

store and 9:00 by his Elgin. Store opens, customer rushes in. Then follows (C. being customer, S.W.C., salesman who commutes):

C.: "I want this book that I saw reviewed in the ——— yesterday."

S. W. C.: "Yes sir, what is the name of it please? . . . Oh, that book! I am sorry to say it hasn't been published in this country yet. That is an English copy the paper had and we haven't received any copies from the other side. Shall I import a copy for you or take your order for one as soon as it arrives?"

C. (greatly irritated): "But it stated here that the book is published, it doesn't say anything about it's being an English copy. How long will it take you to procure a copy? What will it cost, what will it look like, what color will the binding be, etc.?"

S. W. C.: "I am sorry sir that I cannot answer your questions. Yesterday was the first time I heard of the book; we can however find out for you if you give us sufficient time."

THE MIRRORS OF BOOKSELLING

By William Francis Hobson

IN a book store we may trace the origin of Blue Monday to that well known book for the tourists and those that possess Fords—to the Blue Book. Whether it is true or mere theory is a question, but it seems that Monday for the book clerk is a day filled with terrors. There are many reasons for this. Let us take one at random. The salesman who commutes arrives just before the doors are opened. He is either busy reliving a well enjoyed Sunday, or is trying to figure what the customer wants who impatiently pulls out his watch, glances through the window at the clock in the shop, and wonders why the store isn't opened. It is 8:59 by the clock in the

C.: "Time nothing, I want the book today. Guess I'll have to go to (names a well known book store); they no doubt will have copies of it. I never seem to be able to get the books I want at this store. No wonder there's no money in the book business. You never have what a customer wants." Exits muttering.

Thus starts the beginning of a perfect Blue Monday for our book salesman. At this point all thoughts of the happy Sunday have been swept aside. "Lightnin'", the floor boy, approaches and informs the S.W.C. that Mr. Knoital, the manager of Readem and Weaps Book Store, desires to see him at once. The scene now changes to the centre of the store where the manager (who also waits upon—or rather, "serves" is the better word—

his personal clientele) has part of a customer that serves as his desk.

"Well, Mr. Inbad, why haven't you fixed up the bins this morning? You know the rule is for you to have the bins in shape by 9:30; here it is that time and nothing done yet. If this keeps on perhaps you will find it easier to do them after 5:30."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Knoital, but I've been busy with a customer this morning so could not get to it before. I'll start right in." Walks away dejectedly to his unpleasant task.

Customer enters and approaches Mr. Knoital: "A friend of mine recommended a volume of poetry, but I've forgotten . . ."

Mr. Knoital calls, "Miss Gusher, will you kindly show this lady the poetry?" Resumes business of writing. Customer follows Miss Gusher to the poetry alcoves and inquires, "Who is that impudent man?"

"Oh, that's our manager Mr. Knoital, one of the greatest bookmen in the country, no doubt in the world. He has been in the book business over thirty years. He really doesn't look his age but he told me (confidentially of course) that he has just passed his fiftieth birthday. Rather young looking, isn't he? Married too," she adds with perhaps a trace of a sigh.

"Well, whoever he is and whatever he knows, he doesn't seem very interested in what I want. I'm looking for a book, etc. . . . No, I don't know the author's name; all I know is that she wrote another book something about Eve or maybe it was Adam or perhaps Adam and Eve. It had something to do with fig leaves at any rate."

"Oh, you mean 'A Few Figs from Thistles' by Edna St. Vincent Millay don't you?" inquires Miss Gusher beamingly.

"Yes, that's the author. I want her other book."

"Which one, 'Renaissance'?"

"That's the book. What, two dollars for that small book! I'm sure my friend never paid that. Well, never mind; now that I've seen it, I don't think that I care for it at all. I'll take a copy of 'The Sheik' instead. Please wrap it up."

However, it isn't always thus in the book store. Only the other day Mr. Fulofpep, Readem and Weaps's youngest salesman, perhaps one of the youngest in the "trade" as it is affectionately called, told me the following:

Two Englishmen lately landed (odor of ocean still retained in clothing) asked Mr. Fulofpep for a guide book of the United States. Informed that the Baedeker is still the best on the subject although 1909 is the latest issue, they hesitated about purchasing it, owing no doubt to its antiquity. (I'm sure no thoughts of Baedeker being a German entered their minds.) Our youngest salesman then tried to discover what particular part of the country they were most interested in, thinking to recommend some particular book, when they seriously replied:

"What we are really after, you know, is a guide to your New York subways. It's most confusing to know whether to follow the yellow line or to take the course of the blue one. However, as we shall in time try to see all of your country, we shall purchase this book."

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday in the bookshop are about the same. Pretty good days for all. Amusing incidents take place between salesman and customer. The very best informed book clerks, even though they be disciples of Freud,

Orison Swett Marden, or Dr. Frank Crane, can't be expected to solve all of the riddles that present themselves in the form of customers asking for a book, name unknown, author unknown, to say nothing of the publisher. As for example the case where the clerk asked the inquiring lady if it might be a Little, Brown book and received the indignant retort, "It's a green covered book; that's all I know about it."

Saturday! Ah, that's a day on which I would like to see A. Edward Newton, the author of two delightful books, "The Amenities of Book-Collecting" and "A Magnificent Farce", employed as a book clerk in one of New York's big book stores. I'll wager he could write another book about bookselling, but if he prefixes it with "Amenities" it will have to be sold to book stores as an O. S. item (on sale).

Saturday is a day I always looked forward to as a schoolboy, little realizing that when I grew up and worked as a bookman my boyhood abhorrence would follow me to the book store; but it has, to the extent of our dear school teachers. Nowadays in the book world each week denotes something. We have Children's Book Week, Travel Week, Fiction Week, etc., but the school teachers have fifty-two weeks, each one of which falls on Saturday. Don't think for a moment that I speak with malice toward the educators of the world. If I did, I could not point with pride and say, "Had it not been for your wonderful patience and instruction I should never have ascended to that pinnacle of KNOWLEDGE, a BOOKMAN." My grievance is this: As I remember, if our lessons were not perfect we received a demerit, or if we repeated the offense we were kept in after school writing two or three hundred lines. Is it not

fair then, now that we are on an equal footing (if the teachers will so consider the bookseller), to ask that in making purchases on Saturdays — as they invariably do — they be specific in their demands. Let them try and reconcile themselves to the fact that a great many of the cheaper school books which "Ask Dad He Knows" used, are out of print or made in more expensive editions due to increased cost of manufacturing and the increase in the bookman's wages. And can't they be persuaded to give their pupils in writing the names of books needed for special work, instead of just saying, "Oh go to Readem and Weaps and get a geography" or whatever the book may be?

Try and help the bookseller as much as possible, book lovers of every description, and he in turn will give you in most cases the BOOK YOU WANT.