

## MEN OF THE TIMES.

## MR. JOHN SLOAN.

"Serve a noble disposition, though poor; the time comes that he will repay thee."—

GEORGE HEBERT.

Since Mr. John Sloan came to this city, the commerce of Toronto has grown from a shallow eddy on the shore of trade into a very considerable maelstrom, in whose funnel is swallowed up a large proportion of the merchandise consumed in this country. Mr. Sloan is one of those who have got high enough to be direct feeders of its vortex, though he made his beginning at its outer circles. The favor of fortune has had nothing to do with his advancement. He owes it to native force of character, which enabled him to keep the hard way of duty, in the face of temptations that have taken and kept so many men in the by-ways of pleasure and idleness. Many a hopeful career has had its promise thwarted by weakness of character, or by the want of steadfast purpose, since Mr. Sloan's boyhood. Many have come under his own observation. Young men may have brilliant parts and may fail, because there is not the due admixture of homely qualities in their mental make-up. They have the lime, but they lack the sand.

Mr. Sloan is the senior partner in the wholesale grocery firm of Sloan & Crowther, of this city. He was born in the north of Ireland. He came to this country in his boyhood, somewhere in the sixties. He is now in the prime of life. When he came to Toronto, its population numbered about thirty thousand. He has been a spectator of all the material and intellectual expansion there has been involved in, and that has gone hand in hand with the growth from that number to the present population of above 200,000 souls. His quota to that progress has been steady support. Other men have contributed to it in a much more ostentatious way, but in a much lower degree of usefulness.

When he came here, his stock of learning was what he had been able to gather in an eighteen months' schooling in his native land. That he had acquired before he was eleven years old. His first employment in this country was in the service of the Toronto Gas Company, with whom he worked at hard

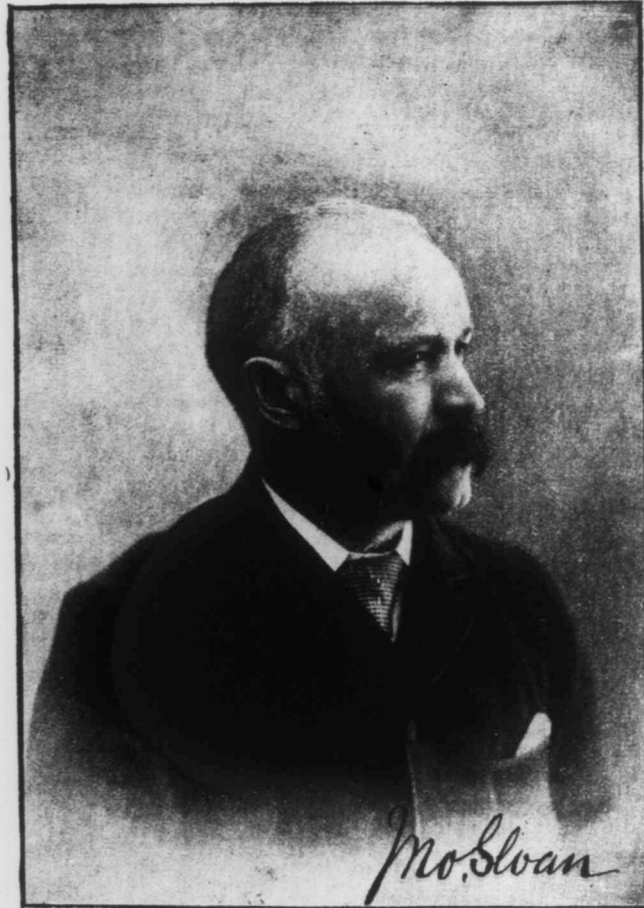
manual labor for four years. Conceiving then a desire to better his lot, he entered one of our commercial colleges where he spent two terms very industriously. This course exhausted his four years' earnings, as board and tuition had both to be paid for. When he got through he obtained a situation in a grocery store opposite the haymarket, being taken on trial at a salary of three dollars a week. After paying his board he had just twenty-five cents left wherewith to pay his other weekly expenses. The spirit of progress that was in him could not be kept down by small wages, and in two months his em-

bought were delivered by a boy with a push cart. The hours were long, store opening in the morning at 7 and closing at 8 p. m. Between these hours Mr. Sloan learnt to work strenuously, and being endowed with a particularly good constitution and plenty of rugged strength, the lessons were not too hard for him. After business hours, instead of attending theatres or concerts, instead of seeking the companionship of the idle and the gay, he would wander into the outskirts where the smaller stores remained open, and would lend a hand to this dealer in straightening up his

books, to that one in taking stock, and in other ways would render friendly service to his fellows who were not so well versed in the ways of business. In this way he laid the foundations of a good jobbing trade, as he usually succeeded in selling a small bill of goods every time he happened along on one of his visits. The sales grew larger as the city grew, and as intimacy between him and the retailers grew, and the business done by his employer swelled beyond the limits originally determined by its locality. The trade done by his house unfolded, under the nurturing influence of such methods, until it developed into a purely wholesale business, extending over the whole country. On the foundation thus laid the house of Sloan & Crowther stands. It commands to-day a particularly desirable and large volume of demand from this province, Manitoba, the North West Territories and British Columbia. The very large western trade it has captured is a credit to the enterprise of a house so far removed from the field in which it takes so prominent a part. Its Ontario trade has always been well cultivated, and has consequently yielded a fine return. Judicious ad-

vertising has gone hand in hand with careful selection of custom and with satisfactory treatment of customers.

Mr. Sloan's success in getting into the front rank of Canadian merchants is simply the culmination of the systematic practice of sound ideas until the observance of them became a habit. When that stage in the process of character-formation is reached a man may go on almost mechanically in the way of success. The men who have the will to ingrain the right habits are rarer than brilliant men, and real workers according to principles are nearly as rare as men of genius. The sub-structure on which Mr.



ployer considered it discreet to make the young fellow's pay \$400 per annum. To keep him on small wages too long might be unsafe, as he was evidently the sort of youth that other traders would be looking after. The advance did not end here. At the end of every following year Mr. Sloan's salary was increased \$100, until it amounted to \$1,000. Then his usefulness was grafted upon the establishment under whose shadow he got his training, his employer taking him into partnership.

The training he got was thorough. The business done in the city may be measured fairly from the fact that nearly all the goods