

The Omaha Grain Exchange || Next Speaker of Iowa House



AMOS H. MERCHANT, SECRETARY OF THE OMAHA GRAIN EXCHANGE.

OMAHA'S grain exchange is taking on a tangible shape, and is all but an accomplished fact. Its organization is complete. It has been provided with headquarters, has chosen a secretary to manage its affairs and will very soon be transacting business in the regular way. It is not expected that it will revolutionize the world of grain traffic at its start, but it is a beginning to a revolution. During years past men well informed as to conditions have predicted success for Omaha as a grain market, and have expressed wonder that no steps have been taken to establish one here. In 1891 the legislature passed the public warehouse law, and a tentative effort to establish a grain exchange at Omaha followed. Inspection was provided for, the Omaha rating was recognized at the principal markets of the world, and for a time the venture appeared to thrive. Unfavorable railroad rates and a couple of bad crop years did the business for the Omaha grain market, and since 1893 nothing has been heard of it until the coming

of the Chicago Great Western stirred it to life again. Now it is about to be realized.

The life of Amos H. Merchant, the newly appointed secretary of the Omaha Grain exchange, may be summed up in the words: "Thirty years with the Northwestern." He was born in Maine and came west when yet a small boy, ending his travels in Minnesota during the winter of 1853. He found work with the Northwestern Railway company, with which he continued in one capacity or another until last March. He was stationed in three places in Minnesota and then transferred to Sioux City, where he served for eight months, before coming to Omaha in May, 1890. He was assistant general freight agent of the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley road here. After leaving the company last winter he became interested in mining operations in Wyoming, which in case he still continues. Mr. Merchant's long service in the traffic department and as traveling freight agent have made him thoroughly familiar with the grain business and an expert inspector of grain.

Raises Fancy Pony Herds

THE breeding and raising of Shetland ponies has proved an interesting and profitable occupation for Mrs. M. B. Bracklin of Minneapolis for some time past, and she is in a fair way of amassing a large fortune. Mrs. Bracklin's love for these animals was doubtless inherited from her father and enhanced by her early environment. In her childhood she lived on a farm and her father, who was a lover of good steeds, bought several blooded animals, of which he always took excellent care. After they left the farm Mrs. Bracklin always had horses on which to expend her interest and study.

About three years ago, when Mrs. Bracklin was living at Rice Lake, Wis., she bought a Shetland pony for her little daughter, and, becoming interested in the little horses, she added one by one until four or five tiny stalls were partitioned off in the stable. Even then she had no idea of taking up pony raising as a business. In fact, not until Captain J. Murray Hoag of Maquoketa, Ia., a veteran pony dealer, suggested that she turn her love for the little animals into a means of money making did she decide to handle ponies. The herd grew slowly, for Mrs. Bracklin picked the foundation stock with the greatest care. She has been in Minneapolis now about two years and has united her herd with that owned by J. F. Elwell. Last year there were 140 ponies, but now there are only eighty. This fall, however, a number of imported animals will be added. Some are kept in a pasture at Wayzata, others are in a small pasture near her home and a few are kept in the stable at her residence. A number are at Como park in the livery and six or eight have been rented to families at the lake.

In the winter, when more are at the

house, she makes bran mash for them twice a week and prepares tempting dishes from carrots. She had a pony once that had a human weakness for certain things, among which were buckwheat cakes and rice pudding. In a year no veterinarian had been called and Mrs. Bracklin is a marvel to the boys in the neighborhood. "She doctors 'em herself," they whisper in an awed tone. Indeed, there is nothing about the entire care of horses or of that business that Mrs. Bracklin does not understand. At a depot one day she even finished one of the crates which held a tiny pony going on a long journey, while the men who watched were obviously surprised to see the nails go in straight and square.

One of Mrs. Bracklin's special delights is the matching of animals and she says that she believes that ponies are more difficult to match than big horses, but, then, she never is satisfied with a match unless it is as perfect as can be. She has tried everywhere to find a match for the stallion Mystic, but Mystic remains without a partner. Her eye is unusually good, too. When she came from Rice Lake and looked over Mr. Elwell's herd she found an animal which she believed would match one she had in Wisconsin. When the two were harnessed together they were found to be as perfectly matched a team as anyone would ask for, in gait as well as in appearance. There are two ponies in the pasture, brother and sister, beautifully matched except size, which are models of devotion to each other. Even in sleep they lie side by side.

Contrary to the practice of many pony raisers Mrs. Bracklin does not believe in using an animal until it is well grown and strong—that is, until it is at least 2 years old. Neither does she believe in keeping a colt thin the first year in order to reduce its size.



