

LITERARY NOTES

THE STORY OF QUEBEC.

THOSE who intend visiting Quebec this year will find an excellent historical sketch of that three-hundred-year-old city in a little illustrated volume by Emily P. Weaver, recently issued by William Briggs. The pen-and-ink sketches are somewhat crude but the text is excellent. The illustrations, however, convey much that could not be given if photographs had been substituted.

Those who would like fuller information will find it in "Quebec Under Two Flags," by Doughty and Dionne, or in "Old Quebec," by Sir Gilbert Parker. Both volumes have numerous illustrations. "The Fight for Canada" by Captain William Wood gives a very full account of the two battles which are known as the Plains of Abraham and Ste. Foye. The latter battle is not so well known, but according to Captain Wood, the British lost 1,124 men and Levis "half as many again."

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A CANADIAN HISTORY.

EVERY home in the Dominion should contain one or more Canadian histories and children should be taught to consult them. Young people who have left school should also be encouraged in historical study. There are several one-volume histories which are suitable for general use and reference. Mr. Roberts' book is excellent and so is either volume by the late Sir J. G. Bourinot in the "Nations" series. Most of the smaller histories used in the schools are abominable—dry, statistical, political and poorly-printed. The only exception is the new edition of Emily P. Weaver's "A Canadian History." At the price, fifty cents, it is the best value obtainable. The maps and illustrations are more numerous and more valuable than in any other single volume, while the story is wonderfully clear and lucid considering the limited space. The book is published jointly by William Briggs and the Copp, Clark Company and it is to be hoped that it will come into general public school use.

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THE NORTH AND WEST.

"THE PEACE RIVER TRAIL," an illustrated pamphlet published by the Journal Company of Edmonton, contains a story which every Canadian should read. "The Yukon Territory: Its History and Resources," an illustrated pamphlet issued by the Department of the Interior is also to be commended. The Report of the Select Committee of the Senate on the great Saskatchewan, Peace, and Mackenzie valleys is a valuable document. It is printed in Vol. 42 of the Journals of the Senate and is also issued in separate form. It gives all the latest information concerning that unknown district and also about Keewatin and Ungava. Being a government report, it is likely to be overlooked by the general reader but many wise ones will find pleasure and profit in the perusal.

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CANADIAN PUBLISHING CENTRES.

AN article on "Canadian Literature in 1907" in the *Nation* (New York) bears on the question of book sales. The article opens with the following paragraph: "The old reproach against the Canadian reading public is rapidly becoming obsolete. To-day the meritorious work of Canadian writers is nowhere more thoroughly appreciated than in Canada; and more than that, English and American editions of Canadian books are not only immediately produced in Canadian editions, but many important Canadian books are now published originally in Toronto or Montreal. Toronto is, in fact, rapidly becoming an important publishing centre, and the time is not far off when it will be as much the rule for an English-Canadian book to bear a Toronto imprint as for a French-Canadian book to see the light first in Montreal."

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THE ENGLISH CATALOGUE.

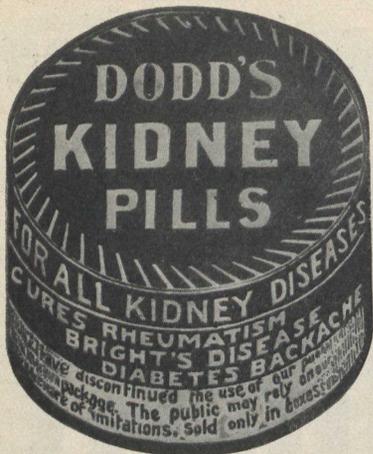
"THE ENGLISH CATALOGUE OF BOOKS" for 1907 has just appeared in London, and this catalogue is such a time-honoured and useful institution in the literary world that a word or two on its history may not be without interest to Canadians.

Among the earliest catalogues of books known were those compiled by Robert Clavell, under the name of "Term Catalogues," during the period 1666 to 1709. He seems to have taken his title from the fact that the catalogue was issued quarterly—that is, at Michaelmas Term, Hilary Term, Easter Term and Trinity Term. Robert Clavell was Master of the Company of Stationers in 1698 and 1699, and a contemporary of his left it on record that Clavell "is a great dealer, and has deservedly gained himself the reputation of a just man. Dr. Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, used to call him the 'honest bookseller'"—a high tribute, indeed! After Clavell's "Term Catalogues" came "London Catalogue," founded by W. Bent in 1700, and running on, under various proprietors until 1855, when it was incorporated in the present "English Catalogue," published by Sampson Low & Company.

The "English Catalogue" gives in one alphabetical list, under author and title, the size, price, month of publication, and publisher of books issued during the year in the United Kingdom. Not only this, but it furnishes a tabulated statement showing how those books are distributed among their various classes. The year 1907, we are told, has been by far the busiest in the annals of English publishing, no fewer than 9,914 new books and new editions having appeared in the twelve months. This is an increase over 1906 of 1,311. The most notable instances of increase are in the Religion and Philosophy class, with a 213 jump over 1906; Arts and Sciences with 610; and History and Biography with 232. That we are getting ready for the Millennium is the natural conclusion one would draw in regard to the Religion and Arts and Sciences increases. But the third-mentioned increase—History and Biography—would seem to indicate that we are not, especially when one discovers that it is the "spicy" memoir that has sent up the figure.

Perhaps, however, the most remarkable feature of the whole year's publishing is the marked drop of 246 in the number of new works of fiction. If this means, with fewer novels, a higher standard of writing, then we can but be grateful, for there have been a deplorably large quantity of books issued recently that were really not worth accepting at any price—even as waste paper.

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