

PREFACE

literature, music and mechanic arts, have been given space and consideration adequate to their great demands.

The language is direct and simple, technicalities of all sorts have been studiously avoided, and it is felt that almost anyone can read any article and understand its contents. Nevertheless, scientific accuracy has not been sacrificed.

To make the work convenient in use, the long articles have been divided by conspicuous subheads. Moreover, the greatest care has been taken to arrange material under the most common and appropriate headings; in other words, to place it in the spot where it will be oftenest sought. At the same time references are made to it from all other closely related articles. This system of cross-references binds together, also, the material of every department, and enables the reader to find quickly anything relating to the subject he seeks. By following the references one is led into broad courses of systematic reading.

In appearance, the volumes are a notable improvement upon other works of reference of similar size, and in one respect are unique, namely, in the use of large, clear type. In a large encyclopedia that is rarely consulted, and then only for brief moments, one might possibly justify small type, but a useful book for daily reference by young students and busy people should make no unnecessary demands on the eyesight, nor waste valuable time with its crowded lines.

The publishers have admirably embellished the work with the finest multi-colored illustrations, new engraved colored maps and vivid relief maps of the continents; choice full-page, colored halftones; new and correct pen and ink portraits, and more than a thousand other pictures. As all have been selected primarily for the important purpose of clarifying and broadening the text, they form an integral part of the work.

The pronunciation of all but the simplest titles is indicated by phonetic respelling.

The work is thoroughly American in its attitude toward all topics, and ample space has been given to those things with which the average American is inevitably concerned. On the other hand, those foreign persons, places and events which are interesting and important to an American student have been treated generously. This library of reference is modern; and present-day facts, forces and tendencies have been regarded as of more interest and importance than ancient history.

The publishers wrote to more than fifteen hundred prominent educators, including every state superintendent and leading city and county superintendents, asking what should constitute the salient features of such an important work as