

ANNALS OF IOWA

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

IOWA AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS.

In the effort to discover and preserve the evidences of accomplishment of our people, the Historical Department of Iowa has gathered diligently and with all its resources. At the time of the death of Charles Aldrich, its founder and first curator, it already possessed a notable collection of books, pamphlets, and object materials on pioneer and Indian life in Iowa and the Mississippi Valley. The already good collection on the service of Iowa soldiers was further greatly augmented by the compilation and publication of the Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers, a work made possible largely through the effort of Mr. Aldrich and the Roster Board on which he, and afterward the present curator, served.

Another field in which the founder was a most appreciative and active collector was that of authorship. His personal acquaintance with American and English literary men—writers and publishers—was exceptional, and the collection of autograph writings and presentation volumes he gathered and gave to Iowa is one of the most priceless treasures of the State.

Of Iowa writings and writers the collection thus begun was materially augmented by the auxiliary committee of the Iowa Commission to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. This auxiliary committee, Mrs. W. H. Bailey of Des Moines, Mrs. H. J. Howe of Marshalltown, and Mrs. H. E. Deemer of Red Oak, prepared, through Mrs. Howe, a list of these books, and others by Iowa authors, which was published by the Iowa Library Commission. Their collection of volumes was presented to the Historical Department of Iowa.

Recently there was added the rare collection of Hon. Henry Stivers of Osceola, and these, with the fruits of zealous begging and some buying for the last few years, form our present collection of books by Iowa authors.

In our effort to acquire every book by an Iowa author, we have long felt the need of an exhaustive list of such writers. For our own guidance such a list was begun. So rapidly did the work develop, it seemed incumbent on us to sound the depths of the problem while interest was at its height. So we issued our list in tentative form with a program for its completion. This program and the scope of the collection is perhaps best set forth in the introduction to the tentative work:

Charles Aldrich, founder of the Historical Department of Iowa, regarded attainment in the arts as the equal in importance of military prowess or political achievement. His successors have observed that while scholarly attention has been turned to Iowa valor and statesmanship, the arts, including letters, have remained almost unnoticed.

To facilitate the study of Iowa literary effort, we have designed, first, a general list of Iowa writings, and second a chronological list. The first—and by far the more laborious—has been prepared by Miss Alice Marple, Assistant Curator, and is here presented. Comprehensive as the list appears—presenting many times more information than appears in any other place—it is incomplete. To perfect it additions and corrections will be called from every source. It will be circulated in its present form and published in short sections, serially in the *ANNALS OF IOWA*. After the completion of the series it will be republished with full annotations showing the connection of each writer with our state.

The idea of such a list is not new. It remained, however, for Miss Marple to engage in its present exhaustive character. She has availed herself of the following aids: A list prepared by the late Hon. Theodore S. Parvin; a partial chronological list kindly loaned by Professor Selden L. Whitcomb, now of the University of Kansas; a list prepared by the Iowa Press and Authors Club; "Some Recent Publications by Iowa Authors," current in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*; "A list of books by Iowa Authors," by the Iowa Library Commission, 1904; the excellent collection of clippings upon, and of volumes by Iowa authors in the Iowa State Library. But her greatest aid was the books and pamphlets in the Historical Department itself, where the collections of the Louisiana Purchase Commission, and the collection of Hon. Henry Stivers, of Osceola, Iowa, lately acquired, form a large portion.

It is not for the Historical Department to decide upon the worth or merit of the works of Iowa people in literature or elsewhere. Its function is to have at hand all the evidence, including the finished works, from which the critic himself may well decide. It is the effort, rather than the result we note, and it is for us to assemble

every thing embraced in the field of inquiry. We hold that whoever was of Iowa birth or worked in Iowa was an Iowa worker and without a record of him and his work our account with Iowa effort is not closed.

So "feeling our way by a series of tentatives" to a sound and comprehensive foundation, we present Miss Marple's "Iowa Authors and Their Works; a Contribution toward a Bibliography." Through this warp the hands of others may weave the mass and color of a tapestry of Iowa Letters.

COALS THAT WERE FRANCE'S.

Of the cardinal tenets which modern civilizations hold, that which makes nations rank in power in accordance with their relative fuel reserves is nowhere so well exemplified as by some of the countries of Europe. France in particular has long felt the telling force of this great economic law. A hundred years after the momentous event she still publicly bemoans her separation from her distant, inaccessible wilderness on the North American continent west of the Mississippi river. For this act she still bitterly berates the great Napoleon for something he could in no way possibly have avoided. What is true today was not so evident a century before. What might be inexcusable folly now, then might have been, and indeed was, a bit of supreme wisdom.

A number of French journals have copied from the ANNALS a recent article on the discovery of coal in America and the Mississippi valley. One comment which appears in *La Chronique Industrielle*¹, one of the leading economic periodicals of the Old World, is of special interest, because of the fact that it reflects even to this late day the temper of the French people on their great loss. The article is sadly headed "We Have Had Great Coal Wealth."

The translation of this article based upon the one appearing a few months ago in the ANNALS is as follows:

We have spoken of the possibility of discovering in America coal supplies in which we are so deficient. We had them, alas;

¹Thirty-fifth Annee, No. 102, pp. 1-2, Paris, 1912.

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