

WOODSTOCK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

SIR,—In response to your request for some sketches of prominent members of our Society, with views of their homes and gardens, I send you one of Mr. T. H. Parker, and his home, together with a sketch of his life, kindly written up by Mr. R. W. Sawtell.

Yours truly,

JAS. S. SCARFE.



FIG. 1398.—MR. THOS. HARRISON PARKER.

The subject of this sketch was born in Cumberland, England, on the 10th day of February, 1828, and came to Canada, with his parents in 1831. His father settled on a farm and engaged in the lumber business, near Peterborough, where he remained 15 years. During that period this son worked with him, going occasionally to a school in the neighborhood. In 1846 the family moved to the County of Oxford and purchased a farm on the 16th con. of East Zorra.

Two years thereafter Thomas left home and returned to Peterborough, where he engaged in the lumber business, at a saw-mill on the river Otonabee. In the winter he attended the Grammar school of Rev. Mr. Taylor, an eminent scholar, and while here a desire for mercantile life possessed him. He fortunately found an opening in a large dry goods establishment in Brantford, where he apprenticed himself, and for further experience entered a larger house in Hamilton. With the drill and experience of five years' steady labor in two such houses, he felt equal to the task of managing a business for himself, and selected Woodstock as the centre of his labors. The choice was well made. There was but little competition, and with his energy the business prospered from the beginning. At the end of the first year he admitted into partnership Mr. J. D. Hood, an experienced book-keeper

from England—whose sister he subsequently married.

The firm of "Parker & Hood" was known in every household in the county, and beyond. It was also well known and trusted in the English markets, where one of the firm went annually to purchase supplies, and they were the first direct importers here. Such was their phenomenal success, that in eighteen years (1873) they sold their business, and each retired with a competency. But after such an active life, neither could long remain idle. Mr. Hood became the efficient Town Treasurer (and died some years ago), and Mr. Parker opened an office for insurance brokerage and private banking. He now owns a large number of buildings here, which together with other matters, keep him still in harness.

Mr. Parker has travelled a great deal, both on this continent and in the older countries; hence has been always well informed in business matters—as well as of things beautiful. His general knowledge and systematic methods have made him a valued citizen in public matters, and but few, if any, public enterprises have failed to benefit by his counsel and financial help.

In the P. D. and L. H. R. R. he took a deep interest and was a large stock and bondholder. In the Board of Trade, Mechanics' Institute, Agricultural and Horticultural societies, Loan companies Hospital and kindred institutions, he has held office and rendered personal service. As early as 1861 he represented his ward in the Town Council, and later, as first and second Deputy Reeve, and in 1878 and 1879, as Mayor of the town.

The special reason for writing this sketch, however, is to show his love and long-continued interest in Horticulture and Floriculture. Vausittart Avenue, in this town, is now acknowledged to be one of the most beautiful in the Province, for its length. It is 132 feet wide and nearly a mile in length, with a double row of maples on each side the roadway, under whose arching branches a concrete sidewalk extends, making beautifully shaded promenades to the small shaded parks, and a cross street of similar width. At the north end of the avenue three public cemeteries are situated, and their well kept lawns, plots and trees attract many visitors.

When Mr. Parker first selected two half-acre lots on this street, it was not considered a fashionable locality, and but few dwellings of the better class thereon. He erected the building, which is represented at the head of this sketch, and laid out the whole space in lawn, shrubberies, hedges, fruit and kitchen gardens, in an artistic style, and for more than twenty five years it was unequalled either in convenience or beauty; and there are very few of the modern and up-to-date residences in the town which surpass it now.

As an amateur flower and fruit grower, Mr.