

# NEWS OF THE BUSY HOME BUILDERS

## LIGHT WEEK IN NEW WORK

Contractors Say They Are Catching Up a Little Now.

## MACHINE FOR MOLDING CONCRETE

Minneapolis Has a Method that Makes Solid Walls Possible and Permits Steady Progress in Construction.

Builders, architects and real estate men reported a light week just closed in new contracts. However, work connected with the erection of homes and the completing and furnishing of them. They have caught up with the volume of work somewhat, but they do not see any letup yet.

"I saw something new when I was in Minneapolis the other day," said an Omaha builder. "It was a machine for molding houses out of cement. The machine was only about a foot thick and a couple of feet long. It was, in fact, merely an ingenious arrangement for making the cement blocks right on the walls where they are to be laid. The house was about 20x25 feet, I should say. Rigid steel rods were used as tracks on this track was a mold for cement blocks. This track was, of course, just the length and width of the house and was held up by ropes suspended from steel T-shaped supports about sixteen feet high and fastened to the floor beams of the house.

"I watched the men about ten minutes and they laid a stretch of wall about five feet long. This was done by the simple method of pouring the cement into the mold, then removing the latter and moving it along the rail to the next adjoining position. When one layer of wall had been completed the entire track on which the mold ran was raised and the process repeated. By this means no mortar is needed, for the whole house is molded into a solid block of concrete. You could turn such a house on its side and it would remain intact.

Soil dealers report a growing business in Omaha, which indicates that the home builders are paying increased attention to this important economical, but often neglected part of the home spot. But it is a fact that the prettiest lawns are produced from the seed. Three things are required for making good lawn from the seed—good seed of the maximum weight, good soil and good care. The soil should be spaded deep in the fall and allowed to settle all winter for the action of the frosts. In the spring it should be harrowed and carefully leveled. Then the seed should be put in. When the grass has attained a good height the soil should be rolled or otherwise worked. The result is a fine, level lawn, with the best foundation.

Five houses are being erected on the southwest corner of Nineteenth and Clark streets and the method or operation there is unique. A complete cement building block plant has been set up and the blocks being made on the spot. They are set out to dry and mature right in the positions along the proposed walls where they will be handy for the masons. By this means considerable handling and the breakage incident thereto is avoided.

"Delay in ordering repairs during this summer is going to be a serious thing for the procrastinators when cold weather comes," said a representative of the Omaha stove repairers. "The furnace men have been urging the necessity of hot air furnaces which are being installed in most of the new houses being built this season has kept the furnace men fairly busy. It is realized, however, from past experience that there will be a large number of people who will put off this work until the last moment and then there will be a deluge of rush orders."

The Hussey Hardware company say that this has been the best summer they have ever had in the furnace line. Their experience has been that furnace work usually done during the warm months and beginning about September. It becomes very brisk. "If this rule obtains this fall," said Harry Hussey, "the furnace men will not be able to take care of their rush orders when the cold weather reaches us."

Mr. Eaton of the Omaha stove repair works has been very busy during the summer season. He has been kept very busy during the summer season installing furnaces, both in the city of Omaha and throughout the country.

They all insist, however, that it would be much better if orders were looked at up present time, so that they might clear up some of the smaller repair jobs before the regular rush. The man who has a furnace requiring perhaps an hour or two of work will not be able to understand when his furnace man informs him that the work cannot be done in less than two or three weeks. The order holder will take their time. The wise order holder will take the tip and place his order for repairs at once.

"The best all-around flower for growth in yards in Omaha is the carnation," said a local florist. "It is 'dead-end' flower, except the rose is prettier—it is hardy, it likes city life as well as the country. Most flowers do not thrive in the smoke and murky atmosphere of the city. The carnation does."

"Carnation beds should be dug in the fall. The soil should be turned up to a depth of a foot. See that it is good ground, and if it is not very rich put manure in at a depth of six inches. Then let the ground lie fallow during the winter for the frosts to act upon. Planting

## A Twentieth Century Cottage



The design here shown is of the favored colonial style. The large porch, with its substantial columns gives it an inviting and homelike appearance. A few small changes in the interior arrangement would make this a fine farm house. The exterior is finished in siding to second floor and shingled on the gables.

