

the California drovers of 1853, they were nothing to what would come hereafter. . . . Hundreds of men in the Golden State were laying up money for the sole purpose of coming to Iowa and Illinois to purchase and drive cattle and sheep. This trade is the most profitable of any now carried on in California and is one which we are assured it is impossible to overdo for the next twenty-five years. The drovers come, not with the rags of eastern shinplaster mills, too often mere phantoms and shadows of a currency, but with solid gold which cannot easily take wings and disappear, even while you clutch it in your hand. They ask no credit, and pay fair and remunerating prices. The further west the cattle are found, the better they suit their purposes, and the more readily are they sold. No market need be sought, for the purchaser seeks the vendor at his home, and at once pays his money and drives off his purchase. The heavier the stock on hand, the greater the attraction for the buyer. No more profitable and satisfactory business need be asked by any man than the future which is opening up to the farmer of the prairies of Iowa.

On these and similar facts and reasons, through this and no other vision, came Salmon P. Chase's bill of 1853 appropriating funds for a survey for a Pacific railway.

There was no considerable traffic across our State up to the opening of the Union Pacific Railway that did not go over some portion of the old Mormon Trail. In one decade the traffic was transferred to railways and the old route abandoned. Memory both of traffic and route had been dimmed by time and further obscured by the tragic events of the Civil war. Records of even the Western Stage Company are meager indeed. The subject of Mormons, Mormon church, Mormon travels and Mormon routes are of but trivial importance in Iowa annals. But the movements of the pioneers upon the Mormon Trail is one of the most fruitful themes of inquiry. It is most worthy to be commemorated by markers along its ancient way.

HISTORICAL PORTRAIT COLLECTING.

Iowa, through the Historical Department at Des Moines, has a notable collection of pictorial data of her more noted citizens. Our oil portraits are exhibited in accordance with the best gallery rules, and afford to the visitor as satisfactory

opportunity for inspection and study as is given by the best European art collections.

Our visitors, and visitors to all similar collections, are often of the opinion that portraits displayed are or should be gathered and exhibited solely for their art character. Some are of the opinion that only art considerations should govern the acquisition of portraits, and especially their exhibition in public galleries. But the Iowa policy has ever been that the collection should be first historically, then artistically valuable and if possible, both. But of those personages essentially part of the forward movement in Iowa affairs, some record of face and figure should exist.

Charles Aldrich was wont to go for guidance to the rules and examples of British collectors of historical and biographical materials. The present curator has sedulously endeavored to advance along the course found so well marked out. He has not come upon an opinion so well presented and so precisely defining the duty of our Department as that called to his attention by a British curator, from the pen of Thomas Carlyle. So far as portraiture is of value to the historian the view presented is our belief:

First of all, then, I have to tell you, as a fact of personal experience, that in all my poor Historical investigations it has been, and always is, one of the most primary wants to procure a bodily likeness of the personage inquired after; a good *Portrait* if such exists; failing that, even an indifferent if sincere one. In short, any representation, made by a faithful human creature, of that Face and Figure, which *he* saw with his eyes, and which I can never see with mine, is now valuable to me, and much better than none at all. This, which is my own deep experience, I believe to be, in a deeper or less deep degree, the universal one; and that every student and reader of History, who strives earnestly to conceive for himself what manner of Fact and *Man* this or the other vague Historical *Name* can have been, will, as the first and directest indication of all, search eagerly for a Portrait, for all the reasonable Portraits there are; and never rest till he have made out, if possible, what the man's natural face was like. Often I have found a Portrait superior in real instruction to half-a-dozen written "Biographies," as Biographies are written;—or rather, let me say, I have found that the Portrait was as a small lighted candle by which the Biographies could for the first time be read, and some human interpretation be made of them; the Biographied Personage no longer an empty

impossible Phantasm, or distracting Aggregate of inconsistent rumours—(in which state, alas his usual one, he is worth nothing to anybody, except it be as a dried thistle for Pedants to thrash, and for men to fly out of the way of),—but yielding at last some features which one could admit to be human. Next in directness are a man's genuine Letters, if he have left any, and you can get to read them to the bottom; of course, a man's actions are the most complete and indubitable stamp of him; but without these aids, or Portraits and Letters, they are in themselves so infinitely abstruse a stamp, and so confused by foreign rumour and false tradition of them, as to be oftenest undecipherable with certainty.

