

THE Bookseller and Stationer

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CURRENT TOPICS.

ON another page of the present issue of "Bookseller and Stationer" appear a number of letters from readers, dealing with the general condition of the book and stationery business in Canada during the year just closed. A perusal of these letters, we feel sure, would do all our readers good. They contain much food for reflection and offer solutions to several of the difficulties at present confronting the retail trade. Without a single exception, all our correspondents express satisfaction at the results of the general and holiday business of 1903. Not only do they speak for themselves but they speak also for the centres in which they are located, so that beyond a doubt the year just closed has been an entirely satisfactory one in the book and stationery business.

AGAIN and again, booksellers and stationers are urged to pay more attention both to their advertising and their window dressing. As a rule window-dressing is a strong point with booksellers and more attention is directed to a bookseller's window than to most others.

Advertising and Window Dressing This is in large measure due to the great variety of the material with which he can work. On the other hand his advertising is either nil or ineffective. The

paucity of book, stationery and fancy goods advertisements in the average newspaper is well-known and evidences a deplorable lack of confidence in publicity. Why it is that the bookseller refrains from advertising, while the dry goods man uses pages and half-pages is beyond the understanding of most people. On another page of this issue attention is directed to this important subject, as well as to the kindred subject of window-dressing.

DURING the Christmas season the sales of books naturally increased to a considerable extent. In addition to the popular works of fiction of the Fall months there was the usual demand to be noticed for standard works and gift books and large sales were reported of both classes. Enormous quantities of cheap editions of famous books were disposed of at every bookstore and book counter and the sale of annuals was as large as ever. The popular books of the day in current fiction included "The Little Shepherd of King

dom Come," by John Fox, jr.; "The Heart of Rome," by F. Marion Crawford; "Wings of the Morning," by Louis Tracy; "Two Little Savages," by Ernest Thompson Seton; "The Blood Lilies," by W. A. Fraser, and "The Long Night," by Stanley J. Weyman.

THE charge made by our correspondent that booksellers in this country are not up to their calling, reminds one of the controversy recently carried on in English publishers' journals on the very same subject. There, it was charged that with but few exceptions the modern bookseller was entirely ignorant of the contents of his books and treated his stock as just so much matter to be trafficked in. To these accusations, indignant denials were made, not only by booksellers themselves, but also by numerous readers who came forward, in most cases, to champion the cause of individual booksellers with whom they were acquainted. How far the charge is justified by the facts in Canada is matter of doubt. It would perhaps be safer for us to steer a middle course and assert that we have in Canada many admirably qualified and well-read booksellers and that there may also be found some, concerning whom, it is to be regretted the same cannot be said.

IN the February issue of "Bookseller and Stationer" a new departure will be inaugurated, which it is felt will be of material benefit to our readers. Hitherto a great lack in the book trade in Canada has been the absence of a complete list of Canadian publications, together with names of publishers, sizes and prices, to which Canadian booksellers could refer at will. It is the intention of "Bookseller and Stationer" to attempt to supply this deficiency and in the February number, there will in all probability be published as complete a list as possible of all the publications of the year 1903, which bear the imprint of Canadian publishers. Henceforth, every six months, a similar list of the publications of the preceding half year will be compiled, which will serve as a handy reference guide to our readers. We bespeak the assistance of all Canadian publishers of books in making the "Bookseller's" list complete and authoritative.