

FRAUDS IN REPRINTS.

“Vivre au grand jour.”—*Comte*.

IF knowledge was a species of Rinderpest our statesmen could not take more effective measures to “stamp it out.” Though the absence of native thought makes us to a great extent dependent upon foreign speculation, our legislators put a duty of twenty-five per cent. *ad valorem* upon all books imported into the United States. In this way such works cost more than double what they did in Europe.

This characteristic specimen of “protective” legislation does even more. It not only deprives the country of the food and stimulant of thought, thus tending to aggravate the evils under which we suffer, by retaining Americans in their almost animal attitude to the “advancement of learning;” not only does it impose an onerous and iniquitous tax upon those least able to bear it—students; but, when joined with the absence of international copyright, it affords an opportunity to publishers to victimize the community. The following instances will show that they are not slow to avail themselves of the opportunity, and that the expression is not too harsh.

(1) Gould and Lincoln, of Boston, published, some years ago, a translation of a very useful French work—Roget’s “Thesaurus of words and phrases.” The virtuous milksops who had charge of the task omitted all such naughty words as “hell,” “devil,” etc., fearing lest these and kindred words and phrases should injure the reader’s soul and the heavy sin be laid to their charge. In the next edition of the original, Roget very delicately ridiculed his Boston expurgators. Immediately our wise and moral Americans rectified their mistake by adding all the omissions in an appendix,

“Which saves the trouble of an index.”*

(2) This sample of absurd sentimentalism is followed by a graver case. George Combe’s “Constitution of Man” was originally published in a newspaper. The separate parts were collected on this side of the Atlantic, and reprinted in book-form by the Harpers, of our city. Mr. Combe revised his work several times, so that the last editions were almost entirely new. But the American “reprint,” like the laws of the Medes and Persians, did not change—our countrymen were proof against all the author’s seductions in favor of any modification of either language or ideas. What to them were crudity or in-

* See Byron’s fine satire on the omission of the “nauseous epigrams of Martial”—a parallel case—DON JUAN, Canto I, xliii–xliv.

completeness, while basing their action upon the logical principle that, when a writer has put his ideas in a book, which publishers have been kind enough for their own profit to print *gratis* (for him at least), he should never suffer these ideas to undergo any change, as it only leads to expense in getting up new stereotype plates, etc. It is to be regretted that these same publishers have not been as careful of the author's fame as of their own pockets. The book is sold with the most recent date, thus tacitly asserting that it has the author's latest corrections.

Similar remarks are true of "The Vestiges of Creation," published by the same house. The last editions were re-written, so as to make it a new book. The American public is, however, cheated by having a reprint of the first edition sold with the latest date.

(3) The following is, we think, the greatest swindle of this kind ever perpetrated. The first edition of J. S. Mills' "System of Logic" was published in 1843; a seventh in 1868 or '69. Yet the *respectable* Messrs. Harper have the coolness to put the date "1870" upon the reprint of the first edition, published nearly thirty years ago. To sell such a book as Mills' "Logic" is a fraud upon the community and a glaring injustice to the author. The important discussions upon "innate ideas," in answer to Whewell, Hamilton, Spencer, etc., upon Darwinism, upon Buckle's attempt to apply scientific method to history, for which purchasers now desire to obtain the book, are just what is wanting, though found in all late English editions. The pleas about cost of stereotype plates as condoning a fraud do not apply to this aggravated case; Harpers' reprint not having appeared until 1867, when the work was almost as complete as now.

These are only suggestive instances, which might be indefinitely increased. A curious chapter might of itself be written upon the art and mystery of book-making as regards "dates." It appears that a large number of copies of a book are struck off at once; the title-page, on the contrary, being only printed as the work sells, and, of course, always bearing the most recent date. This sort of "confidence game" is practised by all our large publishers. The Appletons sell the "Origin of Species" dated "1870," while the last English edition appeared in 1866. An injury to the author, this practice leads to the utmost confusion in reference.

The mere statement of such occurrences is enough to make us reflect upon public morals. May we hope that popular opinion will be so wisely and firmly directed towards them as to compel (1) the abolishment of the tax on useful knowledge; (2) the granting of an international copyright; (3) the abandonment, on the part of publishers, of the iniquitous practices glanced at; and (4) the establishment of a higher morality, in which to cheat the community will be considered as despicable as to swindle an individual? Let us trust it.

POSITIVIST BIBLIOGRAPHY.

A CATALOGUE COMPRISING 300 WORKS, PAMPHLETS, AND ESSAYS, WHICH HAVE APPEARED UP TO THE PRESENT TIME UPON THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY OF AUGUSTE COMTE. BY PROF. ANDRÉ POËY, LATE DIRECTOR OF THE OBSERVATORY AT HAVANA.

THE Positive Philosophy, definitely systematized from 1822, by the great genius of Auguste Comte, comes now victoriously to replace the ancient theological and metaphysical beliefs by the foundation of our scientific and moral conceptions upon the solid bases of the *laws* of nature.

