

THE NEWS COPYRIGHT LAW.

There is a theory current among the editors who believe that a news copyright law will prevent the stealing of news to the effect that the country press is clamoring against the project, and that all those who oppose it are news thieves and pirates. This is very convenient, of course. It gives the great editors and the great newspapers an opportunity to pose as victims and martyrs and they do not fail to take advantage of this opportunity. Up to this writing, however, we have never seen Editor Watterson's project opposed by a country newspaper, and, so far as we know, the papers that do oppose it base their opposition on grounds of impracticability. In other words they believe that the copyright project will not prevent the evil. Neither facts nor incidents can be copyrighted, but only the form in which they are presented. This is no remedy at all, for the papers that steal their news would not be balked by the copyright of form merely, and this is all that any copyright can cover.

Take a recent instance. The Courier-Journal, Editor Watterson's paper, stole THE CONSTITUTION'S interview with Mr. Tilden—stole it bodily and refused to give THE CONSTITUTION credit for it in any shape or form. Under these circumstances, does anybody suppose that the news copyright law proposed by Editor Watterson would have prevented Editor Watterson's paper from stealing the report of an interview with Mr. Tilden by the special correspondent of THE CONSTITUTION? Not at all. The substance of the news would have appeared in Editor Watterson's paper in spite of the law, and THE CONSTITUTION would have had no remedy any more than it has now.
