

they do several years concerning which but little other data is in existence. Mr. Ham has made many studies in genealogy and local history, of which the results may some day be published, should he regain his health which for some time has been very precarious.

THE PASSING OF OLD IOWA.

The deaths during the past twelve months of Ex-Senator James F. Wilson, Ex-Judge Geo. G. Wright, Gen. Ed Wright and John G. Foote, have drawn renewed attention to the fact that the pioneers of our State are not only rapidly going hence, but that they are nearly all gone. The thought comes home to the writer with added emphasis for the reason that from two of them—long-time valued personal friends—we had received promises of articles for THE ANNALS which will never be written. Senator Wilson was a prominent actor—though at the time a young man, at the threshold of his illustrious career—in the Convention which framed the present Constitution of our State. He expected to write his recollections of the leading men of that body, and had health and life been spared would no doubt have presented the people of this State with many interesting reminiscences of that far-off time. That he did not live to do this precious work our readers will as deeply regret as do we. Judge Wright had given some time during the last three years of his useful and honored life to recording his recollections of distinguished Iowans whom he had known intimately and well, with many of whom he had been closely associated. A

few of these sketches we have published, but many more exist among his manuscripts, from which we hope hereafter to draw valuable materials for these pages. It may have been in his thoughts some day to include these in a book. It is a great loss to the meager data of Iowa history that these two distinguished men were not spared to write what they knew of early Iowa—"all of which they saw and part of which they were." Each could have written a most valuable autobiography.

Of the men able and willing to write of our early days, how few are with us! Of the earliest comers only Theodore S. Parvin remains. Just entering upon his eightieth year, his pen is still active in setting down what he remembers of early Iowa. A later comer was the versatile and accomplished Dr. William Salter, who is doing every thing in this direction that his years and the condition of his health will permit. Ex-Governor C. C. Carpenter, one of the earliest residents of Fort Dodge, though an invalid, still has hopes of recording many things which will have great value. That these three useful men may be spared to add to our historical records, is most devoutly to be hoped. H. H. Bancroft, the distinguished historian of the Pacific States, avers that the most reliable and valuable materials for history are the recollections of men—even of common, uneducated observers—eye-witnesses of events of which it is desired to make permanent record. With this view of our conditions it is most unfortunate that greater efforts have not all along been made to gather and perpetuate this knowledge which is so rapidly "fading into the azure of the past." But of old Iowa little now remains, and very soon he who would know anything of early Iowa history will have to grope for it almost in the dark, studying the collections of neighboring States, and drawing his conclusions largely from our early laws. The old are rapidly yielding their places to a generation to which even the war of the rebellion is ancient history.

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