

PREFACE.

Notwithstanding all that has been said, sung, and written about the new American Empire in the Golden North-West, that rich and wonderful region is to-day comparatively little understood or appreciated, in a practical way, by the masses of the people, especially in the far eastern states. Even yet the glamour of border romance lingers in every allusion to the older portions of the section, where civilization has almost blotted out the memory of pioneer days, and the honest farmer of New England believes now that the man who raises corn in Minnesota is in constant danger of himself becoming an Indian meal. It is true that the comparatively recent discoveries of precious metals in the still wild districts of Dakota and Montana, the extension of the Northern Pacific R. R., the surprising development of the country along the lines of the Milwaukee and St. Paul road in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and other allied causes, have within a few years done much to spread the knowledge among the people of these states and territories, teeming with resources of every description calculated to excite the acquisitive energy and industry of man. But, after all, the Golden North-West with its rich prairies, its stately forests, its mountains of gold and silver, its mighty rivers and crystal lakes, its vast stock ranges; scenery unequaled in the world for beauty and grandeur; flora and fauna so diversified, extended and abundant as to cover all the wants of our race; its hills, valleys and streams, the paradise of the hunter and the angler, and its railroads, steamers, mills and factories—of all this enough remains unknown to render further and reliable information concerning it of practical value to the civilized world. It is the want of such information that the publishers of the Golden North-West have undertaken to supply.

The growth of that portion of our country, including the adjoining British province of Manitoba, which we have called "The Golden North-West," has been truly miraculous! Of Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Dakota, and Montana, it may be said that their whole history under civilization is spanned by the recollections of people yet living, while of the newer sections, included in the list, a few, a very few years covers the complete record of their development. Of the states and territories mentioned, only Wisconsin and Iowa appear in the census of 1840, with populations respectively of 30,945, and 43,112, or only 74,057 whites in all this great division of the country. At the next census, 1850, Minnesota was added to the list, with the modest return of 6,077 popula-