

Legislature of 1903 provided for this second edition, rendering it possible for all interested libraries to obtain copies.

Dr. Draper's editorial methods differed somewhat from those in fashion in our day; but a recognition of this in no manner detracts from their quality. Throughout his thirty-three years of devotion to the work of the Society, he was in every branch of that undertaking sadly hampered by inadequacy of funds; he could therefore command but slight editorial assistance, and was able to spend but little for research in neighboring states or in foreign archives. On the mechanical side of book-making, also, he was, through circumstances beyond his control, never able to realize his ideals. When it is considered that the *Collections* were almost his only vehicle of publication, and that therefore much space must necessarily be sacrificed therein for matters of temporary value, the marvel is that the volumes were maintained upon so high a level of scholarship.

From the appearance of the first volume in 1855, the *Wisconsin Historical Collections* commanded wide attention. Their reputation grew as the successive books appeared. They easily took rank, so far as much of the contents was concerned, with the publications of the Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania societies, and set a pace for the newer societies of the Middle West. Long before his retirement, Dr. Draper had won high place as an editor of historical material, and probably no man engaged in this manner of work was in his day more widely known among Americanists than he.

Merely from the point of view of the history of the Society, these reprinted volumes are of the greatest interest. In the Annual Reports are chronicled the steady growth of the institution, from that fortunate day in January, 1854, when Dr. Draper assumed charge of its fortunes as executive officer until, a generation later, he gracefully transferred his burden to other and younger shoulders. It is a remarkable story of almost continuous progress, save during the anxious period of the War of Secession: success achieved amidst conditions that to many might frequently have appeared disheartening. From the first, the Society's friends have never faltered in its support; but in