

MEN OF THE TIMES.

MESSRS. N. QUINTAL & FILS.

Good sense, which only is the gift of Heaven,
And though no science, fairly worth the seven.
—POPE.

A house which holds a commanding place in the commerce of Canada is that of Messrs. N. Quintal & Fils, wholesale grocers and importers, Montreal. The scope of their reputation coincides with the expanse of settlement in this country, and the threads of their business connection knit a great part of the grocery trade of Canada into one system, of which their warehouse is the distributing centre. Their business has grown as the national facilities for traffic have increased, and the point it had reached years ago was the ne plus ultra of all our big houses until the railway service of the country received the immense development of the last decade. Since that extension of the sphere of trade they have made steady and considerable accessions to their business, which is now one of the largest in the country. Their Quebec business is of itself an immense one, and the demand they have attached in the other provinces is the basis of a very substantial trade. Their total sales amount to over a million dollars per annum.

The premises from which this big annual volume of stock is discharged are situated at 270, 272 and 274 St. Paul street, and extend through to Commissioners' street. The warehouse is a fine large cut-stone building, four storeys high, exclusive of the basement, whose floor is flush with Commissioners' street, and is therefore specially suitable for the shipping and receiving of goods, with which activities it constantly resounds. As the area of the building is 45 x 85 square feet, the four flats above the basement afford ample space for storage. The disposition of the stock in these great chambers illustrates the method and economy of resource that underlie and inform the success of this firm. Convenience, expedition and tidiness have plainly been made a study of, and are clearly realized in the arrangement of the stock in all parts of the warehouse. Everything is equally trim and ship-shape in the order and equipment of the offices and the sample-room. The direction of the intricate business is admirable and cannot fail to impress a visitor. Everything proceeds easily and

without friction, and an immense amount of work is overtaken every day.

The firm keep two travellers constantly on the road throughout the provinces, and have three looking after the business in the city. Liberal advertising backs up the efforts of these salesmen, and the upright, prompt dealing of the firm does the rest. The firm do a special trade in canned goods and in fine wines and liquors. They import directly from England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain, Italy, Sicily, Greece, Germany, Holland, China, Japan, the West Indies and the United States.

Mr. Narcisse Quintal, the senior partner and founder of the house, was born at St. Paul the Hermit, in the province of Quebec, in the year 1830, and is therefore in his 61st year. At the age of 21 years he made his first venture into business, opening up in a modest way in the retail grocery busi-



Mr. N. QUINTAL.



Mr. JOS. E. QUINTAL.

ness in Montreal. There he has since remained, building out wider and higher every year until the present great proportions of his business have been realized. He is one of the oldest wholesale merchants in Montreal and is highly esteemed by the whole mercantile community. For some years past he has been enjoying his otium cum dignitate, gradually relinquishing his hold of the helm as his son and partner grew fitted by experience to take his place. Mr. Narcisse Quintal has the satisfaction of beholding a life-work of more than ordinary magnitude accomplished with more than ordinary completeness, and cannot but feel some pride in the result of his labors. It must be equally gratifying to feel that he has raised and trained a son so capable of carrying on the business whose foundations the father has so solidly established.

Mr. Joseph Edmond Quintal was born in 1860, and was admitted into partnership with his father, Mr. Narcisse Quintal, in 1881, since which year the style of the house has

been N. Quintal & Fils. Thus the parallel features in the careers of father and son are, that both entered business in their 21st year, both chose the grocery trade and both started in Montreal. Under the sage direction of his father the young man's aptitude rapidly qualified him for responsibility. He was soon trusted with an important share of the duties of management, and by degrees the control of the business drifted into his hands. He was possessed of the powers that specially fitted him for such work, being a man of unusual executive ability, and having a capacity for business despatch that few men have. It requires a comprehensive mastery of detail to guide a business which keeps forty-two assistants moving so briskly as they have to move in N. Quintal & Fils warehouse and office, and to keep everything in view that has to be watched in the interests of so large a concern. During the

ten minutes our representative waited till Mr. Quintal, Jr., was disengaged, the latter had disposed of three travellers, four or five customers, and given various orders to the clerks in the shipping department, and before he could answer a few questions others were waiting to speak to him. Mr. Joseph E. represents his house on the Montreal Board of Trade and in the Wholesale Grocers' Guild. He is an agreeable man to come in contact with personally.

Some of the causes of this strong firm's success have been adverted to in the course of the above description of the extent and volume of their business. In the first place a substratum of honor underlay their policy from the outset; they never got off that firm ground, and consequently never got into any of the commercial bogs which frequently swallow up concerns whose career is not based on integrity. Uprightness was seconded by vigorous and able management, which pushed the fortunes of the house at all times and in all quarters, but never unduly or without discrimination. Safe methods of doing business they have always encouraged among their customers; hence, they have not sown a crop of bad accounts, than which there is nothing more debilitating to commercial health in the upper ranks of trade. They have done well for themselves, and that fact involves this one—that they have done well for their customers. The progress must be mutual where it is so continuous and so great on the one side, as customers would not steadily contribute to that progress if it did not react beneficially upon themselves.