

DESIGNS BY WEBB & MATHER, LONDON.

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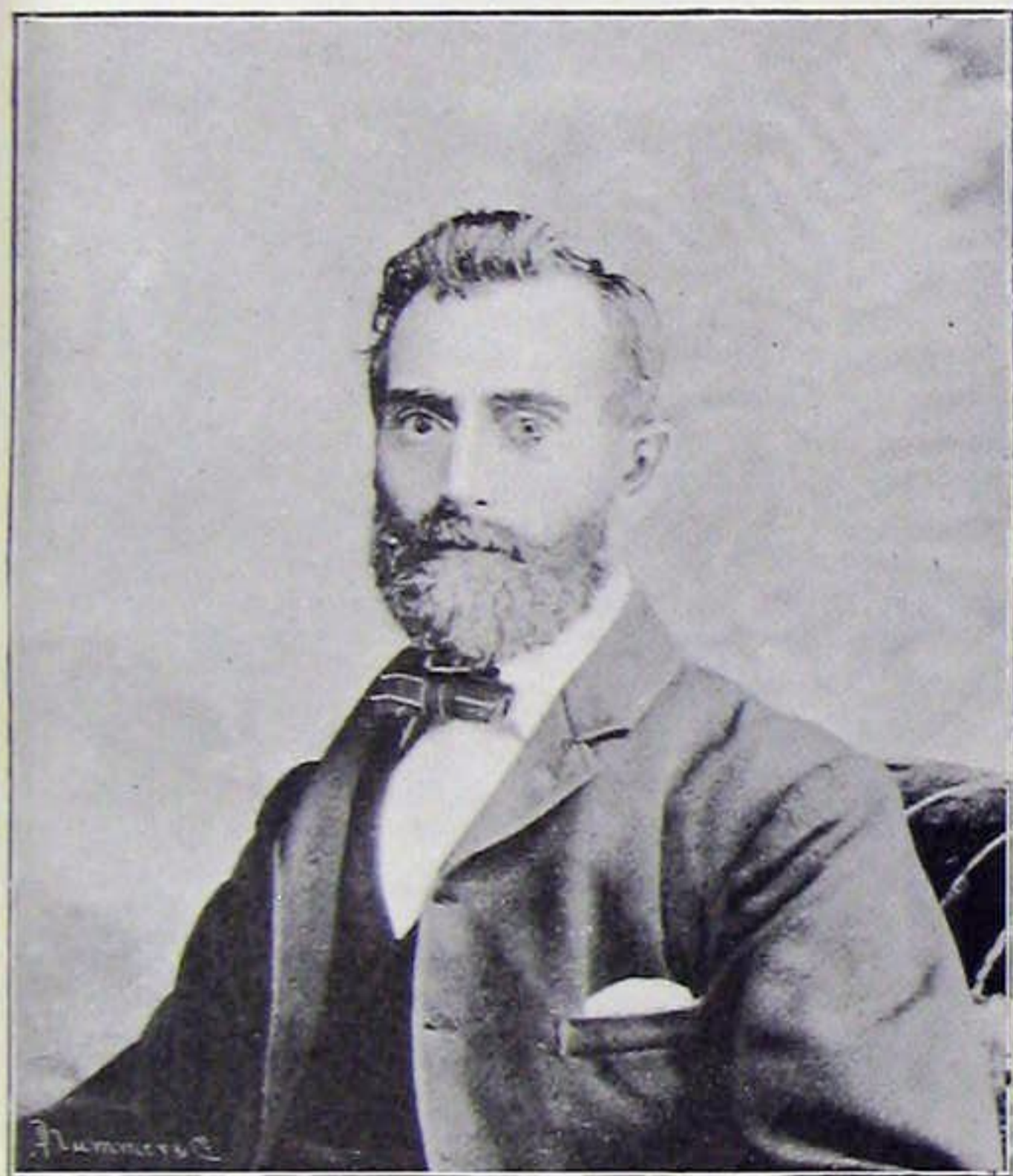
Our Portrait Gallery.

MESSRS. WEBB & MATHER, LONDON.



