

## MR. ALDRICH'S LAST DAYS.

The *Boone News-Republican* of March 12, 1908, contained the following:

"Boone to-day is in mourning for its most distinguished citizen. Sunday morning, March 8, at 8:15 o'clock, following an illness of seven weeks' duration, the Hon. Charles Aldrich, founder and up to the time of death, curator of the State Historical Department, and noted legislator, lawmaker and pioneer editor, passed peacefully away. Seven weeks ago Mr. Aldrich was compelled to give up his duties in Des Moines temporarily on account of sickness. He came to Boone, suffering at first from an attack of the grip. For some time his friends here were greatly worried over his condition but he seemed to rally and apparently was recovering and had hopes of soon returning to his work in the Historical Department. But a complication of kidney and heart trouble set in and he began to decline. Friends who called at the pleasant little home, No. 304 South Marshall street, saw the change and many feared that he would not survive. In delicate health for many years, Mr. Aldrich's sickness seemed to undermine the foundations of life and on Saturday night, with his faithful wife at the bedside, and attended by a competent nurse he sank into unconsciousness. He remained in this condition for several hours, lingering until Sunday morning, when at the hour mentioned above his soul took its flight.

The message of death soon spread over the city and caused a deep sadness to all. Many of the pioneers here who knew and loved Mr. Aldrich and who cherished this friendship beyond all others hastened to the home and offered words of sympathy and condolence to the widow. Mr. Aldrich was more than a citizen of Boone—he was Iowa's grand old man and as such brought fame and distinction to Boone. His work in the legislative halls, in the printers' shop and in Iowa's Historical Department, brought him prominently before the nation as one of its most useful citizens, and yet he retained his home in Boone and spent much of his time here, with the friends he made in the pioneer days. Thus the city bows in deepest mourning over the death of this good man."

Private services were held at the home in Boone, where he had resided for the last seventeen years, at 2:30 Tuesday afternoon, conducted by the Rev. S. M. Wilcox. The remains were then taken to Des Moines, where they lay in state in the rotunda of the Historical Building and where public services were held Wednesday afternoon. Thursday, under charge of Col. G. W. Crosley, a full military funeral was held at Webster City, his old home. The Grand Army Post, of which he had been a member since its organization and the local company of the National Guard were in charge. The funeral exercises were held in the beautiful Kendall Young Library and interment took place by the side of his first wife.

#### MEMORIAL SERVICE IN HISTORICAL BUILDING.

At the request of Governor Cummins, Mr. E. R. Harlan, Acting Curator, took charge of the arrangements at Des Moines. The public services in the Historical Building, commemorative of Mr. Aldrich's character and career consisted of a program of prayer, poem and addresses of which a verbatim report follows. Chief Justice Scott M. Ladd, of the Supreme Court of Iowa, presided:

*Judge Ladd:* The service this afternoon will open with prayer by the Rev. A. L. Frisbie, during which the audience will please rise.

*Dr. Frisbie:* Almighty God, our days are but as an ended breath but thy years have no end. Thou art the everlasting father as well as the almighty ruler. We bow reverently before thee. Our lives are in thine hand and thou art over the destinies of all men. We give thee thanks for thy great goodness, and that thou hast given to our state so many good men, men who could be enamored of high ideals, men who cared for the things they thought right and just, men that have given themselves with their best thought and their extreme consecration that they might bring about the things that ought to be. And now to-day, while we remember so many men who have been largely useful to our commonwealth in its earlier days as well as to-day, we especially remember him that this building commemorates. He passed his life in this our com-

monwealth. He has become so large a part of its history that is to remain. For all that was in him brilliant and conspicuous, for his devoted patriotism, for his intelligent plans and wise endeavor to bring about worthy things, for his faithful consideration of the needs of our people in the days that are to come in providing for them that careful repository of the histories that have been made—the individual and the community and the state histories that have been making in Iowa, for all that he has been as a patriot and a teacher and a wise leader in so many ways, we give thee thanks, acknowledging that the gift of a good man is one of thy great gifts. And now, our father, we pray that thou wilt grant blessings upon those who were dear to him, who were nearest to him, blessings upon those who have been associated with him during these many years prosecuting plans that were for the welfare of our state. Give us all, we beseech thee, such understanding as we need for our lives as they finish. We pray for thy blessing upon those who were with him in early days of peril and strife when he with others went forth to do what might be done to save our Union. We give thee thanks for these men. We pray thee that thy blessing may be also upon our state and upon those called to high places and responsibilities, that they may have wisdom, and courage and strength for all duties that come to them so that all that pertains to our public life may be clean, inspiring and helpful for the days to come. Accept our thanks we beseech thee, grant the wisdom and health and safekeeping to fit us for the hard work to come, and teach us all, we beseech thee, and our children, patriotism and pure-mindedness and high exaltation of character. Help us to teach these things that there may come after our generation passes, a generation brave and strong and courageous and pure, equal to the best things; equal to the bearing of high responsibilities. So, oh Lord, save the commonwealth of Iowa. Amen.

