BOUND BY MESSRS. BEMROSE & SONS.

Printed on Grosvenor, Chater & Co.'s "Acme" Printing Paper.
OUR PORTRAIT GALLERY.

WILLIAM BEMROSE.

HENRY H. BEMROSE.
THE BRITISH BOOKMAKER.

Our Portrait Gallery.

MESSRS. BEMROSE & SONS, DERBY AND LONDON.

It is our pleasing duty to present to our readers the portraits of the principals of the widely-known firm of Messrs. Bemrose & Sons, Ltd., printers, lithographers, binders, manufacturing stationers, and publishers; and to give a short account of their large works in Derby, and we must confess to a feeling of wonderment as we passed through the many departments. Everywhere there was an air of business which told of orders of magnitude in hand, and plenty more following in their wake. Labour-saving appliances, the newest machinery, the rapid movement of work from one department to another, all told in unmistakable terms of the time and thought, and also of the vast expenditure of capital, which it must have cost the principals in developing and consolidating so large a business, of which they are justifiably proud.

The founder of the firm was the late William Bemrose, who, in 1825, commenced business after serving an apprenticeship under Mr. Henry Mozley, a printer and publisher of Gainsboro', and afterwards of Derby. In 1857 Mr. Bemrose retired in favour of his two sons, Henry Howe and William, the present heads of the firm.

Mr. H. H. Bemrose was born at Derby in 1827, and in 1855 married Miss Brindley, daughter of the late W. Brindley, Esq., of Derby, and has one son, Mr. H. Arnold Bemrose, M.A., F.G.S., and three daughters. He has always taken a deep interest in the public affairs of the town and county in which he resides. In 1871 he was elected a member of the Derby Town Council for Friargate Ward, and on his election as chairman of the Sanitary Committee, vigorously urged a scheme under the Artizans' Dwellings Act for removing some of the unsanitary blots of the town. In 1877 he was elected first mayor of the enlarged borough, and on his elevation to this dignity, the employees of the firm presented him with a magnificent illuminated address of congratulation. In 1878 he was appointed a J.P. of the borough, and in 1879 was elected to the aldermanic bench. When the Derby Corporation acquired the property of the Derby Waterworks Co., Mr. H. H. Bemrose was elected, and has since continued, chairman of the committee who manage that responsible undertaking.

In addition to these public offices, Mr. H. H. Bemrose is to the front in every scheme or society for the welfare of others. The following institutions, amongst others, claim him as taking a leading part in the management of their affairs. He is the hon. sec. of the Midland Institute for the Deaf and Dumb; president of the Derby Y.M.C.A.; on the committee of the Infirmary Rebuilding, the Church Army Labour Home, and the Diocesan Training College; president of the British Typographia; member of the House of Laymen for the Province of Canterbury, etc.; and there is scarcely a philanthropic or religious society in the town or county which does not find in him a liberal supporter.

In his leisure hours Mr. H. H. Bemrose has formed a very fine library, containing some rare examples of printed books, and possesses some of the rarest examples of the printing art executed during the last centuries. He has also a unique library of Derbyshire bibliography, containing nearly every book and engraving published relating to his native county.

Mr. William Bemrose was born in Derby in 1832, and married, in 1858, Margaret Romana, the only daughter of the late Edward Lloyd Simpson, Esq., of Spondon-by-Derby, and three of his sons are taking an active part in the business.

On the occasion of Mr. W. Bemrose's silver wedding one of those interesting and gratifying events took place which betoken the good feeling existing between employer and employed, in the shape of a handsome gift from the employees in all the establishments of the firm, of a costly silver candelabra, and a Derby crown china tea service to Mr. and Mrs. W. Bemrose to celebrate the happy event.

Although his time has been most fully occupied with the multifarious cares and duties devolving upon him in the active conduct of the large and ever increasing business, Mr. W. Bemrose has always been most active in the discharge of his duties as a good citizen. He has never sought a seat on the town council, but he has done yeoman service in divers other ways for the community of Derby. For some years he was a member of the Litchurch Local Board, and filled the chair when that important district was added to the borough of Derby. He has taken a distinguished part in all educational movements in the town, and was years ago unanimously elected a member of the Derby School Board. He is also a member of the Free Library and Museum committee, chairman of the Corporation Art Gallery committee, and a member of the Corporation Technical Instruction committee, and of the Railway Servants' Orphanage. He was appointed a J.P. in 1885. He is a director of the Royal Crown Derby Porcelain Works, and took an active part in reviving and re-establishing this important industry, which is so closely identified with the history of the town.

