

AN OLD ENGLISH BOOKSELLER.

Mr. Joseph Gallop, the oldest bookstall manager in the United Kingdom, has just retired from business. He has been with W. H. Smith & Co. for forty-five years. Mr. Gallop tells of a lesson on booksellers' profits which he once gave to Mr. John Bright. The latter, a few years before his death, visited the Derby bookstall, and stood surveying it in a critical, quizzing sort of fashion. Presently the following conversation took place between himself and Mr. Gallop:

"Do you take any discount off your books?" he asked.

"We do not, Mr. Bright," I replied.

"But you have a large, a very large profit, twenty to twenty-five per cent."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Bright."

"Well, but you do get it."

"Pardon me, sir, but we do not. We have something like £500 worth of books at this stall at the present moment. First of all, we have to purchase the books; then we have to pay people for collecting them; we have, moreover, to send them down by rail, which adds five per cent. in every case. We have also a very heavy rental, while the depreciation of stock is a most serious item, reducing the profits from ten to fifteen per cent."

Mr. Bright was silent for a moment.

I then took up his own work, "John Bright's Speeches," two large volumes octavo, twenty-five shillings. "Look at this work of yours, sir. Are these two volumes worth twenty-five shillings?" Mr. Bright was as silent as the Quaker he was. I proceeded to say, "Well, people are apt to think that W. H. Smith & Son's business is all profit and that there are no drawbacks to it."

"Well, you have enlightened me, Mr. Gallop. Good-bye."

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

GEORGE ELIOT'S "Scenes of Clerical Life" will soon be out of copyright and at the disposal of anybody who likes to publish them. There will be little room left for enterprise, however, having regard to Messrs. Blackwood's issues. Recently they brought out a sixpenny edition of the "Scenes," and now they announce them in three small, dainty volumes. "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" will form one of these booklets, "Amos Barton" another, and "Janet's Repentance" the third.

The University of Oxford has brought an interesting lawsuit against a United States firm of publishers. This firm, it appears, has reproduced the Oxford Bible—or, rather, produced a Bible so designed. The

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authorities of the Oxford University Press claim that the designation "Oxford" means, and always has meant, that the book was printed at Oxford. They argue that the use of the word on any other Bible is deceptive and fraudulent, and is so intended to be. An injunction is asked against the American firm, and the case will shortly be heard in New York.

A pamphlet biography of Henryk Sienkiewicz has been published by Little, Brown & Co. to answer at once the manifold enquiries sent to them concerning the author of "Quo Vadis," which has taken such a hold upon the public. An interesting fact about the Polish writer is that in 1877, when

the Polish fraternity of expatriated Poles went to France, Mme. Modjeska and her husband, Count Bozenta Chlaponski were among the party of refugees in which was Sienkiewicz.

The title of the posthumous volume of Professor Henry Drummond which Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton are about to publish will be "The Ideal Life and other Addresses hitherto Unpublished."

Mr. Stanley Weyman's new romance "Shrewsbury" will be published in February by Messrs. Macmillan.

Mr. and Mrs. Rudyard Kipling sailed for Capetown by the Dunvegan Castle on January 8.