

changes which have taken place in Iowa in the last fifty years, are all in the right direction and are indicative of the good time coming when all wildernesses and all solitary places shall be made glad, and all desert places will blossom as the rose."

Cordially your friend,

HON. CHARLES ALDRICH,
Des Moines, Iowa.

H. PRICE.

PROF. W J MC GEE, SECRETARY UNITED STATES BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY.

WASHINGTON, May 2, 1899.

MY DEAR SIR: Your invitation to aid in laying the corner-stone of the State Historical building awakens sentiments normal and proper to a native of Iowa. These sentiments may be expressed through a brief retrospect.

Those who have studied deeply the physical and moral and intellectual forces of national development realize that western Europe was the chief theatre of human activity three centuries ago; they recognize, also, that the vigor and intrepidity characterizing that region and concentrated in the isles of Great Britain and Little Britain grew out of the combination of the blood and the knowledge of the strongest tribes and half-formed nations recorded in the history of the world. The Angles and Celts of the islands, the invading Saxons, the Normans and Gauls of the mainland, the Danes of the Peninsula, the Vikings of the far north, and the early Romans of the far south, were among the peoples whose blood was blent and whose intelligence was commingled to form the parent stock of the American colonists and pioneers. It is little marvel that the offspring of such stock were able to erect a new nation on a new national theory; and it is little marvel that this nation should have outstripped all others in the material and moral progress of the century now closing.

Already the strongest stock of humanity then living, the American pioneers were yet further strengthened by the exercise of pioneering, and their extension over the Atlantic plains, the mountains beyond, and then over the broad interior was a succession of conquests over savage tribes and over hard nature, a like conquest of the most inspiring sort. The character of the land found reflection in the character of the people, who increased in rugged strength of body and mind, and grew broad and generous and free as their own magnificent woodlands and plains. Nor were the people all alike; two human streams flowed westward over the land, mingling slowly as they passed—the Puritan stream of the north and the Cavalier stream of the south; and, as they met and merged, each stimulated and invigorated the other, much as the ancestral tribes of Britain were fortified in blood and knowledge by intermingling. Some strife was engendered by the contact, especially over differences relating to land tenure; one of the northernmost of these land feuds had western Dubuque county for its scene, and my own kinsmen among its actors; yet, despite the antipathies sometimes created, the general effect of the commingling of the human streams was to strengthen character. The two streams, representing between them the strongest character the world had seen, commingled in Iowa more completely than in any other commonwealth; the consequences may be seen on every farmstead, in every town and village, in the unequalled diffusion of education, in a splendid capitol building, in the halls of the nation's councils, and in the concentrated intelligence represented by the idea of a permanent Historical building.

Some Iowans forget the true place of their commonwealth among the states of the Union; they forget that in general diffusion of education their State leads the country; they forget that in homogeneity of culture and in equitable distribution of wealth their State stands alone in the foremost rank; they forget that in the shape of national policy two states—the border State of Maine and the central State of Iowa—have dominated law-making, and that, within three years, the interior State has outstripped its only rival in determining the nation's career. If the commonwealth of Iowa be viewed from the standpoint of Washington or Franklin or Jefferson, so nearly as their ideas can now be judged, it can but be regarded as the ideal State—the commonwealth without class distinctions, the home of free institutions in their perfection, the population leading all others in equably distributed moral and intellectual strength—the real Stronghold of the Republic:

As a citizen of the State, I heartily congratulate my fellow-citizens on this fresh manifestation of their greatness; and, in so doing, I cannot but note the eminent fitness of this last mark of their enterprise to their own peculiar character.

I have the honor to be, yours cordially,

W J MCGEE.

HON. CHARLES ALDRICH,
Des Moines, Iowa.

HON. JOHN F. DILLON, EX-CHIEF JUSTICE OF IOWA.

NEW YORK, May 10, 1899.

DEAR SIR: I esteem it a great honor to have been invited by the Executive Council of the State of Iowa to be present at the laying of the corner-stone of the Historical Building by Governor Shaw on Wednesday, May 17, 1899.

I deeply regret that preengagements in court and distance will prevent my being present on that interesting occasion. Words can scarcely express how much I should enjoy seeing once more the venerable and eminent Mr. James Harlan and listening to the address of the distinguished Mr. Kasson. All who were concerned in laying the foundations of the great State of Iowa may well rejoice for themselves and their descendants in the great work which they did, and they will hold you in perpetual remembrance for your ceaseless and well-timed efforts to preserve the memorials of the beginnings, progress and history of Iowa.

Very sincerely yours,

JOHN F. DILLON.

CHARLES ALDRICH, Esq.,
Des Moines, Iowa.

HON. IRVING B. RICHMAN, EX-CONSUL GENERAL TO SWITZERLAND.

MUSCATINE, IOWA, May 10, 1899.

DEAR MR. ALDRICH: I have received your kind invitation to attend the exercises in connection with the new historical building, and regret that I shall not be able to be present. I should like to hear Mr. Kasson's address, and to join in the congratulations to you on the realization of your hopes and plans. The entire credit is yours.

Cordially yours,

IRVING B. RICHMAN.

HON. ALVIN SAUNDERS, AN IOWA STATE SENATOR IN 1860, GOVERNOR OF NEBRASKA,
U. S. SENATOR, ETC.

OMAHA, NEB., May 15, 1899.

I desire, my dear sir, to return my sincere thanks to you for the kind invitation you have sent me to be present at the laying of the Corner-stone of the Iowa Historical Building, at Des Moines, on the 17th inst. I am very slowly getting over a strong struggle or battle with the grip, which has lasted me all of the latter part of the winter, and for awhile hoped I might be able to come to the meeting; but I see it plainly now that I will not be able to come. I know I would meet with many old friends there, and among these you say ex-Senator Harlan is to preside and Hon. John A. Kasson is to be the orator of the day. These men are my acquaintances and friends and have been for almost half a century—how glad I would be to see them with the others!—but I must submit to the inevitable, and must content myself with wishing you all a joyful and pleasant time.

With great respect I am very truly your friend,

HON. CHARLES ALDRICH,
Des Moines, Iowa.

ALVIN SAUNDERS.

HON. SAM. M. CLARK, M. C.

KEOKUK, IOWA, May 15, 1899.

MY DEAR ALDRICH: I congratulate you upon the success of your efforts. You have earned your triumph. I wish I could be with you, but I cannot.

Yours truly,

S. M. CLARK.

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