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MR. E. COATSWORTH.

THERE is no better known figure on the streets of Toronto than that of Mr. Emerson Coatsworth, City Commissioner. Mr. Coatsworth is seldom seen on foot, as he is expected to be ubiquitous to the last degree. He has duties to attend to here, there and everywhere, and his presence is imperative during a portion of each day, at the City Hall as well. Clad in a fur coat during severe weather, and driving an active little horse in an unpretentious buggy, the City Commissioner gets over a good deal of ground between sunrise and sunset. Mr. Coatsworth has led an active, healthy life, and although the flight of sixty years has silvered his locks and placed some wrinkles about his face, it is easy to see by his clear eye, ruddy complexion and well-knit powerful frame, that he is a man who has always taken care of himself, and is to-day in the possession of unimpaired powers.

Mr. Coatsworth was born in Yorkshire, England, on the 26th of July, 1825. His father, who was engaged in farming and mining, died in England, and in 1832 Mr. Coatsworth's mother brought her four children to Canada and settled in St. Catharines. Mrs. Coatsworth was accompanied by her father and several of her brothers and sisters, and the family party landed at Quebec, on the 8th of August, 1832, one of the cholera years. They came up from Quebec on an old Durham line open boat, drawn most of the time by cattle. At night they sheltered themselves in barns, but could scarcely obtain a crust of fresh bread during the whole journey, owing to the dread of cholera which prevailed all through the country. They had been six weeks at sea, and in Quebec the deadly Eastern plague was raging when they landed. Under such circumstances their first experiences of the new world were far from encouraging.

When about sixteen years of age, Mr. Coatsworth set himself, to learn the trade of a carpenter in St. Catharines and remained in that locality until he was about 20.

During that time he was engaged on the reconstruction of the locks, gates and bridges of the Erie canal. The cry of "Westward,

ho!" was then potent among the young men of the country, and Mr. Coatsworth resolved to start on a prospecting tour along the line of the Grand River. After visiting a number of small places he finally pulled up at the village of Jarvis, a little south of Hamilton. He stayed there a year and then went to Brantford, where he worked at the locks and bridges on the two mile canal which runs from Cayuga, across a bend of the Grand River. In Brantford Mr. Coatsworth met his future wife, a Peter-

18th of March, 1851, Mr. Coatsworth reached Toronto, having spent three days on the stage between Chatham and this city. He had been employed in the West by the late Mr. Garner Ellwood, of London, and that gentleman having contracted for the building of the Don bridge, on King street, Mr. Coatsworth was sent here to superintend the work. His next job was in the neighbourhood of Holland Landing and Bradford, on the new plank roads, which were laid down there in the fall of 1851,



EMERSON COATSWORTH

boro' lady, and they were united in marriage at the latter place. While in Brantford, Mr. Coatsworth helped to build the dam and bridge across the river on the main road, in addition to his work on the canal. He spent two years in Brantford, and then went to Chatham, where he acted as foreman on the construction of a bridge across the Thames, built in place of one which had been washed away five years previous. On the

stretching from the former place to Bond Head. Returning here the same year, Mr. Coatsworth commenced business for himself. In the spring of 1852 he took his first Corporation contract for laying the following streets with four-inch plank, 24 feet roadways:—Front street (then called Palace street), from the market to Trinity street; Wellington street from Church to Bay, and Church from Adelaide to Shuter,

That year he superintended as foreman, the erection of the white bridge across Dundas street, being the first bridge over the line of the Northern railway. During the following two years all the contracts for new sidewalks in the city and repairs to existing ones, were granted to Mr. Coatsworth, and David Wells. Mr. Daniel Devlin, who still lives in the west end, was his partner in the planking of the streets. Mr. Coatsworth also did a good deal of dock work for the northern railway, including their temporary warehouses here and the first wharf at Collingwood harbour. From that time until 1873, with the exception of the years 1860 and 1862, the subject of our sketch was engaged in building and general contracting in Toronto. In 1860 he went to the county of Grey with ex-mayor Manning, the latter having a contract for all roads and bridges throughout the county, and Mr. Coatsworth obtaining a sub-contract from him for the bridges, of which he constructed seventy-three. In 1862 he was engaged in conjunction with Mr. John Worthington in reconstructing the bridges on the Northern Railway.

On the 4th of March 1873, Mr. Coatsworth took office as City Commissioner, which at that time was thought to be an unmanageable position. The duties of the Commissioner covered a wide ground, including the control of the sanitary and fire departments; erection of buildings; line fences; care of streets, including cleaning and watering, and the weight and sale of bread. In 1881 Mr. Coatsworth's position was changed to that of Commissioner of Works and Health which added immensely to his labours, giving him besides his former duties, the care of the parks and Island, and the repairing of all municipal public buildings. He was associated in this capacity with the Board of Works, the city Engineer being the Executive officer.

In July, 1883, while Mr. Coatsworth and the late City Engineer Brough were engaged in the most extensive and important amount of work ever performed in the city, an untoward and apparently trivial accident terminated the life of the latter.

One day during the month men