

THE TRADE IN MONTREAL.

Montreal, January 3, 1900.

THE big sales are past, and now there is time to stop and take breath. Without exception, the members of the book trade in Montreal express themselves as well satisfied with the season's doings. That is to say, the sales have been somewhat in advance of last year's. Of course, there is the proverbial grumbler, who, when he goes to heaven, will, within 15 minutes, be complaining that his halo is scratching his neck; but he would not be content if the whole trade were centred in his own store. Uncertainty of weather does not produce the same effect on the Christmas trade in books that it does on some other lines. It had, indeed, the effect of postponing it until very late, but did not really injure the buying.

The two books of the month were, undoubtedly, "Janice Meredith" and "Christmas in French Canada." The former, as had been prognosticated, took, to a large extent, the place of "Richard Carvel," and proved a very fast seller for the holiday trade. The 75c. edition ought to be ready now, and will be in great demand. "Christmas in French Canada," by Louis Frechette, had what might be called an astounding sale. Instance is cited from the fact that The Montreal News Co., though they had taken in what, in their consideration, was a very large order, were compelled to quadruple the same, and even then they were sold out. When it is borne in mind that this book was, to a large extent, an experiment, being written in English by a French-Canadian, such a reception is the more remarkable. "The Habitant," as usual, came up again for Christmas gifts, and the books which have been popular for some time past had a much increased demand. Outside of the six best sellers may be mentioned "The Lewis Carrol Picture Book" (Fisher Unwin); "When Knighthood was in Flower"; "Wild Animals I Have Known," by Ernest Seton Thompson; "David Harum"; "Santa Claus' Partner" (Briggs); "Modern England Before the Reform Bill," by Justin McCarthy; "Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais," "Impressions of South Africa," by Bryce, and Goldwin Smith's "United Kingdom." The popular novels were, of course, largely sold in the gilt-top holiday editions.

New publications of The Montreal News Co. are "Red Pottage," by Mary Cholmondeley, and "The Orange Girl," by Walter Besant. Another is a work by

Bryce, "Briton and Boer," which, as it states, presents both sides of the much vexed question. "A Bit of Atlantis" is the title of a work lately published by Mr. A. T. Chapman. It is entirely a home product, the author being a well-known lawyer of Montreal, and the artistic work, which is excellent, being done by Messrs. H. Julien and R. G. Matthews, of The Star. Fifty pages of introduction seem a little lengthy for such a book. The price is \$1.25.

The sale of calendars has exceeded all former ones by quite a large margin. The fact is that many people bought for themselves this year calendars which they wished to keep as a memento of the end of the century. This they may presumably do without running the risk of scurrilous attacks at the hands of controversialists, for 1900 will last till the end of the century anyway. Whatever the reason, the case is that only a small proportion of these calendars were left over to be disposed of at half price. The Montreal Book Room deserve to be mentioned especially in connection with the calendars and Christmas cards. They do a large business in the country districts, and this branch of their trade is important to them. The calendars sought were, for the most part, those of medium price, i.e., 50c., 75c., and \$1. Quite a number were sold as high as \$3 and \$4, but most of the bookstores did not keep a large assortment of the expensive lines. The fancy calendars took like wildfire.

There is hardly a single copy of any of the Christmas supplements to periodicals left in the city. In more than one store the only one left was that of The Paris Figaro. This is possibly not the fault of the supplement itself, for it is attractive and striking. But things French are not the most taking just now, and the Figaro has made a name for itself as not merely French, but decidedly anti-British. The extraordinary interest evinced in the Christmas supplements to British papers is somewhat hard to account for, because there has not been a proportionate degree of improvement in the articles themselves to warrant such demand. Neither were they particularly of a military character. The explanation seems to be that the war has directed public attention to Imperial matters, and communication of all kinds has been quickened between Britain and her colonies. The rush for one and all of the Christmas supplements was unprecedented.

Mr. Renouf secured some special sets of Scott. A. & C. Black, the publishers, issued in the Dryburgh edition only 300 copies. This statement is made over their autograph. Of these Mr. Renouf bought ten, and during the Christmas trade sold seven of them. The edition is an exceed-

ingly fine one, and the woodcut illustrations were made specially for it.

NOTES.

The Canadian edition of Pearson's Magazine has proved a success.

Mr. Brophy, of The Montreal News Co., has arranged for an authorized edition of "Le Chien d'Or." The contract is closed, though the same will not come into effect for some months.

The trade will regret to hear of the death of Rev. James Tate, the author of "Christianity Without Conscience."

"The Sky Pilot" would have sold much better if it had been mentioned on the posters and announcements generally that it was by the author of "Black Rock."

Interest in South Africa is taking a more intelligent form, and books are more in demand. Closer connection with that colony may be expected in future both in mercantile and literary lines.

The William Drysdale Co. report very satisfactory trade during December, better than for some years past.

"The Twentieth Century New Testament," published by Briggs, is out in Vol. 1. This is a tentative edition, comprising the Gospels and Acts, with Mark put first, as being first written. The second volume will not be out until Spring.

The statement of the bookmen is that they are waiting for books. Very few new ones are on the market just now. In another month there will be plenty.

School changes will bring the usual demand for text books in the course of a week or two.

Goldwin Smith's "United Kingdom" was found a little heavy. Less expensive works were preferred. J.S.M.

The man who first conceived the idea of putting an eraser on the end of a lead pencil—just where it would always be ready for use instantly, died only six weeks ago, and, while he was the inventor of many more pretentious things, none were more profitable than the eraser notion. This has withstood the test of time without any great improvement being suggested, but recently a patent has been granted to Joseph D. Strassart, of Portland, Oregon, for a device in which is combined a pencil sharpener with the eraser. The affair is extremely simple, being stamped out of a thin sheet of metal in two pieces. The cutting blade forms one of these pieces, and the cap, which supports the rubber, and also holds the knife, is the other. In construction this is so simple that the inventor claims that it can be put on any pencil of the regulation thickness without materially increasing the cost. — Stationery Trades Journal.