.
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the subject.

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C. J. Ingersoll
63
Select on
subject

Feb 19. 1844

Edmund Rogers
Wm. D. Bartbridge
Clinton Hoar
George W. Bartbridge
J. Durrie Curtis

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See April 5, 1844

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For the above reasons, of the many which might be given, against the passage of the said law, we would respectfully remonstrate against the prayer of the petitioners being granted.

<i>W. Johnson</i>	<i>James G. Smith</i>	<i>Platner & Porter</i>	<i>Bentley G.</i>
<i>W. H. Chase</i>	<i>John P. Kelly</i>	<i>Joseph Chadwick</i>	<i>J. Bellinger</i>
<i>D. H. Colver</i>	<i>Edward Mathew</i>	<i>W. C. St. L.</i>	<i>Henry J. Br.</i>
<i>Compton</i>	<i>Chauncy J. Bliss</i>	<i>Franklin Mayes</i>	<i>Carleton</i>

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Attan Mass. March 20, 1854

Zenas Crane

Z. M. S. Crane