

LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT.

Every lover of books and libraries who has noticed the trend of events must have viewed with pride the rapid development of libraries throughout our State during the past ten years. Several causes have brought this about, as the increased general knowledge of books and their uses, the necessities constantly arising for their use, and the ever-increasing demands for good reading in homes and in schools for works of reference. Then, we have fortunately had several people in Iowa who were constantly urging the formation of libraries and doing all in their power to create a love of books. Among these we always take pleasure in naming Mrs. Ada North (now deceased) for ten years State Librarian, and nearly an equal period Librarian of the State University, who often wrote ably and convincingly upon this favorite theme; Hon. Theodore S. Parvin, first territorial librarian, and the founder of the great Masonic library at Cedar Rapids, who has often written and spoken in this behalf, and Capt. W. H. Johnston of Fort Dodge, who was lately rewarded for his arduous and effective work by his appointment as President of the Iowa Library Commission. And "there are others" who have rendered quieter but none the less efficient service in this direction. It has also come to be known that there is no direction in which men who have been blessed with fortunes can so sensibly bestow their accumulations, when their lives are nearing their close, as in the foundation of libraries. There are already many conspicuous instances of this kind, as in Webster City, Fort Dodge, Grinnell, Boone, Des Moines, Fairfield, Davenport, Burlington—and doubtless many more. Others will follow these splendid examples. Another most encouraging result of this movement is the greater liberality of our state legislatures in making provision for the establishment of libraries, rendering it easier for those so disposed to proceed with these good works. Much more might be said upon this subject

but from what has already been accomplished there can be no doubt that the next decade will witness an increase in libraries and library interests in Iowa which has had no precedent in the past. This will be an ample reward for those modest but persistent workers who have kept their faces steadily to the front, even from the days of small things when progress seemed almost imperceptible.

THE POCKET GOPHER.

This little rodent (*Geomys bursarius*) is one of the most curious of the animals which originally existed in our State. While it may be many years before it becomes extinct in Iowa, our observations lead us to believe that its numbers are yearly diminishing. This is due to many causes, the chief of which may be the fact that all the conditions of its existence have been changed by the settlement of the country. Then, it is well known that it is injurious to meadows and often to fruit trees. It piles up heaps of earth and gravel in the meadows, especially the clover fields, to the great injury of the mowing machines, saying nothing of the hay destroyed, and it often eats away the roots of orchard trees. A tree will occasionally fall to the ground when examination will show that its roots have all been devoured by the pocket gopher. The damage thus caused leads many farmers to destroy them by means of poison or by shooting them. These little animals are about the size of a rat, but thicker and much more solidly built. "They are characterized by the enormous external cheek pouches lined with fur, not communicating with the mouth, and extending in some cases along the neck as far as the shoulders." They have powerful fore limbs and strong claws with which they do a vast deal of digging under ground. Their jaws and teeth are also so strong that it would be dangerous to attempt to handle one of them. Many years ago the writer

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