

BOOK BREVITIES

AN incident of significant importance to the retail book store recently. A customer had been supplied with trade occurred in Montreal in a St. Catherine street her request when the saleslady picking up a book from a convenient table asked, "Have you read this, Mrs. R.?" Upon receiving a negative answer the saleslady gave a short description of the book, being careful not to destroy the story interest adding she thought it was the kind of literature which appealed to her. Almost needless to say she finally effected a sale. Books are hard to sell, but this method judiciously employed often elicits a purchase.

William Briggs has secured Henry Harland's new story, "My Friend Prospero," for the Canadian market. The story is described as gay, buoyant and delightfully clever. The hero's real name is John, and he is a witty, charming Englishman. In the mountains of Northern Italy he meets a beautiful young woman quite his match in spirited, joyous fancy. Through the accident of their meeting they keep their names concealed from each other. In their love affair they exchange swift thrust and parry, and John comes near to losing her because he lets his poverty seal his lips, but the generous old Lady Blancheman, in her odd way, comes to his rescue.

The interest is awakening in Miss Helen Keller by the publication of her autobiography—considered one of the most remarkable books of recent years—will have prepared a large constituency for her recently issued essay on "Optimism." It is said to be "full of the almost unearthly soulfulness and purity which belongs to her life." Miss Keller warns her countrymen against believing that everything in their own national life is good and great, and closes with a sentence in which is, in brief, the whole essay: "Optimism is the harmony between man's spirit and the spirit of God pronouncing His works good."

Harry Thurston Peck writes in the New York American, February 6, concerning "Letters of a Son to his Self-Made Father": "Readers of old Gorgon Graham's letters to his son will read with pure delight these neat replies in which young Pierrepont Graham matches his father's commercial philosophy with a merry philosophy of his own, meets maxim with maxim and anecdote with counter anecdote, and generally succeeds in scoring off the old man most effectively. Mr. Merriman has shown himself to be quite a match for Mr. Lorrimer, and the book which he has written is a worthy pendant to the one that called it forth."

The Copp, Clark Co. are pleased to announce for publication next week a novel by Mrs. Helen R. Martin, entitled "Tillie, A Mennonite Maid." Mrs. Martin has made a reputation by her short stories of the quaint, unconsciously humorous life and customs of the Pennsylvania Dutch. This is her first novel. Tillie is the spirituelle daughter of a miserly Dutchman who regards

his wife and children as so many assets of his wordly estates. Tillie's courageous struggle to gain an education and to liberate herself from the sordid influences of her home makes a most dramatic story and one that has the relief of many genuinely humorous incidents. The book is to contain illustrations by Mrs. Florence Seager.

The Copp, Clark Co. announce the publication of "The Crossing," Mr. Winston Churchill's new novel in April.

One comes across a cheering evidence once in a while that something else than fiction finds favor with the public. The last year or two there have been a number of biographies that have enjoyed a remarkable sale, showing that this enticing class of reading matter has not altogether lost its charm. Among the life stories that have taken hold must be classed the "Life of Samuel Morris," by Rev. T. C. Reade, D.D., (William Briggs, 10 cents). It is the story of a poor African boy sent to America by Bishop Taylor, and tells of his simple faith, his wonderful influence in a college, and his pathetic death. The sale is now well on to two hundred thousand copies, and it has been translated into several foreign languages.

William Briggs has placed on the Canadian market a new work entitled "History of the Outer Hebrides" (Lewis, Harris, North & South Uist, Benbecula, and Barra), by W. C. Mackenzie, with a chapter on the geology, physical features, and natural history of the group by William Morrison, M.A.

The Canadian Annual Review for 1903 is now in the press, and will issue within a few weeks. The sale of last year's volume was very gratifying, and now that the worth and usefulness of this compendium of events and affairs has been realized a much larger circulation is anticipated for the forthcoming issue. A very fine series of portraits is being prepared for the work.

An attractive design for the cover of the Canadian edition of "My Friend Prospero" has been made by Mr. John Innes, whose work in this line of art has been greatly admired. Effective samples of his art are seen in the covers of Mrs. Carr-Harris' "The White Chief of the Ottawa" and J. R. Craig's "Ranching With Lords and Commons."

The continued demand for J. W. Tice's popular account of his first great exploration journey through the barren lands lying between Lake Athabasca and Hudson Bay, published under the title of "Across the Sub-Arctic," which has been out of print for some time is likely to lead to the issue of another edition of the book. Two editions have already been published. The growing interest in Hudson's Bay should provide a ready market for another edition of this interesting and valuable work.

A special thin paper edition of Webster's Collegiate Dictionary has been published by the G. & C. Merriam Co., of Springfield, Mass., which is mainly an abridgement of Webster's International dictionary. The volume is worthy of every word of praise that can be written about it. Attractive in form, legible in letterpress, light in weight and in convenient shape, it is an admirable students' reference book. As for the contents, they are Webster's, and that is certainly a sufficient guarantee of excellence for the most critical person. Over 1100 illustrations are included and there is an index on the side of the book.