



Vol. XVI.

TORONTO, CANADA, JANUARY, 1900.

No. 1.

CURRENT NOTES AND COMMENTS OF INTEREST TO THE TRADE.

1899 A
Good Book
Year.

The past year has undoubtedly been an exceptionally prosperous one for all lines of trade. Publishers are discussing the question as to how much the great increase in the demand for books has been due to improved methods of trade. The general conclusion seems to be that the prevailing prosperity gave the purchasing public a surplus from which to buy books. There may be some truth in the complaint that we are less enthusiastic about books than other communities; but the fact remains that the past year has been more of a book year than for some five years past. At all events, there is some comfort in the reflection that we are not degenerating below our present low level; but rather creeping up. Perhaps this is due to the quickening of the temperance movement. Though the boom has resulted in the publication of a large number of books of poor quality, a better criterion is taken when it is remembered that the leading books have had an unprecedented sale. Some may be disposed to question the propriety of calling "David Harum" one of the best books. It is pretty well under the water mark now. But its sale of over 400,000 copies is a circumstance worthy of note. Such sales are practically unknown in the Old Country. Another thing worthy of remark is that the books which have taken the lead during the

past month have been of American authorship. As an English paper says, American readers seem to have grown suddenly patriotic. It seems as if the year 1900 might fairly be counted upon to be as prosperous as the one that is gone. The war will, no doubt, furnish material for an infinite amount of writing, good, bad and indifferent, and the bookmen may look forward to a most successful season's trade.

The
Canadian
Market.

Good times may be chiefly accountable for improved trade. But there are other factors. The development of the Canadian market in books is due to a number of causes. The issue of copyright editions has given the publishers an interest in pushing the books which has certainly enhanced sales. The fact that several Canadian writers have achieved fame at home and abroad, and that their books are selling well here is another factor in the situation. The standard reached in excellence of the typography, binding and general appearance of Canadian editions is another element making for success. It is significant that the best selling books are either by Canadian authors or are Canadian editions. In the former class we have had Dr. Drummond, Gilbert Parker, Dr. Frechette, Ernest Seton Thompson and others. This year the Frechette book sold largely. It was entirely a Canadian product and most creditable to the publisher. It will be found, we believe, that the cultivation of the Canadian market can be made a

source of real profit to the dealer, especially when a demand springs up for a book produced here, supplies of which can be quickly secured.

As to
Copyright.

An alert bookseller informed us the other day that many of the books on his shelves were American reprints of English authors and might be, as far as he knew, infringements of copyrights. He could, he thought, be put to some inconvenience if copyright were enforced. In our opinion it will be much more safe and comfortable for the retail trade to have copyright on a fixed basis. Hitherto the various trade interests—publishers, importers, retail dealers—have been unable to agree. Lately, we understand, a member of the Dominion Government has been sounding some of those interested in copyright with a view to some action by Parliament in the near future. Whether they can agree or not is another matter.

CANADIAN ALMANAC.

The Canadian Almanac for 1900—the only publication of its class in the Dominion—is one the trade can well afford to encourage. This year (its 53rd) it contains 400 pp. of carefully compiled information about Canada, commerce, politics, legal, official, etc. The historical diary for the year is of particular interest, giving in small space all the principal events of 1899. A unique feature of the new Almanac is a list of titled Canadians, with their ranks and orders. This is the first time that such a list has been compiled, and may be considered as the beginning of a Canadian De Brett. The Canadian Almanac is growing larger and more complete every year, until it is now difficult to see where it could be added to or improved. The price, however, still remains, as in past years, 25 cents.