*Judge Ladd:* We have come together this afternoon to show our respect and pay our tribute to the memory of Mr. Aldrich, and to commemorate in a brief way his services rendered to society and the State. He was born in 1828 in

the state of New York, so that if he had lived until October next he would have attained the age of eighty years. He began life as a journalist in New York and later in 1857, founded the Webster City *Hamilton Freeman*, of which paper he continued the editor for many years. Later he engaged in farming. He was for four sessions of the legislature chief clerk of the House of Representatives. In 1882 he was a member of the lower house of the General Assembly from Hamilton County. Later he became a member of important commissions, and in 1892 was appointed curator of the Historical Department. But while it may be said with truth that he performed his duties and rendered excellent service in all the various occupations and vocations in which he engaged, I believe it will be conceded by those who knew him best, and knew the most of his career, that his great work in life was in creating and establishing the Historical Department of Iowa, and it may be said that this department and this building in which we are now assembled are monuments to his memory which will continue long in the future. He was an example of what a man of high ideals and persistent industry may accomplish in the world. It has been thought well this afternoon to separate somewhat in the addresses to be made his various occupations, and we will first listen to that concerning the occupation in which he first began life, that of a journalist, by Mr. Lafayette Young, editor of the *Des Moines Capital*.

MR. ALDRICH AS A JOURNALIST.

*Mr. Young:* Mr. Aldrich delighted in newspaper work. The atmosphere of a newspaper office was enjoyable to him. He never lost interest in journalism. Up to the last year of his life he was a frequent contributor to the newspapers whose editors he knew intimately. Like all writers who have advanced to the editorial work from the printer's case, he was a man of few words. He disliked surplusage. He had no patience with long drawn out statements. He wanted it boiled down. He had contempt for shams and no mercy upon hypocrisy. He wanted a man to say what he meant and mean what he said. During his active career as a journalist he

carried on numerous wordy controversies, but never struck below the belt. He was a fair fighter. His opponents often times said he was unfair, but it was because they were getting the worst of the argument. His desire to reach the ultimate facts as quickly as possible gave him an air of impatience. And as years passed his manner became that of a critic, in some measure. Yet he had seasons of the most enjoyable serenity. He never lost his love for nature. In the early spring he felt the old mood coming over him and at such times he would write editorials on the oncoming grass, the budding trees and the birds. He never forgot the birds. He felt that he was a committee of one every spring to give them a written welcome.

When I came to Des Moines eighteen years ago to publish a newspaper, Mr. Aldrich used to give me editorials on his favorite topics, pertaining to nature, the seasons and the state of nature that comes with the seasons. In giving me one of his productions he would invariably say, "Here is something I have written; if it is not good enough to appear as an editorial, do not use it at all; I do not want it to appear as a communication." During a period of ten years he was thus a frequent contributor to the editorial columns of the *Capital*. Some of his writings were widely copied and credited to the newspaper in which they appeared. I called his attention to that and told him that the people were giving me credit for writing the good things produced by his pen. He said he did not object to that. "Some time," said he, "you may do the same thing for somebody else, and thus the situation will be evened up."

I remember once he wrote a long account of a contest or pitched battle between rival tribes or families of ants in some part of a public street or alley. He described the sanguinary contest as only he could. His descriptions were unique and easily comprehended. His report of the battle of ants was reprinted in many eastern journals, much to his delight. His descriptive powers were excellent. His manner intense. By the use of words he could place a landscape right in your view. He could describe the fields of growing corn in a way that would cause the reader in his

imagination to see the rich, green spectacle. He was as careful with every inconsequential paragraph as with a larger production. He was critical. His ear was trained. He could detect an improper use of words readily and could suggest a better one; one to bring out the meaning more emphatically. He grew away from the drudgery and routine of journalism into the work of the pamphleteer and historian. He felt that every good Iowa man at his death ought to have something good said about him, and he appeared oblivious to criticism that might be offered relative to the life of a man who had done many good things and a few wrong ones.

