

this mode of doing business has long been proved a failure, but to protect themselves they are sometimes compelled to take advantage of this defect in our laws; and to still further save themselves from loss, and knowing that no other house can safely sell to the unfortunate store-keeper, they charge him exorbitant prices for their wares—the surest of all modes of hastening his final collapse. We intend to discountenance on the one hand this needless rushing into the trade careless and extravagant buying, giving preference to certain creditors, by chattel mortgage, etc., and on the other the shoving of goods upon their customers by tempting them with long terms of credit, and finally closing them up with as little consideration for others as other firms show for themselves.

Buying by the retailer anywhere except in the home market, is an evil which encourages a much greater one. We mean the custom of wholesale houses selling to the consumer at wholesale prices goods which should not even be shown to them, and certainly not sold at trade figures.

These and many other grievances will be taken up carefully in their proper order.

Meanwhile we ask the hearty co-operation of all interested in fancy goods in our proposed new department.

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THE [semi-annual meeting of the Association, on the 9th, was but very slimly attended. We presume the main reason was the absence of great questions of a general interest and the fact that dealers are not just now in a buying humour, and do not consider it would be profitable to make the trip to Toronto.

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THE question of bazaar interference with trade is entirely new matter. The crusade begins auspiciously when we find the Clerical Association of this city sending two delegates to hear our views, and men of no mean reputation either. The Rev. John Langtry is Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Provincial Synod.

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Too much credit cannot be given to those wholesale houses in Toronto who in the Christmas season departed from their old naughty habits and shut down on doing a retail trade. Toronto booksellers are at least some hundreds of dollars richer by this. Do they reciprocate?

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#### IMPRESSIONS OF LONDON BOOK-SELLERS.

Besides the names heretofore mentioned there are dozens of other booksellers of prominence whose

names I must pass over. Westall, of Oxford street, has an immense stock of miscellaneous literature; Stibbs, of the same street, confines himself largely to standard books; but there are others who deal largely in specialties, whose reputations are world-wide, but whose prices are beyond the pockets of all but the very rich. It is needless to give their names. The places of such men are chiefly in the West End, in Bond street, Piccadilly, Regent street, etc. They occupy about the same place in the English book trade that Benjamin & Coombes do in America. Any one purchasing from these gilt-edged houses have got to pay smartly for what they get, yet customers are not generally lacking, except in very dull times.

From indications observed in almost every part of the British metropolis, I take it that the old book trade in England is in a flourishing condition, and mainly so on account of the immense traffic which has sprung up with America and Australia. The wholesale trade in new books is thriving, for the same reason. But the retail new book business is in a deplorable condition, and is likely to remain so until the dealers can come to some general understanding in the matter of discounts. Just now he gives the public the benefit of his profits. That he can continue doing this for long I do not believe. To do it at all he has to depend upon the sale of other goods for subsistence. He keeps books merely as an advertisement to attract custom, and not for what he makes out of them. When he works his other trade up to be self-sustaining he gradually drops books, upon the aid of which he no longer has to depend. It seems to me that this should be a warning to the dealer here, who, to get temporarily the better of a competitor, cuts the price of new books; and in some towns in Canada, I understand, this pernicious custom has already made very considerable headway. Unless such dealers wish to utterly destroy the book trade, let them take warning in time and revert to legitimate selling, and avoid discounting as they would a pestilence. Of course I am aware that discounts have got to be given to libraries and to purchasers of large quantities of books. Such discounts need not, however, be made absurdly large, as they sometimes are. A case in point is when a Western bookseller, not long ago attempted to give a school library 25 per cent. off the retail price of American standard reference books, on which he got but 30 per cent. himself, and paid the duty into the bargain. I understand he has been trying ever since to figure up the precise amount of his loss. I refer more particularly to the general and indiscriminate discounts to ordinary buyers. This is growing rapidly into a dangerous evil, and should be stopped at once.

I have only to remark in closing that as a general rule I have always found the booksellers of the Old World kindly and courteous men, ready and willing to do anything in their power to make a stranger's stay amongst them pleasant as well as profitable. I bring back with me many pleasant reminiscences of their social qualities. And if these lines should meet the eye of any of them I hope they will understand that what has seemed, perhaps, a little harsh in some of these papers was not intended to be ill-natured criticism, but an honest endeavour to state only what seemed to the writer to be true, and had no personal application whatever.

R. W. D.