

interest of children, the criminality of children, adolescence, etc., is given in convenient form material collected from widely scattered sources.

The articles mentioned only serve to suggest the wealth of material made accessible by this work. It would not be possible to do justice to the content of any of them in a review. It is sufficient to say that they are in the main very clearly written and easy to read. Illustrations, plates, tables, and charts accompany the text. The bibliographies seem to be as full as is desirable, and are well selected.

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

IRVING KING

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English. Adapted by H. W. FOWLER and F. G. FOWLER (authors of *The King's English*) from the *Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1911. Pp. xii+1041.

A book appearing under these auspices promises to combine the authority of the *Oxford English Dictionary* with the taste of *The King's English*. The editors have nevertheless discarded the first of these assets. Thus they have varied at will its definitions and sense order, abandoning the historical method and "treating its articles rather as quarries to be drawn from than as structures to be reproduced in little" (p. iv). Again, "the spelling is for the most part, but not invariably, that of the *Oxford English Dictionary*." So too, "in the choice or rejection of alternative pronunciations the *Oxford English Dictionary* has always been consulted, but is not always followed." Since no indication distinguishes these variations, uncertainty is ever present as to the editors' treatment of their original.

Their well-known taste does not prevent the reproduction of certain marked deficiencies. It was an amateurish eccentricity of the *Oxford English Dictionary* in the first parts to omit adjectives derived from common names. Here in like manner we find *American* but not *African*, *Babylonian* but not *Assyrian*, *Chaldean* but not *Carthaginian*, *Soudanese* but not *Algerian*, *Roumanian* and *Servian* but not *Albanian* or *Bosnian* or *Balkan*, *Northumbrian* and *Kentish* but not *Anglian* or *Mercian*, *Parisian* but not *Athenian*. Nor is this eclecticism confined to geography. One finds *Benedictine* but not *Augustinian*, *Carlovingian* but not *Arthurian*, *Leibnitzian* and *Lanmarckian* but not *Aristotelian*, *Miltonic* but not *Byronic*, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* but not the *Aeneid*. Lest a false impression be conveyed that the deficiencies are mainly in the first letters, one should note that the editors include *Accadian* but not *Sumerian*, *Ciceronian* but not *Petrarchan*, *risascimento* but not *risorgimento*, *nolo episcopari* but not *nolo contendere*, *Sienese school* (of painting) but not *Florentine school*, *Chesterfield* (coat) but not *Raglan*, *Clio* but not *Calliope* or *Erato*, *Apollyon* but not *Apollo*.

The taste of the editors is illustrated—we venture to infer—by the banquet set before us à la carte. Though acceptably rich in wines and liqueurs, it lacks *Asti*, *Capri*, and *Montepulciano* (any of which we prefer to *Constantia*) as well as *crème de menthe* and *forbidden fruit*. The cocktail served is an unrecognizable "drink of spirit with bitters, sugar, etc." *Mocha* coffee may be had, but not *Java*; *souchong* tea, but not *oolong*; *Camembert*, *Stilton*, and *Roquefort* cheese, but (with better gustatory discernment) not *Edam*, *Neufchatel*, *Gorgonzola*, or *Limburger*. These examples exhibit sufficiently the editors' success in their "design of, on the one hand, restricting ourselves for the most part to current English, and, on the other hand, omitting nothing to which that description may fairly be applied" (p. iv).

With felicitous humor the editors acknowledge that this does not apply to technical terms. Here, say they (p. v), "the most that can be hoped for is that everyone conversant with any special vocabulary may consider us, though sadly deficient on his subject, fairly copious on others." Obviously this will not serve to inform readers. By excluding such terms and encyclopedic material, it has been the editors' aim to devote a large amount of space to the common words. This space is found to be devoted in fact chiefly to explanation of phrases, and with these the various senses of common words are run together in a single paragraph, confusing to both eye and mind. Unfortunately the classes of persons most likely to require information about common words—that is, writers in school and out—are the least qualified to be enlightened by "the curtest possible treatment . . . the adoption of telegraphese" (p. iv) to which the editors plead guilty. To quote an example: "**inform**, v. t. & i. Inspire, imbue, (person, heart, thing *with* feeling, principle, quality etc.); tell (person of thing, *that*, *how*, etc.); so **informant** n., bring charge (*against* person)." The facts are here recorded; the Chinese puzzle is easily solved—by one who knows; but is the man who depends on the dictionary informed?

The editors show unquestionably a faculty for terse and vigorous expression: such words as *vocabulary* and *vivid* represent effective entries. Their British bias is perhaps excessively marked in confining the slang use of *lobster* to designate a "British soldier," in defining *alderman* as a "magistrate in English and Irish cities and boroughs," *dormitory* as a "sleeping-room with several beds and sometimes cubicles," and *judge*, n., as merely a "piece of fudging." It is evident again where they explain *poker* as an "American card-game for two or more persons, each of whom if not bluffed into declaring his hand bets on its value." An American marvels no less at the simplicity of their game of *bridge*—"in which each player in turn looks on while his exposed hand is played by his partner." *Euchre* they rest content with describing as an "American card game for two, three, or four persons"; *seven-up* and *hearts* they omit. But apart from Britishism, it seems misleading to define, as herein, *heredity* as "tendency of like to beget like," and *chateau* as "foreign country house." Nor does one see why *landscape* must be confined to "inland scenery." Such occasional lapses are not infrequent.

It is unfortunate, moreover, that no systematic cross-referencing has removed discrepancies in treatment. Thus *bio*- and *zoo*- are glaringly unlike. *Cinque*-, *quattro*-, and *trecento*- vary unnecessarily, and *seicento*- is omitted. Among preterites *forgave* is entered but not *gave*. The variant *douma* does not appear. *Czech* is defined as *Bohemian* and under this word finds himself no other than a "socially unconventional (person); of free and easy habits, manners, and sometimes morals."

After all, the inexpert will turn to the authors of *The King's English* mainly for guidance to correct usage. He may be disconcerted by their easy admission of such slang terms as happened to be accessible in "the dictionaries from which our word-list is necessarily compiled" (p. v): for this is not a dictionary of standard English. He will see *phenomenal* in the sense of "remarkable" admitted without cautionary label; *mere* (lake, pond) not differentiated in usage from *grab* (seize suddenly) or *funniment* (joke, drollery). He will find it no less difficult to understand the line of demarkation between completely and incompletely naturalized words. Thus *facetiae*, *morbidezza*, and *morceau* are naturalized; not so, however, *fiancé*, *boulevard*, *boudoir*, *bourgeois*, *rôle*, and *cerebellum*. *Solidus* appears as naturalized, *denarius* not.

One turns with disappointment from so promising a work, planned with no

evident sense of the needs of a definite public, executed with too implicit faith in its immediate source, yet varying from that with no citation of other authority than the taste of its authors. The book is not worse than most small dictionaries. To the contrary! But it does not represent in combination the merits of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *The King's English*.

PERCY W. LONG

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Selections from Early American Writers, 1607-1800. Edited by WILLIAM B. CAIRNS. New York: Macmillan, 1909. Pp. 493. \$1.25.

History of American Literature. By REUBEN POST HALLECK. New York: American Book Co., 1911. Pp. 431. \$1.25.

There are two problems, among others, that are likely to confront one about to organize a study of American literature. The first is the problem of selection; the second, the problem of finding a principle of classification for the material selected.

To consider the first: Literary historians are doubting the honesty of the time-honored habit of declaring *Thanatopsis* "the first American poem" and Washington Irving the first American writer of literary prose. It is urged that one should know the early American writers of the years before 1800 in order to understand fully nineteenth-century American authors. In fine, the problem arises, Is it worth while to endeavor to trace development in our literature? For this endeavor after all must be the justification of such a book as Professor Cairns'.

Before 1800 America had perhaps produced one or two authors worthy of fame for their literary achievements—such men, for example, as Edwards and Freneau. Others, rather more numerous perhaps, deserve a place in the story because they were men of significant personality—men such as Captain John Smith, Governors Bradford and Winthrop, Judge Sewall, the Mathers, and (much less doubtfully) Benjamin Franklin. Opinions would differ about these and about other names, but, except to the student of American history and culture, there is perhaps no great loss if they remain mere names. Roger Williams, for example, was doubtless one of the greatest figures of his century in America; but that fact does not make *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience, Discussed in a Conference between Truth and Peace* exactly the sort of literary model one likes to put into the hands of a student. And if someone urges the value of illustrating archaic literary forms and tastes, there is easy reply, for one wishing rejoinder, to the effect that a third-rate specimen is hardly illuminating illustration. Roger Williams' work is strikingly significant of the fact that the movement toward more liberal thought in New England Puritanism was, usually, independent of literary expression of the thought. Hence, for any but the specialist, the broadening of religious and civic thought in New England may be studied as profitably in such works as John Fiske's *The Beginnings of Old New England* as in the original documents. The same is true of the writings of other colonies.

However, if one believes in studying the development of thought in America by means of "the original documents," Professor Cairns' book affords ample material for preliminary study, presented in scholarly fashion. To be sure, "scholarly" adherence to the orthography and punctuation of Captain John Smith does not probably enhance the purely literary charm (if there be any) of the writings, but it does give a vivid impression of the adventurer's rugged effort in turning from the sword to the pen. On the other hand, such lapses in editorial care as using "McFinga "