

SOME WORDS OF THE PRESS.

IOWA HISTORICAL BUILDING.

In the presence of men who have aided in making and of those who are making history for Iowa, the Corner-stone of the Iowa Historical and Memorial Building was laid Wednesday afternoon, with conditions, surroundings, spectators and exercises most appropriate. The men who took part in the exercises have been prominent in the growth of the State from the beginning of statehood, men who helped make the first laws for the State, men who were pioneers of pioneers, and some of them could close their eyes and look back to a day when a fort would have been much more appropriate on the site of this new building. This new structure is a great credit to Iowa and her people, and when all of the original plans are completed no western state can boast of its equal. We have been a bit lax in the preservation of our history in the past, and it is very pleasant to see that we have reached the day when we are beginning to think of such things as we should, and as our high state of civilization demands. The preservation of history saves nations and peoples from degeneracy, and the lessons and experiences that come down to us from other days tend to show us a way to a higher and better civilization. But some way or other our lawmakers were unable to see this for many years, but finally, when Curator Charles Aldrich of the State Historical Department, the father of the magnificent structure which is to grow from the foundations now laid, secured the appropriation for the purchase of a site, many a member voted it a foolish move. The beginning has been slow to come, and the one wing of the great building, the corner-stone of which was laid Wednesday is not large, but there is a great deal in the mere beginning and we hope and believe that the legislatures of the future will see the light and make it possible for the consummation of more than the present plans.—*Des Moines Register*, May 18, 1899.

It has been a reproach to the civilization of western America that so intent have we been with the present, so satisfied with the hour and its blessings or so engrossed with its duties and responsibilities, that we have had little time to look forward and none to look backward. If the Chinese have erred too far in the direction of ancestor-worship, we have erred almost as much in the other direction. It is certainly time for our western people to realize this and to gravitate toward that happy medium wherein we will not sacrifice to one portion of time to the exclusion of all else—wherein we will pay due respect to each of that trinity which constitutes eternity—past, present and future. All this is prefatory to a few remarks commendatory of the spirit of yesterday's ceremonial in Des Moines. By the order of the State (certainly it is a well considered expenditure) funds have been provided for the beginning of the erection of a structure which is to be specially devoted to the housing and the preservation of all that has been or is or is to be worthy in the life of the commonwealth. In a modified form we are to have our own pantheon wherein we may set images of our fellows who may deserve extraordinary recognition because of their service to the State—our own museum for the gathering and display of those things which have regard to memory and which should not be forgotten. We are to have a sort of Iowa Westminster Abbey without the interments—a kind of French academy with a more democratic form of election.

This edifice, largely the result of the enthusiasm of the Hon. Charles Aldrich fertilizing the sterile and inert general assembly, without doubt will exert a persistent influence for good. It will not be a spectacular influence, nor one that will be proclaimed from the housetops, but in unseen, and almost unnoticed ways it will generate an indirect influence which will affect the life of the State. An altar has been built on the western prairie to remembrance, and the generations yet to come will lay their sacrifices thereon and rise refreshed from the inspiring contact.—*Des Moines Leader*, May 18, 1899.

The event crowns years of persistent, intelligent and devoted work by Charles Aldrich. He began years ago to solicit the legislature and people of Iowa to preserve the history of the State, its relics, mementos and memorials, its writings, records, memories of its men and women. It was uphill work because Americans are so busy with today that they scarcely care to remember yesterday. The historic habit had to be made in Iowans and Mr. Aldrich has done more to this end than any other man. He is fortunate in living to see the fruition of his work.—*Keokuk Gate City*.

The laying of the Corner-stone of the Iowa Historical Building at Des Moines today will be an event of much interest to the old settlers throughout the State. It is an establishment which is certain to grow in interest with the years. Already many records concerning the early history of Dubuque have been deposited with the curator because Dubuque has no institution equally accessible into whose custody these could be given.—*Dubuque Times*.

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