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THE COPY-BOOK TANGLE.

WHEN BOOKS AND NOTIONS announced that the public school writing course would be sold for six cents a copy after the first of July we thought we were recording a prospective fact. But it was more prospective than we thought. Still the Education Department had said that such would be the case; and, though we recognized that such reduction meant a decrease in profits to the publisher, jobber and retailer, we had no reason to believe that the department was misleading the public and did not expect its regulations to be carried out. To fail to fulfill its promises would have caused the Department to lose prestige in the eyes of the people of Ontario, and we had no idea that the regulations would not be carried out. We stated in our last issue that we still had confidence in the department's power to do what it said it would do. Subsequent results, of which we have authoritative information, shows that the Department will fulfill its promises; and on January 1st, 1893, the retail price of the copy books will be six cents apiece. True, there has been a delay of six months, the publisher has had more profits, the jobber a greater volume of sales, and the retailer has not lost. Only the consumer has not gained anything, and perhaps we may add the Department, for procrastination should not be the attribute of any authority. The inquisitive reader may be anxious to know the cause of the delay, even while he has found it profitable. On this point Books and Notions has nothing to say beyond what has been said previously. There was some sort of hitch or misunderstanding in the arrangements for reduction of price, and as a result certain persons have gained and certain persons lost. In these days of business skill, agreements to be binding must be drawn in a very skillful manner, and fortified in every possible way. Business integrity of the last quarter of the nineteenth century obeys not the spirit of the law, but only the letter of it. Consequently no person will denounce any business man for taking all the advantage he can of life's opportunities. To-day is a day of wealth getting. Become wealthy and you are great; be poor, even though honest, and you are nobody. Such is our business creed. "Be honest as long as

you can and get wealth honestly, but get it anyway," is often the advice of a man of the world. But we have wandered from our subject. We simply desired to show that nowadays men keep their bargains only within the strict letter of the law, for the reason that we are law-abiding citizens. The law is our guide; business conscience is, to a large extent, relegated to the habitations of memory. If the publishers of the copy-books had no obligatory agreement to lower the price of copy-books, they were not forced to do so and no one would expect it.

In concluding our remarks on this subject we would again state that we are informed on good authority that on January 1st, 1893 copy books will commence to be sold at six cents. All retailers should see that arrangements are made for a rebate on all stock then held by them.

SOME STRIKING PHASES OF THE BOOK TRADE.

The dealers in-books for the use of students in the higher educational institutions of this Province are somewhat agitated over one or two phases of their trade.

One is the practice among jobbers of buying a large quantity of a foreign publication, which is sold in Canada, and then, having secured these at a very low cost, reduce the retail price to such an extent as to prevent any further importation by opposition houses or by retailers. For example, a shilling and six-penny book which usually sells in Canada at 50 cents, when bought at a low cost in the manner described, may be sold at about 30 cents retail, the jobber allowing the retailer the usual discount of 25 per cent. But no person can import a small quantity and compete with this price, and hence the jobber monopolizes the trade in that book, and still makes a fairly good profit. It is an exceedingly clever business device, and considering that we are all making money, or at least aiming at that object, and considering that the honesty of the device cannot be questioned, it cannot be condemned.

The jobbers say that they are forced into this for the reason that when a dealer can import at the same cost, and can wait for the importations, he will patronize foreign houses rather than his own. This should not be. Canadians should as far as possible aim at keeping all a profit possible in the hands of Canadian dealers.

On the other hand, the retailers complain that on books which are sold at such reduced prices the discount is small and profits much less. In Toronto this is still further lessened by the fact that the booksellers allow a discount of 10 per cent. on all retail prices of such higher educational works.

This fact introduces a second phase of the book trade, which is more local. The University of Toronto has a system of book-selling of its own. Orders for any publications whatever may be left with the librarian, and these are sent away at certain periods; and when the books arrive they are delivered to the person ordering at a very small advance on cost. This is exceedingly detrimental to the trade; not so much because the cost to the student is lower, since in the majority of cases it is not, but because the student is persuaded that this is the best

manner of procuring books. Hence to attract the trade the dealers are forced to offer a discount of 10 per cent. This leaves the dealer with a very small margin of profits, and hence the slightest shortening of these leads to serious trouble.

The first method mentioned, that of the jobber cannot be condemned; it is simply a business expedient. But it may not be so beneficial as it seems, if retail dealers are isolated in feeling and try to do more importing than before. This should be guarded against as much as possible.

The second phase, that of the university buying books and taking the trade out of the hands of men who contribute to the support of the university, seems hardly fair. It is not pleasant to contribute to the daily sustenance of an animal which then tries to destroy you. This should be remedied, and that right speedily. If the dealers would agitate sufficiently the evil would be removed. It rests with themselves to remedy this palpable unfairness.

NEW TEXT-BOOKS.

Three new text books have just been authorized by the Education Department for use in Ontario schools. One is the long-promised Public School History of England and Canada. The author is W. J. Robertson, B. A., LL. B., of St. Catharines. The book is slightly larger than the one now used, and much more simple in the language and style. The price is 30 cents, being five cents less than the other one. The first edition is promised for September 10th, but the publishers report that this edition is all ordered, and that they are working day and night in order to supply all orders with the least possible delay. The publishers are the Copp Clark Co.

This firm also publish the First Latin Book by Henderson and Fletcher. Mr. Henderson is principal of St. Catharines Collegiate Institute, and Mr. Fletcher, professor of Latin in Queen's University, Kingston. It covers the work of the primary examination, as well as the junior leaving and junior matriculation examinations. Another Latin book covering much the same ground has been authorized, and is published by the Methodist Book Room. It is entitled the Primary Latin Book and is written by Adam Carruthers, classical master of the Jamieson Avenue Collegiate Institute, Toronto, and J. C. Robertson, B. A., head master of the Toronto Junction High School. The first edition has been issued and already sold, and another will soon be ready. These two books are placed on the market, and either may be used at the discretion of the boards and the teachers. They will displace the Introductory Latin Book, the Latin Grammar and the Latin Prose, hence there will be quite a saving to the consumer and less profit to the retailer. Of course all the books at present authorized will be continued for a time, but will ultimately be removed from the list. It is difficult to tell how soon this may be done, but the suitability of the new books must first be conclusively proved. The old history will hardly be on the authorized list longer than one more year. As both histories have the same name, dealers must be careful in ordering. The publishers have designated the new one, Robertson, in their telegraphic code, and the old one, Fend.