This kind of value and interest I may take as the highest pitch of interest there is in Historical Portraits; this, which the zealous and studious Historian feels in them: and one may say, all men, just in proportion as they are "Historians" (which every mortal is, who has a memory, and attachments and possessions in the Past), will feel something of the same,—every human creature, something. So that I suppose there is absolutely nobody so dark and dull, and everyway sunk and stupefied, that a Series of Historical Portraits, especially of his native country, would not be of real interest to him;—real I mean, as coming from himself and his own heart, not imaginary, and preached in upon him by the newspapers; which is an important distinction.

And all this is quite apart from the artistic value of the portraits (which also is a real value, of its sort, especially for some classes, however exaggerated it may sometimes be): all this is a quantity to be added to the artistic value, whatever it may be; and appeals to a far deeper and more universal principle in human nature than the love of pictures is. Of which principle some dimmer or clearer form may be seen continually active wherever men are;—in your antiquarian museum, for example, may be seen, giving very conspicuous proofs of itself, sanctioned more or less by all the world! If one would buy an indisputably authentic old shoe of William Wallace for hundreds of pounds, and run to look at it from all ends of Scotland, what would one give for an authentic visible shadow of his face, could such, by art natural or art magic, now be had!

It has always struck me that historical portrait-galleries far transcend in worth all other kinds of national collections of pictures whatever; that in fact they ought to exist (for many reasons, of all degrees of weight) in every country, as among the most popular and cherished national possessions:—and it is not a joyful reflection, but an extremely mournful one, that in no country is there at present such a thing to be found. What Louis-Phillippe may have collected, in the way of French historical portrait, at Versailles, I did not see; if worth much (which I hear it is not), it might have proved the best memorial left by him, one day. Chancellor Clarendon made a

brave attempt in that kind for England; but his House and 'Gallery' fell all asunder, in a sad way; and as yet there has been no second attempt that I can hear of¹.

DR. REUBEN GOLD THWAITES.

American historical and library interests are laid under a great burden by the death on October 22, 1913, of Reuben Gold Thwaites. He was born May 15, 1853, in Massachusetts, where he availed himself of the grammar and high schools of Dorchester. He then gave liberally that self instruction which produces the highest practical efficiency, the fullest success and highest honors. He became a printer and then the editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal* for ten years.

In 1886 he transferred his activities to the Wisconsin State Historical Society. Dr. Lyman C. Draper, with a matchless zeal to collect, had not had the time to arrange and edit an almost marvelous collection of Western historical manuscripts he had gathered. In this Doctor Thwaites found an ideal field for the exercise of his talent to organize, arrange and edit, with which he combined the rare collector's qualities. From the lives of these two great and good men, the State of Wisconsin gathers a harvest of historical accomplishment that directly will sustain her and indirectly will encourage her sister states for generations in struggles toward ideal administration of historical work.

The Historical Department of Iowa from its inception and the present editor of the *ANNALS* from the beginning of his work were ever welcomed by Doctor Thwaites in our appeals for counsel on our problems. The bar or the clergy know no finer ethics than those in the professional intercourse of Doctor Thwaites with us. His was the most ideal personal influence in the western historical field. Wisconsin historical interests are too well grounded to flag from even her great loss. Yet even in Iowa it will be sadly felt.

¹Carlyle's *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*—National Exhibition of *Scottish Portraits*, Lond. 1869.

Copyright of *Annals of Iowa* is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.