

Rich Manuscript Materials of General Grenville M. Dodge

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Doctor Salter has lately sent the final portions of the personal archives of eminent Iowa men, his former friends and associates, editing a number of the letters for use in the present *Annals*. Doctor Shaffer lately forwarded a mass of documents, and the last of what he considers appropriate of his natural history collection. These two grand men have been exercising fine discrimination for nearly three-quarters of a century in the selection of the good from the bad, the useful from the trash in book, manuscript and specimen. They have hoarded these for the good of their fellow men in the future. They have tendered their assistance, which has been eagerly accepted, toward increasing the resources of many an Iowa institution for the advancement of learning. Their benefactions have been practically numberless and may be inestimable.

RICH MANUSCRIPT MATERIALS OF GENERAL GRENVILLE M. DODGE.

For aids to the study of inceptive periods of movements among a people, it is to be doubted whether there is a source so valuable as the documentary materials with which active men surround themselves. Current documents and writings furnish testimony on the operation of the popular mind that, in minute historical investigation, can neither be discarded nor ignored. Upon this theory the Historical Department has advanced. By assembling the personal archives of Iowa men it has endeavored to serve two ends. It has gathered a harvest from which every investigator with a good character and a proper purpose may take a share. It has honored those whose archives have been received by putting away from flames and from pernicious hands as well, what evidences remain of their distinguished private lives. For personal records of this sort men seldom provide fire-proof vaults nor permanent custodians. While one's private and personal character is, after all, his dearest creature, he seldom provides against its eventual disappearance. If we

cared nothing for our private lives we might not shudder with the knowledge that the only record we can make that stands a chance to endure is such as may be made in the capacity of an official. Few public or private institutions design to preserve more than the skeleton of their history, and although from their nature these institutions are perpetual, the changing incumbencies of office often result in prompt destruction of the signs of life and individuality. But since service in office usually follows and is followed by a uniform character of wisdom, integrity and endeavor, there is probably no sufficient reason for committing all materials of a man's private life to the flames. And if there is reason to preserve that which bears on official life, and if that reason is for the benefit of official successors, the same reason must apply against loss to successors of good men in private life. It is therefore with especial gratification that the Historical Department lately has been made the custodian of the personal papers of one of Iowa's good men and great soldiers, General Grenville M. Dodge. The collection will pass into the future as testimony to the donor's faith in the righteous purpose of the institution, and in its administration. It becomes more than a memorial to a man. It is a memorial of a mind whose operations need never be guessed at, surmised, nor considered from secondary evidence. It must ever be a factor in the attention of those who have written or who may in future write on Iowa or American historical themes dealing with the last half century, for it is the record of the forward movement of a master spirit. This collection presents the first thought on engineering a railroad across the State, and spanning its then formidable border streams. It is original record in right of way and townsite matters, of large financiering before and since the Civil War; of loyal labors in raising, drilling and leading troops; in planning battles and feats of engineering that counted as battles sometimes failed to do; of strategems, of secret service, of punishments devised in instants of desperation not experienced by our country before or after that hour. There are indexes—many times full texts—on the construction of railways over the western plains and through hostile Indian

countries, and sometimes troublous financial times; of organization, promotion, construction and operation of railroad enterprises, made possible and made perfect only perhaps through applications of the methods and employment of the men, produced through the discipline of military life. There are the intimate thoughts of men who fought the civic battles of our state and country, and after all perhaps more precious than the rest the records of one private citizen of America. Except for two years in Congress and five in the Army, all the General's life has been that of a private citizen. Of great distinction in this respect, has been that part in which he figured, as disclosed by materials of which the Historical Department is the custodian, as commissioner or other factor in the erection of many statues and monuments to his great military associates.

IOWA MEMORIAL SCULPTURE.

One recalls a number of public memorial sculptures in Iowa, though it is yet a young State. In Crapo Park, Burlington, is an equestrian statue in bronze of Gen. John M. Corse; in Keokuk one of Gen. Samuel R. Curtis. These are replicas of two of the four by Carl Rohl-Smith, modeled as details for the Soldiers and Sailors Monument at Des Moines. This monument is the most ambitious work of its character the State has essayed. The commemoration of her part in the Civil War is the theme most often expressed in memorial sculpture within as beyond her borders. She has done commendable work on southern fields. There have not been many private donors of such art works to the public. At Clermont are six bronzes which were brought into existence by the taste and generosity of Governor Larrabee. These are of Lincoln, Farragut and William T. Sherman by George E. Bissell; Grant, David B. Henderson and Grenville M. Dodge by J. Massey Rhind. In the art collections of the Historical Department is a fine marble bust in bas relief of William Pitt Fessenden. This was formerly the property of Governor Grimes, and

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