I had known Mr. Aldrich thirty years. During twenty years past I had known him intimately. Our relations were confidential and trustful. He was provoked that I did not see him oftener. He charged that I had lost interest in his work. He had a lingering fear during his later years that something would happen in a political way to put him out of the cherished work of his life. I told him such a thing could not be possible. I told him the State would do him honor at his death and that I believed he would be permitted to remain in charge of his work until his end should come. He used to grow impatient because appropriations did not come fast enough. But his later years must have been gratifying. He did his best work during the past ten years—even his best literary work. When he felt too old to write he formed the habit of dictating and thus kept his literary labors up. He enjoyed his work until the last.

I remember when he was editor of the *Marshalltown Times*. I remember distinctly his special work on the *Chicago Inter Ocean*. It was on the *Inter Ocean* he began to demonstrate his miscellaneous talent, his writing on subjects outside of politics. From that period on he began to think along the lines of advancing the material interests of the State as relates to agriculture, and the moral and intellectual interests as furthered by education. Through long years of intense study and investigation he became a learned man, fit to associate with scientists and those informed on technical lines.

He met the best informed men of colleges and universities, even scientific men, on their own level and could add something to the discussion. His mental growth was constant. His fund of knowledge widespread, covering every field. While interested in facts, he was not unmindful of the delights of imagination and fancy. He loved good poetry and had no patience with any other kind. He loved good books, but had more patience with poor books than with poor poetry. Every event, every happening, every discovery, every song, every story, every human being, interested him. He took the world for his field. Wide travel and discourses with the leaders of thought had made him a cosmopolitan. He had the indefinable quality which we call comradeship. With his kindred spirits, he was a delight. He had hatred for every wrong—love for every good. His sympathies for the distressed were sincere and led him to do many noble deeds of which there is no record.

In his death journalism has lost a distinguished co-worker. In life the world and its history were an open book in which he could daily read. In death, we believe, he has simply gone to the higher life for which his good life here was a preparation. The State rightly honors such a man. Future generations will enjoy the results of his labors. He had a thought, an aspiration, and through painstaking years he carried them forward to their culmination. He established something for the benefit of his fellow-men. He created a place, a quiet corner where the Iowa citizen of the future may resort to inform himself relative to the labors and trials which resulted in creating a great State.

MR. ALDRICH AS A LEGISLATOR.

*Judge Ladd:* Mr. Aldrich was a member of the Nineteenth General Assembly but I take it that as a friend and counselor of legislators he accomplished more in the interest of legislation after he was curator of this department than ever before. Upon Mr. Aldrich's services as legislator we will now hear from Col. Warren S. Dungan, ex-lieutenant governor of the State.

*Colonel Dungan:* At times like this the lips may open, but

words cannot express in full measure the emotions of the heart.

In the presence of death the billows of passion are lulled to repose. We know that a great change has taken place, but we cannot realize that a beloved face and form has vanished from our sight to be seen no more on earth.

These feelings and emotions are as varied as the characters and lives of the persons themselves. When a good man dies; when a beloved friend and noble character departs, the dark clouds of sorrow which nature spreads over us, are illumined by a silver lining which, in part at least, dispels those clouds, and the benediction of their lives comes to us to alleviate the poignancy of our sorrows and compensate our griefs.

Such was the character of our beloved Charles Aldrich. To-day the State of Iowa is in mourning at the loss of so eminent, so highly valued, and so public spirited a citizen.

You, my fellow-citizens, are present at these obsequies to honor the memory of one so near and dear to our hearts, "Our hearts are in the coffin there." We call it death. "He is not dead, but sleepeth." He has rent the veil which separates Time and Eternity, and has entered upon the new birth of immortality.

I come to speak to you to-day of one of the nearest and dearest friends of my life. I first became acquainted with Charles Aldrich in the year 1862, forty-six years ago. He was then chief clerk of the House of Representatives of the Ninth General Assembly of Iowa, while I was a member of the Senate of the same session. He had held the same position in the Eighth General Assembly in 1860. So efficient was he that he was chosen to serve in the same capacity in the years 1866 and 1870. The friendship then formed has been strengthened in all the intervening years.

Our next official association was in the year 1882, as members of the Nineteenth General Assembly, he representing Hamilton County and I Lucas. As a legislator he made the welfare of the people his constant guide. He was a hard worker, as well in committee as in the House. He mastered



the details of legislation, and thus became a very efficient member.

In that session he introduced and had adopted the preparation by the chief clerk of a daily calendar of bills and resolutions, to be placed on the desks of members each morning, and such calendar has been in use by every subsequent legislature, and it has been a very efficient means of facilitating legislative business.

Early in that session, on the 19th day of January, he introduced a resolution asking the legislature to inquire into the question of free passes on railroads to public officials, and to abolish the same. This was the first proposition on that subject ever presented to our legislature. Afterwards, in the same session, he introduced a bill to abolish free passes, and in the same bill he proposed the reduction of passenger fares on the railroads in Iowa. The bill on final vote was defeated, the vote standing thirty-five to sixty-one.