Born in France, the Positive Philosophy was early acclimated in England; it consumes slowly but deeply the metaphysical spirit in Germany; it is rapidly diffusing itself in America, and everywhere it shakes the old school. In France it has plunged the philosophy of the past into a negative torpor. In England it compels metaphysics to expire at the hands of Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, and in Germany at those of Hegel and the materialist school of Büchner, Czulbe, Carus, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Vogt, Wagner, and Moleschott.

The United States has had the honor of inaugurating, in 1869, the first lectures of Positive Philosophy under the wise impulse of Harvard College, and under the care of Mr. John Fiske.

In the presence of such progress, the modern mind irrevocably tending toward this new course, can remain no longer a stranger to the proceedings of this philosophy. Every one is deeply interested in knowing the fundamental bases of this doctrine.

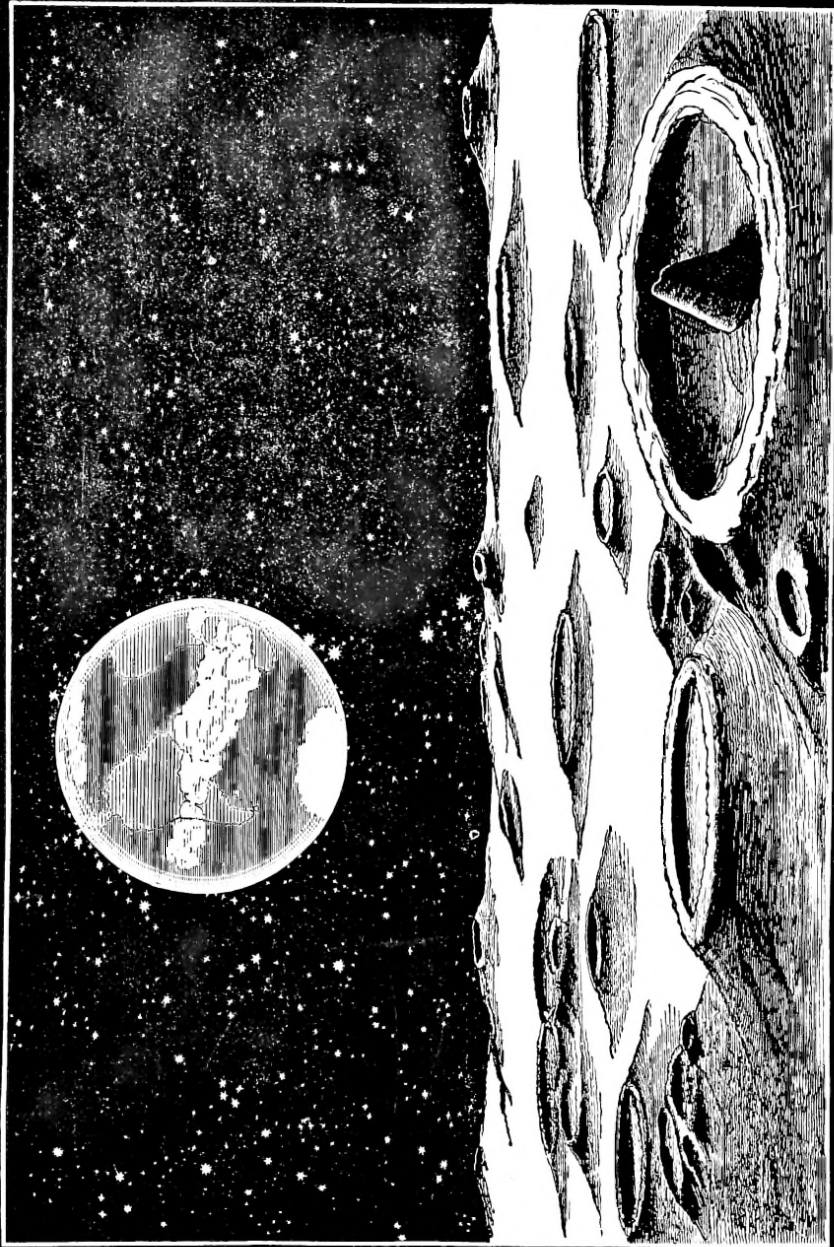
Now a complete catalogue of the works and essays which have appeared up to the present day upon the Positive Philosophy becomes more and more urgent, so that there can be undertaken a serious study and criticism adverse or favorable upon its doctrine and method.

In order to facilitate as much as possible the nature of different researches, this bibliography will be divided into three chapters: the first will embrace exclusively the special works of Positive Philosophy; the second, adverse criticisms; and the third chapter, favorable criticisms or eulogies. Some remarks will be made, for the purpose of illustrating the question.

In fine, a general view of the present state of the Positive Philosophy, and of its progress in Europe and America, will serve as an appropriate introduction to the bibliography. A criticism will also be added on the divergence of opinion between Herbert Spencer, Stuart Mill, and Littré, upon the doctrine and method of Auguste Comte.

New York, February 4th, 1870.

PLATE XXI.



LUNAR LANDSCAPE — "FULL" EARTH.

