

ANNALS OF IOWA.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

A PRELIMINARY NOTE.

In the field of historical collections and historical work our State has been very peculiarly situated. About the time of the removal of the Capital to Des Moines, a State Historical Society was organized at Iowa City, in the belief, no doubt, that it would flourish under the shadow of our great University. Possibly it might have done so to the extent that brilliant success has attended like efforts at the capitals of Wisconsin, Kansas and other Western States, but one single and simple element always necessary in every such undertaking was lacking. That there were brains enough and culture enough in the Iowa Historical Society to secure magnificent success, no man of information will for a moment doubt. The only thing lacking was money adequate to its support and the fair and logical development of its aims. This was never granted by the Legislature. Why not, we will not now attempt to set forth. Suffice it to say, that "the sinews of war" were withheld. As a result of this lack of support the State Historical Society has only accomplished what the hard work, personal generosity and self-sacrifice of a few of its individual members, none of them wealthy, brought to pass. For this they deserve unstinted praise, for they kept alive that element of patriotism which manifests itself in seeking to preserve the annals, memories and personal relics and mementoes of ancestors—those who laid the foundations of the State and later defended the integrity of the nation on bloody fields. Then, in their contributions and collections, more than any others—far more than those who enjoyed the emoluments of office—have they preserved nearly all of our early written and printed records now in existence. For these excellent and fruitful labors they deserve and should ever receive the gratitude of our State.

So far as publications are concerned the record of these men is one to which those who come afterward can always point with pride. In 1862 they founded, and continued until 1875, "*The Annals of Iowa*." This was a quarterly magazine of distinguished merit, and within its pages may be found more facts relating to early Iowa than can now be gleaned from all other existing sources. Its contents were made up for the most part of the recollections of leading men who had borne a part in the transactions which their pens delineated or who had known the men and women of whose good deeds they therein made a record. The regular publication of this very excellent work was suspended in 1875, solely for lack of adequate support. It was, however, revived in 1882, by Rev. S. S. Howe, and continued until the close of 1884. Hon. A. R. Fulton, of this city, was associated with him in its editorial management in 1883-84. Typographically "*The Annals*" was a beautiful magazine. It was plainly but very neatly printed, and for the most part each number contained a fine steel portrait of some distinguished Iowa man. Volumes of this work have become very scarce and command high prices. Many of the numbers are now difficult to obtain. Some of them, indeed, are in demand at \$5.00 each. As it looks now, the policy which cramped and finally let die so excellent a work is not to be commended. It is one, however, which quickly consigns its own authors to the oblivion in which they would bury the memories of all who have gone before. Finally, in the year 1885 a new publication, appearing quarterly and called the "*Iowa Historical Record*," was projected by the Historical Society. It is carefully edited by Dr. Frederick Lloyd, and is a publication which eminently deserves a remunerative support. Each number contains fifty pages, and is illustrated with a portrait of some distinguished Iowan. But its outside support is unfortunately most meager and the State has done very little to keep it in existence.

But while pecuniary support must be had to insure the development and continuance alike of historical magazines and historical collections anywhere, it would seem that this can be secured more easily and naturally at the Capital

than at any other point. At Iowa City the great University constantly needs and demands appropriations. What it asks is really a necessity of the times and of our theories and systems of public education. But such large demands in one direction tend almost invariably to silence those in every other. This we believe to have been the prime reason why the State has not adequately supported the State Historical Society and its meritorious work. It is a result of circumstances and not one to call for the censure of any man or men. We believe no one will deny that the Capitol is the proper place for a historical collection. People are daily arriving here from all parts of our State. They naturally expect to see a great library, works of art throughout the edifice, collections illustrating our growth and progress, relics and mementoes of our pioneers and the heroes and heroines of all our wars. Nothing more delights the average tax-payer than a magnificent Capitol building well filled with collections in these various directions. Evidence of this is a matter of every-day occurrence.

The collections in our Capitol were started in 1884 in a very unpretentious, humble way. They were continued wholly at private expense until 1890. True, two cases for their preservation had been furnished out of the funds for the construction of the Capitol, and in 1888 the Legislature appropriated \$1,000, from which two other cases were built. In 1890 the sum of \$3,000 was appropriated for this work. In 1892 the present law was passed under which the sum of \$7,500 was appropriated for the present and next year. After that the appropriation is at the rate of \$6,000 per year. Under this law collections are rapidly accumulating. There is a constant necessity for some means of communication with the people of the State, as well as of interchange with other States and Societies. Offers of "Our Publications in Exchange for Yours," are constantly coming to the Historical Department of Iowa; and unless some work like this should be promptly issued the State would be in the end greatly the loser. Through its pages, and by reason of its influence under proper management, it is believed that additions in value far exceeding its cost can be easily and regularly secured. These views were

presented to the Board of Trustees at the last meeting. That body by a unanimous vote decided that this effort should be made, and the first number is now before the reader.

It was, however, deemed judicious to retain the name, "ANNALS OF IOWA," and accordingly the right to use it was secured from the owner of the copy-right at Iowa City. In reviving the publication it will be our aim not only to fill its pages with the best articles we can obtain upon all topics of Iowa history, but to render it as useful as possible in building up the Department of History now in the first year of its organization in our Capitol. We enter upon this work with much misgiving—with the deepest regret that this work had not been commenced under able and zealous management forty years ago—but with the determination to make our labors as valuable as possible to the State.

ORIGIN OF THE HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT.

Allusion has elsewhere been made to this subject, but it has seemed to be a very proper thing to present, in the initial number of the new "Annals," a brief history of this work. In the year 1884, Mrs. Aldrich and I presented to the State, through the trustees of the State Library, a simple Autograph Collection, proposing, if it should be placed in cases in the Library, and properly cared for, to make further additions to its contents, as well as to illustrate it with portraits of the celebrities represented, adding also sufficient biographical data. This offer was accepted. In due time a case was made, and later on another, from funds appropriated to furnishing the edifice. But no one else was willing to undertake to arrange the materials in the cases. I was therefore compelled to come to Des Moines and do this work myself, or let the enterprise fall to the ground. We also continued to make additions to the Collection, both by purchase and solicitation. In 1888 the two cases were filled to overflowing, and two more were needed. The Legislature that session put an item in the

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