

August meteors and a comet called comet III, of 1862. The almost necessary conclusion is that Temple's comet is only a November meteor of unusual size, and that in general the distinction between comets and meteors exists only in respect to their magnitude. In the meteoric stream laid down on your diagram, place Tempel's comet then at a point a little forward of the center, and you will have figured before you the ultimate conclusions thus far reached in the investigation of the November star shower.

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NOTICES.

HISTORY OF JOHNSON COUNTY.

Captain Irish concludes in this number the history of Johnson County. All in all it is an excellent history. Personally we can judge of the merit of that portion descriptive of the early settlement, only by its style and apparent fairness. Old settlers tell us that it is essentially correct.

Of course there is much omitted in its narrative portions, which would have given to it additional interest for the general reader. Many amusing sketches of frontier life have been left out; many exciting scenes of the intensely earnest transactions of those days have not been described; many mirth-producing incidents which have been recounted a hundred times by the cabin fireside of the settler, are still unwritten. Entertaining as these would have been to such who came later, and are consequently unfamiliar with them, there are serious objections to their introduction.

First. This class of history would have extended the work to a very great length, compelling its continuance through many future numbers of the ANNALS, or requiring more space than our crowded contributor's list now permits.

Another and the paramount objection is, that with the greatest of care injustice is liable to be done. For there is scarcely a story of interest of those times that its point or zest does not consist in the fact that some person has been made the subject of a depreciative practical joke; the butt of ridicule; or his character compromised.

These parties still live, or their friends are here, or if dead, their memories have become dear; covered and redeemed a thousand times, by the good which after circumstances developed in them, and which won them the after respect and love of their neighbors and fellow citizens. To transmit then these foibles or mistakes which made them the subjects of jest or criticism for the passing hour, to the future, for the simple sake of giving an enhanced entertaining quality to the work, would have been unjust.

We have no authority for saying that such were the motives which induced the author to withhold the numerous anecdotes with which he is so successful in entertaining his hearers in social intercourse; yet we can readily understand

history how an honorable sensibility may have interdicted them, and that only of essential transactions has occupied his pen; and we are gratified at the elevated tone which has characterized all these papers and the evident care to guard against any statements which should do injustice or unnecessarily hurt any whose record has been given: For we do not forget that in the strifes and competitions of new settlements, there are jealousies and antagonisms aroused as well as friendships formed and cemented; and bitterness of feeling engendered which lasts often through a life-time. Imbibed in youth, strengthened and confirmed in mature life, and going down with its possessor into its decline, marring that harmony of social intercourse, which would render more pleasant the re-unions of the aged pioneers; and that Johnson County, the ancient seat of Territorial and State government, which, as such, afforded tempting openings and rich perquisites to be struggled for by ambitious and enterprising aspirants;—the public arena for the exercise of political management, intrigue, and *finesse*;—the centre of a surrounding rapid settlement and development, and hence of sharp conflicting interests, has not been free from the struggles usual to these formative stages of all communities, which have left their marks in the breasts of our pioneers.

The author, in early life an active partizan, a leading citizen, a positive character, has not escaped the impress to which we allude, and we deem it creditable as the prompting of a high sense of honor and justice that he has put behind him all personal incentives which might otherwise have colored his representations, and has dealt with entire ingenuousness in his statements. !

The author has conferred a favor upon the county in writing its history which it will not, we apprehend, be slow to recognize and appreciate. The pioneers of the county are growing few in number; death and removals are thinning their ranks, and of those left among us he only could be persuaded to undertake the task, without which, so far as any progress made in that direction was a basis for expectation, it would have gone unwritten by any of the men who *know* its history. Trowbridge, Felkner, Spurrier, Switzer, McCrory, and others, persistently declined to accept the invitations which, in various ways, were extended to them, to place upon record the recollections of their youth, and gather and group the incidents of the settlement and growth of the county.

Stepping forward at this stage, and working his way amid the disadvantages of the night of physical blindness with which he is surrounded, the author has industriously committed his memory to writing, and gathered with much labor and great patience compilations of facts, dates, and events, which he has sketched in a style characterized by an elegant simplicity, and in English creditable for its purity.

The concluding article published in this number possesses superior merit. Added to its historical incidents are geographical and topographical descriptions of the county, and also the prominent features which mark its geological formation, all which evince careful research and accurate knowledge of the topics upon which he writes, and renders this chapter of enhanced value. All in all, it is a valuable and excellent history.

IOWA COLONELS AND REGIMENTS.

Captain A. A. Stewart, author of the above named work, is canvassing for the sale of the remaining copies on his hands, fifteen hundred in all.

We believe that all the works written concerning the rebellion have proved pecuniary losses to their authors, unless the larger and general works of Greeley, Headley, Stevens, and a few others, may have proved remunerative. All those of a local character, of whatever excellence, have been pecuniary failures thus far, and for obvious reasons: The limited territory in which they have a special interest for their readers, and within that limited territory the limited class of persons who feel a special interest in reading the scenes they describe, to-wit: The soldiers, whose deeds they record; for outside of these, there is no special demand manifested for reviews or descriptions of the great war which once thrilled the heart of the nation—do not afford a sufficient demand to make them remunerative. Therefore the fact of failure, as a pecuniary investment, is no index of the merit of a local history of any portion of the army or country.

