

BOUND BY GEORGE SIMPSON, 12 PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

REDSKIN
AND
PALEFACE

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AND PALEFACE

ROMANCE AND ADVENTURE
OF THE PLAINS.

ASCOTT R. HOPE



Our Portrait Gallery.

GEORGE SIMPSON, LONDON.

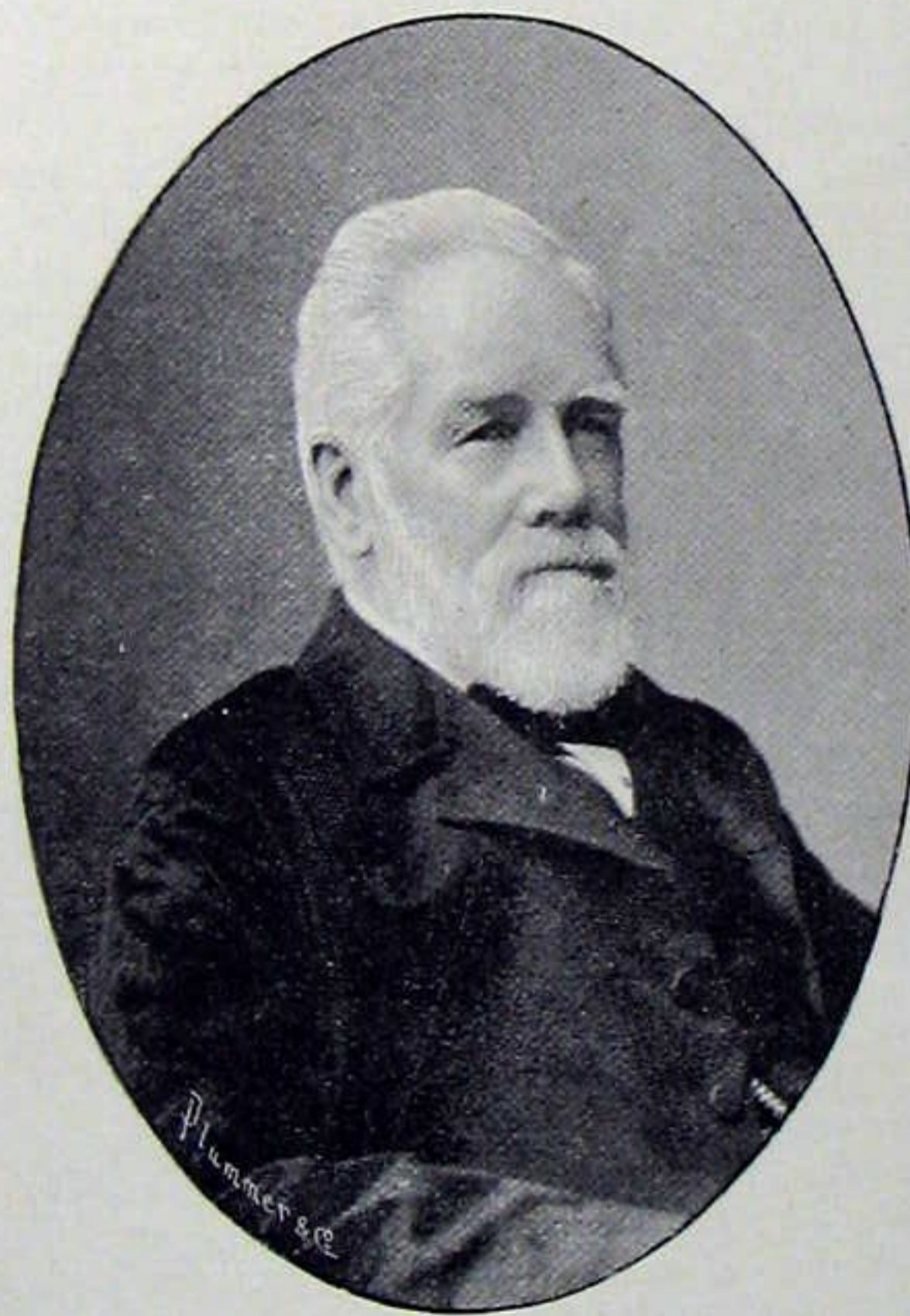


ONE of the London names with which the binding trade is most familiar is that of the subject of this month's sketch, and no representative group of binders would be complete without a portrait of the gentleman before us, who has taken such an active part in the trade for many years.