GEORGE W. CLARKE OF ADEL, IOWA, WHO WILL BE CHOSEN SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF THE THIRTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF IOWA.

NEXT week the thirtieth general assembly of the state of Iowa will be convened in regular session at the capitol in Des Moines. It will be unique in one regard: its organization has already been practically agreed upon. The sentiment of the members-elect is so well known that it is accepted as a fact that Hon. George W. Clarke of Adel will be elected speaker of

the house and he and Lieutenant Governor Herriott have already conferred in regard to committee appointments, so that the wheels of the legislature will be set in motion with less of delay than was ever known in the Hawkeye state. The session has a number of important matters to come before it, among them amendments to the revenue laws and other legislation of interest to the people of Iowa.

New Fur Hats for New Year

NEW YORK, Dec. 24.—Dame Fashion has ordained two revivals in millinery circles. One is the feather hat, the other the fur one. The latter seems the more appropriate to the crisp weather which usually ushers in the New year, at least that is what millady seems to think, judging from her purchases.

"My work has been doubled this season," said the buyer for a great millinery establishment. "To my thorough knowledge of the millinery needs of other years I have had to add an understanding of fur qualities and values. We have had to engage a special designer to assist in the evolution of the fur hat, and have hired several experienced fur operators."

The result has certainly justified the outlay of time and thought. The fur hats are charming creations, and are decidedly the reigning fad of the moment.

Perhaps the greatest charm of fur is its adaptability for almost every sort of occasion. The small toque of dark hued fur is eminently correct for morning wear, while the plume loaded ermine hat gives the finishing touch of elegance to the evening toilette.

But the most striking feature of these fur hats is not the fur itself, but the materials which are combined with it. Gauzy lace is edged with fur, and winter and summer meet on the fur hat, which is rose wreathed. There seems no limit to the combinations which are being worn, each with the sanction of good taste. They are dictated by the desire to attain individuality, and they do not fall of their object.

Moleskin is a close rival of ermine in the millinery field. For daytime wear it can be even said to have attained the superiority.

A pretty moleskin hat is built somewhat on the lines of an old-fashioned poke, though with a more decided front face. The soft fur furnishes a pretty background for the face, whether it be young or old. The under brim has no further adornment. But the crown and outer brim seems at first glance a chaos of fur, lace and feathers. Closer inspection reveals the mellor of the creation. Cream lace has been artistically applied on the fur, and in the nest so formed rest several small black and white birds. They are of a variety which never flew on sea or land, but they look marvelously in place on the soft gray fur. The brim fits snugly to the hair in the back, provided it is worn low, after the prevailing fashion.

Mink is a fur that has perennial popularity. That and sable are always correct, however the tides of popular fancy ebb and flow. Just as long as mink accords well with a certain shade of bronze brown hair, just so long it will be worn by certain damsels.

Coarse mesh wool lace is used for the crown of a stylish mink toque. These heavier laces seem more fitted for fur combination than the more filmy weaves and are much in demand. The rolling brim is bent in something of the three corner effect, and is ornamented on either side of the front by two small real animal heads. The lace of the crown extends slightly over this brim, thus giving the needed color contrast. The only other trimming is a cluster of small fur tails at the back.

It is noticeable that the fur hats are simply trimmed. A cluster of flowers, a single plume, or a bit of lace applique are the approved ornaments. Perhaps it is a reaction from the over-trimming of the spring and summer. Perhaps the richness of the fur does away with the desire for further display. In either case, the result is artistic.

A recent window display was placarded "Under the Reign of King Ermine." The application was not inapt, for the window showed a bewildering array of articles for wear fashioned out of ermine and of ermine alone. The passion for white has had the most to do with ermine's popularity. Other white furs are often substituted for the ermine, with almost equally good effect. The best of these are trimmed with bits of black fur, for the purpose of simulating the more expensive fur.

Moleskin is used to cover another scoop-shaped frame. The flaring brim is also faced with the moleskin and is ornamented with medallions of heliotrope-colored panne velvet. These are embroidered with French knots in a slightly darker shade of silk. A heliotrope shaded ostrich plume starts from the front of the crown and falls over the hair in the back.

Yellow is one of the most fashionable colors this winter. Cream deepens to lemon and that again to orange. All are permissible. And with yellow comes the penchant for gilt. First came the gilt buttons and cabouchons, and more lately the use of gilt braid and ribbon of varying width and thickness has obtained. Some of the gilt ribbons are as pliable as silk. They are particularly effective on the white fur hats.

HARRIET HAWLEY.