



# **The Century Book of Facts: A Handbook of Ready Reference (Classic Reprint)**

*Henry Woldmar Ruoff*

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Excerpt from The Century Book of Facts: A Handbook of Ready Reference

This volume is designed to meet the popular demand for a book of reliable and authentic information touching our every day pursuits and requirements. It belongs to a class of publications of a cyclopedic character that are not only a very great desideratum but an unquestioned necessity in an age like the present, - marked, as it is, by a constantly expanding spirit of invention, progress, innovation, general enlightenment, and humane achievement, the record of which is found in a wide and diverse literature.

It has been truly said, "Of the making of books, there is no end" nor is it desirable that there should be. The thing that is desirable is, that the books we are compelled to own should be the best of their class rich repositories to which we can repair with entire confidence for new knowledge, or the refreshing of that which may have lapsed through some trick of memory. This is especially true, not only as a matter of economy in time and energy, but because of the utter futility of any effort on our part to keep abreast of the knowledge of the times, and the practical issues that concern us, in any other way. When it is remembered that the yearly output of books exceeds 30, 000 volumes, and that the reading capacity of the average man is not more than 3, 500 in a lifetime, even though he devote the whole, of his working hours to the task of reading, the necessity and wisdom of properly and judiciously epitomizing that knowledge which is of most avail in making us into better citizens and more intelligent beings, is only emphasized.

The present work is confined exclusively to those departments of knowledge with which we are most practically and vitally concerned. Its mission is to convey useful and general information to all classes of readers, and incidentally to add something to every ones store of general culture. It is the result of a large expenditure of labor, painstaking care, judicious discrimination, and wide research. The material included has been drawn from numerous sources and authorities, and great care exercised in its collation so as to exclude everything of doubtful authenticity. Obviously the grouping of related facts into Books will be found advantageous for quick reference, as well as in giving a comprehensive view of certain fields of knowledge. The topics in the various Books are not meant to follow any specific order, but have been permitted to fall in line in such fashion as seems most likely to sustain their interest for the general reader. This seeming disorder is, however, fully met by a complete index, both direct and indirect, at the end of the volume.

The points that have been steadily kept in view are, conciseness, authenticity, comprehensiveness, range, and utility; and in these respects it is believed that this volume occupies a niche peculiarly its own.

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