

ANNALS OF IOWA.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

FOUNDING THE NEW CAPITOL.

In the leading article of the present number of THE ANNALS, Hon. John A. Kasson gives a very full account of the struggle which ended in the passage of the bill providing for the erection of the new Capitol of Iowa. To those who for sixteen years have looked upon this edifice as one of the proudest and solidest things in the State—which, indeed, must have been provided for by universal acclaim—it will read strangely that its erection was fought with rancorous bitterness from the outset, and that success at last depended upon the narrow margin of but two votes! Mr. Kasson speaks from the fullest knowledge, for he was in the great contest from the start to the finish. Indeed, he was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives for three successive terms, as the chosen leader in this contest. As a matter of course everybody in the capital county favored the project, but its support was by no means local. There were people in all parts of the State, in every community, who realized the necessity of providing a new building. How the contest began, how it was conducted, and how it ended, Mr. Kasson sets forth with graphic pen. But he scarcely portrays the deep and implacable hostility with which the measure was treated in some quarters. It was assailed as a piece of jobbery initiated by speculators, and it was claimed that no necessity existed for such a building. "Its space will not be needed for a hundred years," shouted the opposition. (But the reader will bear in mind that the new Capitol was first occupied early in 1884, and that it has been uncomfortably crowded the past three years). Again, the State was said to be in such distressful financial condition

that this undertaking would be burdensome to the people. Our State was alleged to be "full of barefooted women and barefooted children," and the expenditure was denounced as nothing less than criminal. This same statement was made in 1860 at the time of the heroic effort to found our first Hospital for the Insane, at Mount Pleasant. It has been heard on more than one occasion since. Often in the past, when it has been sought to throttle some great public enterprise demanded by the necessities or best interests of the State, this false and foolish cry has been raised. We have been compelled to hear a great deal about these hordes of unfortunate people. That such a class has existed within the borders of productive and prosperous Iowa is purely a myth and always was. Happily, while so loudly proclaimed, this cry has not availed to stay the progress which the closing and the coming century demand from our great State. Public institutions have arisen where they were needed and such will be the record of the years to come.

All who read Mr. Kasson's history of this great fight will award him the highest praise for the manner in which he conducted it. He worked with unbounded activity, but with unruffled temper, and a degree of prudence and judgment which won the heartiest approval throughout the State. We deem it well to place this paper among our permanent records, that future generations may have some knowledge of the cost of one of the proudest steps in the history and progress of Iowa.

STATUES OF GRIMES AND HARLAN.

Readers of THE ANNALS will no doubt remember that the old Hall of Representatives in the capitol at Washington is now used as a Hall of Statuary. Under the law each state is entitled to place therein the statues of two of its representative men, to be selected by its own authorities. Many of the

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