

## DEPARTMENT OF ADVERTISING SUGGESTION AND CRITICISM

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Note. Herein are discussed the principles and practice of advertising. Subscribers are invited to send Mr. Kirkwood specimens of their newspaper and other advertising, for the purpose of review in this department. Address care of Department of Advertising, BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER.

### ON ADVERTISING BOOKS.

THE book business in Canada, from the retailer's point of view, has not proved itself to be a very remunerative one, due in part to the comparatively small turnover in the sale of books, and in part to the cutting of prices by department stores and the attendant hurtful influence on the general trade. At the same time it may be said with a good deal of truth that the average retail bookseller has not done all that is possible in behalf of his own business.

Canadians are readers, perhaps not always reading the best class of literature, but none the less readers. The prevalence and use of public libraries are evidence of this fact. But it cannot be said that Canadians are book-buyers. To be a book-buyer is a distinct advance on being a book-reader. To convert readers into buyers is the business of the bookseller, and the success of his book department hinges upon his ability to make his community a consumer of books. To accomplish this is no easy task. It is not my purpose in this article to investigate the causes of the condition of affairs existing, it is rather to suggest remedies, if I can.

No bookseller can hope to make a success of his book department without a sympathetic knowledge of his business. If he is not a bookman, a book enthusiast, he is not likely to impart any real book-hunger to the people of his community. Of course, it is possible for a man in the book business with little liking for and knowledge of books to engage some young man or woman fitted to take charge of his book department, and in this way to overcome the difficulty he must otherwise encounter.

There are to be found successful booksellers who themselves are not book men, but they are successful because they employ competent help. In the smaller stores and in smaller towns it may not be possible from the strictly business point of view to engage a special salesman for the book department, yet in such cases one need not despair of building up a very gratifying book trade.

The first requisite is knowledge,—knowledge of two things—books and the people to whom one expects to sell. The first knowledge is the most readily acquired. Catalogues, reviews in the newspapers and magazines, and the advertisements of books, which by the way constitute a fairly trustworthy index of the books that are selling, furnish this knowledge. It may not be possible for the bookseller to acquaint himself with the character and contents of the books of the day by reading them, that would be too big a burden to impose. Indeed, it is not necessary that the dealer should read all the books he sells, yet he can acquire by one means and another a sufficiently accurate idea of the books he handles or should handle, and having this knowledge he is in a good position to help those who look to him for assistance and direction. As a means to this end the dealer can give or lend a book to some one of his customers who is compe-

tent to perform the task, to review the book. This estimate from a local individual written out for display in the store or in the window or published in the local paper would certainly result in much good.

Taking it for granted that the bookseller knows books the next thing for him to know is the tastes and purchasing power of the people of his constituency. This is knowledge that can be secured by some diligent effort. One way is to familiarize oneself with what is being read by the community. A study of the annual reports of the local public library will prove profitable. Another way is by keeping an inquiry or record book. Following upon this there remains to be learned and listed the names and addresses of the bookish people in the town and surrounding country. The card index system should be used for this purpose. It will be found worth while to record on these cards as much data concerning the tastes and book purchases of each individual as can be obtained. Then whenever a book appears that is likely to interest a prospective buyer a post card after the manner of the one herewith suggested can be mailed:

Dear (Madam or Sir)

We bring to your notice the book entitled \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ with which we shall be glad to supply you. The price is \_\_\_\_\_. We believe this book is one that will appeal to your tastes. May we send you a copy?

Yours truly,

THE BOOKSHOP.

Such cards in blank can be printed at small cost and can be mailed at no expense of time or trouble worth reckoning. That the sending out of cards in this way will produce a good many orders in the course of a year that would otherwise not be forthcoming is practically certain. Moreover, their influence from the point of view of advertising is of the greatest possible value.

There remains for consideration the use of the local paper, but I shall have to leave for another time the question of book advertising as it concerns the use of newspapers. I should like to have said, also, something on the subject of school book advertising, and hope in another article to be able to take up this interesting problem.

### TO THE TRADE.

The results from the Copp, Clark Weekly News have so far been very satisfactory. Some of the trade, however, have mistaken the purpose of the card. They have sent it back with their order written upon it. The card is published mainly as a business tonic to keep the bookseller in touch with the company's books. Probably the best place for it would be inside the cover of the book it is about. It is not an order card.