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CURRENT TOPICS.

NINETEEN Hundred and Three has started most favorably for the booksellers and stationers of Canada. The business done by retailers throughout the country has been above the average for the time of year, and everything seems to point to a favorable Spring trade. A good business in books was done notwithstanding the fact that the holiday demand was over.

The Past Month.

This year there seems to have been a revival of the valentine business, and dealers report an increased demand, especially for the better class of goods. Other lines of goods are taking well. There seems to be a tendency on the part of the public to ask for more servicable and valuable goods. The cheap grades of novelties and fancy goods are not quite so popular.

United States Books in 1902. In the United States last year, from the publisher's standpoint, was a full and prosperous one, unmarked by sensational elements. The "booming" of special novels ceased to be an advertising feature, and great sellers were not so plentiful as in 1901. The total number of books published fell short of the total for the preceding year, mainly on account of there being fewer new editions of fiction. Many cheap series were forced to stop publication under the new postal rulings. As usual, fiction led in point of quantity with biography, correspondence and memoirs grouped in second place. A noteworthy feature was the marked increase in the number of books published by American authors, while those by English and foreign authors showed a corresponding decrease.

Every month, seemingly, it becomes necessary for us to chronicle the death of some one who has made a valuable contribution to the literature of the day. This month we note the death of Julian Ralph,

Death of Julian Ralph.

author, war and special correspondent, which occurred in New York on January 20. He was born in New York City in 1853, and at the age of 18 he became a member of the New York Daily Graphic. As re-

porter at the trial of Henry Ward Beecher, he sprang into prominence, and was immediately afterwards engaged by Charles A. Dana, of The Sun. Of recent years he has reported almost all the great events of the world. For many years he travelled extensively and wrote a great deal for the magazines.

Important Decision. Some time ago the firm of R. H. Macy & Co., the New York booksellers, secured an injunction against the American Publishers' Association preventing them from taking any action to force Macy & Co. to enter the Association. The defendants in the case filed a demurer, and the case came up for a hearing on January 12. On January 14 the Supreme Court of New York handed down judgment sustaining the demurer. This was a signal victory for the booksellers and publishers who compose the Publishers' Association, and the result contains a lesson for the Canadian trade. It shows conclusively that there is a remedy for much of the present dissatisfaction existing in this country. The remedy lies in co-operation, and if only Canadian courts will support any reasonable amount of coercion that might be exerted on outsiders, the success of a Canadian Association would be assured.

English Book Trade. Book production in England for 1902 was slightly above that of 1900, nearly 200 below 1898 and 1899, more than 500 below 1897, just 800 above 1896, and 1,000 above 1901. In fiction the number is almost the same as in 1898, slightly above 1900 and 1896, but below 1897 and 1899. In history and biography the numbers were almost the same in 1901 and 1902. In medicine they were precisely the same, 237, while law books and educational publications showed a falling off. On the whole, there was no practical change in the publishing situation. If the books of 1902 were more in number than those of 1901, the latter made up in quality where they lacked in quantity.