A history of the United States

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A HISTORY OF
THE UNITED STATES
FOR SCHOOLS

BY

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WITH TOPICAL ANALYSIS, SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS
AND DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

BY

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PREFACE.

About thirteen years ago I was solicited at once by half a dozen publishing houses to write a school-book for the study of American history, and in all these requests the same reason was alleged. The desire was expressed for a book from a professional hand instead of the mere compilations formerly in use. In response to one of these requests I had formed a definite plan for writing such a book, when I was deterred by the appearance of two or three new and excellent text-books which seemed likely to make mine superfluous. The plan was accordingly abandoned, and I thought no more of it for several years.

In 1889, at the instance of my friends, Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., I wrote the little book on "Civil Government in the United States," and its gratifying success in schools has led them to urge upon me a similar experiment with the general subject of American history. The present book is the result. One of its chief aims is the furtherance of methods of study and instruction such as are indicated in the work on "Civil Government." In the teaching of history the pupil's mind should not be treated as a mere lifeless receptacle for facts; the main thing is to arouse his interest and stimulate his faculties to healthful exer-
cise. With this end in view I have again been so fortunate as to obtain the assistance of Dr. Frank A. Hill, a teacher of great experience, and whose ideas are quite in harmony with my own. Dr. Hill has furnished the questions which serve as a topical analysis of my chapters, as also the directions to teachers and the suggestive questions which point to answers that can be obtained only by going outside of this book. I know from experience that even children are capable of receiving much stimulus from such independent questions, and it is hoped that many teachers will find them useful.

It is difficult to squeeze the narrative of nearly three centuries within the narrow limits of a school-book without making it dull. So much compression requires the wholesale sacrifice of details, and it is in the multiplicity of details, if well grouped, that the life of a narrative is apt to consist. The grouping is, however, the main thing. Without the proper grouping, a mass of the most picturesque facts is liable to seem like a blur; with proper grouping, even abridged and general statements may retain a good deal of life. The best kind of grouping is that which brings out most clearly the true relations of cause and effect, for it gives to the narrative the flow of a natural stream. Very young minds are susceptible of the charm that is felt upon seeing an event emerge naturally from its causes; perhaps all young minds are susceptible of it unless an artificial stupidity has been superinduced by bad methods of teaching. I have therefore aimed, above all things, at
telling the story in such a way as to make it clear how one event led to another; and hope that in this way the interest will be found to be sustained, even in the absence of stories like Putnam and the wolf. The interest of the pupils will of course be greatly increased by collateral readings from more detailed narratives; and here the teacher will find sufficient help in the references which Dr. Hill has appended to each chapter. These references are purposely made to a very few books, such as any school may have in its library without great expense.

Dr. Hill's contributions to this book consist of the note To the Teacher, pp. xix–xxi; the Topics and Questions, Suggestive Questions and Directions, and Topics for Collateral Reading, at the end of each chapter; Appendix G, pp. 545, 546; the first footnote to page 21; and the footnote to page 22.

In selecting the illustrations I have carefully restricted myself to such as are helps to the understanding or appreciation of the narrative. Such are maps, portraits, views of historic buildings, or of towns in past stages of development, with an occasional autograph, a reproduction of some historical picture, the facsimile of a document or old print, etc., etc. Mere fanciful pictures, or "embellishments," have been scrupulously avoided. The maps have all been made either from my own sketches or under my direction.

CAMBRIDGE, August 4, 1894.
PREFACE TO THIS EDITION.

In the present revision such errors as are incident to first editions have been carefully eliminated, and such changes have been made as have seemed desirable in order to keep the book abreast with the times.

JOHN FISKE.

CAMBRIDGE, February 10, 1899.