

BOOKS AND NOTIONS

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THE HOLIDAY TRADE.

IN no way, do we find, to any appreciable extent, has the holiday trade this season differed from that of the average year. On the whole, perhaps, as much business has been done, and as much money taken in as at Christmastide in 1893.

Most of the wholesale book and fancy goods houses in Toronto and Montreal have done fairly well, and one or two have done a great deal better than ever before.

Some of the Toronto fancy goods houses have been somewhat affected by the fact that some of our big dry goods firms have been carrying certain lines of fancy goods which they offered at very low prices. The leading retailers, however, tabooed these goods, when they recognized that the dry goods men carried only rag ends of stocks, and these only as leaders for their heavy wares.

This season in Toronto the large retail book and fancy goods stores seem to have benefitted greatly at the expense of the smaller retail shops. The former report having done a splendid business, but from the latter comes up a wail of woe.

According to general reports, the retailers in the outside villages and towns have done an average holiday business.

One feature of this season's trade noticed by retailers is the fact that while sales have been individually smaller, the number of purchasers has been much larger than in

former years. This would seem to indicate that the taste for, or ability to buy, extravagant presents did not exist this season, and that at the same time money is more widely and evenly distributed among the masses than formerly.

Taking into consideration the world-wide depression of the past twelve months, the deductions to be drawn from a review of the Christmas holiday book and fancy goods trade seem very encouraging.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

SINCE the last issue of BOOKS AND NOTIONS news has been received of the death of the famous English novelist, Robert Louis Stevenson. He died on December 3 at Samoa, whither some years ago he resorted in search of health, but, owing to lack of cable communication with the outside world, some days elapsed before the sad tidings reached Europe and America.

Stevenson was the uncrowned king of the native islanders, and when he passed away they paid his memory every honor in their power. During later years the great writer had expressed a desire to be interred at the summit of Samoa's highest mountain, which commands a splendid view of the islands and surrounding ocean. In order to carry out his wishes, the inhabitants hewed a pathway through the dense forest which clothes the side of the mountain, and then bore his corpse up the steep heights, making the difficult ascent by clinging to creepers and ledges of rock and gradually lifting themselves and their treasured burden upwards.

The press the world over acknowledges that in Stevenson has departed a master of English—an eminent man of letters.

It seems cruel indeed that the author of "Kidnapped" and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" has been cut off in his early manhood. Had he been spared to develop his powers and attempt greater things, what might he not yet have given to mankind?

A PECULIAR PRACTICE.

In some parts of Nova Scotia the public school teachers are getting into the habit of supplying books to their pupils. It is said that by thus turning the school rooms into retail book stores these enterprising pedagogues manage to make quite a neat little income "on the side."

By this means the trade of the regular retail dealers is more or less affected, and some of them are calling for protection.

If the trustees for the various schools will not interfere with this practice, the public school inspectors should look into it, and if they find that they have no power in the premises, the Provincial Legislature should be asked to enact a law providing for a remedy in such cases.

HOW HE INCREASES BUSINESS.

JAMES MACLEAN, Pictou, imports direct most of his books and stationery from Great Britain. He carries a large stock of books, but makes a special feature of importing to order, i.e., he canvasses for his book trade, and is doing a good business. When the Presbyterian Synod met at New Glasgow, he went over with a few samples of high priced books and sold 75 copies in one day, to be delivered as soon as he could import them. The list included "The Pastors' Congregational Record," "Ascent of Man" (Drummond), "Social Evolution" (Kidd), most of them being \$2 and \$3 books.

BOOKS AND NOTIONS has several times drawn attention to this method of increasing business. A number of dealers have adopted it, and have made money. Others say it is beneath their dignity to canvass, that they are booksellers, not pedlars. Those who canvass are making money, and they are not any more pedlars than are the commercial travelers. It is simply a case of Mahomet and the mountain. If buyers will not come to your store, you should go to them.

As the demand for books is growing, especially for the early additions by the best authors, increased attention will be given to this department in these columns. Dealers should work up a list of book buyers and keep them informed as to what new books come out each month. A copy of BOOKS AND NOTIONS containing lists of books can be shown to them. The notices therein will often interest them enough to buy several books each month. Not only can a local, but also a mail order business be worked up. Once you have a reputation for all the latest books, buyers will get into the habit of sending long distances to you for them.

COST OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

The total expenditure of the Toronto Public School Board for 1894 for free text books was \$2,475.48; for blank books, \$6,731.89; total, \$9,207.37. Deducting \$296.31, the amount paid to the secretary for text books and blank books during the year, there is left a balance of \$8,911.06, which is the total cost to the city for text books, work books, note books, exercise books, dictation books, copy books, drawing books, business forms and slates. The total number of pupils above the kindergarten is 29,247. The total cost per pupil for all text books and blank books was 30½ cents, or, say, 3 cents per month.

At Charlottetown, P.E.I., on Friday, Dec. 28, Theo L. Chappelle, well known throughout the province as the publisher of Chappelle's Almanac for many years, dropped dead. Rev. B. Chappelle, missionary, now in Tokyo, Japan, is a brother.