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SELLING BOOKS.

WE have devoted a good deal of space this month to saying something of the new books. An attempt is made to indicate in each case the selling qualities of the book in this market. The bookseller may find here and there an indication of the quarters to which he may look for purchasers.

No doubt the town trade, as against the larger cities' trade, are finding it more and more difficult each year to make a profitable business out of selling books. There is, first, the department store competition which is cutting the life out of all cheap lines, both in books and stationery. There is, secondly, the public library, which is a direct rival to us. Then hard times and lower prices generally have tended to make people more captious about the prices they pay for books.

From these and other causes the bookseller finds it increasingly difficult to make this department of his business pay. Yet, unless he intends abandoning the field altogether, he must study the situation carefully to see what he can save out of it. He must know books. He must cultivate

a constituency of clients like a lawyer. To do this it is necessary to be familiar with the merits of new publications, to encourage local buyers by directing attention to the new books they are likely to buy, to keep publishers' lists and never be at a loss for suggestions when inquiries are made.

All this, no doubt, is very laborious. But bookselling is really a profession, and requires many qualities which ordinary business does not demand. Remember that there is still a large profit on the right kind of books—if you can sell them. And you can sell them if the end is persistently sought. There is a tremendous demand for novels, no doubt, but these are much subject to cutting, and a trade in books not sold by the departmental stores is the thing to be kept in view.

We commend once again to the reader, in the light of these remarks, the books mentioned this month.

BUYING AT HOME.

THERE is sense in Mr. Cranston's letter which we reprint in this issue from the Galt paper. These people who whine about local men going abroad for legal or medical advice are the very first to buy away from home themselves. Let them give their custom to the local trade. It is only fair. THE BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER has many city subscribers, but is quite free to say that the city bookseller has no right to the trade which ought to belong to the town bookseller. Let us live and let live. As a matter of fact, we

don't believe our city readers are getting trade from outside towns. The department stores are gobbling it up. A man visits the city and, in nine cases out of ten, steers straight for one of these places, where they might as well sell books by the pound as far as the clerk knows anything about the merits of books. Booksellers would do well to imitate Mr. Cranston's example. Write a good pointed letter to your local paper and get the editor to back it up with an article. There are some people who do not consider how they injure their own town in sending away for supplies.

SOME COMPLAINTS.

ONE of our subscribers voices some grievances in a letter which appears elsewhere. Firstly, he points out that the staffs of local post-offices do subscription work for newspapers, thus depriving the newsdealer and bookseller of considerable profit in what is their own legitimate line. There is something in this contention. We do not blame the newspapers for making use of what is a convenient means of increasing their lists. But in cities and towns where the staff have no leisure, or should have none, and where there are booksellers to do the subscription business, the practice might be stopped. In villages without booksellers the circumstances are different. There the post office can do this work without interfering in any one's business and it is a very great convenience both to the locality and the publishers. Our correspondent might send a