GEORGE SIMPSON was born in London on the 19th of November, 1824. His father was a binder, and he subsequently learned the trade in his father's shop, being taught the various branches with a view to becoming a practical employer himself. After leaving his father's workshop, he went to Josiah Westley's, where he remained for some years as foreman; then he went for a while as manager at Mr. Loader's, and afterwards started in business on his own account in Little Britain, in the year 1861. Mr. Simpson still retains his first wages book, a little pocket notebook, from which we learn that he began with two men, but on looking over the pages, we find the number rapidly increased, so that the place became too small for the business and he removed to Red Lion-court, Fleet-street, where he entered into partnership with Mr. H. Hanbury in 1863, under the style of Simpson & Hanbury. The partnership lasted until 1870, when Mr. Hanbury died, but in 1871 Mr. Simpson accepted as a new partner Mr. A. D. Renshaw, whose diaries were at that time amongst the best known in London. As Simpson & Renshaw, the firm extended their premises right through from Red Lion-court to Johnson's-court, and prepared for even yet more extensive alterations, which, however, were set aside owing to the opportunity afforded in another direction, the firm having decided to buy up the very old business known as Edmonds & Remnants, in Lovell's-court, Paternoster-row. This was established somewhere about 1790 by Mr. Richard Remnant, who later

on took Mr. Jacob Edmonds into partnership, and the two, by their wonderful energy, succeeded in making it the largest bookbinding concern in the city. "Dick" Remnant died at a ripe old age, leaving behind him a wonderful fund of material for yarn spinning as to his peculiar habits and idiosyncrasies, and two sons who joined Mr. Edmonds in the business, under the name of Edmonds & Remnants—and successfully carried it on until newer business men

began to play havoc with their old-time notions, when Mr. Edmonds, finding old age creeping on and the burden of business cares too great, retired, and sold it to Simpson & Renshaw, who then concentrated their business and workshops in Lovell's-court. Mr. Renshaw retired in ill health in 1882, but the name continued as Simpson & Renshaw until after the removal of the works to No. 12 Paternoster-square, about Christmas, 1883. Barely had the last things been removed, when a great fire broke out on the evening of April 2nd, 1884, at an adjoining printers, which consumed the old premises, destroying every vestige of the block that had an almost historical significance to the trade. In 1885 Mr. Simpson again allied himself with a partner, Mr. R. G. Bevington, but the connection only lasted till 1887, and since then the style of the firm has been George Simpson & Co. Though it was



GEORGE SIMPSON.

arranged that the business should be purchased by the Hansard Publishing Union, the purchase was never completed, and at the break-up of the union, Mr. Simpson had the satisfaction of finding himself still in possession.

During these many years, Mr. Simpson has seen many changes in the styles of work, and passed through the usual ups and downs of business life; he admits he was very hardly hit when Messrs. Longman, Green & Co. took over their own binding, for it meant to him the loss of a few thousands on the

numbers turned out per year, and when again that firm took over the work of Messrs. Rivington, who had been constant customers not only of Mr. Simpson, but his father also, it acted much the same as a knock-down blow. However, they had to be looked upon as simply incidents in commercial life, and Mr. Simpson pushed out into new fields with the result that he has regained all his old amount of work, and just now has his premises stocked from floor to roof in a rather embarrassing manner.

We were much interested in our run round his large establishment, where a staff of about 350 hands are variously employed on many classes of work, turning out on an average in busy times between thirty and forty thousand volumes per week. At times of extra rushes, as for instance when the revised edition of the New Testament was in hand, these figures were largely increased.