ALTHOUGH one of the younger firms in the trade—not yet in their teens—Messrs. Webb & Mather have already won for themselves a good name for sound and reliable workmanship. Both partners have been engaged in the Bible line ever since their apprenticeship, and they have been associated together much longer than the comparatively short period of their business connection.

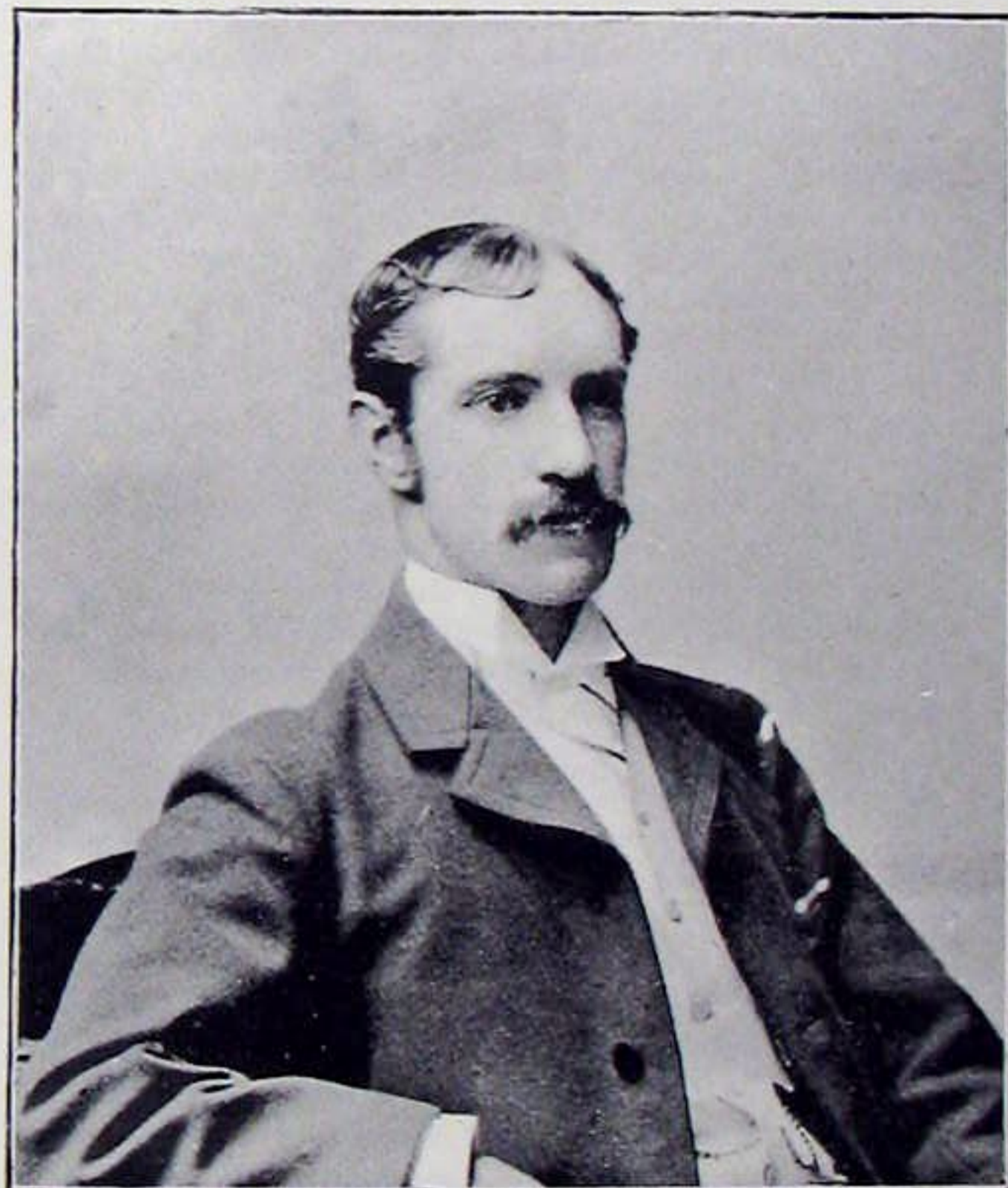
It was in October, 1882, that they agreed to buy the small business then existing in Union-buildings, Leather-lane, Holborn, under the style of Messrs. Hamp & Street—though Mr. Street had retired from it—and commenced to transform it into a going concern. Their first month at the new venture was one of a series of hard struggles, for it is no small matter for new beginners with little capital to attempt to compete for work with older and larger houses, having



WILLIAM WEBB.

