

## PREFACE.



It is confidently expected that this dictionary will commend itself to all those who favor books of reference on the *multum in parvo* plan. Every accepted word in the English language will be found in its pages; and, in addition, many technical terms which the advance of modern science and the recent rapid spread of useful knowledge in the United States have made part and parcel of our popular literature; also many old words and meanings found in the writings of the Elizabethan and Queen Anne periods. It has been found necessary to enlarge upon many words, whose full and real meaning is not adequately disclosed by a mere definition. To all definitions which do not apply in this country, the American meaning has been added. Local meanings, words and phrases; provincialisms, both English and American, and a few slang words and phrases—all of which are instructive as showing the natural growth, and in some cases the debasement, of the pure stock of our language—are given for what they are worth, and only in such instances as are to be met with in early and recent standard works.

The etymology of each word will be found at the end of the definition of the primitive word. These etymologies will be found to differ materially from those found in other dictionaries, of even recent date. As it is only within the past twenty-five years that the etymology of English words has attained even the semblance of an exact science, these new etymologies will be found, in general, more correct than those of any preceding work. The industrious labors of Skeat, Wedgwood and other recent authorities on English philology, leave the most patient lexicographer with many open questions upon his hands. For this very sufficient reason, the editors of this dictionary announce, simply, that they have given the latest and what to them seem the most imperative conclusions of the science of English philology—a science which, though rapidly progressing, is still, on the whole, quite incomplete.

We have but to add that, in general, the aim of the editors of the "American Dictionary of the English Language" has been to give to the public a convenient lexicon which will decide all questions about words, which arise in the course of general reading, and to give to the American reading public the latest, most authentic and most complete conclusions of English philology.

NEW YORK, March 1, 1892.