

HON. WM. McMASTER.

Honourable in More Than the
Mere Name.

A PRINCE AMONG MERCHANTS.

The Result of Industry, Energy, and
Uprightness.

SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS.

A Farsighted Financier and Good Citizen—A Life Crowned with Good Works.

(From the Toronto Truth.)

Among the merchant princes of Canada, the Hon. William McMaster occupies a foremost place, and the simple record of his life may well read a lesson to all young men and encourage them in a course of well-doing. There has been nothing very extraordinary in Mr. McMaster's history, just as there is nothing overshadowingly great in his original powers of mind, or anything out of the common in his very successful and honourable career. No young man need say that the circumstances of Mr. McMaster's lot were so exceptionally favourable, or that his abilities were so entirely above the ordinary that few could hope to follow in his steps, or to look for anything like his splendid commercial success. On the contrary, there is nothing about the Honourable Senator's character, acquirements and prosperity which might discourage the young and aspiring; but something very much the reverse. Mr. McMaster

HAD TO FURNISH HIS WAY

with few advantages. No extraordinary help and no exceptionally lucky turns of fortune. It could not be said that he owed anything to what some would call a mere fortunate chance, or that he took advantage of some special opportunity which, if once neglected would never again have presented itself. The secret of his success has been in steady, energetic work, prudent management and skilful attention to all the minute details of business. He has left nothing to chance, has never depended on something turning up, or reckoned upon others going out of their way to help him when he knew that he could help himself. Prudence, tact, energy and skilful management account for all that he has accomplished.

NOT FORGETTING THE BLESSING OF GOD,

which he would himself be the first to acknowledge, and to which he would be the readiest to ascribe all he is and all he has achieved.

A native of Ireland, where he was born in 1811, Mr. McMaster came to Canada when twenty-two years of age, and immediately set himself to the work which he has ever since so successfully prosecuted. His educational advantages had not been very many or very great, but he had made the best and most of them, and, full of youthful energy and hopefulness he entered upon commercial work,

RESOLVED TO SUCCEED,

but only by legitimate means, and in regular honourable undertakings. He was at first engaged as clerk in a dry goods store on King, nearly opposite Toronto street, but he could not long remain in that position. Within a year after his settling in Toronto he had become

A PARTNER IN THE CONCERN,

and very shortly after, had started as a wholesale merchant on his own account. At first, of course, he had very considerable difficulties to contend with. Montreal was the great distributing centre for Canada, and

continued to be so for many years after. The merchants there had all the advantage arising from an established trade and settled business facilities, and it is not saying too much to add that they looked with no favourable eye upon any such attempts as that of Mr. McMaster which aimed at making Toronto, not Montreal, the great wholesale centre for the West of Canada. The covert jealousy and keen competition of Montreal, however, only stimulated a man like Mr. McMaster to greater exertion and made him the more

DETERMINED TO SUCCEED AT ALL HAZARDS.

He turned the peculiar advantages of Toronto to the best account; made it worth while for the merchants of the West to deal with him, and soon established a large and even growing connection, which for many years, first under himself and thereafter under his nephews, whom he had taken into partnership and who have carried on the business since he retired, has been among the largest and best known in all the Province of Ontario if not in the whole of Canada.

Very homely yet not so very common instrumentalities have been employed to build up and maintain the large and lucrative business. They may be all summed up in fair dealing, prudent management, untiring energy, courteous conduct and watchful attention to the smallest details. Mr. McMaster has never had any faith in sharp practice, questionable pretences or more than questionable make-believes. He established a character for fair, honourable dealing, kept the best of goods, gave the best terms which were prudently possible, and watched every opportunity for honourably pushing his business and profiting by the changing chances of the market. His customers learned to rely upon him. His name rose for

UPRIGHT AND HONORABLE DEALING,

and, within a comparatively short time his transactions extended over the whole country, and were, as such transactions ought always to be, mutually advantageous to all concerned. What the firm was, in the days when Mr. McMaster was at its head, it still continues to be, occupying to this day a foremost place among the many establishments of this kind now to be found in Toronto, and, as we believe doing it not the very largest business in its particular department, one of the safest and most lucrative.

A man of Mr. McMaster's energy could not remain idle, even after he had no special call to exertion. It is now many years since he entirely retired from the Dry Goods business and found himself so far, a gentleman at large. Instead, however, of his business life closing when a respectable competency had been secured, it may be said that it only then really commenced. He has since made himself a still greater name and power in the realm of finance, than ever he was in that of Commerce. As director of various banks and other monetary institutions he has shown

THE SAME SOUNDNESS OF JUDGMENT and caution, combined with enterprise, which gave him success in his original occupation. No undertaking with which he has been connected, has failed to reap large and satisfactory benefits from his wise and careful administration. But it has been in connection with the Bank of Commerce that his peculiar abilities have had chief scope, and have achieved their greatest success. That large and flourishing enterprise, may be said to owe almost all its prosperity to the untiring attention, admirable business habits, enlarged experience, and keen discernment of its President. It has been his favourite work, and he has reaped special celebrity and profit from his connection with it from the beginning. Indeed, there is no institution in Canada,—we had almost said

—or on the Continent, whose history and success are so intimately connected with one man's name, and which are known so generally as having become what they are through the skilful management and undomitable energy of a solitary individual.

The Bank of Commerce will not go down when Mr. McMaster dies, but it is safe to say, that, but for him, it would never have occupied the position of prominence and power which it holds at present.

But it is not merely—we had almost said not chiefly—upon his success as a business man, that Mr. McMaster's wide spread reputation throughout the Dominion, rests. He has never been a very ardent or prominent politician, though, in the course he has followed as such, he has always displayed the same sound judgment, and unimpeachable integrity. As a public spirited citizen, however, an ardent christian, and an enlightened philanthropist, Mr. McMaster is most widely and most favourably known.

