

Fur Trade Matters.

The Leipzig correspondent of the New York Fur Trade Review writing on January 11 says. "The usual number of visitors from German and Austrian cities attended the New Year fair with a general demand for furs. One article—nutria—was missed by them, as it has been imported during the past winter only in small quantities, trappers in South America reporting the catch extremely light. The few skins on hand, together with those which had been repurchased from abroad, were quickly sold at advanced values. Opinions regarding the future of American furs are diverse here, some fur merchants believing that all articles excepting musquash will decline, and that skunk will be very cheap. Other fur merchants, a smaller number, state that all American articles, skunk excepted, will be dearer. Of course, one or the other must be nearly right, but we are inclined to believe that a great deal will depend upon the financial condition of the various buyers. Many firms had heavy losses through bad debts during the past year but as they could stand the loss it is not improbable that they will speculate to a considerable extent in order to retrieve their losses. Musquash has sold fairly well, and stocks are small, and an advance in prices is fully expected. Mink and marten have had a smaller sale than in good years. However, there are no stocks anywhere, and it is thought that both articles will hold their own. Raccoon was cheap in 1895 and considering the situation in general, we think this article will do better in the spring, as the different dyed productions have met with a regular demand. There are no views for better prices for American opossum, as dyed skins are no longer in extended use. There is no apparent reason for higher prices for bear, and moderate values are expected. As beaver will be used to produce a number of articles heretofore made of nutria, lower prices need not be looked for. Owing to the trouble in the Orient, prospects cannot be regarded as good for red fox. Gray fox is at present in very little demand on the continent. Lynx suffers for the reason affecting red fox, and though prices are very low now customers are not found and the article has not proved a success, even when dyed in the new shades, the only demand and that a limited one, being for black-dyed skins. Otter has been in good demand—the dark skins for men's coat collars and the pale skins for plucking. Low prices are not expected. Blue fox is neglected. Wolf for rugs is only in limited demand. Australian opossum sells only in consequence of the present very low prices, but only small quantities are in demand. The same is true regarding wallaby and wombat. Japanese fox sells well as heretofore, especially blue dyed skins. There is the usual good demand but no stock of real chinchilla. Bastard chinchilla is in good request. In Russian furs astrachan receives a good deal of attention. Prices of raw skins in Russia have declined considerably, and naturally Leipzig holders of dyed skins are not eager to sell. It is thought that at the present prices the article will again be taken for America. Persian met with a fair demand until the beginning of December, but has been rather quiet since that date. Some small lots of old skins were recently sold at the low prices generally prevailing at the end of the year, but fresh skins will be dear if purchases become general. Raw skins in Russia are in small quantity, and held at high prices. Prices for broad-tails are somewhat easier than last year, and sales limited in quantity. Some important transactions have recently been noted in white hares, French, English and German firms being the buyers, a good proportion of the skins being taken for brown dyeing. Superior grades were preferred and prices were firmer than before. White fox have

sold only to a limited extent and prices are lower than they were one year ago. Ermine sells more slowly than during the past season, but we regard it as a favorable condition that prices are not as high as formerly. Sable of medium grade has been purchased here for France and other countries. Slightly dyed sable, prepared by Russian sable artists, makes a good article for French and German use. Thibet has been a little cheaper since the first of December—a consequence of large supplies. There has been a continued demand for black-dyed skins of superior quality, as it is expected to be in good request again next autumn. Several parcels of Russian squirrel belly linings, especially dark sorts, have been taken for England at moderate prices. Raw squirrels have had a slow sale. Squirrel tails are in good request and twisted tails are selling very slowly. Beas sell slowly."

History of the Horse Shoe

Horse shoeing dates from the development of the Christian era. The earliest histories we have of the use of horses dates back, probably 1600 or 1700 before Christ. In the first era of civilization the horse travelled with the Nomad Invaders over Europe, reaching the northern parts of Denmark and then into western Europe; but down to historical times the horse was probably only used irregularly and naturally horse shoeing was hardly needed. The first representation we have of a horse in historical times was about 2,000 years before Christ. Simultaneously, among the monuments of Nineveh and Babylon, we have representations of the horse, so distinct that they show the true Asiatic race. Following that are representations of the horse in Greek art, and in Grecian sculpture. After Greek art had begun to affect Italian art, we find representations of the horse so distinct that even the ornaments of the bits, with the reins and caparisons appear. Yet there is no representation of shoes on a horse up to that time. Afterwards, in Xenophon's account, which has already been referred to, and in all the accounts down to the time of Michridates the Great, where he speaks of the cavalry being stopped on account of the horses' feet being sore, we have no representation whatever of the shoe of the horse.

It is not until about the second century that we find traces of the shoeing of the horse in certain shoes which are now in the museum at Mayence, Germany, which evidently were only used as a protection to feet which had become sore—two shoes, one of them a flat plate with a metal cap coming to the front part of the hoof, and sets of rings to fasten it to the pastern, the other a shoe consisting of a cup with four sets of rings with which also to fasten it to the pastern. Such shoes undoubtedly could not have been used at all for any purpose beyond that of protecting a sore foot. About the fifth century, in Rome, we find horse shoes which began to approximate to those used to-day. Mr. Russell referred a while ago to the shoe having been developed in northern countries, where caulking was required on account of the ice. The traces of the earliest horse shoes have been found show evidently that they developed among the Huns, and in the northern part of France among the Normans, in the neighborhood of the fifth century. A few centuries later, about the tenth century, at the time of the early crusades—from 1091 on to 1200—the horse shoe had been developed to a far greater state of perfection and the use of caulks came in. The shoes of the first century were held on with two nails, sometimes with four nails.

In the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries shoes were found with ten and sometimes with six nails, with caulks at the heels and toes. At an earlier period shoes were found among the Huns, during their migrations, and they were in general use among the Normans, and in the northern part of Spain and

in Italy. In the neighborhood of the fifteenth century the shoe had reached almost the perfection of the ordinary horse shoe of to-day. Among the crusaders from Italy we find a horse shoe with four nails, evenly made. Since that time there has been little change except in certain modifications in special parts of the shoe.—Dr. R. S. Huidekoper before the New York Farmers' Club.

Silver.

There is very little life in the silver market at present. Quotations have varied fractionally this week, but the tone may be described as strong. Silver prices on Feb. 7 were: London 30½d; New York 67½c.

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