He was the first to propose to abolish free passes and for the reduction of passenger fares. His wisdom and foresight are seen in both measures.

Twenty-four years thereafter, the Thirty-second General Assembly adopted both measures, and Mr. Aldrich lived to see the adoption of measures he had so long before initiated.

He also took an active part in introducing and advocating many other measures of importance, some of which were at the time enacted into the statutes of the State and all of which have since been adopted by subsequent legislatures. Among these were bills to prevent the sale of adulterated food; for relief of the Des Moines River land settlers; for the publication of the Acts of the Legislature in the newspapers of the State, for the information of the people, all of which point to him as a wise, prudent and sagacious legislator, one of that splendid class of legislators who have, by their wisdom, contributed so much to make Iowa one of the grandest in the galaxy of States of which the Union is composed.

He has erected his own monument, more enduring than granite or marble shaft. We shall miss his smiling face and

the generous welcome, "Glad to see you," when we enter this Hall of History. We shall all miss him! sadly miss him! Let him ever live in our hearts and memories.

There is no death! the stars go down  
To rise upon some other shore;  
And bright in Heaven's jeweled crown  
They shine forevermore.

There is no death! the choicest gifts  
That Heaven hath kindly lent to earth  
Are ever first to seek again  
The country of their birth.

They are not dead! they have but passed  
Beyond the mists that blind us here  
Into the new and larger life  
Of that serener sphere.

And ever near us, though unseen,  
The dear immortal spirits tread;  
For all the boundless universe  
Is life—there are no dead.

MR. ALDRICH AS A SOLDIER.

*Judge Ladd:* Mr. Aldrich was a veteran of the civil war and never lost interest in that conflict or in its survivors, or in the historical accuracy of the conflict. His closest and most intimate friend for many years is here to-day to speak of him as a soldier and patriot, Colonel George W. Crosley of Webster City.

*Colonel Crosley:* From the commencement of the war of the rebellion, to the date of the organization of the 32d regiment of Iowa Infantry Volunteers, in September 1862, Charles Aldrich, the founder of the *Hamilton Freeman* at Webster City, Iowa, had, through the columns of his paper, earnestly advocated the cause of the Union. Actuated by an earnest and sincere feeling of patriotism, and gifted with great ability as a writer, his articles denouncing treason and rebellion, and appealing to his countrymen to go forth in defense of the government, had been widely quoted. He was thus doing yeomen service as one of the leading journalists of his adopted State, in arousing public sentiment to the necessity of re-

sponding to the calls of President Lincoln for more troops.

The loyal sons of Iowa had continued to fill up the ranks, as regiment after regiment was organized, and yet, as the magnitude of the great rebellion came to be more fully understood, it became evident that the number of soldiers in the Union army was inadequate to successfully combat with the tremendous forces arrayed against them.

At this, and later stages of the gigantic struggle, there were many notable instances of men, whose patriotism and love of country, far exceeded their physical capacity to go forth to battle in its defense. Charles Aldrich was one of these notable men. Had he remained at home, and continued to uphold the cause of the Union, as he had so nobly done from the time the war began, no loyal man or woman, would have felt that he was not rendering as faithful service to his country, as were the men endowed with the necessary physical strength to supplement their patriotic ardor, and enable them to endure the hardships of a soldier's life, in camp, upon the march, and in battle.

The time had now come, however, when this man of slender physique, but lofty courage, was unable to longer control his ardent desire to actively engage in the defense of his country as a soldier. He proffered his services to Governor Kirkwood, who promptly gave him a commission as First Lieutenant and Adjutant of the 32d Iowa Infantry. He at once closed his printing office, suspended the publication of his paper, bade adieu to his wife, and entered upon the discharge of the duties of his office, with great zeal and energy. His superior intelligence, and intense application to the study of military tactics, soon enabled him to become proficient, and his regiment owed much of its rapid progress in drill and discipline, to its capable and energetic Adjutant.

The earlier records of his regiment show the minute and careful manner in which the important duties of its Adjutant were performed. He was possessed in a marked degree with the true military spirit, and had he been permitted to serve to the end of the war, would no doubt have won the distinction as a soldier which he subsequently achieved as a citizen. The archives of the office of the Adjutant General

of the State of Iowa, contain his brief record of honorable military service. On the 3d day of July 1863, he was promoted to the rank of Captain, but he declined to accept the commission, for the reason that the duties of a line officer involved greater physical exertion and hardship than he was capable of enduring. He continued to serve as Adjutant until the following winter, when, admonished by failing health, he reluctantly resigned. His order of discharge reads as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
*Washington, Jan. 28, 1864.*

Special Orders, No. 39.

