

"Pilgrim Fathers of New England" is perhaps, therefore, hardly comprehensive enough, seeing that the genesis of the Puritans is so fully dealt with. For Canadian readers, no book on this subject could be better adapted than Dr. Brown's. It is also typographically excellent. The illustrations are from original sketches by Charles Whymper. Considering its attractions, the volume is very moderately priced.

THE BOOKSELLER OF TO-DAY.

IN reply to J. C. Pumpelly, who read a paper on "The Bookseller from the Customer's Standpoint" at the recent meeting of the Booksellers' League, says The American Stationer, A. Growoll opened his remarks by complimenting his opponent on his generous treatment of the bookseller. He characterized Mr. Pumpelly as one of that rapidly diminishing "old guard" of bookbuyers who, were they still as numerous and strong as in bygone days, would have rendered the attack and defence of the evening unnecessary.

He pointed out that in Mr. Pumpelly's mind there was still a confusion of terms; that since the time Mr. Pumpelly spoke of, when he cast his first fly over the shoulders of his father into the book stream from which his senior took such pleasure in capturing rich prizes, the status of the bookseller had changed somewhat. Fifty or seventy-five years ago the bookseller was still a publisher—very often also a printer. Long before the printed book saw the light of day the bookseller became acquainted with it in manuscript. It was very often bought with his hard earned savings, and so its intrinsic merit became a matter of solicitude, and it was judiciously placed upon the market. This was the rule from Bradford's time until the days of the Careys, the Fields, the Harper brothers, D Appleton & Co. and their generation.

While it was comparatively an easy matter for the bookseller of a generation or two ago to keep acquainted with his stock, at the present day it would be well nigh foolhardy to make the attempt, except in certain directions. In 1855 there were published in this country and England about 500 new books, or at the rate of one a day. Last year there were published in the same countries over 9,000 new books, or more than one book each hour of the day for every day of the year. These figures did not include the Government, State and society publications, periodical matter and the privately printed books concerning which the bookseller is expected to give information, and his ability to do so often tested by the customer in judging of the bookseller's merit.

As literature grew and the business of the earlier publishers expanded, division of labor rendered it imperative that the original busi-

ness of the latter should be divided, in fact, cut into three parts—printing, publishing and bookselling. The latter branch—a comparatively young industry, being about fifty years old in this country—was at first taken up by bibliophiles and by the young men trained in the older houses. Their career lasted until the era of commercial revolution, when their field was usurped by the underseller and the bazar. Since then booksellers have become something altogether different from the men remembered so lovingly by Mr. Pumpelly.

Referring to Mr. Pumpelly's regret at the passing of the old order of things, Mr. Growoll said: "We have, indeed, fallen on evil days! With few honorable exceptions booksellers, for the present only, let us hope, have been forced to become 'dealers' in books. The old-fashioned class of booksellers, the philosophers, friends and guides of intelligent book-buyers—the men who bought books from a sheer love of possessing and accumulating them—is rapidly disappearing, because in these utilitarian days the bookseller has lost his clients. Men either do not buy books at all, or when they are driven to it by sheer necessity, deal with the publisher direct, or patronize the shops that make a specialty of cutting prices rather than furnishing intelligent service.

"Bargain hunting has become as fierce a mania with the men as with the women of our day. A bookbuyer will now tramp as many miles and suffer as much discomfort to save a cent and to circumvent the bookseller as the book hunter in the olden times tramped and suffered to secure a long coveted treasure, regardless of all cost. That is one of the causes of the decay of bookselling. The growth of periodical literature and of the subscription publishing business; the so-called reading clubs, or, rather, co-operative book buying associations; the free public libraries—much as some of these agencies, regarded from a purely optimistic point of view, are supposed to make book-buyers, but looked at from a hard, practical standpoint can hardly be thought to attain to that object—besides a number of other causes, leaving out all reference to the discount complications, have limited the sphere

of the ideal bookseller to such an extent that he has lost heart and become despondent, has gone out of business, or filled his shelves with stationery and 'gimcracks,' which yield more cash remuneration. So it is that in our large city, in spite of its enormous growth during the past twenty years, more book stores—that is, establishments where books only were sold—have disappeared than have been built up. This misfortune I lay at the doors of the public, which, becoming more and more machine-made or ready-made, is losing its own individuality, and so cannot appreciate that quality in the few who struggle to maintain it. And, mark you, with the extinction of individuality in the bookseller, bookselling will cease to be a profession and become simply a mercantile pursuit. Therefore, God speed the renaissance!"

THE ENGLISH PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION.

The meeting convened for March 23rd at Stationers' Hall was attended by a large and representative gathering of publishers, and, as Mr. Frederick Macmillan said, the formation of the new association appears to be undertaken in a serious spirit. He expressly disclaimed any idea of antagonism against either authors or booksellers. As to the first, he declared that any such antagonism, though often spoken of, was a mere figment of the imagination; while, as regards the booksellers, their chief aim was to co-operate with them in effecting their release from the thralldom of excessive discounts which had brought down the trade from the favorable position it once held. This assurance will be welcomed by the Booksellers' Association, who were naturally taken aback a short while ago at the refusal of the publishers to meet them for the purpose of discussing those very discounts. We should say, however, in view of the weighty meeting just held, that the refusal was prompted by the feeling that the booksellers' suggestions partook too much of the nature of "tinkering" to be worth discussing, rather than from want of sympathy with their aims.—Stationery Trades Journal.

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