

county auditor, together with such further sum as may be deemed necessary to create a sinking fund to pay the interest under the provisions of Chapter 18, Acts 22d General Assembly, and acts amendatory thereof. The board is required each year to make report to the council for the year ending June 30 of the number of books in the library, the number circulated, the number not returned or lost, the amount of funds collected and of money expended in the maintenance of the library during the year, together with such other information as the board may deem important. Heretofore it has been left to the city council to determine within the limit of one mill on the dollar what amount should be appropriated for library purposes, and in many instances the appropriations were so meager as greatly to cripple and embarrass the libraries.

Another act confers upon all cities of the first class power to levy a tax of not exceeding three mills on the dollar to pay any existing indebtedness or that may hereafter be contracted for the purchase of real estate and the erection thereon of a public library building or buildings, and to create a sinking fund for the extinguishment of and paying the interest upon such indebtedness. Heretofore this authority had only been conferred upon cities of the first class, organized subsequently to 1885.

This most commendable legislation, which places it within the power of cities and incorporated towns to secure libraries, and manage and protect them, was largely due to the timely efforts of Col. C. H. Gatch, of Des Moines. His experience in connection with the Public Library of the Capital enabled him to determine what was needed in this direction. This legislation is a great step in advance of the mixed condition of things which it supercedes.

AN IOWA DOCTOR "IN THE FIFTIES."

The Historical Department has frequently been placed under great obligations by Dr. J. W. Shafter, of Keokuk, for valuable contributions. This gentleman has himself been highly dis-

tinguished in this State, for, perhaps, forty years. He has occupied a seat in the State Senate, where he became very well known as one of its foremost men. Away back when the State Fairs were held at Clinton, he was Secretary of the State Agricultural Society, in which laborous capacity he added to his well-earned reputation as physician and senator. He is also a well-known writer, not only for medical periodicals, but for the general press, in which useful work he is always able, clear and incisive. He has given much attention to the natural history of Iowa, and is himself a skillful taxidermist. His collection of stuffed birds and small mammals is doubtless the largest ever made in our State. This, with rare liberality, he has presented to the Public Library at Fairfield, which enterprising little city was his first Iowa home. These collections are worth several thousand dollars. Dr. Shaffer is one of the men of Iowa who has left foot-prints upon its history which will endure for many generations. In addition to his other and various works, he has kept a daily journal during all the time he has been a medical practitioner. Possibly some future antiquary may unearth this interesting mass of manuscripts, and publish to distant times what will throw a flood of light upon the medical history of the last four decades of this century.

But it was not of Dr. Shaffer that we intended to speak more particularly in this article. Among the books which he has sent to the Historical Department is one containing two volumes of "The Western Medico Chirurgical Journal." This periodical was issued in Keokuk, the first number being dated September 1st, 1850. The first article related to the *post mortem* examination of a case of Rheumatic Carditis. This case was one which excited considerable interest in the locality of Croton, Iowa, in which it occurred. Samuel Reed, a laborer, aged 23, had died under circumstances which to the general mind, indicated malpractice. Considerable excitement had arisen in consequence. The deceased had been ailing some time and had been treated by a general practitioner. But he fell into the hands of a traveling quack who administered large

-doses of lobelia. This resulted in severe vomiting, "followed by distressing hiccough, which harassed him until his death, an event which took place a few days afterwards." The quack contended that, "if he could obtain permission to make a *post mortem* examination, he could demonstrate to the citizens of Croton that mercury had occasioned his death by developing an inflammation of the intestinal canal." A *post mortem* examination, therefore, occurred about 12 hours after death. This easily settled the mystery as to the cause of death. It was found that the man's heart was enlarged to about twice the usual size. Of course, this removed all the mystery in the case, and justified the treatment of the man's regular physician, allaying the excitement which had most unjustly sprung up in the neighborhood. This case is written out with considerable minuteness, and appears as the leading article in the first number of this "Western Medico-Chirurgical Journal." The point of greatest interest to us, however, is the fact that it was written by John Forrest Dillon, M. D., of Farnington, Iowa. This young doctor soon, however, gave up the practice of medicine and studied law. Years afterward he was elected to the Supreme Bench of this State, serving at last as Chief Justice of Iowa. Those of our readers whose recollections run back 20 years or more will understand that we refer to Judge John F. Dillon, who at one time was one of the most prominent jurists in the West, the author of many useful volumes in the literature of the law, and now famous as the leading attorney of the Union Pacific Railway. He has attained a reputation which is almost world-wide in his profession as author, lawyer and jurist, results which would scarcely have been predicted at the time he wrote out this interesting case of Rheumatic Carditis. For many years he has also been one of the leading lecturers in Columbia College Law School, one of the most famous institutions on either side of the Atlantic. His great work on corporations is an accredited authority in England. We shall be greatly disappointed if this "quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore" fails to furnish topics for other articles quite as interesting as this has proven to the writer.

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