WILLIAM WEBB was born in London on November 15th, 1846, and was one of Mr. Loader's apprentices. He joined the Day Workers' Society after he came out of his time, and has served several times both on the committee of that society and as an officer of the Shop Association at Mr. B. Collins', where he worked for many years.

PERCIVAL MATHER was born in London on September 13th, 1857, and was apprenticed to Mr. B. Collins, with whom he worked as a journeyman and member of the London Consolidated Society until he left with Mr. Webb to commence business, and from 1872 the two have been more or less associated.



PERCIVAL MATHER.

the most approved machinery, and the opportunities for buying largely and therefore more cheaply than their younger pushing rivals. After a month's hard work, they found they had been able to take £7 from Messrs. Rivington, and had furnished themselves with samples with which they hoped to push their way into some of the publishing houses. Little by little, these proofs of their ability gained for them orders, and after several months they succeeded in getting work from the Wesleyan Conference Office, a house for which they have ever since done the bulk of the best leather work. Fortunately, the comparatively steady and even volume of trade since their debut as

employers, with no more serious slackness than that of the ordinary summer months, favoured them, and the struggle was limited to the usual up-hill work of every beginner, each year showing some slight gain. After the close of the first twelve months, they removed to 12 Charles-street, Hatton-garden. Then, after another two years of expansion, they migrated to larger quarters at 79 Turnmill-street, where they commenced doing their own circuit, yapp, and box work indoors. Then, in July, 1890, a further extension of premises being required, they moved to their present shops at 8 and 9 Snow-hill, E.C., where they occupy two floors in each of the houses, and have added new machinery to enable them to cope with the much larger orders that they undertook during last year.

Walking through Messrs. Webb & Mather's workshops we find them well up to date in the style of productions intended to captivate buyers of church books. Some of their grains for sheep covers are splendid copies of original pieces of morocco and seal, and they have a large assortment, as well as some fine varieties of fancy grains. The newer Luxe moroccos and Rutland roans are having a good run just now, vying with the Palestine or Alsatian levants. The padded German calf and Persians were well forwarded, and clean and neat in appearance as such work should be. Some of their designs are of a very high and artistic order, but, strange to say, it is not the most decidedly artistic which have brought the firm the greatest number of orders. This is not a new or exceptional experience amongst employers; commonly we hear the complaint that choice patterns which have cost a great deal of money to produce have had to be set aside in favour of some commonplace and less commendable design. We have in our minds a design produced in two or three sizes which has had an enormous run, though as badly drawn and incorrect as the thing could well be, yet somehow the ill-conceived inlaid flower with its ungracefully twining stem hanging on to a shadow, instead of the cross against which it is upreared, has proved a big bonanza to the firm which produced it, while other things of pretty and delicate workmanship have not paid for cutting. This is discouraging to employers, who find they cannot afford to be too artistic; there is a commercial side to the question of a book's decoration, and as an inartistic public are the buyers, their taste or want of it rules. In the appreciation of what will take best Messrs. Webb & Mather seem to have been very successful, and were the first to introduce the grained pebbled calf in fancy colours on Prayer and Hymn Book bindings to the London market. From their large stock of patterns we have selected one or two for our journal.

The house is conducted strictly under Society principles, and the firm believe in paying their men as good wages as possible and securing good work in return. Under these conditions the relations between employers and employed are of the most amicable description, and we hope they may long continue so to the benefit of each.

