

this in mind, it might be interesting to the trade to point out a few matters connected with English booksellers and bookselling which the present writer noted during his trip.

The first thing noticed by the stranger is the comparatively small number of shops in which new books alone are kept, and the very large number devoted to second-hand. In America this order is reversed—the new shops largely outnumber the second-hand. He will notice also that the latest publications can be obtained in the new shops at ninepence to the shilling, a discount of twenty-five per cent. If he goes to the publishers he will find that the books cannot be obtained at any better rates than this same discount. How then does the dealer make a living? Oh, he has three per cent, or perhaps five, for cash, and the publisher graciously makes him a present of every thirteenth book. With this he has got to be content, pay his rates, his taxes, rent, assistance and what not, and live. How would one of our booksellers like the prospect? And yet we run an imminent danger of coming to the same condition unless we are more scrupulous than we have been in the past, in our competition with one another. Banded warmly together, pledged not to sell at ruinous discounts, the trade might altogether escape this deplorable state of affairs. The English bookseller sees no way out of his troubles at present. It has been the custom so long to sell new books at reduced rates, that he knows the public would never stand going back to the old state of things, so he solemnly shakes his head, and endeavours to supplement his meagre profits by adding photographs, guide books, and sometimes a little stationery, to his stock.

The trade in secondhand standard and rare books, however, reaches enormous proportions, and large profits are sometimes made by the dealers. Second-hand book shops are to be found everywhere, and many of them are filled from attic to cellar with the most valuable books. Some of the most noteworthy booksellers of the world deal almost exclusively in secondhand books. I might mention Quaritch, Sotheran, Rimell, James Roche and many others. An American used to the lavish display of plate glass and paint, the roomy and spick and span character of the book shops on this side, receives something like a shock on seeing for the first time the dingy, narrow, common looking shop in Piccadilly, where that king of booksellers, Quaritch, does business. Once inside, however, the value of the bibliographical treasures displayed so lavishly, blinds him to the dingy and incongruous surroundings. Here you can buy books from five to five thousand pounds each. It was Quaritch who once at an auction sale bid about seventeen thousand dollars for a copy of the "Mazarene" Bible. His shop contains perhaps the most valuable collections of rare books of any in the world, yet there is no display about its exterior or interior to mark it above its fellows. It is in the most emphatic sense, respectably dingy. One would almost expect that a man owing the treasures that Mr. Quaritch does would take delight in having them enshrined in a suitable receptacle. A book that has become as it were a jewel, should, one would naturally think, be kept in a kind of jewel case. Quaritch is, however, apparently indifferent to the æsthetic side of the matter, and pursues his own way, makes his large sales, and buys his bibliographical treasures, heaping one upon the other in glorious carelessness.

R.W.D.

## CUT AND UNCUT BOOKS.

I do not know whether I am right, but I believe that a genuine lover of books keenly enjoys the operation of cutting up his own books. I know I do. The operation gives one a foretaste of what is to come, an expectancy of good things, often maybe not realized. There are novelists—fewer and ever fewer, I fear—who deserve the exceptional honour of uncut leaves. Who would not put Thackeray first in this list? I love to cut "Esmond" for myself, and leave him every inch of his margin. Every book that is valuable enough to require an index should be published with leaves uncut. If a page has been carefully selected by publisher or printer and its balance duly considered, how long it shall be, how wide it shall be, it is obvious that what may look very well as an uncut book will look less shapely when the shears have been applied. An advocate for cut books would ask us to make allowance for this beforehand, but the shaving process is not a certain one, and I come across books sometimes so indifferently cut that it goes against the grain to offer them the rites of hospitality. Then look at illustrated works. The slightest deviation of the knife on a book containing engravings by George Cruikshank would be a perpetual irritation. Yet, unless you saw the book without the illustrations and have them placed afterward, which operation renders their retention less secure than it should be, the illustrations must be shorn with the book. When books are sent to be bound for the library in morocco or calf the case is different. Other binders are generally employed to those employed by the publishers for wholesale binding, and these binders employ skilled workmen who know enough of the value of books entrusted to them to deal with them kindly. This sort of binding rises to the dignity of an art. Books and dogs deserve humane treatment. They solace us in this unresting age which has taken to digging up foundations. Let us leave our friends the books all their margin.—George Bentley.

## BOOKSELLERS IDIOSINCRASIES.

ENVELOPE SENT OUT FOR ANSWERS IN RETURN.

CLINTON,

Ontario.

CHRIS. DICKSON.

Wholesale and Retail dealer in  
BOOKS, STATIONERY & FANCY GOODS,  
Cor. of Huron and Isaac Sts.

Not a bad idea. No danger of going to the wrong town:

Some of our friends deal in pipes. Nineteen years ago a would-be customer offered a price for a particular pipe. It was refused. The offer was at differ-