The arrangement of the rooms on first floor gives a unique and different idea, but still retains the essence of what is considered essential to a well-ordered house. The view of the reception hall with its large open fireplace, with seats on either side, gives this home a very inviting appearance when first entering the door.



The large, well-lighted living room opens off the hall to the right and is connected direct with the dining room. An arch or sliding doors could be substituted here if desired. The view of the reception hall with its large open fireplace, with seats on either side, gives this home a very inviting appearance when first entering the door.



should be done in April or May on a dry day. The bowers, once started, will thrive and they add much to the appearance of a yard. The carnation produces a beautiful effect in window boxes and the trailing varieties of the flower can be used to advantage on the edge of porches. They are also a pretty flower to use as borders to walks.

An Omaha homemaker who had made the round of the furniture stores buying furnishings for the new home declared that this is the age of "freak furniture." An evidence is pointed to the many designs of chairs, beds, chiffoniers and other varieties of furniture now on exhibition at the stores. He found even what he called the "May chair." This is comparatively a new thing and seems to have been designed especially for the man who slides down in his chair and roasts obliquely upon the small of his back. The back of this chair is concave and runs in a direct concave line with the seat, which is also concave. The chair seat is of a soft texture covered with plush. Furniture men say it is proving very popular.

Ceramic tiling has a rival in the shape of rubber tiling which is now on the market and is being extensively introduced. This article possesses all the virtues of the ceramic tiling with the added desirable quality of being noiseless to the step. It costs somewhat more, but is said to be even more durable than the ceramic tile. It is said no rubber tiling has ever been worn out; that there is no house constructed that will outlast it.

## MERRY WAR ON BILLBOARDS

Energetic Campaign for Civic Beauty Waged by Citizens of Tacoma.

Tacoma, Wash., has a vigorous local society known as the North End Improvement Society. It is "dead-end" against billboards and it has adopted a plan of campaign which is rapidly proving effective. In essence it involves the principle of the boycott.

The society has made a list of bill-boards in its district, and it writes to each advertiser that uses them asking him to explain as to his boards are objectionable. If the first letter does not bring results, a second and stronger letter is sent, and this is followed up until something happens. The last step in the procedure being a rising vote at a public meeting, at which the members pledge themselves to abstain from purchasing articles that are advertised by billboards in the district.

Here are the results of the society's efforts to date: The billboard people have stopped ex-

diving idea presented itself to Settle and has been successfully carried out to the astonishment of his most intimate friends. From a thin board Mr. Settle carved three fancy letters and had them painted in silver bronze. He fastened the letters to a board ten by twenty-seven inches, with a background of black, bordered with gold bronze, making an attractive piece of work. He secured this to the end of a heavy steel bar six feet long and chose the midpoint hour in which to go to the highest part of his metal roof, where he fastened it securely with iron rods. The braces were scientifically fastened to the roof and to the perpendicular bar, and the next morning the word "Try" appeared above the house built by the blind man. The neatness of the design and the inspiration it suggests has been a subject of much praise-worthy comment.

Settle is a close student of the human voice, and is also a great lover of music. He can take any of the ordinary reed organs apart, even the complicated octave couplings, and he has never found an instrument too hard for him to repair. His success in life is attributed to self-reliance and to following his motto, "Try." He uses a typewriter for his correspondence, and in matter of speed and neatness his work compares favorably with that of the average person.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

## ONE OF FATE'S FAVORITES

Series of Remarkable Adventures of a Columbia Wreck Survivor.

If the stars of good fortune ever sang in unison over a human life they have joined in marvelous harmony over the adventurous career of Frank C. Hager, son of George A. Hager, a millionaire real estate owner of Johnstown, Pa. The youth is now in Portland, a survivor of the ill-fated Columbia, recovering from severe physical injuries at the time of the disaster and from the fearful ordeal through which he passed when the vessel scattered its bones on the bottom of the sea, until he was safely landed in the harbor of Eureka, Cal.

Hager, who is only 25 years of age, seems to have been the shuttlecock of fate from the time he was a child. He lost his mother in the Johnstown flood of May 30, 1889. He was a child of 7 years. With his brother he was watching from the porch the rushing waters and carried in the arms of neighbors to the hills, where safety lay.

