

*Nelson's* Careful examination and  
*Encyclopædia* impartial criticism will yield  
 a favorable opinion of the  
 new work, of which four volumes have ap-  
 peared. British and American authorities  
 have collaborated in its preparation. A  
 group of articles on Scotch law-terms of  
 remote and dim interest to us, together with  
 articles on such subjects of fresh interest  
 here as Children's Courts, evinces this.  
 Much of it appears to have been freshly  
 written up to date—see, for instance, the  
 eighty pages of text and illustrations given  
 to Electricity and related topics. Yet it is  
 not wholly free from traces of scissors and  
 paste. The few lines given to Cynics repre-  
 sent the traditional opinion rather than that  
 of to-day, as held by philosophers. It is also

hardly appropriate for a modern work to give  
 in an article on Chronology 4004 B.C. as "the  
 generally accepted date" of the creation of  
 the world. Oversights and slips will, of  
 course, occur in the first print of any en-  
 cyclopædia, and this seems to have its share.  
 But its aim to be a popular work is well car-  
 ried out. Would one learn the art of good  
 driving, here are the rules; is one curious  
 about the relations of our express companies  
 with the railroads, information is here. Hos-  
 pitality toward less popular subjects is not  
 wanting—see a short but felicitous article on  
 Crowds and their psychology. But popular-  
 izing is carried to a protestable extreme when  
 such a title as Electrocutation is given with no  
 wincing at it! Biographical articles are nu-  
 merous, and personal estimates, when in-  
 cluded, are generally judicious and impartial.  
 A crucial instance is the estimate of John  
 Brown, of Kansas. A serious fault occurs  
 in the sketch of Henry Ward Beecher's  
 career. The statement that a jury disagreed  
 as to his innocence of a grave crime, while  
 true, is not the whole truth, and is left in-  
 juriously incomplete. Two other facts should  
 not have been omitted, viz., that a majority  
 of the jury held him innocent, and that he  
 was unanimously vindicated by a large ec-  
 clesiastical council after full inquiry. Such  
 omissions mutilate truth; they are inexcusa-  
 ble, and demand immediate repair. Some  
 omissions, however accidental, provoke re-  
 mark, and so do some insertions. If the  
 "Contemporary Review" is mentionable,  
 why not the oldest American quarterly, the  
 "Bibliotheca Sacra," now in its seventy-  
 sixth year? And why overlap the province  
 of a dictionary by inserting definitions of  
 such words as "categorical" and "ceno-  
 taph"? Intentness on subjects of present  
 popular interest leads to an occasional lack  
 of proportion. But nobody will object to the  
 three columns given to everybody's favorite,  
 Mark Twain, albeit some men of more lasting  
 influence in making history get but a stick-  
 ful, or are passed by. On the other hand,  
 the staple subjects of inquiry are treated  
 fittingly. The four-column article on Ethics  
 shows admirable comprehensiveness, con-  
 ciseness, and clearness. Copious illustra-  
 tion is a strong point in this work—over fifty  
 full-page plates, plain or colored, in each  
 volume, with a multitude of minor sort.  
 Many fine specimens of painting and sculp-  
 ture are reproduced. But the coloring has  
 been sometimes overdone, as in the view of  
 Cologne Cathedral. Maps also occur in  
 abundance—eight of Africa, a dozen of  
 England, climatic, orographic, etc. Taking  
 Connecticut as a specimen of fine detail,  
 these are accurate enough, but the engraving

of the maps in black and white seems rather cheap, and sometimes so nebulous as to need a magnifying-glass; instance Alaska. A vast amount of information has been compressed into the very moderate limits of a twelve-volume work. This has been accomplished partly by the use of type smaller than some would prefer, though not objectionable to the majority. Each page of the six hundred in each volume thus contains about four-fifths as much matter as two pages of *The Outlook*. Whatever its defects, the undertaking to be "everybody's book of reference" is certainly sustained by large and solid merits, at a moderate cost. (Nelson's Encyclopædia. Volumes I., II., III., and IV. Editors-in-Chief, Frank Moore Colby, M.A., and George Sandeman, M.A. Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York.)