He has in many different ways sought the good of the land in which he lives, and in which he has achieved his great success. Toronto has benefited in many respects from his labours, and the religious denomination of which he is a member has long received from him munificent and sustained assistance in all its varied enterprises for the advancement of the cause of Christ. What he did in connection with the building of

JARVIS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

is well known. We should suppose that forty or fifty thousand dollars would not fully represent all he gave in money alone, besides the trouble and personal effort he cheerfully expended in the course of the work. His efforts for the upbuilding of the Literary Institute at Woodstock have been on a similar scale of enlightened munificence, while his last undertaking in erecting the splendid buildings in the Queen's Park for the Baptist Theological Seminary, and, in so far endowing it, also will likely throw all his previous efforts into the shade. It is well that Canada has such men,—men who have abundance of means and at the same time hearts to use them for

HIGH AND PERMANENTLY USEFUL PURPOSES, men who do not hold on to their gold with death-like tenacity till the great king of terrors make them unloose their grasp, but who take pleasure in so far being their own executors and in having the joy of seeing in their life time the blessed fruits of their wise arrangements and unstinted liberality. The amount of happiness which Mr. McMaster must derive from such undertakings cannot but be very great, and such as, if that were allowable in any case, onlookers might well regard with something like envy. What a contrast in every respect his career and his reward, even in mere personal pleasure, compared with what those can have who give themselves up to mere selfish accumulation, and who give way to that kind of pride, which one has said, "raises the loudest laugh in hell," the pride of dying rich. Mr. McMaster is a modest as well as a wealthy man, and can ill stand to have his good deeds blazoned before the public. He is one, however, whom his fellow citizens delight to honour, and whom young men may safely copy. He is not a man of genius, and cannot even be said to be a man of any very distinguished abilities. But he has great good sense, large practical wisdom, indomitable perseverance, shrewd discernment of character, unswerving integrity and genuine,

UNOSTENTATIOUS PIETY.

No one envies him his success for he bears himself with modesty and uses his wealth for high and honourable purposes. That he may be long spared in a green old age to enjoy the fruit of his labours, to devise liberal things for the good of the race, and to still further help forward the cause of truth and

righteousness on the earth, is the cordial wish not only of TRUTH, but of all to whom the interests of the truth are dear. The accumulation of a very large amount of property in the hands of single individuals is not at all a desirable thing, though it is not easy to see how it is to be prevented so long as some are industrious and shrewd, and others are improvident and wasteful, as well as idle and foolish. But if there were more of those generally spoken of as successful, who would follow a course somewhat similar to that of Mr. McMaster, their prosperity would be less envied, and their meaner characteristics less remarked upon. We have in this new country not many who could, if they were willing, expend their means on such a scale of princely munificence as Mr. McMaster has done, and is doing. We have still fewer who are willing to do this, even though they could. That the number of such will increase we sincerely hope, and that all of them will receive as much honour and derive as much unalloyed pleasure as Mr. McMaster has done we most fully believe. The great heart of the people is after all not very far from being just. It is true now, as it always has been, that if a man will only persist in doing what is right and fair and true, right will continually be done to him in return.

Kings in Exile.

The Duc d'Aoste, the whilom King of Spain, is staying at Venice, where he delights the boatmen and fishermen of the Lido by his wondrous performances as a swimmer. They say he is the most accomplished master of the art in Europe, excelling most particularly as a diver. He now and then astonishes the gondoliers by throwing into a gondola the broad straw hat he always wears to shield his face from the sun, as he lies upon the surface of the water; then, diving below, comes out on the other side, snatches the hat, places it on his head again, and remains stiff and motionless as before. The ex-King and Queen of Naples are staying at Benzeval, in Normandy, living the most quiet and unobtrusive life possible. The Queen, who possesses the same love of riding on horseback as her sister, may be seen in the early morning cantering along the sands on one of the ponies belonging to the place, without any other attendance than that of a lady friend who has accompanied her majesty throughout all her troubles and misfortunes. The Queen still preserves her youthful appearance, and the beauty which once formed the theme of many a Neapolitan song, and her spontaneous effusions as she passed through the streets of Naples. The King, on the contrary, has grown stout and heavy, moves with difficulty, and remains all day seated on the *plage*, content to breathe the sea air, and evidently enjoying the quiet of the place; sometimes he strolls along the public walk, leaning heavily on his cane, and supported on the arm of his friend, the Count de la Torre, but he seldom takes a drive beyond the limits of Benzeval, and never rides on horseback.

The crisis in Ireland may issue, at any moment, in bloodshed. It is nonsense to say that it will end in civil war. It will do nothing of the kind. It is terrible to think how unreasonable and absurd some people can be. What possible claim can the tenant farmers of Ireland have, to be made owners in fee simple of their different holdings, and that at the expense either of the present landlords, or of the general public of the three Kingdoms; while the first thing to be done by the new race of land owners, is to cut Ireland adrift from those who have paid the heavy end of the purchase money, and allow them not even consideration for the liberality they have shown? It seems funnily absurd. And what right has a man that ploughs to be made a freeholder, any more than a man that smokes the pipe, or a woman that spins? And then to think that when they have got a Government that is pledged to, and eager for legislative amelioration all round those pig-headed fellows, should by the grand rous they are kicking up, making it impossible for that very Government to look at measures of reform as long as it has to strain every nerve in the first place for the maintenance of the peace. If it were not to be thought offensive, TRUTH would say that it was immensely Irish all over.