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CURRENT NOTES.

IMPROVEMENT IN BOOK COVERS.

PURCHASERS of Canadian paper-bound books of fiction have, without a doubt, noted with pleasure the marked improvement that has recently been made in the printing, binding, and, more particularly, in the cover designs of many of the books now being shown. Several publishers have departed from the old Colonial Library system of uniform covers, and are issuing each separate book in a paper and cover design that marks its individuality and enables those acquainted with the book to recognize it without looking for the title. In most cases, the cover paper is of a

good quality and color, and the designs are unique and attractive in appearance as well as being artistic in taste, and only those selling the books know how much these improvements have influenced and added to their sale.

As yet, some books are being put in covers of different colors yet of the same design, but the time is fast approaching when a book will be recognizable by its color and design alone.

A PUBLISHING ALLIANCE.

The most interesting news that the publishing world has heard in many a long day is that of the alliance between Harper & Bros. and the McClure interests, including the S. S. McClure Co. and the Doubleday and McClure Co. The meaning of it, about which there have been many queries, is plain enough namely, business. Messrs. Harper have an enormous establishment and more material than they can handle to advantage in the old way. They want to bring new blood and new methods into their establishment, and so they have allied themselves with the newest blood and the newest methods. A new encyclopedia in 30 volumes is already announced. Every business has seen a change of methods in the past ten years, but in none have there been greater changes than in the publishing of books and periodicals.

A PENSION FOR MRS KINGSFORD.

The cable announcement that the British Government have granted a pension of \$100 to the widow of the late Wm. Kingsford, the Canadian historian, was received by

many Canadians in the spirit that should characterize one who hears that honors have been bestowed on a friend. Mr. Kingsford may be said to have set aside the latter part of his life for a work in the accomplishment of which the Dominion, and not the author, was the chief gainer. Had he devoted himself to his profession, civil engineering, instead of to literary work, his pecuniary reward would, in all probability, have been much greater. But he obeyed the "call" to the latter. Canadians are glad that he did, and it is only natural that they should be pleased that the Imperial Government appreciate his labors sufficiently to award a pension to his widow. Some time ago, Mrs. Kingsford was granted £150 from the fund of the British Royal Library, and Sir W. C. Macdonald, just about the same time, asked her to accept an annuity of \$500 from him. The Dominion Government gave Mr. Kingsford some slight financial assistance while he was preparing his history, but, as far as we are aware, they have not yet done anything for his widow.

Wholesale booksellers are usually open about this time of the year to do more business than they get. And while Midsummer of 1899 is much like its predecessors in this respect, yet these quiet characteristics are not so pronounced as is usual at this season. We are told by the dealers that the book trade is unusually brisk for this time of the year. "It is swelling right along," as one dealer put it. And not only is the trade better, but the books that are wanted are of a better and more expensive class.