

MEN OF MARK.

MR. DONALD MACKAY.

*View the whole scene, with critic judgment scan,
And then deny him merit if you can.
Where he falls show 'tis nature's fault alone;
Where he succeeds, the merit's all his own.*

—CHURCHILL.

In commencing a series of articles on our leading merchants in the dry goods and allied trades we have selected the acknowledged father of the trade, Mr. Donald MacKay, senior member of the firm of Gordon MacKay & Co., Toronto. Mr. MacKay has passed the allotted three score years and ten, having been born at Kildonan, Sutherlandshire, Scotland, in 1815, but is still hale and hearty, and has, we hope, many years of usefulness yet before him. It is characteristic of the Highland race that they live to a good old age, their constitutions being hardened and strengthened by the pure mountain air they breathe and the athletic life they invariably lead. Mr. MacKay was the youngest of ten children and his parents, when he was two years of age, removed to Lybster, Caithnessshire, where he remained till 1836. In that year he left his native land and came to Canada, the home of thousands of the best and bravest of Scottish Highlanders. In the following year the Rebellion broke out and young MacKay, with the true instinct of the Highlander, joined the Loyalists and served throughout that brief, but stirring period. He resided for a number of years in Montreal where he began that business career which has been crowned with such

remarkable success. In 1848 he removed to Hamilton, commencing in a small way, but shortly afterwards, so rapidly had his business extended, he, with his nephew, Mr. John Gordon, entered into the wholesale dry goods business under the firm name of Gordon and MacKay. Mr. MacKay, with that keen foresight which has so eminently marked his career, was quick to recognize the fact that Toronto was likely to become the distributing centre of the west, and in 1859 the firm removed to that city and opened on Wellington street, near the corner of Scott street, removing to their present extensive and commodious premises, on the corner of Front and Bay streets, in 1871. In March

1867, Mr. Hugh Macdonald joined the firm which was then changed to Gordon, MacKay & Co., but retired in 1873. Mr. Gordon died in 1883 after a successful and honorable career, and in January 1887, Mr. C. C. Robb, and Mr. J. W. Woods, who had been connected with the house for thirty and fifteen years respectively, became partners.

Mr. MacKay's energy and enterprise did not stop at building up one of the leading wholesale dry goods houses of the Dominion. In 1861 the Lybster cotton mills—so-called in memory of the place of his youth—were built at Merriton, Ont., by the firm and these have also proved a most successful venture. In 1868 a Limited Liability Company was

an elder of Knox Church, Toronto. Mr. MacKay's chief characteristics are an indomitable will, self-reliant disposition, and cool and self-possessed business habits. In his youth he was fond of pedestrian and equestrian exercise like many other successful men in various walks of life, the best antidote for driving away dull care and invigorating the system. He is honored and esteemed by all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance and no name stands higher among Canada's commercial men for sterling honesty and integrity than that of Donald MacKay, a worthy specimen of a worthy race.

During the half century that Mr. MacKay has been in business in this country he has seen many changes in the wholesale dry goods trade. Few, of any, of his contemporaries, are alive at the present day and many houses that then stood high in business circles are heard of no more. In all the commercial crises that Canada has passed through during that long period Mr. MacKay has carefully and successfully piloted the firm. When the firm after firm succumbed during that fateful year, 1857, Gordon & MacKay, like a sturdy oak, defied the blasts of adversity that swept over the country and came safely out of the crash. Ten years later the business community was again subjected to a terrific strain, owing to the abrogation of the reciprocity treaty with the States, and though many firms again went under, Mr. MacKay kept his head cool and brought his firm out of the storm into the harbor of refuge. And so it was during the disastrous times of 1878-79. No better tribute to Mr. MacKay's ability,

sagacity and foresight could be needed than this. Mr. MacKay, being rather of a retiring disposition has not taken any prominent part in public affairs, but what he does not know about business is not worth knowing. His career has been a most honorable one, being signally marked by honesty, integrity, and industry, and is worthy of emulation by our young business men. It can truthfully be said of him that he is a man who believes that strict integrity is the foundation of all legitimate business success; who is honest, not only from policy but from principle; who thinks first and deeply, and speaks last and concisely; who keeps his hand on "to-day," but his eye on "tomorrow," and works in the present, while scrutinizing the future.



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formed to operate the mills, known as The Lybster Cotton Manufacturing Company of which Mr. MacKay was president, but he is now the sole owner of the mills.

Mr. MacKay held for years the honorable position of vice-president of the Ontario Bank, but had to resign owing to increased business cares. So highly was he esteemed by the other directors for his rare judgment, sagacity and business tact that at their urgent request he has acted on the board ever since resigning the vice-presidency. He is also a director of the London and Canadian Loan and Agency Company, a member of the Board of Trade, and is identified with several other enterprises. He is a Presbyterian and