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0521621755 - Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England: The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act

Catherine Seville

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LITERARY COPYRIGHT REFORM IN
EARLY VICTORIAN ENGLAND

The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act

Talfourd's first copyright bill was presented in 1837, and the public and parliamentary controversy it provoked is reflected in contemporary pamphlets, correspondence and hundreds of petitions presented to parliament, as well as in the changing aims of the bill itself. In addition to the expected debate as to the nature of literary property and the economic effects on the publishing trade, discussion of copyright law raised broader questions: the relative values of literature and science, the importance of public education, the dangers of monopolies and the nature of public interest. In a period of social, political and technological upheaval, these were incendiary matters. Talfourd audaciously demanded not only a considerable extension of copyright term, but also international protection. This book explores and sets in context the making of this crucial Act, using it to illuminate enduring issues and difficulties in the legal concept of intellectual property.

CATHERINE SEVILLE is director of studies in law at Newnham College, Cambridge.

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Engraving of Thomas Noon Talfourd
(reproduced from the author's collection)

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