

CHAMBERS'S  
ENCYCLOPÆDIA

CHAMBERS'S  
ENCYCLOPÆDIA

A DICTIONARY  
OF UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PEOPLE

ILLUSTRATED

WITH MAPS AND NUMEROUS WOOD ENGRAVINGS

REVISED EDITION

VOL. I



LONDON  
W. AND R. CHAMBERS 47 PATERNOSTER ROW  
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## P R E F A C E.

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IT is now considerably more than a hundred years since EPHRAIM CHAMBERS gave to the world his *Cyclopædia, or Universal Dictionary of Knowledge*—the prototype, as it proved to be, of a number of similar works, in Britain as well as in other countries, which must have contributed in no small measure to increase the sum of general intelligence. In nearly all these works there has been a tendency to depart from the plan of their celebrated original, as concerns some of the great departments of science, literature, and history; these being usually presented, not under a variety of specific heads, as they commonly occur to our minds when information is required, but aggregated in large and formal treatises, such as would in themselves form books of considerable bulk. By such a course it is manifest that the serviceableness of an Encyclopædia as a dictionary for reference is greatly impaired, whatever may be the advantages which on other points are gained.

With a view to bring back the Encyclopædia to its original purpose of a *Dictionary of Knowledge*, even down to matters of familiar conversation, the Germans formed the plan of their *Conversations-Lexicon*, a work which, extending to a long series of volumes, has passed through ten editions, and obtained a world-wide celebrity. Believing that a translation of the latest edition of that well-conceived and laboriously executed work would be generally acceptable, the Editors made an arrangement for that purpose with the proprietor, Mr Brockhaus of Leipsic. After some time, however, had been spent in translating, the task of adapting the information to English requirements was found so difficult, that the resolution was taken to bring out a substantially new work, following in its construction the admirable plan of the *Conversations-Lexicon*, but making use of its valuable matter, only so far as it might be found suitable.

CHAMBERS'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA, therefore, although constructed on the basis of the latest edition of the *Conversations-Lexicon*, is, in no part, a mere translation of that work. All that specially relates to Great Britain and her colonies, as well as to the states of North and South America, is collected from new and more direct sources. The articles also on the physical sciences and practical arts receive greater prominence than in the German work, and are nearly all original, being mostly the work of contributors having special knowledge of the subjects. Even in the articles of the *Conversations-Lexicon* relating to Germany and other continental countries, as well as



## PREFACE.

to subjects of a universal interest, the lapse of time (now ten years) since the publication of that work began, as well as the difference in the relative importance of the same subject in different countries, has rendered great alterations necessary in order to adapt the information to the present time and to Great Britain. The employment of illustrative engravings and maps, is another feature in which the present work differs from the German.

The general character of the work, now thus far advanced, is indicated by its title—*A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People*. The several topics are not handled with a view to the technical instruction of those who have to make a special study of particular branches of knowledge or art. The information given may be characterised as *non-professional*, embracing those points of the several subjects which every intelligent man or woman may have occasion to speak or think about. At the same time, every effort is made that the statements, so far as they go, shall be precise and scientifically accurate. One great aim in the arrangement of the work has been to render it *easy of consultation*. It is expressly a Dictionary, in one alphabet, as distinguished on the one hand from a collection of exhaustive treatises, and, on the other, from a set of Dictionaries of special branches of knowledge. To save the necessity of wading through a long treatise in order to find, perhaps, a single fact, the various masses of systematic knowledge have been broken down, as it were, to as great a degree as is consistent with the separate explanation of the several fragments. In the greater number of articles, however, there will be found copious references to other heads with which they stand in natural connection; and thus, while a single fact is readily found, its relation to other facts is not lost sight of. It will be observed, that by means of accentuation, some assistance is given in the pronouncing of the proper names which form the heads of the articles. At the conclusion of the work, it is intended to give a copious General Index, referring not only to the distinct articles, but to subjects casually noticed—an arrangement which cannot fail to be of considerable use to those who wish to consult the work on many matters of interest.

W. & R. CHAMBERS.

EDINBURGH, *March* 31, 1860.

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## PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION.

Ever since the completion of CHAMBERS'S *ENCYCLOPÆDIA* in 1868, alterations have been made from time to time in the successive reprints of sheets, so as to meet the more important changes taking place. But within the last eighteen months, the whole of the articles have undergone thorough revision, and have been brought up to the present time; not a few of them having been entirely re-written. The present re-issue is thus virtually a *New Edition*, and will, it is hoped, be found to represent the actual state of things. It is proper to add, that the revision has been effected under the careful superintendence of ANDREW FINDLATER, LL.D., who has throughout taken charge of the work, and imparted to it that practically useful character which has rendered it so universally acceptable.

W. & R. CHAMBERS.

EDINBURGH, *November* 1874.