Mr. W. Bemrose has always been an advocate of technical instruction, along with the useful utilisation of leisure time, and found vent for his talent in the art of wood carving. Deriving much pleasure therefrom, and being gifted with the pen of a ready writer,
he issued his first work about thirty years ago on "Wood Carving," with choice illustrations of the possible achievements of the amateur who followed his directions. This book has sold by thousands, and being the first work of the kind issued, did much to bring about a better style of furniture than was then in vogue. It was quickly followed by other similarly successful works on amateur handicrafts, viz., "Fret Cutting," "Buhl and Marquetry Work," "Paper Rosette Work," etc., for which there is still a great demand. He is also the author of a large and important work, "The Life of Wright of Derby," an eminent painter of his native town, and allied to his wife's family. His pen has also been busy in the cause of technical education, of which movement he was one of the pioneers; and he has written works on archaeological and ceramic subjects.

At his house at Elmhurst, artistic taste and refinement pervades his home surroundings, indicative of his character and his pursuits when away from business. In every room there is evidence of his skill in wood carving, fret cutting, oil and water-colour painting, modelling in clay, etc., all emanating from the well-fitted workshop adjoining his residence. Mr. W. Bemrose has been a considerable traveller, and although he has not circumnavigated the globe, he has visited the four corners of it. Egypt has been visited three times, and that interesting country seems to have made a deep impression upon his aesthetic tastes, for he has furnished and decorated one of the prettiest studios extant in Arab style. He has painted a series of sketches of Egyptian temples, scenery, and Arab life, which adorn the walls, and most of the beautiful carved woodwork was executed by his own hands. Much old Arab meereshebya woodwork has been effectively utilised before the windows. The two graceful Arabic arches are supported by a fine column of Mexican onyx with a ring of "Blue John" inserted, and have an alabaster cap and base. The colouring of the walls, etc., is exceedingly rich; Persian tiles are introduced round the divan; ornaments and curios occupy the numerous niches and arcaded shelves, and at the right the room is lighted with five finely-pierced Arab lamps, into which the electric light is conveyed. The effect of the whole is to give the mind a sense of the dreamy luxuriousness, and yet exquisite taste, of the oriental home; and it speaks eloquently of the artist's care and judgment which has so skilfully carried out the adornment of such a "gem" of a studio.

At the Irongate establishment are the offices in which is carried on all the financial part of the business, and there is also the wholesale stationery and drawing office stationery department.

The lithographic works are situated in Chetwynd-street, off the London-road, and there are also the colotype printing department and the latest addition to the establishment, the metalachrome printing department.

The letterpress works are in Midland-place, near the railway station, the offices to the right of the main entrance being devoted largely to railway work, and those on the left to general, commercial, and publication sections, and here the binding department is situated. All the various departments are connected with each other and with the other buildings in different parts of the town (in one case a mile apart) through a telephone exchange belonging to the firm, with twenty instruments, by which means several hundred messages are daily transmitted, time and distance being almost annihilated.

This building comprises three large blocks of three and four storeys each, and contains no less than 92,099 square feet of floor space. The binding room is the most spacious in the whole of the building; off the main room is the folding and sewing room, and overhead is another fitted with modern ruling machines, the whole being clean, light, and airy, ventilated by one of the most improved ventilating fans, which is moved by power, and every care for the health of the workpeople employed is taken in the sanitary arrangements. Many labour-saving appliances may be seen in use, and the work is carried in from the printing, ruling, or sewing room, or out to the packing department, in large trolleys, which are raised or lowered from floor to floor by lifts at either end of the room, worked by power. Whenever machinery could be introduced, it has been done, and the latest improvements added. To keep all the machinery in order there is an engineering department, which is fitted with lathes, tools, etc., to equip it for the many calls which are necessarily made upon it, and which keep it fully employed.

By a well-arranged plan, each class of work is kept quite separate from another, and is so sub-divided that the best results are secured. The necessity for this is found in the enormous range of work that the firm have to deal with. Amongst the regular monthly publications of this firm may be mentioned The Lady's Treasury, Christian Progress, Monthly Evangelist, etc., etc., also a most excellent quarterly in the Reliquary. Of the annual publications we mention the Church Congress Report," "Conservative," "Rosarian," and other yearbooks, whilst a continuous stream of their large number of educational works and school register series is being passed through. We do not pretend, neither have we space, to give an idea of the works on archaeology, science, and other useful subjects issued from the press of this firm, but we might mention that the "Manual of Wood Carving," already spoken of, has passed through ninety editions.

In another branch of this department the extra binding is carried on, washing and mending, and the general repair of old and rare works, the clothing of them in choice covers, and their enrichment by the art of the finisher. Several works bound by the firm have gained silver and bronze medals, and various corporations and other official bodies are constantly entrusting to the firm's care valuable illuminated addresses for artistic binding in book form, for presentation to the Queen, the Prince of Wales, or the nobility. Of several specimens of the firm's work we have chosen four different designs which will illustrate the class of work done.

Numbers of the men employed have served their apprenticeship to the firm, and have never worked in any other shop; many having been in their employ for
twenty, thirty, and even upwards of forty-five years, which speaks volumes on the community of interest between the firm and its employees, and in such long and continuous association lies much of the secret of their success in the best forms of their work.

