



JOHN ARMSTRONG,
Ex-President of the International Typographical Union.

It is with extreme pleasure that we present to the readers of the *Miscellany*, in this number, a biographical sketch of Mr. John Armstrong, ex-President of the International Typographical Union of North America, a gentleman who is very popular among the craft, and one who has filled the proud position of executive of the great International body with honor and credit to himself and perfect satisfaction to the thousands of members of subordinate Unions under its jurisdiction.

Mr. Armstrong was born in the county of Monaghan, Ireland, in 1849, and came to this country with his parents in 1851, settling in Toronto, Ontario, in which city he has ever since resided. Taking advantage of the excellent public school system for which Ontario has ever been celebrated, he soon became an apt and proficient pupil, and when he left the school-room, in 1861, to enter himself as an apprentice to the printing business, he did so with a sound, practical common-school education to assist him in the battles of life. His first introduction to the mysteries of the "art preservative" was in the composing-room of the *Toronto Globe*, his tutor being Mr. C. W. Bunting (until quite recently part proprietor of the *Toronto Mail*, and member of Parliament for the county of Welland), who was foreman of the *Globe* at that time. During his apprenticeship Mr. Armstrong was noted for the intense interest he took

in the welfare of his fellow-workmen, and as being an avowed champion of the cause of labor. On completing his apprenticeship he immediately connected himself with the Toronto Typographical Union, and soon became one of its most ardent and earnest workers, his constant aim being the advancement of the interests of the association and its members under all circumstances.

Mr. Armstrong was a very prominent leader in the nine-hour movement which was inaugurated by a combination of trades' unions in Toronto in 1872, and ably and earnestly advocated the curtailment of the hours of labor by tongue and pen. The Typographical Union took the initiative step in bringing about this desired end, and what is known as "the big strike" followed. During this event nearly all the principal members of the Typographical Union were arrested at the instance of the Master Printers' Association, under an almost obsolete law known as the "Conspiracy Act," Mr. Armstrong being, of course, among the number. The striking printers were arraigned at the Police Court on a charge of conspiracy, and bound over to appear at the Court of Assize for trial. The sympathy of the public was strongly manifested in favor of the prosecuted typos, and bail was lavishly proffered for their appearance when called upon. Through the influence of their many friends a bill was introduced by Sir John A. Macdonald, in the Dominion Parliament, repealing the Conspiracy Act, and, it having been passed, the indictments against the strikers were quashed before the Assize Court met. This bitter fight between the proprietors and journeymen lasted for three months, during which time the *Evening Express* and the *Daily Telegraph* collapsed under the strike, while the *Leader*, which had espoused the cause of the strikers, doubled its circulation. Finally, the Master Printers' Association was forced to accede to the demands of the Union, and thus ended, perhaps, the longest and most hotly contested strike that ever occurred in the Dominion.

In 1875 Mr. Armstrong was chosen President of the Toronto Union, in which position he exhibited the same executive ability which he subsequently displayed in the supreme office which he has but recently relinquished. In 1876 Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Ben Sutherland were elected delegates from Toronto Union to the International Convention at Philadelphia, at which