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CURRENT NOTES.

THE ART OF BUILDING TRADE.

THE buying of books is a habit. Upon that the bookseller should build. He must see to it that the taste of his best customers is sedulously fed and cultivated. The habit can be broken off. On that the bookseller may also bank. If he has one or two, or half a dozen, good bookbuying customers in the place, and he knows the lines on which they accumulate books, he should keep himself posted in order to be able to tell them of new works coming out and stimulate their desire to get them. If he does not know he had better go into the fruit or stove business. Even the book lover, who takes a literary paper or two, and who ought to be well informed of new publications, will

occasionally miss something he would be ready to buy. The dealer's business is to keep these people supplied. If he lets them dwindle away into mere casual buyers he is not an adept at his calling. Book buyers will not economize on the object of their affections if properly served.

Suppose the buyer is a woman who only takes novels. If she has a fancy for certain writers, their latest works should invariably be brought to her notice. Or, suppose the buyer is a clergyman, or other professional men, their book wants should be catered to from personal knowledge of what they are likely to buy. It is astonishing how many of these people order from the city, instead of the local dealer. That need seldom, or never, occur if the dealer is awake.

Town dealers often complain that the local trade is cut into. Are they really striving to keep it up? The city buyer is harder to hold, since he usually has an immense public library to draw from, and, desiring a new book in a hurry, will go there for it. All this sounds very elementary, but the fact is that too many local booksellers, having allowed their trade to sink into sales of the latest novels, are surprised that the big department stores get the orders at cut prices.

Here is an actual incident to illustrate what we have said. It occurred a few days ago in Toronto. A quiet old gentleman appeared in a bookstore and to the clerk stated that he wanted a few books for his library. He looked over several, priced many more, but at first gave no sign of being an exceptionally good customer. The

clerk, however, understood his business and was attentive. The proprietor also understood his, for he told the clerk to attend to the visitor if the latter took all day over the purchases. The customer wanted books that were not in stock, so the clerk accompanied him to the wholesale firm where these were selected. It took nearly all day to select and fill the order, but in the end the purchases amounted to \$200. It was a cash transaction and might just as well have been secured by the local dealer. We have no intention of giving names and places. But the place where the gentleman lives has a good bookstore, and we think the order should have gone to the local man.

WESTERN SALES GOOD.

Correspondents of this journal in western places, from Winnipeg to Victoria, report that casual sales are brisker than they used to be. It is not asserted that pilgrims to the gold regions are apt to stock up with novels for their traveling "kits." But the fact remains that sales are better. There are more people out west, and they buy more. Perhaps that is the real explanation of what is, in any event, a satisfactory evidence of greater prosperity.

CARRYING THE WAR INTO AFRICA.

In another column is noted the removal of an aggressive retail Toronto dealer right into the heart of the department store district. This shows courage and determination. It should, and probably will, succeed. The book counter in the department store is not an attractive place to the real book buyer. In only one instance in Canada can