First Lieutenant and Adjutant Charles Aldrich, 32d Iowa Volunteers, having tendered his resignation, is hereby honorably discharged from the service of the United States.

By order of the Secretary of War,

E. D. TOWNSEND, *Ass't. Adj't. Gen.*

He has often said to me, that it was one of the greatest trials of his life, to be compelled to sever his relations with his comrades in arms. It had been his earnest desire and ambition to be able to serve his country to the end of the war, and if need be, to demonstrate his devotion by the sacrifice of his life. But, there was yet patriotic and noble work for him to do, and from the time he left the army, his ability as a writer, was employed in behalf of the men who interposed a wall of fire between his country and her enemies, and when at last, the white winged dove of peace hovered over our beloved land, he was among the first to exert all his power and influence in behalf of the soldiers who survived, and of the widows and orphans of those who had died, that their country might live. He had worked for long years to secure the enactment of a law that would insure the preservation, for all time, of the record made by Iowa soldiers and was identified with the compilation of the military history of the State at the time of his death. The people of Iowa fully recognize the great service he has rendered them, in preserving the historical treasures of the commonwealth, and to provide a fitting place for the safe-keeping of these priceless treasures they have erected this splendid building, which stands in its dignity and beauty as an enduring monument to his mem-

ory. He was an honored member of the patriotic societies of the Grand Army of the Republic, and the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States.

It was my good fortune to have been long and intimately associated with him, and as his friend and comrade I offer this simple tribute to his memory as a soldier. Brave, gifted, and noble Soul, hail, and farewell.

MR. ALDRICH AS A MAN OF CULTURE.

*Judge Ladd:* Mr. Aldrich did not enjoy the advantages or the possible disadvantages of a college education, but, nevertheless, because of his great learning Iowa College conferred upon him the Master's degree. One of those who first became interested in his work in preserving the memorials and data for history was the Hon. J. A. McCall, who will now address you on Mr. Aldrich as a man of culture.

*Mr. McCall:* Keenly conscious of my own limitations it is with no small degree of embarrassment that I arise in this presence to address you on the subject which the honorable gentleman presiding has announced. But I have known from my boyhood the man whose silent, pulseless form lies before us under the beautiful dome of this great historical building with which his name will ever be associated.

He was the lifelong friend of my father and in later years as my own acquaintance with him extended, I learned to hold him in affectionate regard and veneration and on this solemn occasion I could not remain silent when called upon to speak however inadequate and unworthy may be my treatment of the theme assigned me.

Mr. Aldrich's early educational opportunities were limited to a course of study in an academy in his native State. He was never graduated from a college, but after he had attained middle age a noble educational institution of our own State did honor to its name as it honored him by conferring upon him the Master's degree in recognition of his learning and labors in intellectual fields.

The lack of educational advantages in youth constituted no discouragement to Mr. Aldrich. Endowed with a vigorous mind of keen perception, quick grasp and unusual retentive-

ness, he was by nature a student possessed of an avidity for knowledge that knew no satiety and in this devotion to learning he continued to the close of his life—"hiving wisdom with each studious year." But he was not a mere theorist and student of books. He was a close and intelligent observer of men and things and in a long and interesting career engaged in different spheres of activity he became rich in the practical wisdom of experience. He came to this State when it was a new land and the vast expanse of its sparsely settled and untilled prairies seemed to the human vision as wide and wild as the sea and in actual contact with its hardships and vicissitudes he acquired an intimate knowledge of pioneer life. In the great heroic contest for the preservation of the Union he rendered the patriotic services as a soldier, so eloquently related by Colonel Crosley, and as a participant in that tremendous conflict, saw and faced the terrible and tragic realities of war.

Of the career of Mr. Aldrich in the field of journalism and of his distinguished services to the State in its legislative halls, and on important expeditions and commissions, and of his great work culminating here in this magnificent edifice with its contents of immeasurable value to this and future generations, others far abler than I have spoken or will speak to you to-day. Let it suffice for me to say that from these labors of surpassing value to the public the pecuniary reward to Mr. Aldrich was small—only a very modest living. But of this he did not complain. He was content with the reward that came to him in ripened experience, enlarged knowledge of men and affairs, and, far greater than all else to his altruistic nature, in the privilege conferred upon him of rendering a service of enduring importance to the State and its people.

