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#### CURRENT NOTES.

ONE of the most instructive and least edifying qualities in the human character has been described as "dog-in-the-manger." There are men who don't want some movements to succeed in case it would benefit the other fellow. They themselves have no interest in it, perhaps; it might not affect them one way or the other; yet they kick, to use an expressive term, against what promises to bring benefit to another. You hear people say: "What's the use of a Canadian copyright law anyway; it is only a scheme to benefit a few Toronto and Montreal publishers." That is the sort of meanness you expect from a dog-in-the-manger. It is the same with the demand for a bankruptcy measure. Some retailers are convinced that it is a dark plot by the wholesale trade to find an easier way of collecting their debts. They don't seem to think that when the reputation and business methods of all Canadian trade would be improved by such legislation—as we know positively they would be—every individual merchant shares in the improvement. That is too broad and generous a

view for some people. They prefer to snarl in their corner.

The stationer who wants people to buy good stationery and wonders how they can be satisfied with cheap envelopes and paper should begin by using a nice quality himself. We saw a letter from a dealer to a customer this week that looked as if it was a bill from a second-hand junk store, and had reposed in the coal-scuttle a day or two before going out. This sort of thing is all wrong.

Talking of cheap stationery, really nice people will not use it. The craze for trash is one of the nasty influences of the department store mania. People who write and receive letters ought to be ashamed to employ some of the stuff that is now used. If a stationer knows the customer well he can afford to hint at the vulgarity of cheap stationery for people who can afford to use better. If you have a counter case that will permit of such an arrangement, try an assortment of the best papetries, with price-tickets on each, under glass cover, but shown prominently. Keep the cheap lines out of sight. For holiday trade special efforts should be made to push good stationery.

The Customs authorities are again raising the point whether American editions of books copyrighted here may be imported into Canada by the owners of the copyright. The Toronto Custom House has stopped 700 sheets of Ruskin, containing "Sesame and Lilies," imported by Messrs. W. J. Gage & Co., who own the Canadian copyright. The importing firm contend that

they are entitled to import the books, as they own all copyright rights for "Sesame and Lilies" in this country. The Customs dispute this, and the question has been referred to the Minister of Justice for decision. The matter having been thus made a legal question, it is perhaps rather rash for a layman to venture an opinion. But, looking at the facts, it does seem as if the importers had a good case. Clause 30 of the present Canadian copyright law is worded so as to prevent reprints of Canadian copyright works coming in "without the consent of the person lawfully entitled to the copyright thereof." This certainly looks like permission to import if the owner of the copyright is satisfied. And in the case now before the Minister the owners of the copyright are themselves importing. It would not surprise us, therefore, if the Minister gave decision in favor of the importing firm. We have no interest in the case one way or the other, but looking at the facts it seems as if the Copyright Act contemplated importations of reprints, always provided the owner was a consenting party. Imports of this kind have been allowed before, so that the question does not arise for the first time. The Customs officials take their stand on the Tariff Act of 1897, which, among articles prohibited from entering, puts (Item 637) "reprints of Canadian copyright works and reprints of British copyright works which have been copyrighted in Canada also." If this supersedes the copyright law, then the officials would be right, but as the two Acts conflict the matter is thus practically in the hands of the Minister. No decision had been given up to the date