

"Webster" will almost certainly be found to have included them. There are, however, a few curious omissions in this respect, for while "sex appeal" is decorously defined, "glad eye" is unaccountably absent, and though "kick the bucket" is equated to "to die" there is no mention of "conk out". These omissions, we may readily agree, are more than balanced by the welcome inclusion of such good English dialect words as "dither" and "nesh", "drang" and "toot" (in the sense of a small hill).

The pronunciation of words is clearly indicated, and, in many cases, where the American pronunciation differs from the English, both are given—for example, under 'schedule' (skĕd'ul and shĕd'ul)—though occasionally the American form only is noted. The etymology is scholarly and conservative, and in those test instances that we have applied to it (for example, Whitsuntide, pea, grobel) has always been correct.

Among the remaining features of the dictionary are a biographical section of more than 13,500 names of noteworthy persons (sufficiently up to date to include Herr Hitler), a pronouncing world gazetteer of some 30,000 places, a table of forms of address, a very useful section on arbitrary signs and symbols, a lengthy list of abbreviations in common use, plates of national flags, a history of the English language, modestly described as brief, and a guide to pronunciation. The book is profusely and appositely illustrated, and many of the principal words are provided with antonyms and synonyms. It would, indeed, be difficult to suggest any improvement, even in detail, and the editorial board, printers and publishers are to be unreservedly congratulated on the production of a superb example of lexicography. They have placed the whole of the English-speaking world under a lasting debt to them; and they should feel happy in the thought that "Webster", re-invigorated and reinforced, has once more undertaken its task of universal service. The dictionary-maker is no longer 'a harmless drudge'; he is a vital factor in the advance of learning and the progress of civilisation.

E. J. HOLMYARD.

British Neolithic Man

The Skeleton of British Neolithic Man: including a Comparison with that of other Prehistoric Periods and more Modern Times. By Dr. John Cameron. Pp. 272+16 plates. (London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 1934.) 15s. net.

THIS book is clearly the result of long and careful work by Dr. Cameron. It is a digest, more or less complete, of the state of our knowledge of prehistoric man compared with that of the man of historic times, down to the present

day. It is not, I think, a book meant for the general reader, nor would it mean much to him; but to the serious worker in anthropology, who is able to distinguish its strong from its weak points, it will be very valuable, and it is sure of a place in every scientific library.

The amount of original work which the author has put into it is not very large, and with what there is I cannot always agree. The new theories to account for platymeria and platycnemia, for example, would be all the better for discussion and criticism at the Anatomical Society, where they would have to run the gauntlet of men who are handling bones, and the muscles which mould them, every day.

All the standard indices, angles and arcs are dealt with, one by one, and those of the Neolithic people are contrasted with those of other races which have inhabited, or are inhabiting, Great Britain; but what the author has not done—possibly because he assumed that his reader knew it already—is to point out that if all these are put together, they will not produce average pictures of the skulls of the different peoples examined; indeed they often produce skulls so grotesque that even a layman would laugh at them.

I am very grateful to Dr. Cameron for his kindly mention of so much of my work but I would exchange it all for a passing reference to the average skull contours, derived from series of horizontal and vertical measurements of dioptographic tracings, published in "Early Man" by the Royal Anthropological Institute. A glance at these would show how completely Mr. Macdonell was misled by thirteen indices into stating that the seventeenth century Londoner was a Neolithic man; for the modern Londoner's contour has been worked out and may be placed side by side with that of the Neolithic people, and it does not need an anatomist to see how utterly different they are.

Then again, it is a pity that Dr. Cameron chose the Hythe skulls as types of medieval Englishmen, for they differ from all our other medieval skulls, at Rothwell, Dover and Upchurch, in being those of a settlement of round-headed people who must have come into England from the Continent in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and resemble the Mid-European type very closely. The typically English collection from Rothwell would have served his purpose so much better.

I have given the book this serious criticism because I think that it is worth it, but I must not forget to add that perhaps the part which will be most useful of all is the list of ancient skulls in the different museums of Great Britain; for which, I gather, we have largely to thank Miss Tyldesley.

F. G. PARSONS.