

the bequest so that our collections become the final repository for this great memorial canvas.

Upon his last visit to the Historical Department General Dodge was shown the apartment in which we proposed to assemble his materials as a Grenville M. Dodge memorial. The architectural features were discussed and their preparation left with the approval of General Dodge to his friend, the eminent architect, Emanuel L. Masqueray. The proposed method of treating the vast manuscript collections and the publication features were broadly canvassed. Soon after the death of General Dodge our Board of Trustees approved the plan of the Curator for the memorial room and the policy of publication, and appointed as a committee thereon Judge Horace E. Deemer and the Curator.

The death of General Dodge occurred on January 3, 1916, that of Judge Deemer on February 26, 1917, and of Mr. Masqueray on May 26, 1917. The general outlines for both the structural and literary features of the memorial were rapidly taking shape when the loss of these two advisers came. But when the whole country turned its attention to the war our own department awaited more settled conditions to take up and complete its work on the memorial of General Dodge. Recently we have received the final portions of the great collection. More than a million items of written and printed matter not only bearing upon, but indispensable to the understanding of western industrial, political and military subjects of greatest importance are now assembled. Plans for their final repository and use will be ready to be announced in the ANNALS in an early issue, and their completion will, we believe, be in full compliance with the letter and spirit of the great bequest of General Dodge.

BLACKSTONE ON PRESERVING HISTORICAL MATERIALS

Sir William Blackstone, in Vol. II of "Law Tracts." published at "Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, M. DCC. LXII." presenting "the Great Charter and Charter of the Forest, with other Authentic Instruments: to which is prefixed An Introductory Discourse, containing The History of the Charters," explains how

the original parchment manuscript of the charters happened to remain in existence in his time. His works are no more pertinent to the history and the principles of English common law than are these words commendatory of the traits of such as Charles Aldrich, which resulted in the founding and promotion of Iowa historical collections in our own institution. Blackstone says:

New as this account may appear and unnoticed by all our historians, except very imperfectly by Tyrrel, it is however incontrovertibly confirmed by the original charter itself now preserved in the Bodleian library at Oxford; from which the following copy is very carefully and exactly printed. This charter is in breadth seventeen inches, and in length (including the fold for the label) twenty three. It has the following endorsement on it in a cotemporary hand, *Magna Carta Caps. xiiiij de Lanc. te.* which seems to have been a mark denoting the capful or drawer, wherein it was deposited at the abbey of Gloucester, to which religious house it is thought to have once belonged. In a somewhat later but very ancient hand it is also thus endorsed, *Carta H. regis de libertatibus magne carte H. reg. avi nostri. Registratur W at.* There still remain affixed to it by parchment labels the seals of Gualo the legate and William Marefcall earl of Pembroke, the former in white wax, the latter in green; both which are exhibited with their several imperfections in the plate, page 71.

This invaluable piece of antiquity was bequeathed (among others) to the university of Oxford by the late reverend Richard Furney, M. A. archdeacon of Surry. And it were much to be wished that all gentlemen, who are possessed of similar curiosities, would follow so laudable an example, by placing them in some public repository. The collecting and hoarding of antiquities, which, when confined to private amusement and self-satisfaction only, are too justly the object of ridi-

cule, would then be of singular advantage to the public. However, we may congratulate the present age on the prospect there is of seeing the paths to these hidden treasures made sufficiently easy and commodious, not only by the immense fund of ancient learning which the wisdom of the legislature has amassed together and deposited in the British Museum; but also by a plan which has long employed the attention of the noble and honourable trustees of the Radcliffe library in Oxford, for transferring to that august edifice all the MSS which are at present the property of the university, and appropriating it for the future to the reception of MSS only: a design, which will exhibit in one view, and preserve with the utmost security, that inestimable treasure which now lies inconveniently dispersed; will give room for the daily accessions of printed books to the Bodleian library; will perpetuate, by a proper arrangement, the memory of former benefactors to letters, and be the means of exciting new ones; and will in the end do the highest honour to the name of the munificent founder, by stamping a peculiar and most useful character of its own on that noble structure, which it ever must want if considered only as a supplement to former libraries. How far this plan will be adopted, is not hitherto fully determined; yet it cannot but seem an auspicious omen, that the ample first-fruits of doctor Radcliffe's endowment have been lately applied with the utmost propriety to the purchase of M. Frazer's very curious and numerous collection of oriental MSS.

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