Four years ago Hager was saved from asphyxiation by the timely assistance of members of his family. At that time he lay between life and death for seventy-two hours, as the result of inhaling the deadly fumes of escaping gas.

Yet more marvelous is his escape from death when the steamship Columbia was rammed and sunk recently. While he was unconscious a greater portion of the time and can give only a disconnected account of his experiences, he was literally saved from death four times in that fatal night. His own story, so far as he is able to recall, is as follows:

"I have heard somewhere that an ancient chief scoured the waters of the inhospitable Hellsport, and I will say that if I could get all the waters on the face of the globe in one body I would hang greater crosses on them than did that storied monarch.

"The angry food in Johnstown cost me my mother, and but for the heroic men of friends the lives of my brother and myself would have been snuffed out also.

"I cannot remember a great deal about the Columbia disaster. I know my right arm is fractured, but how it happened I do not know. Both my legs and feet are bruised, and my head is bandaged. How I received those injuries is equally a mystery.

"I felt the chill of teeming waters, living ages and ages, and remembering nothing distinctly until I found myself in a bunk on the San Pedro, with rain and seas shooting through me, one arm useless and my legs numb.

"Shortly after I rested I heard a voice cry out: 'All hands stand by!' I rolled over and dozed off again, and then came the order, 'Everybody on deck!'

"I then had a hazy notion that something was wrong, and I got up. Somebody yelled: 'My God, man, get busy! The ship is sinking! Get out, but my underwear, and somebody thrust me a life-preserver. That fellow saved my life, for I was deathly sick that night and would not have lasted a minute without one.

"I got the life belt on upside down, and had just time to leap clear of the vessel when it seemed to give forth a huge sigh of distress and sank beneath the waves.

"I must have struck something or some wreckage must have bumped into me when I jumped, for I have no clear recollection of what happened after that, though I must have been floating about unconscious in the water for at least two hours.

"I could not have held out long in that condition, but the same kind fate that had spared me before was at hand, and I was hauled, limp and apparently lifeless, into the lifeboat named by the second officer and a seaman of the Columbia.

"I found out later that I lay huddled in the stern sheets of the boat, never regaining my senses, although the boat was rowed hither and thither until dawn, when the San Pedro was sighted nearly a mile away. We rowed up alongside, and the survivors were removed from the lifeboat and were hauled onto the hurricane deck of the San Pedro."—Portland Oregonian.

INSTITUTE NAMES OFFICERS. DETROIT, Aug. 24.—The Associated Chapter of the American Institute of Bankers, which has been in convention here for several days, today elected the following officers: President, A. Waller, Merchant of Baltimore; vice president, R. L. Stone of Washington; treasurer, Samuel J. Henry of San Francisco; trustee, F. M. Fullard of Pittsburg.

## CRISIS IN DIAMOND MARKET

De Beers Monopoly No Longer in Absolute Control.

## LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE WORRY

Competition of Premier Company May Bring Down Price of Diamonds or Lead to a Bigger Diamond Trust.

LONDON, Aug. 24.—There is a great crisis in the diamond market. The stability of rather the steady increase in the price of diamonds which has prevailed for more than a decade is seriously threatened. Mysterious movements in the prices of diamond shares which have been taking place during the last few months will be followed by one of two things; either a diamond war involving a big collapse in the price of the stones or the formation of a new and larger diamond trust to take the place of the De Beers syndicate and to control the world's output. The cause of the present excitement is the competition of the new Premier diamond mine in the Transvaal.

In order to understand the situation it is important to know how the world's supply of diamonds is put upon the market. It is a matter of common knowledge, of course, that until the late three or four years the supply of standard stones came almost exclusively from the seemingly inexhaustible Kimberley mines of the De Beers company.

The product of these mines for more than ten years has not been put upon the market by the De Beers company itself. It has been sold annually by contract to a diamond syndicate in which leading De Beers people are largely interested. The De Beers company has, of course, made enormous profits, but so also have the members of the syndicate, and many shareholders have for some time been agitating a grievance to the effect that a large share of the profits earned by the syndicate belongs legitimately to them.

