

CRUDE LEGISLATION.

(Written by Charles Aldrich, September 1907.)

Much legislation has resulted from the erection of the Historical Building. A study of this legislation at this time discloses many crudities. Some of it is obsolete and some unnecessary. Much is awkward and clumsy. While the Curator of the Historical Department may justly be held responsible in a general way for this legislation, much of it was never approved by him but its passage could not be prevented. One may draft a bill in the form that suits his purpose or the general purposes sought, but when it passes into committees and then is subjected to thorough consideration in the legislature its form in the end cannot be predicted. The Curator has always felt it more important that the work upon the building be kept in motion than that his mere personal preference be followed or his opinions accepted. In one instance a bill for the promotion of the building was amended in a way he considered absurd and irrelevant. He appealed to the chairman of the committee to recommend the bill in the hope of a proper change in its construction. The chairman, who was friendly to the measure, objected that the proposition to that effect would result in a contest wherein the bill might be lost. His counsel that no change should be attempted, and later sessions relied upon for the correction of any injustice, was adopted, and the bill passed in its imperfect state. The writer hopes that the legislation resulting in our beautiful and commodious Historical Building when studied in future may be considered in the light of the above statement and that he may be exonerated from a portion of the blunders of hasty and ill-considered legislation.

The erection of the Historical Building went ahead until its completion and that, after all, was the matter of chief importance. Men who placed obstacles in its way doubtless acted unwittingly. In fact one of them years afterward was frank enough to confess that he had sinned through ignorance—"he did not know better." The legislation to which reference is thus made should be superseded by a brief and simple statute that may be readily comprehended.

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