Several excellent works have been written pertaining to the part which Iowa took in the rebellion. Among them that of Captain Stewart is of the best. It is compact and yet minute in its details of important transactions; truthful in its representations, accurate in its figures, judicious in the selection of its important points with which to develop the most important parts performed by the subjects of his sketches; and free from that fulsome laudation of particular persons so noticeable in most works of the kind. This abstinence from wholesome praise may have been carried too far; we think it has. We would have been glad had he said more in praise of some, or omitted a few disparagements of others. But there is a difficulty in the way of indulging in the laudatory vein without running into wholesale flattery, and an impossibility of indulging in the latter and still be a truthful historian. It is a significant commentary on the impartiality of this history, that every officer whose history is written, with one exception, is of the opinion that his services have been understated. This is natural enough; for each individual, looking back upon his career, from his own stand-point, sees a thousand minor features which governed his action which are veiled from the historian, and weighs his services by their intrinsic merit, and not by comparison with others; while the historian estimates his man by weighing him with a hundred others, equally as brave, good and skilful, and hence to make one conspicuous would be unjust to others, and to laud all would be so neutralizing in its effect as to be of doubtful value to any; and hence the fact of the dissatisfied feeling of all, evinces, we think, that his work has the merit of candor and a desire to do justice by all. His style of writing is elegant, his language pure, and his descriptive talent fine.

In the sale of the book he has combined the sale of one thousand dollars worth of property, of which the purchaser of the book becomes shareholder of one of fifteen hundred shares, the property to be at the disposal of the stockholders. This is certainly a novel enterprise, and one which is proving productive of rapid success. It is a work worthy of success without resort to such aids, but that it has not been, we trust the author may realize handsomely from this entirely honorable and honest recourse for increasing inducements for its purchase.

OUR PUBLISHERS.

We deem it but justice to say respecting the Publishing House which prints the ANNALS, that the delays which have attended the issues of several numbers, are not to be attributed to it; that the responsibility of delay rests with others, and as between them and us, we assume it.

Although it has always lain back of us with parties or circumstances which we could not control, we are willing as a convenience, to avoid explanations too lengthy to be given and not at all interesting, that it may rest at our door.

The enterprising house of LUSE & GRIGGS has been prompt when required.

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA.

The annual meeting and election of officers of the State Historical Society occurs the evening of the first Tuesday of December. The value and importance of this organization to the State, demands that special attention be given it by the State's best men. Especially now that it has been placed under its fostering care, drawing largely from its treasury for the advancement of its objects, no effort should be spared to make it all in its every feature that such an organization ought to be, by bringing out all its powers of usefulness in its special field of labor.

To do this, men competent for the peculiar work at home, and in every other part of the State; men who have taste and qualifications for the special work it contemplates; men of historical antecedents, as the makers of the State's early history, and who carry it in their memories unwritten; men who through their historical studies and acquirements are enabled to rise to an intelligent appreciation of its significant purposes, and the proper methods of best promoting them; prominent men of culture, whose names would give it dignity and whose encouragement by participation in its active work would command for it a more general attention and increased respect, ought to come forward and give it a helping hand.

The Society numbers among its members many of the State's eminent citizens, but who unfortunately for it, usually find it inconvenient to attend its meetings or give active work in its official positions. It is very desirable that such should take a more lively interest in its meetings and proceedings, and give it more active aid.

Kindred societies of the older States are carried on by their very best and most prominent citizens. From them distinguished scholars, historians and statesmen derive additional honor, and through them, contribute additional usefulness by active membership. The names of Everett, Prescott, Adams, the Winthrops, Andrew, and others of national fame, appear among those who were once their prominent members, who were most regular attendants upon their meetings and active participators in their proceedings; giving willing labor in filling the official chairs, and thought a journey to any portion of the State not too long to attend an anniversary, or the labor well bestowed that gave to it the special preparation of a paper or an address. And the membership lists of these Societies still shows the names of Bancroft, Lowell, Adams, Holmes, Longfellow, Holland, Dana, Cushing, Emerson, Whittier, Bigelow, Hale, Draper, Parton,

and others, among their active members, of the highest renown for culture and leadership in every intellectual walk of life. To men of this class in our own State, has the Society, as well as the State, a right to look for countenance and active work in forwarding its objects.

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA.

The State University has commenced its Winter term with favorable prospects. Its classes are large, its chairs are full, and its departments all established.

At the June meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Law Department of the University was established; and at the September meeting of the Board, the Medical Department was established.

The chairs of the Law Department have been filled with the following named gentlemen: Judges Geo. G. Wright, C. C. Cole and W. G. Hammond. A class is now being instructed in this department.

The Board also at its last meeting appointed a committee to select competent persons to fill the several chairs in the Medical Department.

By the time of another meeting of the legislature, every department will be fully organized, and the institution will stand before the people of the State and the world in an attitude it has not before—that of a *University*.

Gradually, we presume, will the inferior departments, to-wit: The preparatory and normal, be separated from it, and then the University will walk forth on its mission, unincumbered, the pride of all the people.

EDITORIAL REMARKS.

RETROSPECTIVE.

The present number closes two years of service as Corresponding Secretary of the State Historical Society, and ex-officio, the Editorial management of the *ANNALS*.

We make the retrospect with something of satisfaction, although conscious that it has not reached the highest point of success which, in our aspirations, we would have had it attain. But in view of the difficulties in the way of success, much, very much, has been accomplished; and it is in view of this, rather than the success which might have attended in a field of labor unhedged by peculiar difficulties, that we look upon results with the satisfaction we feel.

We took charge of the *ANNALS*,—for it is of it that we now especially propose to speak—when it was a forty-eight page tract; we gave it attention, care and labor, pushing the objects of the Society, and foraging in all directions for the historical records and reminiscences of the State, with a persistence not justified by the fact of compensation or the encouragement of co-operative labor of any. We turn it over to our successor, if called upon to turn over, a work of the magazine proportions of one hundred pages and upwards of original matter, and promised contributions from nearly every portion of the State.

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