

Then the year 1880 proved, from almost its beginning, to be an exceptional year, especially in its relations to the West. Our decennial census was to be taken, and it would be possible by the close of the year, but not earlier, to ascertain whether the boasted increase of these Western States and Territories was justified by the cold and careful enumerations of the census supervisors. Six hundred thousand emigrants reached our shores during the year, and more than twice that number of our own citizens migrated to the West. The railway kings were enlisting their syndicates and making their combinations, which have resulted in a twelvemonth in arrangements for the speedy completion of four new trunk routes to the Pacific on our own territory, and of the Canadian Pacific on our northern border. Eleven States and Territories, heretofore either in part or wholly inaccessible by rail, are now, or will be in a few months, provided with railroad transit across their entire breadth or length; and the year on which we have entered is only carrying out right royally the plans and projects of its imperial predecessor.

It was evident to both publishers and author that our plans required extension and enlargement, and so we went from ordinary octavo to royal octavo; from 500 to 700, to 1000, and finally to over 1300 pages. Resolved to represent what had never previously been even attempted, and what for lack of material could not have been attempted with success—the present condition of each of the States and Territories which go to make up “Our Western Empire”—no pains nor expense has been spared to gain from every source every fact which could illustrate their topography, geology and mineralogy, climate, soil, productions, mineral wealth, pastoral facilities, population, accumulated wealth, education and religion, with notices of the Indian tribes found in their borders. For these purposes, every book and pamphlet, official and other, every report, railroad publication, mining record, every newspaper and every telegraphic report affecting any of these States or Territories, has been carefully scanned to the number of more than three thousand, and a correspondence opened and maintained with many hundreds of officials and others.

The result is before the public. It has been a labor of love, notwithstanding the toil it has required. That it is absolutely free from error is impossible; but the great care which has been taken to secure accuracy leads to the hope that there are no errors of great magnitude. At all events, it could not have been completed with as great a measure of perfection as it now possesses, a day earlier than the present.

No man was ever blessed with more kindly and thoughtful friends than the writer. Every request for information has been most promptly and heartily

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