

Perhaps one of the greatest difficulties under which Dr. Draper labored was that in his desire to inform the public he attempted too much. The variety of plans for historical works which for the last forty years of his life he had in various stages of preparation is quite astonishing. Instead of completing these enterprises one at a time, he continually added to them all, never pausing in his zealous search for fresh details, ever hesitating in an excess of conscientious caution to construct his proposed edifices, for fear that there might yet be found new and better quarries.

Despite his ambition to work in a broader field, Dr. Draper's chief work as an historian was the editing and publication of the *Wisconsin Historical Collections*. Ten large octavo volumes of 500 pages each were issued under his editorship. These constitute a vast mass of original material bearing upon the history of the state, particularly the pre-territorial epoch: all of it gathered by Dr. Draper, either through personal solicitation of manuscripts from prominent early pioneers, or by means of interviews with old-time celebrities, white and red, by the doctor himself. In the garnering of these materials for the early history of Wisconsin, the busy corresponding secretary traveled thousands of miles, wrote thousands of letters, and interviewed hundreds of individuals. Each paper in the ten volumes was carefully edited and annotated by this untiring worker, who brought to bear upon every important point a wealth of correlative illustration or needed correction. These volumes, a storehouse of original data bearing upon the history of our state, are enough of themselves fully to establish his reputation as an historical specialist. Their incalculable value to western historians has been frequently attested by the best of authority — Bancroft, Sparks, Parkman, Shea, Lossing, and others of lesser note, having frequently complimented Dr. Draper upon their excellence and practical importance, and emphasized the debt which students of American history will always owe to him for them.

Recognizing that his physical vigor was waning, yet as ambitious to complete his greater works as in his earlier