

of 1857 came the very month the store was opened, and hard was the experience of the merchants in that young city of 6,000 to 8,000 inhabitants. But the new enterprise weathered the storm, and Mr. Fred Eaton's business has survived all subsequent financial disturbances, great and small, that have overtaken the country, without his seeking shelter under insolvency or bankruptcy laws, and, what is really remarkable, without ever having the stain of protest attach to a single one of his obligations. His sales now amount to over one million of dollars annually, a sum which but few Boston merchants exceeded twenty-five years ago.

He is a member of the First Congregational church, and a large contributor to its support, as he is to the many benevolent objects in the city, a director in two banks, and vice-president in one of them, and director in a number of manufacturing institutions. He has been twice called to manage and preside over the tri-state fair held in Toledo by the people of Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. He is one of the most active business men in bringing new and important enterprises to locate there. Though mentioned by the people as a Republican candidate for mayor of Toledo, for lieutenant-governor and for governor of Ohio, he has never allowed his name to be used in any nominating convention. William H. Maher, a literary gentleman and brother merchant of Mr. Eaton's, in a letter to the press a few years ago, alluded to him as follows :

The merchant of to-day must be very bold and very cautious ; he must be more than a mere salesman or shop-keeper. He must be as well acquainted with manufacturing as the manufacturer, as well posted in foreign markets as the importer, and as sensitive to the public temper and mind as the keenest politician. It goes without saying that Mr. Eaton has possessed these qualities, for otherwise he would not be where he is. How many boys and girls have grown up under his roof ; how many families have been supported by his energetic forcing of business ; how many men have gone out to begin the battle of business for themselves after studying their lessons with him. The names of these must be in the hundreds, and if each one shall bring a stone in grateful appreciation, it will build a monument no higher than he deserves. But let us hope that no monument will cover him for a score of years, during which he may enjoy the success he has earned.

His ready wit and genial humor, added to his solid qualities, make him a favorite on social and public occasions of interest. He m. March 8, 1860, Mary Helen, b. May 23, 1839, daughter of Robert M. and Sophia (McCutcheon) Shirley. Her father was of the firm of Lawrence & Shirley, wholesale merchants of Boston,