

MRS. MARTHA J. LAMB.

This distinguished woman died at her residence in New York City, on the 2d day of January last. Few persons are able to win such proud literary distinction, or confer such substantial service upon the historical annals of their day and generation, as resulted from her labors. Mrs. Lamb was born in Plainfield, Mass., August 13, 1829. She was thoroughly educated in the higher English branches, especially distinguishing herself in mathematics. After her marriage to Charles A. Lamb, in 1852, she resided a few years in Chicago, where she became well known from her abounding and sympathetic charities, as well as from the fact that she was Secretary of the Sanitary Fair of 1863, the success of which enterprise was largely due to her management. In 1866 she settled in New York City, thenceforth devoting her attention chiefly to historical literature, though she wrote some short stories and novels. Her most voluminous as well as most successful work was the "History of New York City," which was published in two ponderous, copiously illustrated octavos, in 1877-81. This was a new departure in that field of literature. It was a wholly original work and the most complete history of a city ever published. In the language of one of its reviewers—"a marvel for a man, a miracle for a woman." It took the highest rank of any local history wheresoever published.

In another direction her labors were quite as distinguished and more generally known to the public. We refer to the "Magazine of American History," of which she became the editor in 1887. This work, under her management, became a marked success, and is known in every State in the Union. Not only had she secured a corps of able contributors throughout the Union, but in every number of the magazine, for months in succession, the leading article was from her own pen. These writings were either in history or biography. Her articles not infrequently ran up to twenty or thirty pages, aside from her other editorial work in the preparation of each

monthly number. Her useful life was no doubt shortened by overwork. In her list of contributors she counted Hon. T. S. Parvin, of Cedar Rapids, the late Hon. A. R. Fulton, of this city, Hon. Irving B. Richman, of Muscatine, and others in our State. She was a capital converser, bright and witty when she chose to be—a person who left the pleasantest impressions upon all who met her—a rare woman, “of her gentle sex the seeming paragon.” She lived in the New York Hotel, and though proprietors had come and gone, she retained the same rooms—surrounded by her rare and precious books—from the time she settled in that city, until her lamented death.

THE EVOLUTION OF A PUBLIC DOCUMENT.

There has been placed upon our table a bright and beautiful Iowa book of 208 pages, which seems to deserve appreciative notice in these pages. We refer to the “Iowa Official Register, 1893.” An effort was made as long ago as 1860 to secure the publication of a legislative manual, largely a book of statistics, after the style of many of the older States, but the Legislature declined to print the booklet, even though its preparation was to cost nothing whatever! That this determination was a mistake, we do not believe any well-informed person would to-day question. But the initial point in this work was attained in 1864, when Hon. James Wright, then Secretary of State, printed upon cards or loose sheets of paper the vote for the heads of the State tickets, giving also the population of the different counties. Only a limited number of copies, however, went into circulation. Succeeding Secretaries pursued much the same plan up to 1886, when the “Official Register” began to appear in its present form, though much smaller in size. In 1881 Hon. J. A. T. Hull, then Secretary of State, had issued a very diminutive pamphlet of 32 pages, containing lists of the Executive and Judicial Officers of the State and the Trustees of public institutions. The size of the printed pages was but $2\frac{1}{4}$ by 4 inches. Possibly in length it was one-sixteenth of an inch longer. It was a very small

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