

The Century Dictionary.

THE CENTURY DICTIONARY. EDITED BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM DWIGHT WHITNEY, Ph.D., LL.D. Six Volumes. 13 × 10, pp. 7094. ALSO, THE CENTURY CYCLOPEDIA OF NAMES. EDITED BY BENJAMIN E. SMITH, A.M. One Volume. 13 × 10, pp. 1085. (London: T. Fisher Unwin. £14, 14s.) With the issue of the Cyclopaedia of Proper Names, the *Century Dictionary* is now complete. It is the most comprehensive dictionary of the English language at present in existence. The *Oxford Dictionary*, when it is finished, will be a larger book; but it cannot be compared in this respect at present, since only two volumes are quite complete and published. Another dictionary, issued in America, claims to take account of a larger number of English words, but its treatment of individual words is on a much smaller scale. So that for the present the *Century Dictionary* is the largest English dictionary in existence.

The scheme was started in 1882 by Mr. Roswell Smith, the distinguished president of the Century Company. Mr. Smith's proposal, however, was no more than to adapt Blackie's *Imperial Dictionary* to the needs of America. The project passed beyond these moderate ideas. New men were taken in, new needs arose, new ideas found acceptance. At last the work was finished with Professor W. D. Whitney as editor-in-chief; Mr. B. E. Smith as managing editor; seven editorial assistants (including one lady); thirty-one editorial contributors, each of them a specialist in some department of knowledge; and Mr. W. L. Fraser as Superintendent of the Department of Illustrations. The printing has been done at the De Vinne Press, and it is in every way worthy. Blackie's four volumes have stretched to six of a much larger size, and there is a separate volume of Proper Names.

In dictionary-making there are just two things that demand attention: what words shall be included, and what shall be said about them. The first is the most difficult problem. And it is not solved immediately by the character of the dictionary, still less by its size. Whatever the character and whatever the scope of a dictionary, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of words that hang in the balance for admission or exclusion, and

whose claims have to be carefully and painfully considered. It might be supposed that a dictionary of this size would include all the words that ever were spoken by the English tongue. They do not know the English tongue who say so. Are words that we call 'slang' to be excluded? Then what *is* slang? Is this a slang word or is it not? If they are to be included, they cannot *all* be, for there are slang expressions that never were English at all, that never were uttered by cockney or Yorkshire man, but sprang, sprang still-born, from the pen of some irresponsible novel writer whom accident or impudence brought into momentary notice. Again, are technical words to be included? If so, what of all the patent medicines, foods, and poisons, whose names murder the English language before they themselves murder the English people? So this is the first problem, and it is the most difficult to solve. The editor or editors of the *Century Dictionary* had no royal road to its solution. They settled the scope and the destination of their work, and then when a doubtful word came forward they judged it on its merits.

To know what to say about your word after you have chosen it is easier. It is easier since *Johnson's Dictionary* came. We marvel that Johnson was able to define his words, and define them so that his definitions stand to-day. Once done by a giant, it is no giant's task any more. Certainly there is no dictionary-maker, if he is worthy of his name, but can improve upon Johnson, and even on those who have so often improved upon him. There is progress in the definition of words. Choose an example with care, choose one of the household words that are familiar in our mouths, and you will see that it is not in engine-building only that our generation is making progress. The basis of the *Century Dictionary* as to definition was the *Imperial*, since the *Imperial* was its latest and greatest predecessor; but the *Century* has considered every word's definition for itself, passed it through its own editor's mind, and in a perfectly true sense made the definition its own, though it differs from the *Imperial* definition in only the turn of an adverbial phrase.

Perhaps the greatest advance that this new

dictionary has made on its undoubtedly great predecessor is in the definition of the words that are best known to those working men of whom you and I know nothing till they go on strike. These words are very numerous, and often very expressive. Though they are often new, they are already more familiar to the men who use them than the words in St. John's Gospel, and it is right they should be here. The days are coming when these words will be scattered through the literature that we shall most desire to read; and if the words convey no meaning, the literature will afford no joy.

The quotations that have been retained in illustration of special meanings are evidently the residue of a much longer list. They are few and apposite. But the feature of the book upon which most of the chief editor's care was spent is, of course, the derivations. Professor Whitney was our leading philologist. He held his science in the highest honour. And there is no doubt that the etymological part of the *Century Dictionary* is its highest claim to originality, its weightiest contribution to modern science.

It remains to say a word about the *Cyclopedia of Proper Names*. It was once considered possible to include proper names in the dictionary itself. That was wisely abandoned. We want the proper names alone. We need them most. We need them as easily handled as possible. It seems a pity that the names of places were included in the volume. Most of us have a gazetteer of more or less truthfulness already, and the space was sorely needed for the names of persons. Yet room has been found for a very large and representative selection. And certainly there is no respect of persons. Nay, even racehorses are here, racehorses that were famous in their generation. The biographies are brief, but much can be said in an inch of small type, if it is said by a man who knows his subject, and can begin at once. The type is cleverly managed. Beginning of a fair open countenance, it becomes small and close just when you have become interested in the biography and now must read it to the end. Yes, the *Cyclopedia of Proper Names* was most needed, it is well done, and most welcome.

The Meaning of Christ's Prayer in Gethsemane.

I.

By the Rev. W. M. ALEXANDER, Memphis,
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In the July number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, under the heading 'Notes of Recent Exposition,' you quote Drs. Schauffler and Trumbull in the *Sunday School Times* as giving a new view of the agony in Gethsemane. I do not know who *originated* the view advocated by them, but I find it fully elaborated in the *Revival Lectures* of Charles G. Finney, published in 1835. In the lecture on 'The Prayer of Faith,' under the 'IV' head, which deals with the proposition, 'This kind of faith always obtains the object,' after urging three reasons to prove the theme, he proceeds to answer objections, and writes thus:

'Perhaps you may feel a difficulty here about the prayers of Jesus Christ. People may often ask, "Did not He pray in the garden for the cup to be removed, and was His prayer answered?" I answer that this is no difficulty at all, for the prayer was answered. The cup He prayed to be delivered

from was removed. This is what the apostle refers to when he says, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard in that He feared." Now I ask on what occasion was He saved from death, if not on this? Was it the death of the cross He prayed to be delivered from? Not at all. But the case was this: A short time before He was betrayed we hear Him saying to His disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Anguish of mind came rolling in upon Him till He was just ready to die, and He went out into a garden to pray, and told His disciples to watch, and then He went by Himself and prayed: "O my Father," said He, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." In His agony He rose from His knees and walked the garden, till He came where His disciples were, and then He saw them fast asleep. He awaked them, and said: "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" And then He went again, for He was in such distress that He could not stand still, and again He poured out His soul. And now the third time, He goes away and prays: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done." And now the third time of praying there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening