# Everything Explained That Is Explainable: On the Creation of the Encyclopaedia Britannica's Celebrated Eleventh Edition, 1910-1911

*Denis Boyles*
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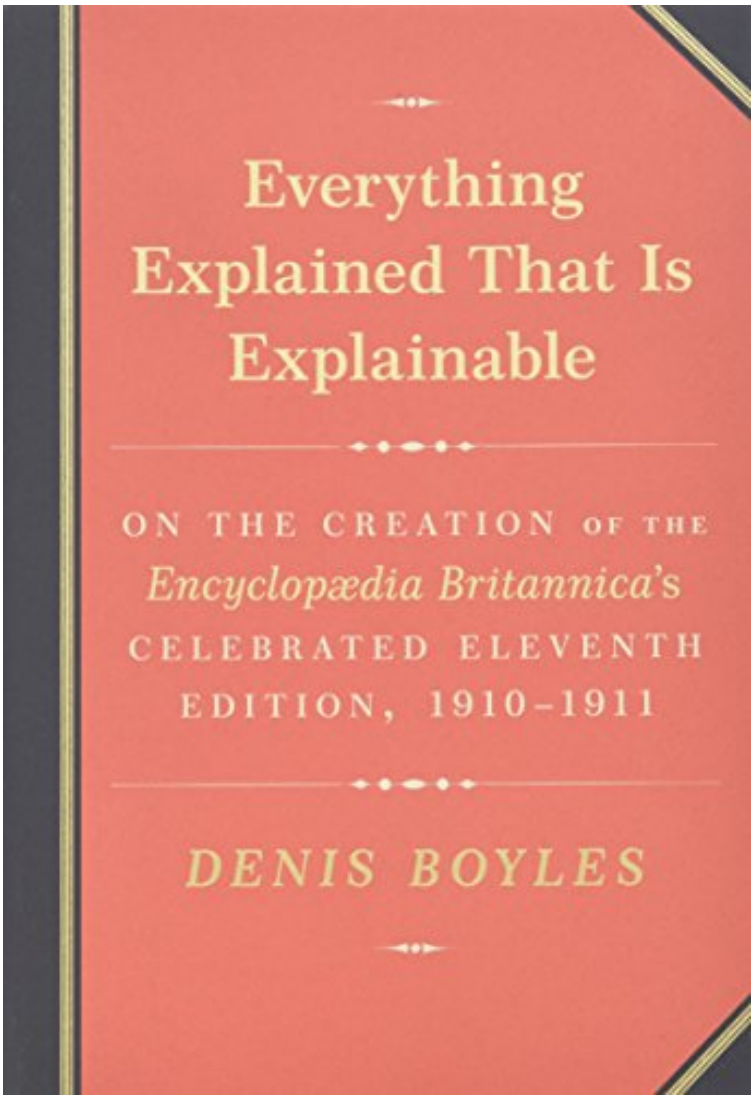




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**Denis Boyles : Everything Explained That Is Explainable: On the Creation of the Encyclopaedia Britannica's Celebrated Eleventh Edition, 1910-1911** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Everything Explained That Is Explainable: On the Creation of the Encyclopaedia Britannica's Celebrated Eleventh Edition, 1910-1911:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy JoAnn B.Perfectly described and received.6 of 6

people found the following review helpful. Fun read about the preposterous creation of the EB 11th, monument of an era.By ASWYears ago, a friend gave me a set of the 11th edition of the EB. Reading the small print on India paper with a magnifying glass in this marvelous concoction of explainables was worth the red hands from the infamous disintegrating covers. While modern scholarship has superseded many details of the entries in the 11th, it has rarely exceeded the confidence and style of these Victorian and Edwardian scholars. The 11th has always been a treasure for writers and poets.Now, Denis Boyles has given us the story behind this work and it reads like the intricate plot of a Nineties novel. A tale of two brash Americans from the buccaneer school of American book publishing came together to invent and foist mass marketing on England and as a former MP wrote made a damnable hubbub with your American tactics.H R Haxton was the unruly genius in this marketing campaign. His method is explained with gusto by the author. As one contemporary wrote, if Haxton were to let loose his American penno effort could keep him within the limits of approximate veracity.The Americans, with a continuously growing parade of British eccentrics took the ninth edition of the EB, a group of monographs by the most esteemed authorities, through a maze of organizing and financing which the author meticulously unravels and explains, brought it up to date with supplements to make the tenth, and then created a unified narrative of everything explainable in the 11th edition.Hugh Chisolm, the editor, assumed everyone should aspire to the condition of the educated and civilized Englishman in this new century, this new era of Progress, and that the spirit of science should move over the construction of the work as a whole. Unfortunately, the racism which informed the science of the day, is a major blot on the whole work. The author shows how the science has improved, but the problem persists. This 11th edition stands as one of the last monuments of an age and points to the beginning of a time still in turmoil.Mr. Boyles painstaking research allows him to tell much of this fascinating story through the letters, reported conversations, contemporary newspapers, and characters diaries, especially the diaries of Elizabeth Hogarth, the chief indexer of the 40000 entries and 1500 contributors of the 11th, of which she was the only female senior editor. Boyles uses Hogarth to neatly incorporate the womans movement blossoming at the time.The author has done a service to that Eras end by producing this book with the same panache and enthusiasm as the creators of the 11th edition.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. About Those Dusty Books in the Attic....By Robert McHenryReams -- I should write gigabytes instead, I suppose -- have been written in the past 25 years about such things as data, information, and knowledge (as for wisdom, not so much). I have the distinct impression that many of the writers have, let us say kindly, only an arms-length connection to the actual hands-on processes by which these abstractions are made concrete. It is easy to write, for example, that so-and-so edited a book; but if you havent done it, chances are you have only the dimmest notion of what that actually entailed.Not so Denis Boyles, who writes, edits, and publishes and who knows what to look for when examining how others perform these tasks. His history of the fabled Eleventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica explores not only what we might call the paper trail -- planning, commissioning, writing, editing what will become the printed content -- but also the equally complex and fascinating story of the organizing and financing of the project by a couple of American go-getters who charged into the sedate world of British publishing and journalism and overturned the whole applecart. As ever, British gratitude was, well, finite.The Eleventh is celebrated as the ultimate expression of Edwardian intellectual confidence and equally deplored as a damning document of Edwardian complacency and racism. Would twere that the present incarnation commanded as much attention. Sic transit, and all that.

The publication of the Eleventh Edition of the Encyclopdia Britannica in 1911 marked the last stand of the Enlightenment and a turbulent end to an era. The Eleventh Edition summed up the high point of optimism and belief in human progress that dominated Anglo-Saxon thought from the time of the Enlightenment. Eagerly embraced by hundreds of thousands of middle-class Americans, the Eleventh Edition was read as a twenty-nine-volume anthology of some of the best essays written in English. Among the names of those who contributed to its volumes: T. H. Huxley, Algernon Swinburne, Bertrand Russell; it was the work of 1,500 eminent contributors and was edited by Hugh Chisholm, charismatic star editor. The Britannica combined scholarship and readability in a way no previous encyclopedia had or ever has again. Within less than a decade after its publication, the Edwardian worldview was at an end: the unsinkable White Star Titanic had sunk on its maiden voyage; Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated and the Great War had begun. In Everything Explained That Is Explainable, Denis Boyles tells the audacious, improbable story of twentieth-century American hucksterism and vision that resurrected a dying Encyclopdia Britannica by means of a floundering London Times, and writes of how its astonishing success changed publishing and produced the Britannicas Eleventh Edition, still the most reveredall 44 million wordsof English-language encyclopedias, considered by many to be the last great work of the age of reason.The author writes of the man whose inspiration it was: Horace Everett Hooper, American entrepreneur who stumbled into the book business at sixteen on a hunch that he could make money selling inexpensive editions of classics by direct mail to isolated settlers scattered across the American West. Hooper found an outdated set of reference books gathering dust in a warehouse, bought them for almost nothing, repackaged them, and sold them on credit as one-shelf libraries to farmers concerned about their childrens education in frontier schools; his Western Book and Stationery Company became one of the largest publishers in the Midwest, sending books directly to readers, bypassing traditional booksellers, and inventing a model

that was forever after emulated . . . Boyles writes that Hooper and his partner, Henry Haxton, a former Hearst reporter and ingenious adman, came across the Encyclopdia Britannica, published by Adam Charles Black, whose Ninth Editions final volume, published in 1890, was seen by many as the height of English intellectual achievement. The Ninth had everything an encyclopedia needed. Except readers. Hooper and Haxton came up with a new market for the encyclopedias next two editions, which they planned to produce, and approached the then-struggling London Times, which became their publishing partner.Boyles tells the outlandish, bumpy tale of the making of the Eleventh; of the young staff of university graduates working with fanatical conviction (40,000 entries by 1,500-odd contributors), scattered around the globe . . . more than 200 members of the Royal Society or fellows of the British Academy; diplomats; government officials; officers of learned societies . . . contributions by the most admired writers, thinkers, and scientists of the day; of their scheme to sell the Eleventh Edition and of the storm that erupted around its publicationand after.An extraordinary tale of American know-how, enterprise, and spirit.

Praise for Denis Boyles EVERYTHING EXPLAINED THAT IS EXPLAINABLE Delightful . . . Lively and quirky, ballasted by hard work, lit by flashes of wit. Like the 11th itself, it highlights interesting people and odd turns of events, without ever losing the long arc of its purpose. Richard Brookhiser, Claremont of Books Compelling . . . Brilliant . . . EB Eleven has 40,000 entries, more than double that of EB Nine, and an index with ten times that number of topics, but its most miraculous achievement may have been that of its American promoter and overseer in bringing the project to its conclusion. Its a terrific tale, and Boyles has told it more fully than his predecessors. Robert DeMaria Jr., The Times Literary Supplement Clever . . . A remarkable story of American ingenuity . . . We see the yearnings of an informed populace on the frontier, seeking wisdom with their newfound wealth. We also discover a last hurrah for an age whose belief in endless progress would soon be doomed by the Great War, World War I. This is not just a book about the rebirth of a great literary event, though it is that, it is a metaphor for what that world view represented, on the eve of its demise. John Davis, Decatur Daily A suspenseful new work of history. Rob Nufeld, Ashville Citizen-Times Highly readable . . . Denis Boyles limns the intricate business of negotiations that went into the creation of the Eleventh Edition . . . Boyles provides excellent portraits of the key figures responsible for the 19th- and early-20th-century editions of the Britannica. Joseph Epstein, The Wall Street Journal A thorough and engaging telling of the Eleventh Editions conception and birth, midwifed by an eclectic group of madcaps who succeeded in producing a literary treasure the likes of which will never be seen again. David Bahr, National Almost reads like fantastic fiction. The book drops you into a time when print publishers possessed the same dynamism as todays web developers and authors celebrated as much fame as prime time pundits . . . Engaging. Jeff Milo, Paste An encyclopedic biography of the iconic reference work . . . A surfeit of information on the Encyclopdia Britannica . . . Entertaining . . . Fun . . . Boyles shows in great detail that the Britannica was as much a product of advertising and marketing as it was of condensed knowledge . . . Boyles writes with such a mordant touch his chapters move along even as they assault you with hurricanes of information. Matthew Price, The Boston Globe A definitive and meticulously researched chronicle of the creation of the EncyclopdiaBritannicas Eleventh Edition. Donald Liebenson, The Chicago Tribune The latest word on everythingthat was the eleventh edition of the EncyclopdiaBritannica when it first appeared in 1910. It would become immortal, not only because of its distinguished contributors, from Swinbourne to Huxley and Bertrand Russell, but because it was considered the sum of human knowledgeor almost. Dennis Boyles's lively, unexpected and erudite set of essays tells us why. Meryle Secrest In Everything Explained that is Explainable, Denis Boyles brings to life a rollicking saga of outlandish schemes, copyright theft, lawsuits, buyouts, and bankruptcies. James Gibney, The American Scholar Boyless account of how this classic reference work came to be published in 1910-1911 makes for enthralling business history. Michael Dirda, The Washington Post How grit and determination created an encyclopedia for the modern world . . . Boyles traces the evolution of the Britannica and the fate of the Times through lawsuits, battles for ownership, and ongoing money woes involving colorful, earnest, sometimes eccentric characters . . . Illuminating . . . A well-researched, brightly told history of the men and women who saved a great compendium of knowledge. Kirkus sAbout the AuthorDENIS BOYLES is the author of more than a dozen books of poetry, travel, humor, essays, and criticism. He is a veteran magazine editor, and currently a coeditor of The Fortnightly . Boyles teaches journalism and political science at the Institut Catholique dtudes Suprieures in La Roche-sur-Yon, France.www.denisboyles.comExcerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.chapter 1Plymouth 1896HOOPER, HORACE EVERETT (18591922), American publisher and book distributor, joined the other passengers on the first-class deck as his steamer passed the lighthouses of the treacherous south coast of England. First, the Wolf Rock light, standing alone on its sea-level stone perch, then the distant Lizard light, said to be the equal of a million candles, and visible from sixty miles away. To transatlantic passengers, such as our man, lately of Chicago, the long journey was nearly over. Just a few miles ahead was Rame Head, the light and marker for Plymouth harbor.From what we know about him, its easy to imagine a man like Hoopera square, solid man, with a walrus mustache and thick, theatrical eyebrowsanxiously pacing a little square of the deck as other passengers, participating in a time-honored travelers tradition, gathered quietly for a sunrise view of the Old World. Distant steeples, churchyards crowded with the bodies of storm-wrecked sailors, white-sand arcs below the green cliffs of the

shorenone of these would have interested him. He was the worst kind of tourist. He was a man in a hurry. He was thirty-seven years old and he had lived his entire life in a rush. He walked quickly, thought as he walked, talked as he thought, his voice pitched high in the syncopated, sharply chipped rat-a-tat-tat of mid-MassachusettsWorcester, Whista, to be exactwhere he had been born and raised. He wanted to get to London and he was sick of the sea. He had boarded his ship in New York with more ideas than he needed. During the weeklong crossing, they had multiplied crazily, creating a wild architecture for a plan he was eager to put in play.His ship was filled with Americans rich and poor. Even in the depths of the depression that gripped America in 1896, jumping on a steamer to cross the Atlantic was a mainstream indulgence; a ticket to Europe cost about as much as an average bicycle. Thousands of passengers boarded these ships every week, gladly paying 10 for a first-class passage (and only half that for steerage). American wealth in those days wasnt deep; many of those wealthy enough to ride in a cabin next to Hoopers were the recent descendants of European immigrants who had struck it rich selling groceries or hardware. They were returning to a continent their families had forsworn only a few decades earlier. Now their children and grandchildren were coming back by the boatload, literally, to lord it over the unfortunate uncles and cousins who had opted to remain behind.Hooper may not have been the richest man on board. But its likely that the upper decks of Hoopers ship were filled with those whose own American pedigree might not have come close to his, descended as he was from Joan Beaufort, the fifteenth-century queen of Scotland. John Leverett, who had been born in England in 1616 but died in office as governor of Massachusetts in 1679, was an ancestor on Hoopers mothers side; the Leverett name is still potent in New England. Hoopers father, William Robert, was descended from Robert King Hooper, a hard-selling merchant born in Marblehead in 1709 to a candlemaker. For at least one early part of his life, Horace was called Horace Leverett Hooper.Although born in Massachusetts, Horaces own father, an attorney and sometime journalist and editor at the Worcester Spy, was an important member of preCivil War Yankee society. William planned for his childrensix in all, including the three boys, Horace, Franklin, and Louisto be educated properly and launched in the professions. Horace, the oldest, was secured a place at Princeton Preparatory School, where he did well, but only during baseball season and even then only as shortstop. When the family moved to Washington, D.C., to join his father, who had taken up a clerks position in the Lincoln administration, young Horace went too and took a job in a bookstore. Instead of pursuing his fathers somewhat conventional ambitions for himuniversity, the law, perhaps government servicehe took an unexpected turn, for he had fallen in love with books, if not with the conventional means of gaining an education from them. After a year or so selling books in Washington, he and a friend, Sam Alexander, another boy from Worcester, headed west. It was 1876, the year of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Hooper was seventeen years old. Hooper and Alexander traveled across the plains to Colorado and took up lodging in Denver City, the county seat of Arapahoe County.Hooper was a young New Englander a long way from home with little to his name but a bona fide genealogy, a lot of ambition, and a sincere passion for books and bookselling. Barely out of his teens in 1881, he met and married Mary Alice Woodbury, the daughter of Roger Williams Woodbury, the New Hampshireborn founder of the Denver Daily Times, and settled comfortably into the community. Twin boys, William Everett Hooper and Roger Woodbury Hooper, were born in 1884.For a young man leaving the East Coast during the Indian Wars and traveling west, the anticipation of meeting a new kind of American would surely have been great. In the imaginations of boys like Hooper, western Americans were completely unlike the people one would encounter in Worcester or Washington. They would be big, rough, perhaps justifiably disliked by the original inhabitants, at home on a horse, with a professional interest in cattle.Cowpoke dreams notwithstanding, the western American a boy would be most likely to encounter first would be a salesman. Door to door and town to town was the preferred means of marketing and distribution in the years following the Civil War. Preachers, judges, doctors, and dentists all rode circuits making regular visits to communities far and wide; far more ubiquitous were the missionaries of mercantilismmen, almost exclusively, young and old, who carried western Americas retail sector in black suitcases and in small order books, making elaborate pitches for very simple objects, and especially books.Soon, Hooper had established a distribution business called Western Book and Stationery, making books available not only to other agents but also to retail counters in various western towns. For himself, he set up a business pushing a line of books that would seem almost comically unsuited to his clientele, who were not city-dwelling book browsers but settler families living in harsh conditions in remote areas and for whom a distant post office was the only, tenuous, link with the wider world. Hoopers starting inventory included reference works abandoned by their publishersdictionaries and encyclopedias, republished classics, including unauthorized versions of books published in Great Britain left unprotected by the copyright laws then in effect.Although it beggars many modern imaginations, publishing and selling books was very good business back then, highly profitable on the publishers part, and for readers an essential part of life. In the western states, the postwar settlement pattern was everywhere the same: wherever the railway passed, small communities were built that took as their civic models the big cities in the East. Thus, small towns featured not only homes, shops, and churches but also schools, colleges, opera houses, and libraries. Literary circles were everywhere books could be found. Public education had been ubiquitous since the 1850sin fact, by 1890 Americas literacy rate was among the worlds highest. Social aspirations required even the poorest settlers to seek cultural equality by owning one of the badges of literacya bound set of Dickens or Shakespeare, Mark Twains latest

book, or an imposing shelf of encyclopedias, atlases, and dictionaries.While many traveling salesmen included a few handy books among their wares, book agents were specialized characters. They brought to the most isolated hamlet news of what was then the most important part of the entertainment industry. Hooper and his agents, for example, carried more than just a catalog of books. They arrived with complete literary entertainment often centered on a promoted title, including an elaborate presentation prepared by the publisher, a recitation of the featured work, and a beautifully bound set of prospectuses for other books that might or might not have already been published. He and his agents sold these books, often on credit, leaving the first volume of one endless set or another with customers on trust: the payment of an initial deposit was enough to guarantee future deliveries.The publishing business adapted to this exploding market of readers. The American Publishing Company of Hartford, Connecticut, for example, prepared detailed presentation kits to sell subscriptions to the work of their most popular author, Samuel Clemens, and thousands of customers responded by ordering Twains books as quickly as they could. A new Twain was a significant event. For agents representing books such as Life on the Mississippi or Roughing It, Twain added text, some of it not very good, to ensure that salesmen had a book of sufficient thickness to command a decent price. Other Twain prospectus books, such as that for his unlucky Tom Sawyer, offered readers not only passages of out-of-sequence text but also huge spoilers that made the outcome of the story obvious.There was more than a touch of multilevel marketing in all this. Good book salesmen became local distributors, and Hooper was one. He opened shops and stalls, but he also employed sub-agents and collected proceeds based on those sales, as well as his own. Subscription publishing was a tremendously savvy way for publishers (who, in those days, were also sometimes printers and booksellers) to finance the publication of a work in advance or to augment the sales of existing titles by manufacturing only the number of books actually committed for sale.The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia, available in as many as ten volumes, was a very popular set of books among readers, booksellers, and sales agents. It appealed to a very basic instinct to possess some knowledge of a world that seemed to have expanded enormously in the space of a lifetime. Denver, for example, was on the high ridge of an entire continent that was still being discovered, mapped, and culturally defined even as new theories raced across oceans and around the world. Contending with traditional pieties were scientific theories and astonishing claimsmankind, some said, was descended from apes! Emerson and the transcendentalists were preaching the Romantic gospel of divine Nature, while new inventions were altering such fundamental enterprises as transportation and communicationnot to mention the domestic life of families. Behind all of this was the phenomenally powerful locomotive of public education. Literacy not only opened minds, it also opened pocketbooks. Who could be surprised that in many homes, the icon of enlightenment was a collection of bound reference volumes on a shelf?Hooper grew rich. He organized campaigns around the sales of the Century Dictionary. He prepared his own specimen books for use by his salesmen in making their pitches and paved the way for the door-to-door men by offering titles as premiums for newspapers that used them in circulation drives. He sold all kinds of books, of course, but the reference set appealed most to his belief in the improving qualities of books, in autodidactism as the preferred means of pedagogy, and in the profit to be found placing information in the living rooms of working Americans. He also had a family example: his younger brother, Franklin, who had recently graduated with honors from Harvard, already was working for the Century as a junior editor.Hoopers belief was a sincere and lifelong one. He may have lacked the patience for classrooms, but he had all the time in the world for books. He had an organized mind, one that saw connections in business and culture that others sometimes had difficulty seeing. Not surprisingly, his commercial specialization was the multivolume cyclopedia-dictionaries of which the Century and the Britannica were then the best known. He loved these compendia the way his father wished he had loved Princeton, and he read them the way others read adventure stories or books about agriculture, science, and religion. There were dozens of multivolume reference titles being sold as quickly as they could be produced. These ubiquitous sets appealed to his appetite to easily learn what he needed to knowwhich, in his case, was nearly everything. It was education as it seemed it should be to Hooperpractical, self-directed, easy to access, responsive to passing needs and new information and classless in every way. Everything a man could know could be put in those sets of books. After that, it was just a matter of looking it all up and reading it. That simple enthusiasm for finding what you felt you needed to know to be successful at whatever you were doingblacksmithing, banking, surveying, preachingwas one that made complete good sense to western Americans.Books from the entire English-speaking world outside the U.S.England, Ireland, Scotland, and all the publishers in all the colonies of the empirewere fair game for American bookmen, who often took an original work and, without a profitless regard for integrity, Americanized it to give it a more obvious sales appeal. It was a legal practice, but obviously not an ethical one. Foreign authors and publishers saw works changed without consultation; few of them saw a penny of profit on these sales. American copyright law not only permitted this, it encouraged it.The Encyclopdia Britannica was a very lucrative target; A C Black, who had held the copyright since 1827, published the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Editions to disappointing results in the UK, but to a much warmer, if less profitable, reception in the U.S., where the sets were treated as raw material, something to be harvested then refashioned into more desirable products in the workshops of American publishers. Entries were edited, omitted, and added at will, and sometimes without much regard for quality. Publishing derivatives of the Britannica was easy money. Publishing the Britannica itself was much more daunting.This was not a new development. In Britain, the

Britannica had brought prestige, but not much profit, to every proprietor and publisher who had touched it since its first appearance in 1768. That year, the first of three volumes of the 1771 first edition of the Britannicasubtitled A dictionary of arts and sciences, compiled upon a new planwas launched by Andrew Bell and Colin Macfarquhar, two Edinburgh printers, and William Smellie, an editor and friend of Robert Burns. Of course, the first Britannica was far from being the first encyclopedia; Robert Collison traces the idea of creating a comprehensive reference back to Greece, to Platos nephew, c. 350 b.c. It wasnt even the first modern encyclopediathe first Chambers Cyclopedia (two volumes, 1728) had a good claim to thatnor was it the most celebrated: Denis Diderots famous and controversial Encyclopdie, assembled in Paris by A Society of Men of Letters, was seen as a revolutionary set of books, literally. Diderots last volume appeared in 1766.