

HENRY SHAW.

The subject of this sketch like a great many of Canada's successful business men is an Irishman. Born in January, 1826, he is the second son of James Shaw, Esq., of Derryadd in the county of Longford, Ireland, and is from a very old and respected family who emigrated from Scotland in the reign of Charles II. His mother was a McIntyre, also of Scottish descent.

In 1846, Mr. Shaw came to Canada, engaging with the Hon. Malcolm Cameron, in Port Sarnia, where he remained three years, and was one of a knot of young men who spent their spare hours reading, discussing literature, politics, &c., &c., of whom the present Premier of Canada was the leader. Mr. Shaw's library being the most extensive was the one most frequented by the young men. The case was of peculiar construction, being formed of five shingles one each at top and bottom, one at each side and one across the centre; overhead was pasted the well-known lines from Cowper:

"Here shining in scarlet and gold,
The Poets, enchanted, I view;
And hope in due time to behold
The Iliad and Odyssey too."

From this small beginning Mr. Shaw has lived to possess one of the finest private libraries in the Dominion. In 1849 he removed to the far West, entering a Book Store in St. Louis, where his extensive knowledge of books and remarkably tenacious memory soon made him conspicuous and he became the most eminent Book Auctioneer in the United States. Though scarcely 24 years of age he was employed to conduct some of the principal sales in the leading cities of that country. In 1855 he sold in Toronto, Montreal and other leading cities of Canada, the same year he married the daughter of Adin Cadwell, Esq., of New York, then on a visit at her uncle's in London, Ont., and the following year settled in Montreal, where he soon took a leading position in his business. As salesman in the department of fine furniture, libraries or works of art he has few equals in this or any other country.

His store, Craig street near Victoria Square, is now the largest and best supplied emporium for the sale and display of fine furniture in the Dominion. Since the re-erection of his building, after the disastrous fire in 1872, Mr. Shaw has devoted the four principal flats of his immense store to the display and sale of furniture of a superior class, and several of the principal private residences of Montreal have been furnished from this favorite establishment. Mr. Shaw's plan has been to import from the best makers in New York and Boston, specimens of the finest work in Bedroom Suites, Drawing-room Suites, Book-cases, Wardrobes, Desks, &c., and sending the samples thus imported to some of our large city manufacturers, or to the factory with which

he is connected at Bowmanville, he gives out by contract the work to be made from these articles stipulating that the material used must be perfectly sound and seasoned, and the workmanship as good as the sample. In his noble way of Mr. Shaw's, for encouraging home industry, which should commend itself to every right thinking citizen, one of our manufacturers employing 120 men, obtained last year a contract for three styles of bedroom suites, which amounted to over 18,000 dollars, and which were all satisfactorily made and found ready sale. This manufacturer has worked a large order for the latest styles of etageres, side-boards, bookcases and office desks. In this way the best workmanship is secured for each article. Mr. Shaw has given the exclusive manufacture of chairs and sofas to a second firm; fancy articles, such as library and reclining chairs, to another; wardrobes and bookcases to another; and dining-room furniture, &c., to another. While the whole of the polishing and upholstering is done in the top flat of his own building, under the most careful supervision. In this way the most elegant and fashionable furniture is produced in a very excellent and superior manner, no way inferior to the imported articles, but at a great saving in cost; besides this plan which Mr. Shaw has adopted, gives constant employment to between one hundred and two hundred skilful mechanics, most of whom are French Canadians returned from the United States, who brought their families back to swell the manufacturing population of our city. Long may he be employed and spared in this patriotic work. This is the most effective plan of emigrant agency, standing in strong contrast with the action of some of our legislators, who vote the public money to send agents for the purpose of inducing our fellow-countrymen to return from the States, where many of them are in destitution, but who, when they require their new mansions furnished, procure the whole of it from some New York or Boston establishment. Mr. Shaw's plan of reproducing the best New York or Boston styles, as well finished, at about half the cost, will have a tendency to check this habit of transferring our money and labour to increase the wealth and prosperity of foreign cities. The furniture establishment of Mr. Thomson for instance is second to none on this continent for elegance of designs and general excellence; but the prices at which it must necessarily be sold prevents many from purchasing it; while the furniture sold at Mr. Shaw's stores, though elegant in style and of the latest designs, is not so elaborately finished, and, consequently, much less expensive.

The auction sales are conducted in the lower room of the immense building, of which we give a fine interior and exterior view as well as a photograph of the proprietor on the opposite page.