

MEN OF THE TIMES.

MR. W. W. COPP.

Act well your part, there all the honor lies.

Mr. W. W. Copp, the president of the Copp Clark Co., limited, is one of the few who can look back over an unbroken expanse of nearly half a century's experience in the Canadian book trade. If he continues in it one year longer, he will be able to celebrate in July 1892, the jubilee anniversary of the day he entered it. In July 1842, a youth in his sixteenth year just a few months in the country, he became an in-door apprentice in the employment of the late Hugh Scobie. From that starting point his career was a constantly upward one, his own worth and energy advancing him from one position to another, until he stands to day at the head of one of the most substantial concerns in the country. He remained with his first employer till 1853, and had by that time reached an important position in the staff, when his connection with it was brought to a close by the death of Mr. Scobie. In 1854 Mr. Copp formed a partnership with Thomas Maclear and W. C. Chewett. In 1857 Mr. Maclear retired. The remaining partners continued the business under unchanged style till 1862, when Mr. H. J. Clark joined the firm and the style became W. C. Chewett & Co. In 1865 Dr. Chewett retired, and Mr. Copp and Mr. Clark formed the firm Copp, Clark & Co. In 1873 they sold out their retail business, Mr. Fuller having in the meantime been added to the firm. In December 1885 The Copp, Clark Co., Limited, was formed. That is the last change that was made in the composition or style of the house.

The business with which Mr. Copp's life has been identified ever since he came to the country has grown from merely local into national proportions. It began on King street, in the western part of the premises now occupied by W. A. Murray & Co. The store was on the ground floor and the factory on the second storey. Now that business requires two large buildings, and both are tasked to their full capacity. The building on Front St. is the warehouse and seat of the jobbing department, while the building at 67, 69, and 71 Colborne St. is the factory.

The partner who directs the industries that are carried on in the latter establishment is Mr. Charles Fuller, and under his capable management the very highest class of work is turned out. No one who looks upon the mere exterior of that solid looking but unpretentious building, would guess that it is the beehive of industry that it is, that it contains the most modern and costly appliances of the bookmaking and kindred arts, and that it issues some of the finest work produced on the continent. Its printing, book-binding and lithographing departments are models of all that is modern. Work goes forth from them over all parts of the country and into the United States. The modest, unostentatious

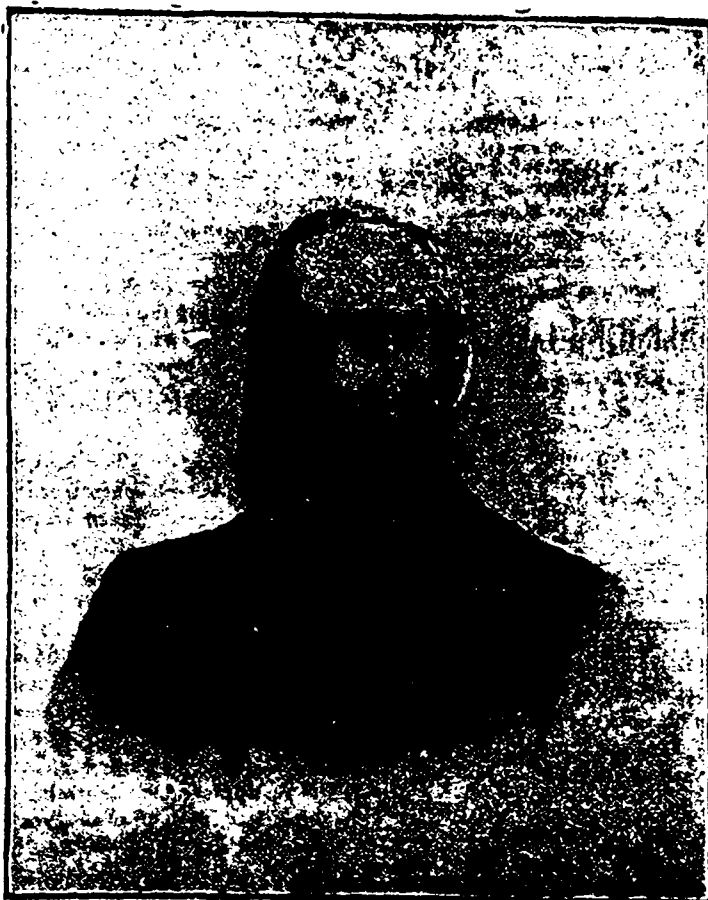
ment. Leaving out the United States part of the business, nearly all the printing, lithographing, and binding done in the factory are for the trade connected with the warehouse on Front street.

The large and elaborate business which Mr. Copp now presides over has evolved from stages that were crude enough even within time covered by his memory. In the early part of his career there was only one ruling machine in the city. That was owned by Mr. Brewer, and everybody had to go to him to get work done. There was only one book-binder—a man named Cuthbert, who carried on the business at his home on Richmond street, whence a work seldom issued till six months after the leaves were left there. But twenty-five years ago the trade made more money than it does to-day. There were fewer in it, books were not so cheap or plentiful, and the retail trade was prosperous. Up to 1865 the business done by the retail branch of Mr. Copp's house under its two earlier styles was enormous. Under the style W. C. Chewett & Co. the business was one of the best known in Canada. The firm's store was a meeting place, a sort of rendezvous where people from all parts of the country would make engagements by letter to meet each other and would turn up there in crowds.

But there were bad spells even in the early days of the book trade. The year 1845 was a particularly dull one. Whole days would pass by without a single sale being made, and the shop boy would have to sweep the shelves to put in the time. While business was in this lifeless state Mr. Copp thought seriously of going to Australia, as there seemed to be no future for Canada. This was

before the railway period in our history, when our only outer connection was a monthly steamer to New York. With increased traffic facilities, notably with the opening of the Grand Trunk Railway, things mended rapidly and Mr. Copp stayed here and thrived.

Mr. Copp is an Englishman. He was born in 1826 in Torrington, North Devon. He came, along with his family, to this country and this city in the spring of 1842. He has consequently been a resident of this country almost ever since responsible government was conceded to it. He has therefore witnessed its growth under the most favorable political auspices, and has been an observer of its economical development throughout the whole of its past railway history.



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air which hangs over the building and about every department of it, seems to be in keeping with the fitness of things, as nothing sits so well on an old,—established and dignified concern as does a lack of self-consciousness. There is a sort of egotism about certain great manufactories, a forcing themselves upon one's notice, that an old house like this on Colborne St. can afford to do without. Not many, however, can afford to do without it.

The magnitude of the jobbing department of the Copp, Clark Co. may be measured by the fact that the bulk of the manufactures carried on upon Colborne street find their way into trade through the jobbing depart-