

## MEN OF MARK.

W. R. BROCK.

OF W. R. Brock & Co. Toronto.

To understand man, however, we must look beyond the individual man and his actions or interests, and view him in combination with his fellows. (CARL L.)

In the history of every country there are recorded the names of some men whose lives have had such an influence over their fellow men that posterity regards them as the moulders of the destinies of the nation to which they belonged, and although Canada is as yet a young country, with the first volume of her history scarcely written, on the pages of that history are inscribed some names which shine as bright beacon lights in the eyes of all true Canadians, giving them confidence in themselves and in their country. No name stands higher in this respect than that of Brock. It was General Sir Isaac Brock who, eighty years ago, taught the 75,000 inhabitants of Upper Canada that a free people with a just cause, although small in numbers, could not be conquered by a nation of 8,000,000, who came like pirates to destroy the homes of peaceable inhabitants, whose only offence was loyalty to the flag under which they lived. It is not, however, the dead general that we desire to bring before the notice of our readers, but a living and worthy representative of the same name, sprung from the same stock, who in the peaceful walks of commerce has achieved a great victory over what may be termed adverse circumstances, and made for himself an enviable reputation among the leading business men of the Dominion.

Mr. W. R. Brock, the senior partner of the firm of W. R. Brock & Co., had no specially advantageous circumstances, such as many of our young men have to day, to help him on the high road to success. It was his own indomitable energy, perseverance and tact that placed him at the head of one of the leading dry goods businesses in the Dominion. Born in the Township of Eramosa, near the city of Guelph, 55 years ago, when that part of the country was more thinly settled than it is at present, he had not the opportunity of acquiring such a liberal education as can now be obtained so easily, but he must have received his rudimentary instruction from some teacher well adapted to lay a good foundation for the structure, which, by close application and extensive reading, he afterwards raised for himself. He commenced his business career at an early age as a clerk in a general store in the village of Caledonia, and a few years afterwards, realizing that the prizes to be obtained in business in country towns were not sufficiently tempting to one of his

energy and ability, he entered the house of Ogilvy & Co., wholesale dry goods, Montreal. This was in the year 1864, and it was the turning point of his life; he had embarked on the tide that bore him on to fortune, and although the waves of commercial disaster at times dashed fiercely around him, making it far from easy sailing, his undaunted spirit enabled him to steer safely over the breakers that shipwrecked many of his confreres. About two years after he entered the employ of Ogilvy & Co., an opportunity occurred for him to go on the road as a commercial traveler for that firm. In this occupation he succeeded so well that at the end of five years his employers made him a partner rather than lose his services, in which capacity he started and managed the wholesale dry goods business of Ogilvy & Co. in Toronto, an enterprise that proved successful from the very beginning. Mr. Brock retired from the firm of Ogilvy & Co. at the expiration of the five years' copartnership, and started in business

along with his brother under the name of W. R. Brock & Bro., in the commodious premises at the corner of Bay and Wellington streets, in which the present firm is still located. Wiseacres shook their heads when Mr. Brock made this move, thinking that the magnitude of the undertaking would prove too much for his ability and means, but they did not understand the calibre of the man. After various changes in the house the present firm was established in 1887, composed of Mr. Brock, Mr. Andrew Crawford, and Mr. Thomas J. Jermyn, which then entered on, and has continued in, an era of prosperity almost unrivalled in the history of the wholesale dry goods trade of this country. In addition to his other marked abilities, nature has endowed Mr. Brock with a genial manner that makes every one, whether rich or poor, who comes in contact with him, feel thoroughly at home, and this magnetic influence has contributed very largely in attracting customers to do business with the firm, for



MR. W. R. BROCK.

anyone can see that it springs from a warm heart and kindly feeling, in sympathy with his fellow men.

The extensive business in which he is engaged, the cares and anxieties connected therewith, would prove a heavy burden on the shoulders of the majority of men. But Mr. Brock has such excellent administrative ability that he can direct its management in such a way that his employees attend to the details with an enthusiasm which seems to be entored into them from the spirit of their chief, so that everything runs as smoothly as well-oiled machinery, without a jarring element, and although his own business requires his close attention he can still devote a portion of his busy life to the interests of his country and the city of Toronto. He is president of the Empire Newspaper Co., of the Conservative Association of the city of Toronto, of the Toronto Humane Society, and of the Toronto Electrical Construction Supply Co., vice-president of the Toronto