

## Annals of Iowa [Wolcott Johnson book]

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has read widely and studied minutely the literature of the State's history. Whether these recent "investigations" are too deep for him or have no attraction for him, or whether he takes no stock in them, and his silence signifies the scholar's disdain or christian charity, the curious may conjecture.

The chief complaint that will be made concerning this volume, we surmise, is that the author has kept himself too severely in check. In our homely vernacular he never "lets himself go". His crisp, concise style suggests constant repression. This is the sure sign of the scholarly historian, whom we prefer to the spluttering sentimentalist; but in this instance it seems to have resulted in our deprivation. He could deal more intensively as well as more extensively with many of the subjects of his story without detriment to his design. Despite this, however, Dr. Salter has given us by far the best narrative of Iowa's political history. Nothing heretofore published is comparable with it in point of style and scholarship.

F. I. H.

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Under the pseudonym, "Wolcott Johnson," Johnson Brigham, State Librarian of Iowa, has added to the world of letters a little book of more than passing interest. From the standpoint of advanced years, Mr. Brigham has portrayed, with true fidelity of nature, in "An Old Man's Idyl",\* the not unusual or overdrawn happenings of every day life. While his own family and fireside have furnished the inspiration, the recital is none the less pleasing; in fact, there is ever a keener enjoyment in the recognition of the *real* incident, which, possessing the true ring, can neither be simulated nor concealed by the narrator's art.

To those familiar with Mr. Brigham's home life, "An Old Man's Idyl" is but the natural expression of one who lives deeply and loves devotedly; to those without the circle of acquaintanceship, there is the charm of simple and homely incident, entertainingly told; the word-painting, with its artistic touches of pathos and humor; the flesh-and-blood coloring, and enough of narrative to hold the reader's close attention to the final pages.

Mr. Brigham's previous work in literary lines has been recognized by high-class magazines. It seems almost regrettable that his efforts did not earlier assume more permanent form; but, as "An Old Man's Idyl" is the expression of his maturer years and experiences, possibly at no previous period could he so feelingly have entered into its spirit, and, through its recital, enlisted so generally the sympathy of his readers.

C. A. N.

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\*A. C. McClurg & Co., Publishers, Chicago, 1905.

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