

in his suit to such a degree that Marie-Anna goes to Shawinigan Falls to escape him. He follows her there, rescues her from the falls, and on his recovery from injuries, received in so doing, he comes to see that it is best for him to return to France, and for her to marry the doctor.

The second novel is the work of Monsieur Hector Bernier, the most brilliant of the younger French-Canadian novelists, who made such a hit last year with his first novel, "Au large de l'écueil," dealing with religion. It is a rather far-fetched tale on social conditions in Canada—a tirade against snobbism, if you like. In "Ce que disait la flamme" we have an exceedingly rich and vulgar French-Canadian father, of the name of Fontaine, who has a son, Jean, of refined education and ashamed of his father, and a daughter, who makes a foolish match with a young snob. Jean himself is imbued with strongly patriotic ideals of the usual modern Quebec type. He falls in love with the daughter of one of his father's workmen and endeavours to persuade his parent to expend his wealth in bettering the conditions of the poorer French-Canadian.

There is much fiddle-faddle made out of Jean's class prejudices at the thought of making a mesalliance with a work girl. However, in the end Jean becomes engaged to Lucille. But his purse-proud father, after the time-honoured tradition, orders him out of the house. So Jean marries Lucille and settles down in a poor suburb of Quebec to aid and reform the habitants. But the father and daughter find the wages of wealth are discontent. Yvonne leaves her snobbish husband and returns home to her father. There, father and daughter, looking in the fire one evening, decide to beg Jean to return to them.

Apparently, Monsieur Bernier would teach us that the idealist is alone happy in this world.

Albert Lozeau, from his sick room, has only issued detached poems since the publication last year of his second volume, "Le Mirroir des Jours," which, to my mind, shows a marked falling off from his first work. In fact I think he has run his gamut.

The young literary school of Montreal are not up to the power of Nelligan or to the sweetness of Lozeau's first work.

This year's books of literary interest, besides those already mentioned, include W. A. Baker's "Prose et Pensées"; Thomas Chapais's second series of Conferences; and R. Chopin's "Le Cœur en Exil." The number of verse plaquettes are, as usual, numerous. A blind girl in Hull, Clara Lanctot, has, for instance, issued "Visions d'Aveugle." A typical example, neither better nor worse than many of the others, is Engelbert Galleze's "La Claire Fontaine." Monsieur Galleze is a kind of poetic realist. He sings of washing dishes with your pipe in your mouth. He writes of the things he knows, and as most of the things he knows are very matter-of-fact, there is not much of the divine fire about his versé. He makes a few desperate efforts to verbal originality; but, if they are not pathetic they are "bathetic."

French Canada's great clerical Sainte-Beuve, the Abbe Roy of Laval, has not published anything. Neither has Monsieur DeCelles, Benjamin Sulte or any of the older men. So we must wait on the new men who have yet to come. On the whole it has been an unexciting year.

The Public Taste in Books

Views of Toronto's Leading Retail Bookman

By WILLIAM TYRRELL

LOOKING back over several years of congenial work as a bookseller, I recall with pleasure many happy associations that have come to me by way of my daily work. No more friendly atmosphere exists for the meeting-place of strangers, than that created by a mutual love of books. By its stimulating warmth reserved natures expand, and at times even go so far as to show signs of enthusiasm. Prudent minds forget to be careful when they talk of the books they love, and sometimes even those of suspicious temperament display unusual trust in human nature while subject to the influence of the printed page.

The normal man who has had time and opportunity to know books finds them no mere luxury. They have become to him a necessity—they are the elixir of life, the fountain of perpetual youth. In them he renews the pleasures of life, forgets his worries, stands out on the high places, sees men of all ages as his brothers and in the end thanks God for books. Such men cannot be narrow-minded or bigoted. They walk through life uprightly and without fear. Their understanding sympathy has no feeble qualities and the books they read never divert them from the main issues of life.

For this reason most eminent men are great readers, and in Canada it is true of our best political leaders, our greatest financiers, and many of our captains of industry. It has, however, often struck me as curious, that one can never be sure of the taste in books that may be shown by prominent men when in search of recreation. As an illustration of the unexpected I may recall the fact that the late Sir Richard Cartwright greatly enjoyed, and was a constant reader of, the adventures of Henty's boy heroes—those doughty lads who performed with ease prodigies of valour that a strong man would find difficult. Another conspicuous Canadian, one of our great financiers, finds delight in simple girl heroines of the type made famous by Miss Alcott. Other successful men of conspicuous position find real pleasure and refreshment in well written detective stories, such as Sir Conan Doyle's genius created in his "Adventures of Sherlock Holmes."

WHILE these instances illustrate the pleasure that great minds take in simple things, it would be absurd to assume that this class of men neglects the more substantial literary works of the day. Anyone familiar with the book trade knows that Canadians are keenly interested in important publications relating to all departments of human activity, whether published in England, Canada or the United States. Works of biography and travel were probably never more popular than they are to-day, notwithstanding the absurdly high prices at which they are usually published. Books on engineering and economic subjects always find a ready sale, particularly when written in a popular style.

