



JOSEPH B. COTTON.

One of the best known and most prominent of the younger lawyers of Minnesota is Joseph B. Cotton, of Duluth. Mr. Cotton is a native of Indiana. His father, Dr. John Cotton, was a graduate of Rush Medical College, of Chicago, and was a relative of the distinguished Rev. Dr. Phillips Brooks. His mother's maiden name was Elizabeth J. Riddle and, like Dr. Cotton, she was a native of Ohio. Mr. Cotton was born on a farm near Albion, Noble County, Indiana, on January 6, 1865. He worked on the farm until he was sixteen years of age and since then has made his own way in the world. His early education was obtained in the schools of the district in which he was brought up. A high school course at Albion followed and afterwards a four years' collegiate course in the Michigan Agricultural and Mechanical College at Lansing. He graduated from college in 1886 with the degree of B. S. For the next two years he was tutor in mathematics at his alma mater, at the same time studying law under Hon. Edwin Willits, then president of the institution, and formerly a member of congress from Michigan. On June 13, 1888, Mr. Cotton was admitted to the bar before the supreme court of Michigan. He almost immediately came to Duluth and commenced practice. He at once plunged into political life, taking active part in the Harrison cam-

paign which was then on. Four years later he was nominated by acclamation by the Republicans of St. Louis, Lake and Cook counties for the office of representative in the state legislature, and in the succeeding election received the largest vote cast for any candidate for representative from the district. In the house he introduced and was mainly instrumental in passing a bill for a third judge for the Eleventh Judicial district. This measure was one of the reasons for his entering the legislature. He took an active part in the fight for a new capitol, and helped secure the passage of the bill. He was also very active in the proposed terminal elevator legislation and was largely instrumental in the defeat of the bill. His committee service was on the judiciary, grain and warehouse, municipal corporation, and tax and tax laws committees. As an ardent supporter of Senator C. K. Davis he made an eloquent speech nominating the Senator for re-election, which added much to his local reputation as an orator. In college Mr. Cotton was orator of his class in both junior and senior years, and was one of the eight commencement orators chosen by the faculty from the graduating class for high rank and scholarship. Since 1891 Mr. Cotton has been a member of the law firm of Cotton & Dibell, recently changed to Cotton, Dibell & Reynolds. Since leaving the legislature he has been the attorney for the Duluth, Missabe & Northern Railway Company and the Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mine, and in addition to these positions is now the vice president and managing owner of the Bessemer Steamship Company and vice president of several mining companies operating on the Missabe Range. For something over three years he has devoted himself exclusively to corporation law. Mr. Cotton was one of the counsel for the defendant in the McKinley suit in the United States Circuit Court against the Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mines, involving the McKinley mine on the Missabe range, and was one of the counsel for the defense in the famous Merritt vs. Rockefeller litigation, now pending in the United States courts and growing out of mining transactions on the Missabe and Gogebic ranges, immediately preceding and during the panic of 1893. He has been of counsel during the last two years in other important litigation in Minnesota and Wisconsin.