In Mr. Aldrich's nature there was an innate refinement, a rare susceptibility to the beauties of nature and of art and a discerning taste that enabled him to discriminate in the estimation of historic, literary and artistic values and it was because of these qualities that the work of his later years possessed for him so great a fascination. He sought that enlargement of the intellectual horizon afforded by travel. Our own

country with its scenery of varied and entrancing beauty he knew well; he visited our great west and traversed its vast mountainous regions amid scenes of rugged grandeur and wild and savage sublimity. He crossed the sea and traveled through old historic lands whose stately monuments and imposing ruins impress and stimulate the mind till the imagination reaching back across the centuries resurrects and re-peoples the mighty past and revives the glories of ancient days. He visited the great museums filled with the relics and treasures garnered from all lands and times. He wandered through splendid galleries and saw the masterpieces of art collected and preserved through centuries. He lingered in libraries old and vast in which are stored the accumulated wisdom of the ages.

In the course of his public services and in his travels he became personally acquainted with many illustrious men both in the old world and the new—prelates and dignitaries of the church, politicians and statesmen of renown, men eminent in the domain of science, and the most famous contributors to the literature of the last half of the 19th century. If the possession of a mind enriched by long years of persistent study and patient research—broadened and cultivated by public service, travel and intimate association with distinguished men and leaders of thought—a mind animated by splendid purposes and cherishing lofty ideals—devoted to the beautiful in nature and art and ennobled by the serene consciousness of high duties well performed—constitutes culture, then indeed was Mr. Aldrich a man of rare culture.

His physique was never robust and in recent years seemed very feeble, but in that frail tenement there dwelt an indomitable spirit and an unconquerable persistency in the accomplishment of the mandates of his will. He was unostentatious, unassuming, gentle and suave in manner, but underneath the mild exterior there was that "triumphant adamant of soul \* \* the fixed persuasion of success" and his finished life is crowned with the glory of his achievements.

#### MR. ALDRICH AS A CONSERVATOR OF HISTORY.

*Judge Ladd:* As is true of every new enterprise, Mr. Aldrich met with considerable impatience on the part of the leg-

islators and people when he first established the Historical Department, and this was somewhat true of some of the trustees who had been appointed on the board, although later the trustees became profoundly interested in his work.

One trustee who has served longer than any other member of the board, became profoundly interested in what Mr. Aldrich was doing, and I think Mr. Aldrich had great confidence in his counsels, and I know that his counsels were of great assistance to Mr. Aldrich. Judge H. E. Deemer will speak of Mr. Aldrich's work as a conservator of history.

*Judge Deemer:* With a journalist's quick intuition for the pictorial and suggestive qualities in the conditions and events of the day; a keen apprehension of the economic and sociological problems of his time, which made him a progressive and efficient legislator; an ardent lover of State and of Country, which prompted him to courageous and patriotic sacrifice and service; a natural refinement and a ripe culture, which were sources of strength and of solace in his declining years, and the highest ideals of duty and of virtue in private life, Charles Aldrich, the founder and curator of the Historical Department of Iowa, will nevertheless be remembered chiefly because of his work in collecting, collating and preserving Iowa historical data, material and incidents.

For more than twenty years he devoted his time, his thought and his energies to this work; and beginning with a single case filled largely with an autographic collection, occupying but a few square feet in the Library proper, he lived to see the practical completion of this magnificent building with its priceless wealth of material—a most fitting and lasting monument to his memory.

This institution is his creature; his child, and being childless he cherished it with something akin to parental affection. And like the child of the body this building sustained and supported him during the latter years of his life. With mingled feelings of apprehension and of pride, he watched the builders as they progressed, seemingly unwilling to trust his offspring until secure from storm and strife; but with the building practically completed and his desk removed to its



permanent office, feeling that his plans were secure, his policies approved, and his labors appreciated, he for the first time in a long, eventful and useful life seemed ready to answer the summons which had been so long deferred.

It has been said that Iowa has no past, and consequently no history. Measured in years it is indeed young. Two generations have here builded an incomparable empire; a commonwealth unexcelled in all that counts for greatness and for strength; and the richest heritage, that we of the second generation have received is the example, the record, and the history of the one gone before. As States and Nations count time, it may be that we have no past; but we do have a history. Some one has said that "every home has a history—even a peasant's hut." And so it is that Iowa although but an infant in the family of States and of Nations, has a most eventful, a most fascinating, a most pregnant, and going back to the aborigines, a most romantic history.

What memory is to the individual, history is to the human race; and without these there can be no progress either in the one or the other. It was Carlyle, I think, who said, "my father's life is the sunken pillar on which my life rests." It is this memory, this history if you please which distinguishes mankind from all brute creation.