The most wonderful thing of the present day is the revival of interest in poetry and the drama. In this money-making twentieth century the unexpected has happened. Hurrying crowds who were formerly contemptuous or ignorant, now stop in smiling silence to listen to the lilting music of the poet's pipes. Canadian booksellers of any importance must now carry in stock the works of many poets whose names were unknown a few years ago,

and their books sell so regularly that they must be ordered over and over again to supply the demand.

But returning to the bookseller's customers, it must be said, that it is not on the very rich man, nor the eminent politician, nor the great financier, that he depends for his support. They are too few in number or too much burdened with the affairs that engage them to find but little time for the real pleasures of life. So, after all, it is the "man on the street," his wife, his sons and daughters, who make up the great body of readers that come to the bookseller and buy regularly of the magic he has to offer. The man on the street has been mentioned first, but usually he comes last, and his daughter first in the buying of books. As in so many other things, the Canadian daughter is Queen, and her subjects (including mother), loving to be ruled by her, hasten, when occasion offers, to buy the very latest book so that she may read it before the ink is dry almost. To offer her a novel more than a week old is to class yourself as behind the times.

Therefore, it is natural to find that a strong recommendation to some buyers is to say of a book that it is "just out," as if it was a new hat or the latest thing in gloves. On the other hand, many readers more discriminating require other qualities inherent in the book itself.

At the last we come to the first and most important of all the bookseller's customers: those sane, wholesome, discriminating and appreciative men and women who want the best. Their libraries are filled with accumulated purchases of years. No books that they possess need be kept under lock and key. They have none on their shelves that their daughters may not read. Their friends are encouraged to borrow, and if the books they lend come back no more, the bookseller is asked to replace them. In the summer they buy literally arms full of books to take to their country houses or cottages and when they return in the autumn the books are left behind to bring joy and delight to lonely farmer families or remote lumber camps where books are treasured in a way that city people never know.

Books and Book-Sellers

By NORMAN MURRAY

A Montreal Book-Seller

AS there are arts and secrets in most trades, the question arises whether a bookseller should discuss publicly his method of doing business. As a friend of the newspaper fraternity in general, however, it is hard to refuse the highly complimentary request of the editor to write something for this forthcoming Book Number. The wide-awake bookseller must follow closely the various authors' progress as well as the ever-changing public tastes and hobbies. He must follow the book reviews and then classify in his mind his customers and their tastes and hobbies.

It is always easy to sell anything if you know of some one who wants it. Suggestion plays a very important part in book-selling. The subscription book publisher's instruction to agents, "Sell the Morocco first," should always be kept in mind by the bookseller. The books that sell best, the books on which most profit is to be made, and the best-paying customers, should be looked after first, but no enthusiastic bookseller makes a god of his profit account. To him bookselling is more than a mere business.

There are various phases of the book trade and many types of buyers. Some customers will continue the magazines that their fathers and grandfathers before them bought year after year, as in the case of Chambers's Journal. Booksellers themselves may have favourite lines that they dispose of to best advantage. In my own case, being born in Scotland, and coming to Canada in 1881, when twenty-eight years of age, I have naturally been more interested in British publications, including Canadian, than in publications published in the neighbouring republic. For twenty-five years I have read the London Publishers' Circular every week.

Then we have different seasons for different

lines. The long winter nights, of course, are more conducive to long and serious studies than the summer months. When the warm weather comes people take more to the open and read lighter literature than they do in the winter months. For twenty-seven years I have made a special feature of the Christmas Numbers of the *Illustrated London News*, *Sporting and Dramatic News*, *Sketch*, and *Graphic*. Some years quite a number of Christmas Globes are bought for mailing abroad. One drawback in reference to the *Globe* is that it is generally a little late in being offered for sale. The publishers of the London illustrated papers send me samples of the Christmas supplement during the summer. I have these mounted on cotton for the purpose of showing them to my customers.

The wide-awake bookseller must have reference books at hand to refer to in these matters to refresh his memory. A wise bookseller will always be glad to examine the samples of any travelling representative of the various publishers. Mr. Musson's annual spring visit to Montreal is one of the events of the season for the booksellers. A real bookseller should be a student of literature and find pleasure as well as profit in his profession. There is room for all who wish to exert themselves.

The public is certainly not progressing in taste for literature that requires thought. In Montreal there were more book-stores twenty-seven years ago, when the population was less than half of what it is now. While the cost of living has gone up in other lines, the price of books has gone down considerably, so that the sale of books might reasonably be expected to increase. Except in certain cheap lines, this is not the case. The Canadian bookseller of to-day must study his business more than ever to maintain himself. Usually, he must add other features to attain a decent competence.