

MEN OF THE TIMES.

HORATIO W. NELSON.

Mr. there is but one Horatio Nelson in the world.

—Southey's Life of Nelson.

Though Canada abounds in material wealth and all the conditions requisite for national prosperity, it has not yet reached an age to compare with the old world in examples of commercial stability. Across the water are to be found old mercantile houses whose name has been kept before the public by several generations of the same family. These old concerns are held in veneration by their juniors, though such a sentiment seems hardly in keeping sometimes with the years of the reigning chief. In this country the instances of families whose current is kept running for two or three generations in the same commercial channel are necessarily few, and the extent of the past covered by them is necessarily limited. But Canadians feel a pride in every such example we have of strength and continuity of growth from our own soil. They are one of the indications of the vitality and substance of our resources. They are a good sign for a young country.

A house which has enlisted in its ownership and cemented two generations of the same family is that of H. A. Nelson & Sons. The senior partner of the Toronto branch of this house is Mr. Horatio W. Nelson, whose name stands at the head of this sketch. Mr. Nelson is a Canadian. He was born in Montreal in the year 1846. In that city also he received his education and the business training he has since made so good use of. He was to the manner born, it may be said, as six years before his birth, his father, the late Mr. H. A. Nelson—whose name appears in the style of the firm—associated with Mr. Isaac Butters, founded the Montreal branch of the present business. The original partners traded for several years on N. Gall street under the firm name Nelson & Butters. Then they bought the property on St. Peter street, where they built warehouses. A few years afterwards, Mr. Butters' health failing, he sold out to Mr. A. S. Wood. The style of the firm then changed to Nelson & Wood. That style be-

came further modified to Nelson, Wood & Co., upon the admission to the firm in 1868 of Messrs. Horatio W. and A. D. Nelson, sons of the senior partner. In 1873 Mr. Wood sold out his interest to his associate partners. Upon his retirement the house took in Messrs. C. H. and F. E. Nelson, and adopted the style of H. A. Nelson & Sons. The last change in the composition of the firm took place in December, 1884, when Mr. H. A. Nelson, the senior partner, died. The business was then taken over by his four sons—the remaining partners—and continued both at Montreal and Toronto under its present style.



The Toronto branch was opened on York street in 1868 by Mr. Horatio W. Nelson, who in that year at the age of 22 was admitted into partnership. He has been identified with the western house since its establishment. His colleague here is Mr. C. H. Nelson, who joined the firm in 1873. The Montreal branch is in charge of Messrs. A. D. and F. E. Nelson. Both branches of the business have made remarkable headway in their present hands. While the history of the Toronto house has been one of continuous advance, it has not been at the expense of the parent establishment, whose trade has

grown at an equal rate of progress. The Toronto branch is one of the few instances of the successful growth of an offshoot of a Montreal house in this city. Many branch stores from the eastern city have been planted here, but only a small proportion of them outlived their youth. At the outset the firm's brooms and whisks were made in Montreal. In 1871 a factory was opened in this city, and in 1881 the manufacture of brooms, etc., was discontinued in Montreal. Since the latter date all the huge stock handled by the two houses has been made here. Their rate of output is 160 to 175 brooms and whisks per day. These figures require no

comment. They show that a larger business is done in this line of production than was believed to be done by any single concern. The other well-known departments, embracing lines of woodenware, full stocks of fancy goods, sporting goods, toys, etc., find an equally large outlet in the trade demand that is tributary to H. A. Nelson & Sons' business.

The magnificent western business is an addition for which the chief credit is due to Mr. Horatio W. Nelson. The scope of that business is the measure of his work, and it is a flattering tribute to his energy and ability. The large and choice trade connections in Manitoba, the Territories and British Columbia are the rich acquisition of Mr. Nelson's foresight and push. He made one of the earliest trips over that ground himself. His efforts of course were well seconded by his very capable coadjutor Mr. C. H. Nelson, and had behind them the weight of a prestige that honorable dealing had secured for his house. The record of a good past is the best key for the unlocking of a good future, and his house had a respected name,

which made the opening up of new fields, if not easier, at all events surer. It is a certainty, however, that no amount of prestige will make up for lack of force in the individual.

Mr. Nelson has so far turned a deaf ear to the temptations of political and municipal opportunity. Though favored by repeated requests to come out into public life, he has not seen fit to do so. The claims of business have had the preference with him up to the present, and he has had the satisfaction of seeing his business expand as the result of his concentrated attention to it. One of