Iowa like every other community has its legendary; its traditional history; and if one be seeking for the fabulous or the miraculous, he may find it in the chronicles of the Red Men, here so carefully gathered and preserved. From these annals some modern Cooper, with better perceptions of real life among this aboriginal people will write a new series of "Leather Stocking Tales," and give us a finer and grander conception of that childlike race, coming from God knows where, which lived and loved, suffered and sorrowed and here on these western plains worked out their ultimate destiny.

The advent of the white man, the Spanish explorers—half historic and half traditional,—the French regime, the Voyageurs, the appearance of the Jesuits—those faithful men of God,—of the fur traders, and the coming of the early pioneers, each and all of these furnish a rich setting for another series of "Waverly Novels," which shall bring to our comprehen-

sion such an America as Scott gave to his native country.

And then the early settlers, the men who came to find fortune, to establish homes, and to found a State. The men and women of the first generation so rapidly disappearing, who formulated our great institutions, and launched the Ship of State. Our historical collection gathered by Mr. Aldrich is rich in the details of their migration, and in the record of their hardships, their privations, and their toil, awaiting some Homer to put in words a splendid and stately epic recounting the heroic achievements of these sturdy pioneers.

Mr. Aldrich was by nature and by training pre-eminently fitted for gathering these legends, traditions, fragmentary histories and biographies, and for collating, arranging and fitting them for future use. He had the true historical instinct, and a correct knowledge of historical values. He thoroughly appreciated the importance and significance of his work, was entirely impartial, cherished no partisan or political bias, always recognized ability wherever found, was fair to his opponents, charitable in his estimate of men and of measures, and consistently and persistently accurate in all his statements. And as a result every man or woman who has had anything more than the ordinary to do with the building of our State, or its institutions, has received just recognition at the hands of this department, and in most instances their biographies may be found among the archives here preserved for future times and generations.

Time will not permit a recount of Mr. Aldrich's labors as a collector and conservator of Iowa history, from its legendary and traditional stages to the present; or of the many branches of his work, and surrounded as we are by the external evidences thereof it is unnecessary to do so.

His labors while already appreciated, will constantly grow in value and the magnitude thereof increase with the coming years. Deep and strong were the foundations laid and upon us rests the duty of completing the superstructure.

Charles Aldrich was indeed the Conservator of Iowa History.

## MR. ALDRICH AS A CITIZEN.

*Judge Ladd:* But after all the greatest encomium that can be pronounced on this man is that he was a model citizen of the state and of the republic and exemplifies the highest type of citizenship. Governor Cummins will speak on Mr. Aldrich as a citizen of Iowa.

*Governor Cummins:*

It only remains for me to take these beautiful, impressive and pathetic tributes and bind them into one offering. For a man who has been faithful as a journalist, patriotic and courageous as a soldier, learned, cultivated and refined as a man, one who has perpetuated the history of his commonwealth, one who has discharged with a high fidelity his duties as a legislator, must be a good citizen. I never stand by the dead body of a great man or of a friend but that there comes sweeping into my mind that verse so loved of Lincoln:

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,  
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave;  
Man passes from life to his rest in the grave.

I quote these verses in order that I may venture to dissent from this sentiment. As I think upon the life of this man, who lies so silently before us, with his work all done, with a life so loyal, and so full of accomplishment behind him, it seems to me that there is every reason why the spirit of mortal should be proud. Who is there here who has known Charles Aldrich, but who is proud of his place in the world, proud of an acquaintance with his kindly nature, proud of an association with his richly furnished mind. Every man ought to be proud who has fulfilled the destiny, or mission, or duties of life as this man fulfilled them. It is only the laggard, only the coward, only the shirker, only he who refuses to accept the responsibilities of life, who ought not to be proud of mortal man.

I don't know about the future. I care not whether we be orthodox or whether we be sceptics, or whether we be agnostics, I cannot part the veil that divides time from eternity. I don't know into what joys this man has entered, but I know, and you know, that whatever there is in the future preserved

for righteousness, for goodness, for virtue, for loyalty, for courage, for patriotism, this man is now enjoying, and therefore it seems to me, that this hour ought not to be a sad one. I know how the heart is torn and charged with grief because we never again will take his hand or look into his eyes, but after all he has simply ushered himself into another life, and he will live that as splendidly as he has lived the one that he has left behind.

