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## CHARACTER SKETCH.

ALEX. GIBSON.

LUMBER KING OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

"Love, therefore, labor: if thou should'st not want it for food, thou may'st for physic. It is wholesome to the body, and good for the mind; it prevents the fruit of idleness."—William Penn.

FOR many years Alex. Gibson has occupied a leading position in the front ranks of the business men of Eastern Canada. No man in the three provinces is better known than he, no man is more highly respected and no individual's opinions carry with them more weight than do those of Mr. Gibson. He seldom or never talks about himself or about what he has done. Like all truly great men he is very modest, in fact, he carries his modesty so far that even newspaper reporters have failed in their endeavors to learn more of his life before he became so well known to the general public.

Alex. Gibson is an old man, but the weight of years rests lightly upon him. He is yet strong and active, and as enterprising as he was twenty years ago. He is constantly evolving some new scheme or endeavoring to perfect that which he has been led to consider behind the

age. Mr. Gibson is not prepossessing in his personal appearance, although he has a kindly face and one too that could not easily be forgotten. He is not fond of dress and seldom wears other than a plain grey or brown suit. It affords him much pleasure for visitors to call on him to be shown around his mills and factories. If he is not too busily engaged he receives them personally and takes great delight in pointing out and in explaining everything of interest. But when he has done this, the visitor should not remain longer to trespass upon his time. This is the man, now for what he has accomplished.

Alex. Gibson began life without any capital other than a sturdy constitution, a strong will, a great capacity for work, and an eminently keen and practical mind. We first find him in Charlotte county, along the banks of the St. Croix, where with his axe he labored for the ordinary woodman's wage. Not long, however, did he remain an ordinary laborer. He soon removed to Milltown, where he worked for a short time in the lumber mills at that place. Very soon after this we find him launched out in business on his own account. A very few years later we find him at Lepreaux. The mill at this place had never paid its owners, but Mr. Gibson not only made it pay, but he made it pay well—he acquired a small fortune there. That was over thirty years ago. With a keen business eye he saw that to remain at Lepreaux was to allow himself to become very much handicapped, and instead of adding to his small fortune he should run a great risk of losing what he had made. Mr. Gibson accordingly sold his mill at Lepreaux and removed to the Nashwaak, where he invested all his money in mills and in 7000 acres of timbered land. On taking possession of the river Mr. Gibson at once saw the first requisite, the lack of which had caused all former operators to fail. This was a first class boom, held by a mile or more of piers. The firm of whom Mr. Gibson purchased the property

had driven logs nearly all the summer, having had no place in which to hold them. Consequently the river driving, instead of costing them 50 cents per thousand feet, cost \$1.50. After Mr. Gibson had got his driving dams there was no further trouble in this direction. Shortly after Mr. Gibson had settled on the Nashwaak river, he purchased several other sections of valuable timber land, so that in a short time he had acquired 170,000 acres of heavily wooded land, the greater number of which were situated along the Nashwaak river. A year or two witnessed a great change along this river. Mr. Gibson felt that he had a sure thing, and with his characteristic enterprise he launched boldly out into a speculation which had cost him more than he was worth. But he had calculated well. His mills soon became too small. Other and larger ones had to be erected and equipped with modern mill machinery, for Mr. Gibson never used second hand machines of any kind. These purchases involved the expenditure of large sums of money, but by that time had acquired a reputation among the leading business men in the province, and he could have received plenty of backing if he had required

his own property, and within a stone's throw of the structure. It was completed in 1889 and fitted throughout with the most improved machinery. So keenly is Mr. Gibson on the lookout for new machinery that some of that which was placed in the mill at the first has already been cast aside for later inventions. The mill is lighted at night by electricity from their own dynamos. There is a well equipped machine shop in connection. The mill is protected against fire by hydrants outside, with pipes through the mill supplied by gravitation, with plenty of hose on every floor, and is in every respect a complete and thoroughly equipped establishment. In addition to the cotton mill and lumber mills, the brick yard is still operated and employs from 20 to 30 men during the summer.

When Mr. Gibson settled on the Nashwaak there was but one old mill and not more than half a dozen tumble-down shanties there. Now there is a thrifty little town with its mayor and aldermen. Alex. Gibson, jr., was mayor in 1891, and the younger son, James, served in the council during the same year. Maryville, for this is the name of the town, has all the modern improvements.

The Methodist church was built by Mr. Gibson at a cost of more than \$50,000. The interior finish, handsome frescoes, stained glass windows, splendid organ, (the organist, Prof. Cadwallader, is a gifted artist whose salary is paid by Mr. Gibson himself), excite the wonder and admiration of every visitor.

