far preponderate over sectional interest that the much needed provision will be made, in some form and on a scale which will make the Institution or Institutions not only the resort for temporary treatment, but the Asylum—the home of the most unfortunate class of sufferer, the hopelessly insane.

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

We find the germ of this Society in a small meeting of citizens of Madison and persons from other parts of the State, held at the American Hotel, in Madison, Jan. 29, 1849, of which J. Y. SMITH was Chairman and E. M. WILLIAMSON, Secretary. This meeting resolved to call a general meeting in the Senate Chamber the next evening to consider the expediency of organizing a State Historical Society. At the meeting on the 30th, Prof. ELEAZER ROOT was called to the Chair, and Gen. Wm. R. SMITH chosen Secretary. A constitution was formed and adopted, and numerous signed by those present, after which the Society proceeded to the election of officers. NELSON DEWEY, the Governor of the State, was elected the first President, I. A. LAPHAM Corresponding Secretary, and Rev. CHARLES LORD, Recording Secretary. One Vice-President was also chosen for each of the 25 counties then organized.

The Society held annual meetings at which able historic discourses were delivered, but during the first five years of its existence it accomplished next to nothing in the way of historical collections—so little that in 1854 the library contained only 50 volumes, and all but three of these were State laws, journals and documents, and were deposited in a small cupboard 3 by 4 feet.

In 1853 the Society was incorporated by an act of the
legislature, and in 1854 it was reorganized under the charter. In the reorganization Gen. W. R. Smith was elected President, Lyman C. Draper Corresponding Secretary, and Rev. Charles Lord Recording Secretary. This formed an important era in the history of the Society. Under the energetic and untiring efforts of the Corresponding Secretary, Mr. Draper, it made rapid progress from this time onward, in the objects for which it was formed—the securing of Historical Collections. He opened correspondence with other Societies and with individuals throughout the country, soliciting donations and exchanges from every available source, as well as written contributions and relics relating to the history of our own State, and the result was that collections rapidly accumulated. At every meeting of the Executive Committee, which recurred several times in a year, the members were surprised at the amount of labor accomplished and its visible results. Small appropriations have been made from the State Treasury for the purchase of such works as could not be obtained by donation or exchange, and these have been expended with great care and discrimination and added much to the value and interest of the collection.

In 1855, Daniel S. Durrie, Esq., was chosen Librarian of the Society, but for some two years his duties were but nominal and rendered without compensation. In 1856 it became obvious that the Society must have rooms specially devoted to its use and a small apartment in the basement of the Baptist Church, on Carroll street was first obtained and soon it required and obtained the use of nearly the whole basement of the church. In 1857 the collections had become so large and of so much interest that Mr. Durrie devoted his whole time to the du-
ties of Librarian, in which position he has been continued by the votes of the Society to the present time. With the care of the rooms and collections, indexing the volumes by subjects, and assisting in carrying on the vast correspondence of the Society, he has performed a vast amount of labor upon a small salary.

Chiefly as the result of the labors of the Corresponding Secretary and Librarian, the Society has become a success beyond any thing of the kind of its age, in this, or probably any other country. The library now contains 21,366 volumes, bound and unbound, of which 1136 are bound newspapers; 138 of these were published in the last century, several of them by Dr. Franklin, and one in the previous century; over 400 Atlases, maps and diagrams of ancient date, illustrating the vagueness of the ideas concerning the American Continent, which prevailed 200 years ago.

One of the most attractive features of the collections is the picture gallery. It consists of 60 fine oil portraits of early pioneers of the State, Wisconsin Governors, and other prominent men, and of several Indian Chiefs, all remarkably true to the life and some of them showing high artistic finish. The Society has also made good progress in the collection of a Cabinet of ancient and modern relics, both of nature and art and which promises to become, ere long, an object of very great interest.

The Society, as will be inferred, is not an institution of the State Government, though the State has generously fostered it by a small annual appropriation, for several years past, to aid in sustaining its management and to augment its collections; but its management and control is wisely retained in the hands of private citizens, residing in all parts of the State, and associated under their charter.
Within the last three or four years the rooms of the Society, never very suitable from their underground position, low ceilings, and want of enclosed alcoves, have become more and more crowded and insufficient for the proper display and protection of the collections, and in 1865 the legislature manifested its interest in the enterprise and their appreciation of its usefulness to the State, by appropriating to its use the entire second floor of the south wing of the Capitol and ordering it fitted up in an appropriate manner, and in January, 1866, the effects of the Society were removed and tastefully disposed in their new and elegant depository. On the evening of the 24th of the same month the rooms set apart by the munificence of the State, were formally dedicated to the use of the Society, by an eloquent address by ex-Gov. Salomon, of Milwaukee, and other appropriate proceedings, and the occasion was one of unmixed satisfaction to the founders and early friends of the enterprise, and of deep interest to the large assembly convened upon the occasion. We know of no enterprise, of the like magnitude, which reflects so much credit upon the State as this. While its cost, in money, has been but trifling, its usefulness is beyond estimate. It will be a favorite and profitable resort for State officers and members of legislatures, Professors and Students of the University, and the curious and studious of all classes; and future generations of citizens will bless the forethought which provided such a reservoir of knowledge. No stranger should visit Madison without spending a day at the Historical Rooms, where he will always find a cordial welcome.