I have known this man for thirty years. I cannot speak of his work as a journalist; I cannot speak of his accomplishments as a soldier; but I do know the real passion of his life, and although it may not be pertinent wholly to the subject which has been assigned to me, I can not refrain from referring again to the real victory of his long and sometimes bitter contest. I know he was a great writer; I know he was a faithful soldier; I know he was a learned man; but it is not for these things that the people of Iowa will longest remember him. There have been other great journalists, there have been other faithful soldiers; there have been other learned men—but he has done something for the people of Iowa single-handed and alone, greater in its conception, vaster in its performance, than has often come to a citizen to perform. My friend Judge Deemer has suggested that possibly Iowa has no history, no past. She has both a past and a history. The pioneer days of Iowa are the most wonderful days Iowa will ever see. They were crowded with deeds as patriotic and as brave and as self-sacrificing as ever will be recorded upon the pages of the history of mankind. The first generation was passing away, and the recollections of men were becoming dim, and those who carried these materials in their minds were fast passing to the other shore, and there seemed to be no man in our whole commonwealth who was willing to recover and to preserve for future generations the history of the early days of our commonwealth. But this man gave his life to that work, gave it during many years without any compensation whatsoever, and during the latter years for so inadequate a compensation that every citizen of the State ought to blush when he remembers it. There are a great many men who could collect the history of Iowa, a great many men

who could gather together the materials with which the State was rich and overflowing, but our people were indifferent, our legislators turned deaf ears to his importunities. This man had not only to gather the historical material of our commonwealth, and of its early days together, but he had to awaken a public sentiment that would require our General Assembly to authorize him to devote his life to that work.

There is no other tribute, as it seems to me, so resplendent as the one which is laid here when you see that he undertook the task of lighting the fires in your minds, a man that disclosed the value of the work that he asked to do. I remember him well as year after year he pressed his attention upon the General Assembly, I remember how coldly and how indifferently they received his original representations; I know, and you do, how many pretty good people called him a crank, called him a fanatic with respect to the work the evidence of which you now see all about you. He was a crank, but he turned the State until it thrilled with interest in the labor of his life, and without regard to the magnificence of this monument which is his work, without regard to the splendor of the material which he has collected, the credit of all of which is due to him, the vastest thing that he did for us was to make us willing—make us willing—that he should erect this monument and collect and preserve these materials for a future age. That marked him as one of the great men of the time. There are only a few men who can become absorbed in a passion of that kind. There are a great many good men who devote their years to the welfare of their fellow-men, but there are only a very few men who are willing to take up some such work as this, and let it absorb all their thought, all their knowledge, all their strength, without knowing the end, whether there will be victory or defeat.

And so in the six years that I have been in constant and intimate association with this dear dead friend, I have learned not only to respect him, not only to value and appreciate his great mental and moral equipment, but I have come to know that he is one of the great souls of the earth, who has been willing to devote his time not in the leadership in a cause in

which the people was already aroused and interested, but in the leadership of a cause that he himself was compelled to create, and as the chief executive of the State, I pause at this moment to lay upon this casket a tribute of the deepest love and affection and appreciation for his life and for his labor. In every relation to his fellow-men he was true, in every work to which he committed himself he was faithful, and I believe with those who have gone before me that he held his spirit amongst us against the assaults of disease and the attacks of weakness, I believe he held himself here just so that his eyes might rest upon the building and its rich and splendid collection, which had been the object of all his mature years.

*Judge Ladd:* I take it that most of you read in the morning paper the beautiful and appreciative poetic tribute to Mr. Aldrich, and I know of no better or more appropriate way of bringing this program to a close than by listening to Major S. H. M. Byers read this poem in the presence of the dead.

CHARLES ALDRICH.

*Major Byers:*

"Tis finished now—the hall, the dome;  
But listen there, a sudden knell,  
A voice that calls the builder home,  
He too has finished—all is well.

Fate willed that he should live to see  
A crown on yonder work he led—  
Yet dying, dream not there would be  
A greater still upon his head.

No evanescent glory his,  
Time will increase the fame it lent,  
And Truth, that never walked amiss,  
Will make these stones his monument.

Here is the Past—he gathered far  
What patient genius only can,  
The storied tale of peace or war—  
The story of the life of man.

Look round you well; a hundred years  
Are gathered in these walls of state,  
The record of the pioneers  
Whose toils, whose genius, made you great.

Here long he labored, toiled and thought  
Where Past and Present sadly meet  
'Till, one bright morning there was brought  
The message—"Come, it is complete."

Sing on sweet birds, he was your friend,  
Of all sweet things of earth or air,—  
The sylvan woods, the river's bend,—  
Where beauty was, his heart was there.

Gone is the soul that longed to know  
The future, strange, and vaguely dim—  
The darkness of an hour ago  
Is as daylight now to him.

Who now would call him back again,  
The faithful one forever kind?  
He lived, he loved, he died, and then,  
Left only love and good behind.

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