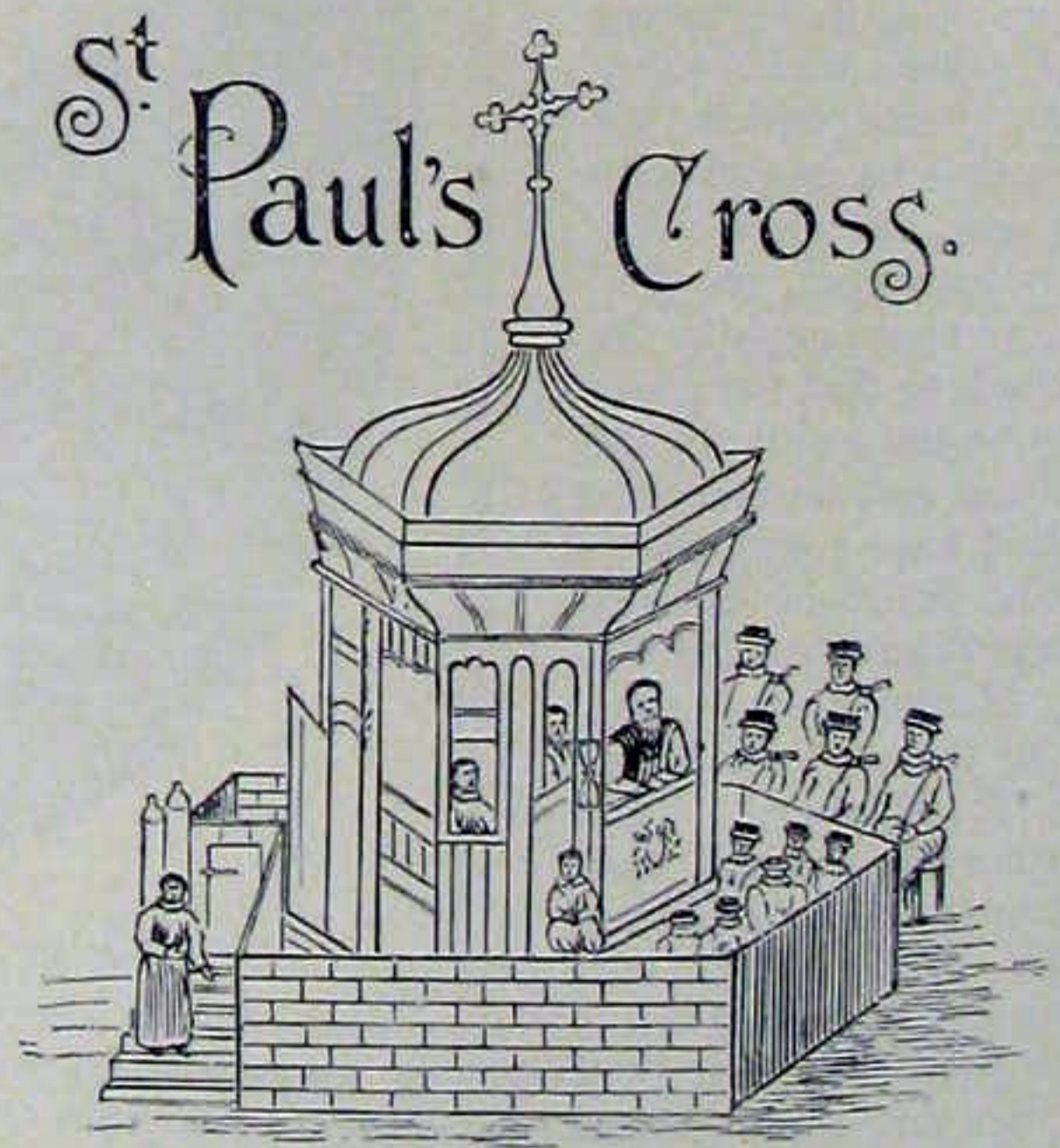
On the ground floor, as we enter from Paternoster-square, is the packing and delivery department, from whence the work is conveyed by van to the various publishing houses. On the first floor are the offices, leather room, and Mr. Simpson's sanctum. Above that the premises extend over the splendid building of Messrs. Nelson & Sons in Paternoster-row and Warwick-lane, from whence there is a separate entrance for the workpeople. The second floor, thus extended, is divided into one large and several smaller shops, which are occupied by the female portion of the staff, who are chiefly employed upon hand work, although the Smyth sewing machine is also used. Just off one of the shops there is a nicely-arranged kitchen, with large gas stoves and cooking utensils, for the comfort and convenience of the women, who usually fare badly where such arrangements are not provided. On the third floor the forwarders and case makers are located, and machinery becomes a more important factor in production. The powerful self-clamp cutting, and trimming machines, hydraulic presses, etc., are worked by a 12-h.p. horizontal engine in the basement, which also finds power for the lift. Through the centre of the large shop huge piles of material are stacked, as in some smaller shops, while others are devoted to packing and the overlooking of the work; one side room is set apart for the foremen's use, although it does not appear to be taken advantage of in the sense desired. Upstairs again is the blocking shop, where the heavier steam presses for large work are placed, and all around in a gallery still nearer heavenward, the lighter hand-presses, and a number of finishers are at work. Off and apart from this is the gold room, where females lay on, and the blocks are stored in drawers and on pegs, their number being legion. Almost every variety of work was being executed—legal, medical, poetical, devotional, ethical, statistical, and technical, from order forms in half-cloth flush to fine editions in morocco extra, the three-volume novel not yet out to the Bible which has been out some time, and in numbers as widely differing as those of Government contracts and private orders. The pattern books—no mean collection—have a story of their own besides that of the numbers and variety of the books, for there we read of the development of blocking on case work, and the constant necessity of evolving

something new and striking enough to attract attention and assist in securing a ready sale for books that as often as not have little to commend them but the exterior embellishment. In hundreds of cases the binder makes the book quite as much as "the tailor makes the man," and Mr. Simpson seems to have done his share in providing book buyers with at least pretty covers, while samples of work put into our hands show the forwarding and other details to be equally up to the mark.

The shop is, and always has been, a fairly strict Society shop, in which there have been but few differences with the employer, and those have been easily and amicably settled; some of the employes have been with the firm a number of years, which in itself speaks well of the feeling existing between employer and employed.

Mr. Simpson was one of the committee of the Employers' Association at the time of the nine hours question, and now is chairman of the Bookbinders' Section of the London Chamber of Commerce. He is assisted in his business by the active co-operation of his son Ernest, to whom our thanks are due for his courtesy in showing us around the extensive works.

"ST. PAUL'S CROSS: THE MOST FAMOUS SPOT IN LONDON," by John B. Marsh (London: Raithby, Lawrence & Co., Ltd., 1 Imperial-buildings, E.C. 3/6) though not pretending to be exhaustive, gives all the notable incidents recorded in the annals, diaries, histories, and state papers (domestic series) mentioned as having taken place at this famous old-time preaching place, the arena where great national questions were



in olden days usually ventilated and declaimed upon by the ablest preachers, frequently in the presence of the reigning sovereign and his or her ministers, or of the Lord Mayor and corporation. The book is a small 4to, admirably printed in old style (modernised) type, in red line borders with wide uncut margins, embellished with three illustrations, tastefully bound in black and gold, top edge gilt, and is altogether a model of modern bookmaking.