There are four other churches, Episcopal, Baptist, F. C. Baptist and Reformed Baptist,

now in course of erection in the town.

There are fine schools, where the children of the town have the best educational facilities.

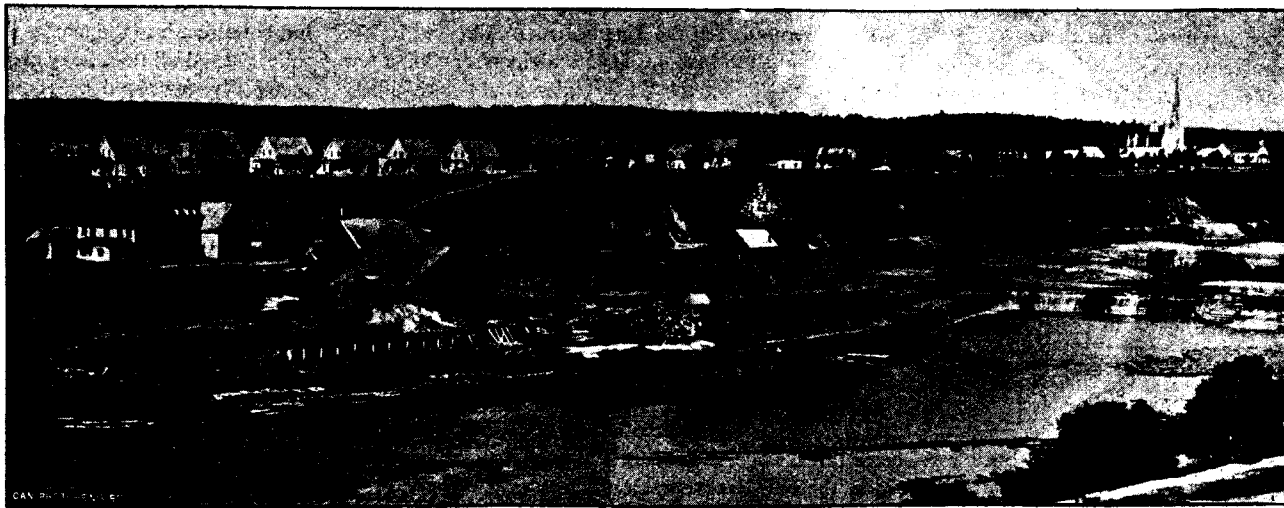
There is a splendid skating rink, where many interesting sporting events occur in winter.

There is a large public hall over one of the stores, where theatrical companies are afforded facilities for their performances, and where at other times meetings of all kinds may be held.

The town has a brass band of 20 pieces. The uniform of the members is one of the finest in Canada, and they provide splendid music as well as present a fine appearance.

There are lodges of Oddfellows and Foresters and temperance and other organizations in the town.

Mr. Gibson is principal owner of the Canada Eastern railway. He has quite large interests in shipping and owns a small fleet of schooners, woodboats, tugs, etc. His has been a remarkable life. Though past three score years and ten, he is in perfect health, due to his splendid constitution and to the fact that he lives wisely and knows nothing of the excesses of modern living. He is always at his post and will tolerate no neglect of duty on the part of those around him. A man of kindly and generous impulses, many persons and causes have profited by his benevolence without knowing the source. When he has done with life his monument will be the town his genius has called into being, and the record of a life of honorable toil and service to his fellows.



MARYVILLE, N. B.—THE HOME OF MR. ALEX. GIBSON.

it. He was told to go ahead and he did so in leaps and in bounds.

But it would take too long to give in detail the various moves made by this man. His business grew, and grew rapidly. In the course of a few years he became convinced that a shingle and lath mill would pay. He at once erected both and equipped them thoroughly. At present he has a mill at Blackville along the Canada Eastern railway. It gives employment to 50 men and cuts in the vicinity of 5,000,000 feet every year. Mr. Gibson's saw mill on the Nashwaak gives employment to 90 men, his lath mill 65 men, shingle mill 40 men; at the boom there are between 25 and 30. On the stream every spring he employs about 350. All his mills are equipped with the most modern and labor-saving machinery. In addition to his own cut, which averages about 30,000,000 feet every year, Mr. Gibson is a large purchaser of provincial lumber for shipment to the English market. In connection with this business he has an office in St. John.

But when we speak of Mr. Gibson's business as a lumberman the half has not been told. The fame of Gibson's cotton mill has gone throughout Canada. At present it employs over 500 hands and can provide employment for 1,300 whenever the market of the country becomes large enough to consume the output, as the capacity of the mill is double the present output. This mill was started by Mr. Gibson in 1888. The bricks of which it is constructed were manufactured by him on