

"must acknowledge and do acknowledge, that yours has been a great work in the interest of the State—a work, in fact, which no other man in the State could have performed so thoroughly and so well."

"It does not seem possible," observes Hon. A. R. R. Butler, "that the legislature can fail to comprehend the importance to the State of strengthening your hands in your unselfish efforts to promote the interests of the Historical Society."

"The Historical Society of Wisconsin," remarks Hon. Cyrus Woodman, "adds to the glory not of Wisconsin alone, but of our whole country."

Similar flattering commendations come from Hon. Alexander Mitchell, Hon. James Sutherland, Hon. M. M. Davis, Hon. George Gary, Hon. William C. Allen, Gen. John H. Rountree, C. E. Britt, Hon. Sat. Clark, and others.

Conclusion

It is not necessary, on this occasion, to dwell upon the importance of public libraries to an enlightened community or State—that by such collections, books are brought together upon almost every conceivable subject, utterly beyond the ability of individuals to purchase, and placed where all may freely consult them.

It has been well said, that true self-education begins where the colleges leave off; hence the true mission of libraries should be to furnish the proper appliances to encourage and carry forward this process of self-culture. "The stores of facts and thoughts, and the exemplification of methods accumulated in books, are needed to harmonize and give a purpose to mental action."

By citing a few recent benefactions to public libraries, it may serve to show that we are not alone in our estimate of the value of such institutions.

The late Walter L. Newberry, of Chicago, left a colossal estate, estimated at about five millions of dollars, one-half of which, with a liberal forethought and wise discrimination, was reserved for a public library in the city of his residence; and the Newberry Library, with such a generous provision, will soon enter upon a career of great usefulness.