



LOREN FLETCHER.

Loren Fletcher is the representative of the Fifth district of Minnesota in the congress of the United States, and is now serving his second term in that body. He is one of the pioneers of Minneapolis, his identification with the city dating back to 1856, when as a young man of twenty-three he brought his newly wedded wife to the rural village of St. Anthony and made his home there. His father, Capt. Levi Fletcher, was a prosperous farmer in the town of Mount Vernon, Kennebec County, Maine, where he lived in a state of comparative prosperity, giving his four sons and two daughters the best educational advantages which the neighborhood afforded. Loren was the fourth son, and was born April 10, 1833. The usual attendance at the village school was supplemented by two years at Kent's Hill Seminary. At the age of seventeen he had determined to learn a mechanical trade, but a short experience as a stone cutter satisfied him that a mercantile life was more to his taste. So he went to Bangor, where he obtained a situation as a clerk in a shoe store, and where he remained for three years. Although earning but small wages, he had already acquired habits of thrift and economy, and with his savings he sought new fields of activity in the West. After a few months spent at Dubuque, where the prospects did not appear inviting, he

joined the tide of immigration to Minnesota, and arrived at St. Anthony in the summer of 1856. He found temporary employment as a clerk in a store, and the following year entered the services of Dorilius Morrison, who was then carrying on an extensive lumber business. Loren's occupation was sometimes in charge of lumber yards at Hastings and St. Peter; at other times in the woods supervising the winter's cut of logs, and then on the drive, and again in the mills at the falls. He was thus occupied for about three years. In 1860 he purchased an interest in the dry goods store of E. L. Allen. The following year he associated with himself in the mercantile business, Charles M. Loring, and they established a general store on the present site of the old city hall. They dealt chiefly in lumbermen's supplies. This business was carried on for more than fifteen years at the same stand. It extended however, to other lines of activity and investment, including dealings in pine lands, in lumbering, in farm lands, in contracts, in Indian supplies, in town and city lots and finally in milling. In this latter particular his firm has been prominent for many years. At first they were interested with the late W. F. Cahill; afterwards they were the proprietors of the Galaxy mill and the Minnetonka mills. Their business was prosperous and both members of the firm became wealthy. It is a noteworthy tribute to the sterling qualities of Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Loring that this partnership has continued for thirty-five years without a break and with the completest cordiality between them. But Mr. Fletcher has not devoted all his energies to the massing of a fortune or the service of his own interests. For ten years he was a member of the lower house of the state legislature, having been elected as a Republican from Minneapolis, and during three successive sessions was chosen speaker of the house; the last time by the unanimous vote of the house, receiving every vote of all parties, an instance of political favor rare in the history of any state. His services as a member of the legislature were marked by distinguished ability and substantial benefits to his constituency, a fact to which his long service in that capacity bears the best testimony. After a number of years of retirement from public service he entertained the laudable ambition to represent his city in the national congress, and when Minneapolis and Hennepin

County were first constituted a district by themselves he was nominated by the Republicans and elected in 1892. He was re-elected in 1894 by a largely increased majority, and has acquired a position among his congressional colleagues which enables him to be of peculiar service to his constituents. Mr. Fletcher is not an orator and makes no pretensions to display on the floor of the house, but his long experience in legislative service, his thorough knowledge of affairs, his capacity for making friends among his colleagues, and his adroit management of the interests of his district make him a most valuable member. The year before coming West, Mr. Fletcher married Amerette J. Thomas, daughter of Capt. John Thomas, of Bar Harbor. Mrs. Fletcher was a most estimable lady, and the gentleness and kindness of her character endeared her to a large circle of friends. The loss of their only child in early girlhood and the death of Mrs. Fletcher, in 1892, were afflictions which have borne heavily upon a strong and courageous spirit.

GEORGE HENRY PARTRIDGE.

George Henry Partridge, a member of the firm of Wyman, Partridge & Co., wholesale dry goods merchants of Minneapolis, is a splendid example of the wide-awake, progressive, enterprising and yet shrewd and judicious business man. He is the son of George H. Partridge and Mary E. Francis (Partridge), and was born at Medford, Steele County, Minnesota, August 21, 1856. His father was a farmer who responded to the call of his country when it was menaced by war and died in the service. Mr. Partridge's parents moved from Wisconsin in the early days to Minnesota, and his education was commenced in the public schools of Steele County. Subsequently he graduated at the State Normal School at Winona, and finally entered the State University of Minnesota and graduated with the class of 1879. During his school years he was dependent very largely upon his own resources, and displayed in that time the pluck and perseverance which have contributed in so large a degree to his remarkable business success. Upon the conclusion of his university course he obtained employment with the firm of Wyman & Mullen, wholesale dry goods



merchants in Minneapolis, and was given charge of the department of credits. He developed extraordinary business capacity and made himself invaluable to this firm. His ability and industry were recognized in 1890, when Mr. Mullen retired on account of ill health and Mr. Partridge, who had then been nearly ten years in the employ of the firm, came in as a partner, the style of the firm being Wyman, Partridge & Co., and composed of O. C. Wyman, George H. Partridge and Samuel D. Coykendall. This is the largest wholesale dry goods house in the Northwest, and its business has grown within a decade from half a million a year to probably ten times that amount. Mr. Partridge is a democrat and takes an active interest in local and national politics. He is relied upon by his party for important service on committees and in campaign work, and never shirks his duty as a citizen in that respect. Mr. Partridge was married January 24, 1882, to Adelaide Wyman, daughter of O. C. Wyman, and has three children, Helen, Marion and Charlotte. He is constantly strengthening his position in business circles in the Northwest, and not only has already achieved a brilliant commercial career, but has a prospect of still greater success in the future. This he has accomplished by his ability and fidelity in a responsible business position and unaided by the influence of friends or the possession of wealth with which to pave the way.