Before concluding, there are several points which ought to be mentioned as showing the anxiety of the firm for the welfare and comfort of their employees. A messroom is provided for those who live at a distance. A sick club has been established for twenty-two years, which distributes nearly £300 yearly amongst its members during sickness; and in many cases, when old age, infirmity, or accident overtakes an employee, the firm makes a liberal allowance in addition, so as to prevent the “grim wolf” coming to the door. Another great boon has been in existence for many years, viz., a savings bank, in which the thrifty may safely deposit their savings at five percent interest, and when again wanted, it may be withdrawn at a few hours’ notice; this bank has been much appreciated and taken advantage of. This firm was one of the earliest to give an annual holiday and excursion to its employees, and the past summer has seen the celebration of the twenty-seventh annual excursion. Two special trains are required for this purpose, and the seaside andmetropolis are the favourite places visited on these occasions. The railway fare is paid and the day’s wages given. These are some of the things which have conduced to promote the best of good feelings between the firm and their workpeople, and the principals know that in the conduct of their extensive business they may rely on the intelligence, loyalty, experience, and skill of all their numerous staff.

THE National Workmen’s Exhibition

It is making steady progress, all the more sure perhaps for not being so very ostentatious. All over the kingdom reports come in of quiet preparation, most of the local groups reporting much enthusiasm over what is being generally familiarly designated by the workers “our” exhibition. Everywhere also the reports are to the effect that employers are heartily co-operating with their workpeople in providing material and giving opportunities for the best efforts being put forth.

The Printing and Allied Trades group at first found some difficulties in their path, and were not altogether agreed as to the best methods to be pursued, but we believe these difficulties have now been overcome, and a representative exhibit will be the result. For letterpress job printers the editor of The British Printer is raising a special prize fund (which already amounts to £35) for three prizes for the best collections of one hundred specimens sent in by any printer in the United Kingdom, and a proportion of the general prize fund will, of course, also be set apart for printers.

One of the galleries has been taken up entirely by the Lithographers’ Societies for a special exhibition of lithographic art work, and there is no doubt that this will be one of the chief attractions of the show.

The Bookbinders are at present rather backward in their preparations, but no doubt will make a good if not large exhibit.

In group 3 (Printing and Allied Trades) the secretary is Mr. Vandy, 13 Osborne Grove, Upper Tollington Park, N. The committee consists of Messrs. Arnold, Bateman, Young, Artlett, Hinds, Mortised, Foster, Irvine, and Withy (compositors); Mr. J. C. Barrett (printers’ joiner); Messrs. W. Watts, Hurren, and Smith (litho printers); Mr. A. Palace (stone and zinc preparer); Mr. H. R. Taylor (litho artist); Mr. Irvine (typefounder); Mr. Croft (machine minder); Messrs. Woodcock, Rawlinson, T. Goddard, and R. A. Goddard (bookbinders); Mr. Robinson (book-edge gilder); Mr. T. Sims (vellum binder).

The Lord Mayor, who is taking a deep interest in the exhibition, has circulated the following letter to provincial mayors throughout the kingdom, asking for their co-operation and influence amongst employers, and has in every case received a favourable reply:—

The Mansion House, London.

April, 1893.

DEAR MR. MAYOR.—I am anxious to commend to the attention and consideration of your fellow citizens and townspeople, and especially those engaged in trades and industries, the request which accompanies this from the Executive Committee of the National Workmen’s Exhibition, which is to be held at the Agricultural Hall in July and August next, under the auspices of the London Trades Council.

They have already obtained from the Corporation of London and some of the leading Guilds promises of support to the amount of upwards of £5,000 to a prize fund, which it is hoped will be of such a sufficiently substantial character as to induce employers and workmen throughout the country to unite in the effort to place specimens of the highest class of skill and craftsmanship in their respective trades before the public at this exhibition. Their aim is to educate public opinion to the point of appreciating and demanding excellence in production, instead of the flimsy slop work or “shoddy” which imperils the supremacy of our national industries, for which this country has been for centuries so justly celebrated.

In this very laudable aim, I feel sure the authorities of the exhibition—all practical working men of high character—will have the sympathy and, I hope, the support of the provincial Mayors and Corporations. Donations to the prize fund may be either general, or limited to the special industries in which a city or town is particularly interested, and it is sincerely desired that the workpeople of your locality may be induced to exhibit specimens of their craft, and compete for the prizes which will be offered. I am given to understand that special arrangements will be made during the exhibition for working men’s excursions to London at the cheapest rates, so that the exhibition may be visited by those resident in all parts of the country.

Believe me, dear Mr. Mayor, yours very truly,

STUART KNILL, Lord Mayor.

The initial number of The Retail Trader, a weekly paper (1d.) intended for circulation amongst shopkeepers and their assistants, makes a good beginning in its endeavour to ventilate the grievances and advance the interests of this wide class. A cartoon represents some of the evils from which shopkeepers suffer, and the whole matter is of the highest interest and value to the trade.

It is said to become fashionable to address and stamp envelopes on the back. With the direction written across the folds, the letter cannot be opened by an unauthorised person without the fact being detected.