

for native authors to obtain a price capable of remunerating them highly, as well as their publishers. But such is not the case. Very large editions of Prescott's "Ferdinand and Isabella," and of his "Mexico," and "Peru," have been sold at a high price; and when Mr. Harper stated to me his estimate of the original value of the copyright of these popular works, it appeared to me that an English author could hardly have obtained as much in his own country.* The comparative cheapness of American books, the best editions of which are by no means in small print, seems at first unintelligible, when we consider the dearness of labor, which enters so largely into the price of printing, paper, and binding. But, first, the number of readers, thanks to the free-schools, is prodigiously great, and always augmenting in a higher ratio even than the population; and, secondly, there is a fixed determination on the part of the people at large to endure any taxation, rather than that which would place books and newspapers beyond their reach. Several politicians declared to me that not only an income tax, but a window tax, would be preferred; and "this last," said they, "would scarcely shut out the light from a greater number of individuals." The duty on paper, in the United States, is trifling, when compared to that paid in Great Britain. Mr. Chambers informs us, that the Government duty of 5000*l.*, paid by him for his Miscellany, in twenty volumes, was equal in amount to the whole profits of that publication. The cost of advertisements, in America, is also small. One of my American friends sent over to a London publisher 250 copies of his work, charging him 4*s.* 6*d.* each.

* A letter dated April 15, 1849, was lately shown me from the Harpers, with permission to make known its contents, in which they mentioned, that having been authorized by Mr. Macaulay to publish in America his "History of England," they had printed six editions at various prices varying from four dollars to fifty cents (sixteen shillings and sixpence to two shillings). At the expiration of the first three months, they had sold 40,000 copies, and other booksellers who had issued independent editions had sold about 20,000; so that 60,000 copies had been purchased in the United States at a time when about 13,000 had been disposed of by Longman and Co., in London, at the price of 1*l.* 12*s.* each. As the cheap American editions were only just brought into the market at the date of this letter, the principal sale of the book was but commencing.