

with a will, canvassing on foot. He saw at a glance that the business in which he was engaged afforded him not only an opportunity of earning money by the sale of books, but also of studying the people with whom he mingled, of learning their wants and their peculiar views with regard to books. He went everywhere, his pleasant, genial ways making him a favorite with all classes, and his determined industry and shrewd business tact drawing upon him the favorable attention of the older men with whom he was thrown. When he stopped over night at a farm house, he was sure to win his way into the friendship of its inmates, and leave behind him such a favorable impression that he never failed to find a hearty welcome awaiting him on his return. Besides this, he sold only works of merit, and his customers learned to depend on his simple word as the best guarantee they could have.

Ten years of such experience made him the best canvasser in New England, a reputation which brought him to the favorable notice of Mr. L. Stebbins, an energetic publisher of Hartford, who offered him an important position in his house. Mr. Seranton accepted the place, and from this beginning rose in a short time to be a partner of Mr. Stebbins. He proved himself a valuable man in every position filled by him. Mr. Stebbins soon found that he was perfectly safe in entrusting his interests in his partner's hands, and Mr. Seranton thus became the life of the business. Many important changes were effected in the mode of conducting the subscription trade, Mr. Seranton's vast experience with the public as a canvasser having acquainted him with the necessities of the business, and with the best and most expeditious way of bringing his books to the notice of purchasers.

Some years later, the interest of Mr. Stebbins was purchased by other parties, and a joint stock association was formed under the title of the American Publishing Company of Hartford. Mr. Seranton became the chief manager. The business of the Company was left almost entirely in his own hands, the Board of Directors finding that the best they could do at their regular meetings was to endorse his course and authorize him to act according to his best judgment in the future. The operations of the Company grew larger every day until they became the first in importance of any similar firm in the land. That this is no exaggerated statement will be seen from the following authoritative returns of the sales of a few of the books issued by them. Headley's History of the Rebellion reached a sale of about three hundred thousand volumes, being in itself a fortune for both author and publisher, and the Secret Service, by Albert D. Richardson, the popular *Tribune* correspondent, met with a sale of over eighty thousand volumes in a single year. Such results as these are the very best evidence of the skillful and enterprising management of Mr. Seranton that could be given.

About the close of the year 1865 Mr. Seranton withdrew from the management of the American Publishing Company and formed a new partnership with Mr. W. N. Matson. The new firm assumed the style of S. S. Seranton & Co., and began their operations under the most favorable auspices.