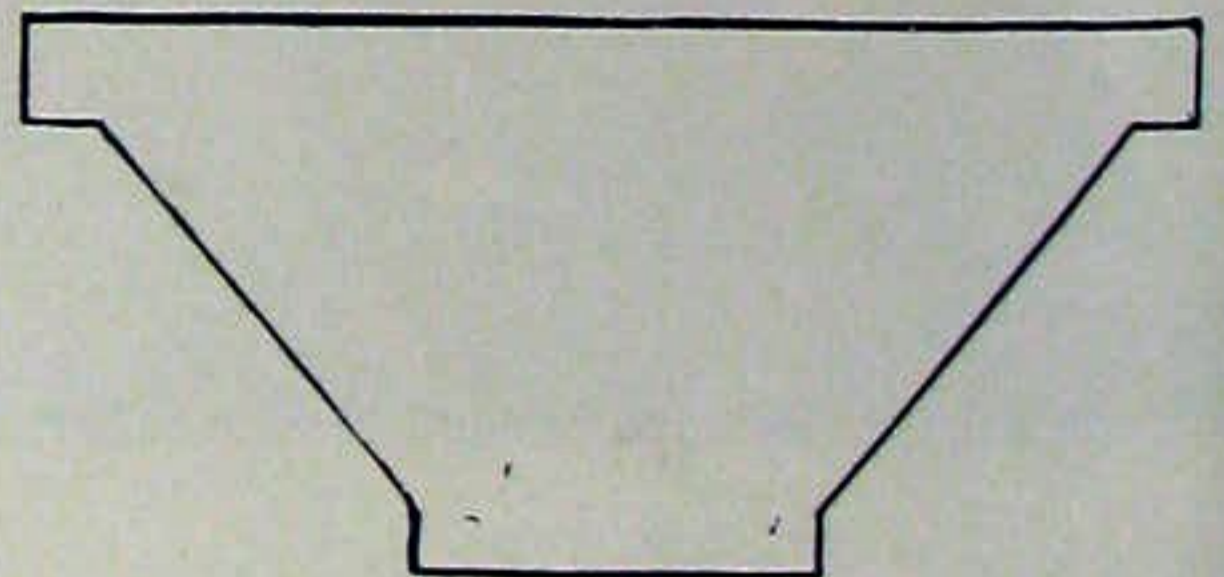
OUR readers should "make a note of it" that the Printing, Binding, and Allied Trades' Exhibition at the Agricultural Hall, opens on September 20th.



Siding and Pasting Down.



WHEN the sides have been marked up, the leather on both back and corners should be pared off with a neat regular bevel from the line marked. For this purpose a short piece of an old knife ground on the slant from back to edge will be found a very handy tool, especially if the handle is planed down flat near the hasp of the knife, when it may be used more conveniently and effectively. Next, lift the boards and pare off the leather on the edges and the turn-in, so that it is square with the marks on the side, and will not leave ugly lumps beneath your marble or cloth sides. For cheap work, which will not pay for cutting out the sides singly or in pairs, the insides and edges had better be left, when the sides may be cut out all together with a hand-knife or in the cutting machine, the corners being cut right off; but on all decent work, marble sides may be cut in pairs, but cloth sides should be cut singly. Lay the square material with a clean-cut edge on the book, level with the marked up back, and put a weight on to hold it in position; then fold the corners to the marks; hold the folded right-hand corner with the fingers of your left hand, turn down the overlapping part at the head with your thumb loosely, and passing your knife between the fold of the cloth, cut downwards towards the fore-edge, then across the corner, then turn down the other overlapping edge with your thumb and cut through that. After repeating the process on the other corner, your side will appear thus:—



You will have to be careful, especially with cloth, not to bend the overlapping piece down too tightly, or you will cut little pieces out of the side just on the edges of the boards, so a little play must be given and the edge of the knife slightly inclined upwards, but the advantage is that the turning-in is square instead of being diagonal at the corners, and looks much the best.

In gluing, work your brush outward from the centre, not in streaks as with paste, but dabbing it on and frothing the glue, which should be first strained through a piece of mull, and not too thick. Hold the sides firmly with the fingers and do not lay too many