

THE MONTREAL TRADE. GROWTH OF DEPARTMENT STORES.

MUCH has already been said in these columns on the much-talked-of question of departmental stores and their effect on trade. In regard to the extension of the book and stationery department of the largest of Montreal's departmentals, BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER asked the trade for their opinion of the effect of this on their business and on trade in general. Here is the result:

A prominent bookseller was first approached. He said: "The departmental store has no doubt affected our business and caused us loss. But it is to a certain extent a natural growth, and the sale of books by such an establishment cannot be prevented. We booksellers must simply change our methods. One change is this: The large stock hitherto carried, and the consequent large capital invested, must be reduced. This means that more of our business must be done by order. This, of course, applies to the higher class of books. Another change necessary is to get exclusive rights over certain books. These books the departmental stores cannot procure, and consequently purchasers of such books must come to us. Naturally, when dealing with us so far, they are inclined to deal in other classes of books as well. On the class of books the departmental stores offer for sale, of course we must meet their prices."

The next visit was to a stationer well known in the trade, and whose opinion is of value, especially as he said he had tested the truth of what he says. "There has been a great deal said," he replied in answer to my question, "both in your valuable paper and in other similar publications in regard to the departmental store evil, and much of it has been pure bosh. Such stores necessitate a change in methods, but do not necessarily mean a loss. I have changed my methods to suit the times and have not felt the effects of such competition. That could be the experience of everyone if the proper course were followed. The proper course, let me say, is not to sit down and whine about loss of trade. Another competitor in the field is all the more reason for strenuous and sustained effort. The times are changing. Change business methods correspondingly. The departmental store can be met on its own ground successfully, and those who keep up step by step with these establishments will have no reason to complain, and, in fact, the extent of their business will leave them little time for grumbling."

Another bookseller expressed his opinions as follows: "Although the departmental stores are growing, and their book departments are growing, they enter into competi-

tion with us in only a few lines. These lines, of course, are paying ones, and there is no help for it. We must keep even with them in prices, and lose much of our profit on those particular lines. But it is a mistake to suppose that the money spent in books in a departmental store would be spent in the regular book store if there had been no book department in the store. Some of it undoubtedly would, by not much, after all. These stores cause us a loss, but not so great as is often said. The only way to meet it is

to keep pace with them. They cannot be prevented from selling books."

Mr. William Watson has been spending part of the summer and autumn at Windermere. His next volume, which will be published in December, will contain, besides the "Ode in May," and the poem entitled "The Unknown God," which appeared in The Fortnightly, a considerable amount of work which will be printed for the first time. What title the book will bear Mr. Watson has not yet decided.

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