

PREFACE

THE library has been prepared in response to a general demand for a reference work of medium size which presents in a practical way the answers to the many and varied questions which rise in the course of everyday experience. While intended primarily for the use of students and their teachers, it will be found of permanent value to those busy people in every occupation who desire brief and direct information not easily accessible elsewhere. Accuracy, balance, clearness and convenience are the essential characteristics of such a work, and the editors feel that THE NEW PRACTICAL REFERENCE LIBRARY conforms in a notable degree to these requirements.

To secure balance and accuracy, the work was divided into more than a score of departments, such as geography, pedagogy and education, biography and history. These departments were given to qualified editors, who worked under careful supervision and who finally brought together the thousands of articles which they had written and adjusted them in harmony with the proportions of the work. The editors have not relied solely upon their own experience and judgment, but have had the advice and assistance of business men and educators from every state in the Union. The latest information has been secured through thousands of letters addressed to prominent persons in the important towns and cities of the United States. The state articles have been revised by residents possessing full information concerning their own states. Statistics have been compiled from the very latest reports, provided they had the merit of strict reliability, and the narrative of events is brought to the eve of publication.

The department of pedagogy and education has been wrought out more fully than was ever before attempted in any work of this kind, and consists of practical articles on psychology, the history of education and methods of teaching; information concerning important universities, colleges and other educational institutions; brief accounts of educational systems in states and countries, and a large number of biographies of men who are prominent in educational affairs. Geography is the largest department, but others, such as natural history, law and politics, art,