The methods of the syndicate in marketing diamonds are equally arbitrary and effective. The diamond cutters of the world are compelled to buy their supplies in London how and when the syndicate dictates. They specify their wants both as to aggregate value and number of stones as long as they can be got. Then they must wait until they are sent for by the manager of the syndicate.

When they arrive one or perhaps two or three collections of stones are shown them. The price of each package is fixed and unchangeable. They may examine the rough jewels as minutely as they please, and then they must take them or leave them at the price named.

If they decide not to purchase they simply go away and await their next turn. The control of the output of diamonds has been complete and absolute.

This was the situation until the Premier Diamond company a few months ago began to be an important factor as an outside producer. Even now the De Beers company and its associate syndicate pretend to be utterly independent of the competition of the Premier and all other diamond producers. They have intimated that the Premier stones, like the Brazilian, are of inferior quality.

The first outward sign of serious disturbance in the market was the sharp fluctuations which have taken place in the prices of De Beers shares during the last two months. Then came an application by the Premier company to the Transvaal government for permission to keep secret the figures regarding its output.

It should be remembered that the interest of the Transvaal government in the Premier company is greater than that of the shareholders themselves, by reason of the enormous tax imposed. No other industry in the world is so heavily taxed as that of diamond production in the Transvaal.

It amounts to no more than 60 per cent of the net profits, some of which are the fabulous wealth of the Premier field, but it has gained from the fact that in spite of this tax the shares of the company are quoted at eighty times their par value and they have sold as high as 140 times their par value.

It was explained in the Sun a year or more ago that this company was developing its fields in a most conservative and systematic manner. Its development work until now has been devoted entirely to the poorest portion of its deposit. It is just entering upon the richer part of its field, which, it is calculated, according to careful tests which have been made, will require nearly half a century to exhaust.

It is hardly surprising, under these circumstances, that the De Beers company realizes at last that it has a great competitor to meet. How it proposes to deal with the situation is the problem of the London stock exchange today, and naturally it is a matter which interests every woman who wears a diamond ring or who hopes one day to possess a necklace of brilliants.

It is argued that one of three results will follow. The present dictators of the diamond market, with their enormous resources, may seek to buy control of the Premier company. One report is that they have already succeeded in doing so.

Second, they may endeavor to break the competition by flooding the market with diamonds, thus rendering competition unprofitable when it is handicapped by a 50 per cent tax. They may take the Premier company into partnership and form a new world syndicate, which might keep the price of diamonds at something like the present standard. Opinions on the London stock exchange incline toward the last solution, but no definite knowledge on the subject is yet available.

The great rise in the price of diamonds in the last few years should not be altogether attributed to the workings of the syndicate. It is an acknowledged fact that the tremendous wave of prosperity which has rolled over America has also contributed to produce this effect.

## German Bank in Perils

The concession which has been obtained by Herr Guttmann of the German Orient bank for the establishment of a German commercial bank in Persia, is valid for forty-five years if the bank starts operations within two years from the date of the concession. According to the Cologne Gazette, the bank will enjoy the patronage of the Persian government, inasmuch as official assistance will be accorded in the recovery of debts, while the bank's branches will at need be entitled to claim the protection of the military. The maximum dividend payable by the bank in any one year is not to exceed 12 per cent, and profits in excess of this sum are to be devoted to public enterprises in Persia. The bank will be allowed to participate in the mining of silver coinage in the same proportion as other banking institutions which already enjoy this privilege. The government reserves to itself the right of annually investigating the conduct of the bank, and the bank on its part is pledged to negotiate government payments abroad without charging a commission. The result of the present experiment will, it is thought, furnish a standard by which the prospects of further German financial and commercial undertakings in Persia may be gauged.

Captain Pustau, a German naval expert, publishes a prediction that within a decade motor-airships will come into general use not only for military but also for sporting and other purposes. He says: "We must realize that the atmosphere, like the ocean, offers us innumerable routes of travel. Who in the future will invest his money in the construction of cable railways and rack and pinion railways up mountains, when it will be possible to reach the most elevated points more rapidly and more agreeably with less danger by means of airships?"

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