

ANNALS OF IOWA.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

EARLIER HISTORY.

In the leading article of this number of *THE ANNALS* Prof. Samuel Calvin, of the State University, who is also our State Geologist, presents a most interesting outline of the Glacial History of our State. It has been well known that Iowa was within the region covered in remote times with great sheets of ice; but that it passed through so many vicissitudes as those set forth by Prof. Calvin has not been known to or surmised by even the most advanced specialists in that field of exploration. Many of the facts set forth in this paper are new and now published for the first time. They have been developed in the most recent work of the Iowa Geological Survey, and point unmistakably to farther discoveries and to wider extensions of knowledge in that direction. Another paper of interest and value might be written upon "What the Glaciers have done for Iowa." This would show how our soil of unsurpassed fertility was made from primordial rocks, which were ground into fine sand and impalpable powder by the great ice sheets which covered our State and regions farther north during untold centuries. It would show how great bowlders—some of which found their way into the structure of our magnificent State Capitol—had been torn from their parent ledges in the far north and brought thither. In fact, no portion of the geological past has so largely influenced the present as the Pleistocene period, the one treated in this admirable paper. The present courses of the rivers, so large a factor in the location of cities and towns, the rapids at Keokuk, the character of our present plant life, and many other important results, are all due to so called "accidents" of the glacial period. The copper nugget mentioned in the article as the gift of Col. Warren S. Dungan to the Historical Department, has had "a strange,

eventful history." Its migrations under the great sheet of ice are fully set forth. Since it was exhumed from the spot where its long slow journey terminated, it has become an object of interest far beyond our State. It attracted much attention in the New Orleans Exposition of 1884-5 and has been mentioned in popular and scientific publications at home and across the Atlantic. It will always be regarded as one of the most interesting souvenirs which have come down from glacial times.

This paper from the facile pen of Prof. Calvin is not only a wonderful revelation of natural phenomena and scientific knowledge, but everything is clearly set forth in popular language which all may understand. As an original contribution it possesses great value, and we bespeak for it the reader's careful consideration. It likewise demonstrates that the Iowa survey is making distinct and valuable additions to the knowledge and literature of geological science.

The drift series of Iowa is probably the most complete in America, and in many respects the beds are most advantageously situated for study. In no field probably has the recently established Iowa Geological Survey made more notable contributions to science than in the study of the drift—and in no portion of the United States has so much significant work upon these beds been done in the last two years as in our own State. The results have included the discovery of a new and hitherto unsuspected drift sheet, and a complete new classification of the deposits. Professor Chamberlin of the University of Chicago, the highest American authority on glacial phenomena, after visiting Iowa in company with various members of the local Survey, fully accepted the work, and in a recent editorial in the *Journal of Geology* abandons the classifications he had himself proposed some time since, and accepts the new. The full details of the Iowa work have not yet been published, but will appear in future volumes of the State reports. Not even a good general summary of the results had been published when at the request of the Editor of THE ANNALS Prof. Calvin prepared this paper.

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