

THE NELSON FIRM.

IN the year of Queen Victoria's coronation and in the same season of the year the business now passing under the style of H. A. Nelson, Sons & Co., Limited, Montreal, was founded. In the year of her death and while British and foreign people were mourning over her bier, the business of this firm was discontinued. The reigns were peculiarly contemporaneous.

Nelson and Buttes commenced business in 1837 on McGill street, Montreal. They were "chums" who hailed from New Hampshire, thrifty and venturesome. They had learned of Canada and its possibilities, so started out with a few team loads of fancy goods, smallwares, and general woodenware, drove through the woods and over the border, and finally landed in a shop on McGill street, Montreal. Their capital amounted perhaps to \$500.

From the first they were in the wholesale business, but how different was the wholesale business of those days from that of to day! We should now call 1837 wholesaling, peddling. There were no railways, few roads, and travelling was arduous. Trade was of necessity confined. But there were few firms engaged in the importation of novelties from the United States, and year by year Nelson & Buttes found their business expanding. About 1860 Mr. Buttes retired from the business and the firm's name became Nelson, Wood & Co. Mr. Wood left in 1873 and was succeeded by Mr. Nelson's four sons, Albert D., Horatio W., Charles H. and Frederick E. About 1855 business had expanded to such proportions, and the wholesale business was acquiring such a widening field for operations, that new quarters had to be secured on St. Peter street. In 1872 these were burned down and a new building erected, which stood the strain of commerce until last month, when it took hardly half an hour to bring it to the ground. The business done last year was the largest in the history of the firm.

The Toronto branch was established in 1868 and put in charge of the two youngest sons, H. W. and C. H. A large warehouse was built on Front street, but four years ago the stock and business were concentrated in Montreal, and only a sample room retained. It is now contemplated that Mr. H. W. Nelson will continue the Toronto business, but it seems probable that the stationery part of it will be discontinued entirely. This would mean that an old and reliable wholesale firm is lost to the Canadian stationery trade.

The founder of the business, Mr. Horatio

Admiral Nelson, was quite prominent in the growth of Montreal and her commerce. For 14 years before he died he was a member of the City Council, and during most of the time he was chairman of the finance committee. He was also a member of the Quebec Assembly during the Joly Administration, when he looked after the interests of Montreal in the local Legislature. In commercial organizations he was accounted a man of fine and sound judgment.

In Montreal religious circles he also assumed a leading position. He was a prominent member of the American Church and he was a large donor towards its maintenance.

His sons are known to the trade of Canada as energetic and reliable business men and to their hosts of friends as gentlemen of an inherited fine character. At present their business future is undefined.

THE MONTREAL BOOK AND STATIONERY TRADE.

Past and Present.

(Concluded.)

The business of Granger Freres is probably growing faster than any book business in Montreal. This Spring, they have added two more stores, and their premises are as large as an ordinary dry goods warehouse. Mr. Flavien Joseph Granger started the business in 1885, after serving some time with Chapleau & Labelle and Cadieux & Derome. In 1891, he admitted his brother, Alphonse A. Granger, to partnership, and together they are to-day handling a tremendous trade in books. This year, they were exhibitors at Paris, and won three medals—one gold medal for a collection of books, one silver medal for a collection of Canadian publications, and one silver medal for bookbinding. They carry a stock of about 70,000 second-hand French and English books. The senior member of the firm is a member of the Chambre du Commerce Francaise. He has sent a good many Canadian books to French and German libraries. They are also agents for many French and American patentees of office supplies.

In 1880, The Montreal News Co. was established at 588 Craig street, but soon after they moved to the present premises at 386-388 St. James street. Mr. Henry Brophy has been manager since 1883. This firm handle nearly all the current fiction trade of Quebec and the Maritime Provinces.

One of the most important changes that has taken place in Montreal business is the movement of the retail trade up town to St. Catherine street. These include those of

W. Foster Brown, W. Drysdale & Co., A. T. Chapman, F. E. Phelan, C. W. Coates, James Mock, E. N. Renouf and J. T. Henderson. Mr. C. Ashford, 800 Dorchester street, also has a well-established business. Mr. W. Drysdale is one of the best known bookmen in Montreal. In 1874 he established his business on St. James street, giving up charge of The Witness bookstore. In 1882 he founded a branch on St. Catherine street that was long under the charge of Mr. W. B. Baikie. He has now taken over this latter business himself.

W. Foster Brown is also an experienced bookseller. He bought the book stock of Dawson Bros. in 1889, and seven years ago moved to his present store. Mr. Chapman is a thorough bookman who established his business five years ago. The business of C. W. Coates was founded in Montreal 25 years ago as a branch of the Methodist Book Room. For five years it was on St. James street near the Temple Building, then for three years it was situated at 3 Bleury street, since when it can be found at 2176 St. Catherine street. The movement up town seems to have been going on for about 20 years.

Among other up-to-date bookstores are those of Walter Street, 3 Bleury street, and T. Vaughn, 439 St. Lawrence street. The news and magazine depots at St. Lawrence Hall, Windsor Hotel, Place Viger and Bonaventure and Windsor street stations are also worthy of mention.

For two years Henry J. Thomas & Co. have been established at 123 St. Francois Xavier street. They make a specialty of subscription books.

Two important wholesale houses are those of Macfarlane, Son & Hodgson, Craig street, and Austin & Robertson, De Bresoles street. Messrs. Macfarlane, Austin and Robertson came from Buntin and Boyd's establishment and established a business in 1882. Subsequently, Messrs. Austin & Robertson withdrew and branched out for themselves. In 1892, the latter establishment came under the control of Mr. Robertson. The original firm now is Macfarlane, Son & Hodgson.

J. C. Wilson & Co. have a magnificent warehouse on Craig street and do quite a large wholesale paper and envelope trade. They commenced business in 1870 and own large paper mills at Lachute, P.Q.

Mr. Henry L. Lyman, 12 St. Nicholas street, has represented the Dennison Manufacturing Co. in Canada for fifteen years. He also sells quite a quantity of crepe tissue paper for Jas. R. Crompton & Sons, English papermakers.

Mr. C. Theoret does a large law publishing trade at the corner of St. Gabriel and St. James streets. The business was established by Mr. Perrier in 1883, at 23 St. James street. He had been a canvasser for John Lovell & Son. He started by taking a trip to Europe, and bought some English and French books. In 1885 he published his first law book. In 1892 he died, and was succeeded by Mr. C. Theoret, who has published about 90 volumes.