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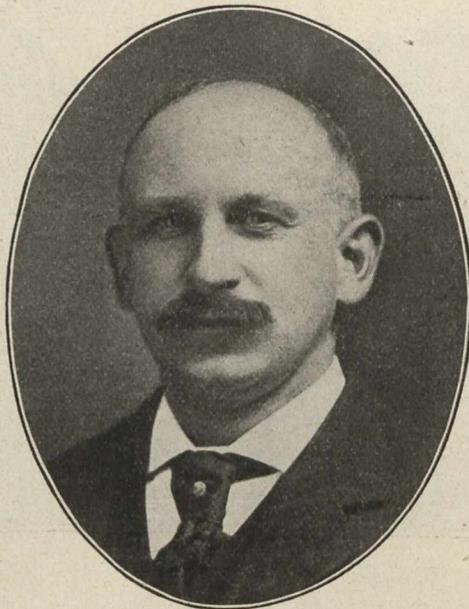
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"We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing; but the world judges us by what we have already done."

Longfellow.



H. R. PLAYTNER.

At the Trades Congress held in Toronto recently a resolution was adopted affirming that Canada was moving too slowly in technical education; and only a few days ago the "Globe," of Toronto, came out with a trenchant article, setting forth the need of better accommodation, and a wider range of usefulness for the Toronto Technical High School. While artisans are declaiming in the halls, newspaper editors writing brilliant articles, and School Board directors looking into space, there is in the fair city of Toronto to-day a trade school which, for efficient teaching and practical usefulness, ranks with anything of its kind, either on this continent or in Europe, viz., the Canadian Horological Institute. New England is renowned for the skill of its workmen in the use of fine tools and the production of intricate and complex machinery. But at the competition instituted by the Faneuil Watch Tool Co., Boston, Mass., in 1897, the students of the Canadian Horological Institute carried off first, second and third prizes. In the official report of the judges—all Americans—is the following eulogy: "It is worthy of remark that all of the work of the prize winners is highly creditable, not only to the competitors, but also to the school which they attend." This trade school, with its band of earnest students, equipment of fine tools and instruments of precision, and practical methods of teaching, is the best object lesson in the Dominion of what a technical school should be like for the teaching of handicrafts as a substitute for the obsolete apprenticeship system of days gone by. It is a fitting thing, therefore, that in our portrait gallery of men who have "done things" in Canada the founder and maker of this institution should find a place.

H. R. Playtner was born in Preston, Ontario, 1864. He received a common school education in his native town, and at the age of fifteen was apprenticed to the watch and jewelry trade under a man of sterling moral worth, and skilled in the art of the silversmith and the science of horology, viz., Mr. Edward Fox, of Kincardine, Ont. From the first he evinced earnestness and enthusiasm in his chosen vocation, thus complying with the Ruskin dictum that for a man to succeed in his work he must be happy in it. Romantic is the story of his early attempts to master the mechanics of a watch; how he found himself a mere copyist, owing to his defective education; how he forsook the pursuit of pleasure, and spent his holidays, evenings and early mornings in the study of geometry, mathematics, mechanical philosophy and drafting, and in the construction of models, mastering thoroughly the principles of the lever escapement, etc., thus laying deeply the foundations of that theoretical and practical knowledge which in after years he has applied so successfully in his school. After seven years he entered the employ of Kent Bros., Toronto. Here he was fortunate in meeting with Edward Beeton, a superior artizan of the "old school," who conceived the idea of a trade guild. In June, 1890, Beeton and Playtner opened a school with two pupils. At the end of two months Mr. Playtner was left in sole charge. Keen was the struggle to make it "go," and ere two years had elapsed would have undoubtedly collapsed had it not been for the timely financial aid of Mr. W. K. McNaught, now president of the Toronto Exhibition. After seven years of strenuous work the Institute was crowned with success, and is to-day an honor to Canada and a monument to the patience, perseverance and genius of H. R. Playtner.