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[Longman dictionary of contemporary English. Editor-in-chief Paul Procter]

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Latin text of Beda's story is given. An *ad-hoc* vocabulary and a word index are added.

The textbook will prove useful to all students of English at university level and even advanced readers may find it of great interest.

Ludmila Urbanová

**Paul Procter** (Editor-in-Chief): **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, London: Longman, 1978, 1303 pp.

Irrespective of the stage reached, a learner of a foreign language — a beginner, a fairly or very advanced student, or one maturing to perfection — will need a special dictionary of the language he wishes to acquire. Apart from defining the meanings of words, such a dictionary will have to offer information on their pronunciation, their morphological and syntactic behaviour in the sentence, the collocations they enter into and the stylistic and the territorial restrictions they may be subject to. It will have to offer a good deal of information a native speaker may take for granted and therefore consider redundant.

A pioneer work in this field is Harold E. Palmer's *A Grammar of English Words* (London 1938). Palmer-inspired is the *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*, compiled under the general editorship of A. S. Hornby, published in Tokyo in 1942 and later reprinted as *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English* in England in 1948. Another pioneer work that deserves special mention is perhaps Albrecht Reum's *Dictionary of English Style* (Leipzig 1931), paying particular attention to collocations.

A new publication in the field is the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, prepared by a team of lexicographers, illustrators and computer experts under the general editorship of Paul Procter and benefiting from the advice and experience of such prominent scholars as Professors Randolph Quirk, Arthur Bronstein, David Crystal, A. C. Gimson, Geoffrey Leech and others.

The new dictionary will meet the needs of a wide range of non-native speakers of English, including such whose stock of words is still rather limited. This is because both the definitions and the examples are written in a controlled vocabulary, *A General Service List of English Words* (Longman 1953) having been primarily used for this purpose. For more delicate nuances of meanings a fastidious user may have to have recourse to other sources of reference, but Randolph Quirk is right in pointing out that 'the strict use of the defining vocabulary has in many cases resulted in a fresh and revealing semantic analysis' (p. vii).

A point worth mentioning in this connection is the retention of the articles in the definitions, a practice observed by the first edition of *A Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, but abandoned in its later editions. It will be appreciated especially by those non-native speakers of English whose mother-tongues are articleless.

In some cases the value of the definitions is heightened by illustrations. In principle, the latter do not elucidate single lexical items, but cover groups of items that are thematically related, coming under such headings as 'geometrical figures', 'household equipment', 'human body', 'insects', 'mountain landscape'.

The British pronunciation given by the dictionary is that usually referred to as 'Received Pronunciation' and the transcription used is that employed by A. C. Gimson in the 14th edition of the *English Pronouncing Dictionary*. If differing from British pronunciation, American pronunciation is given as well, its 'more common forms' (p. xviii) having been chosen for representation.

One of the most valuable features of the dictionary is its information on the grammatical, morphological and syntactic behaviour of English words. The amount of this information exceeds that offered by the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. The codes employed are partly mnemonic in character and therefore easy to understand and to handle. Additional grammatical information is given in the usage notes, which also draw attention to synonyms and to common mistakes.

Another important feature are the labels indicating the stylistic rank of the words and/or the geographical region(s) within which they are used. In addition to the British and American variants of English, even the Australian, Canadian, Caribbean,

Indian and Pakistani, Irish, New Zealand, South African and Scottish variants are taken into account. It is certainly right that also taboo words have been included and indicated as such. They cannot be ignored by non-native speakers, for they may prove to be pitfalls into which many an unwary non-native user of English may tumble.

Most welcome are the numerous examples. In this respect, a possessor of both the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* will be in a fortunate position, for there are cases when one of the two has an example or examples to offer, whereas the other has none.

All the information on the use of English words provided by the Dictionary will be greatly appreciated by the non-native speaker of English. In fact, the presented information may even whet his appetite for more. As he will hardly ever acquire a native speaker's feeling for English, he will always be in need of a reliable and comprehensive guide to Modern English usage. It therefore appears that there would be a place even for a larger dictionary meant specially for him, perhaps one of the size of *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Needless to say, this is not a criticism, but merely a suggestion. Within the limits of 1303 pages, the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* offers a wealth of information which makes it into a work of reference that will be acclaimed as an outstanding lexicographical achievement by non-native users of English all the world over.

Jan Firbas

J. I. Rodale, *The Synonym Finder*, revised edition by Laurence Urdang and Nancy La Roche, Rodale Press, Inc., Emmaus, Pa., 1979.

*Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus*, G. C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., 1976.

*Roget's II: The New Thesaurus*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass., 1980.

The innumerable editions of *Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, first published in 1852, testify to the usefulness of a reference book providing a sophisticated native speaker of English with vast collections of words covering certain semantic fields. *Roget's Thesaurus* is usually less useful to non-native speakers or learners of English, partly because its range is beyond the limits of their knowledge of the English vocabulary and partly because it does not give usage labels. A disadvantage of *Roget*, felt perhaps by all its users, is its complexity, resulting in not so readily available information. Better structuration of the material is achieved with the alphabetical arrangement of a thesaurus, as is evidenced by three recent achievements of American lexicographers.

The most extensive of the new generation of thesauruses is the revised edition of *Rodale's Synonym Finder*. Its 1355 pages of small print contain over 1,000,000 words (as we learn from the blurb, or more than 1,500,000 words according to the Editor-in-Chief's introduction). The average size of an entry seems to be about 60 words, but the entries are divided into numbered subgroups according to meaning, a still finer classification within the subgroups being indicated by semicolons. For instance, *head*, as a noun, is divided into 13 numbered subgroups containing about 200 words, further divided by 33 semicolons, which gives six words between semicolons on the average. (The size of similar word-groups in Longman's 1962 revised and modernized version of *Roget's Thesaurus* seems to be slightly smaller, indicating finer classification.) If we compare the groups of synonyms of *head*, n., conveying the meaning of 'part of a body' in *Rodale* with the analogous group in *Roget*, we find that *Rodale* offers more synonyms or closely related words, although of stylistically limited applicability: archaic *mazard*, *costard*, informal *upstairs*, *noggin*, slang expressions *gourd*, *noodle*. (If the comparison were made on the basis of *Roget's* index, there would be three more words found in *Rodale* only: *poll*, *upper storey*, *double crown*.) *Roget's Thesaurus*, on the other hand, covers a wider field and offers a higher number of related words, in careful sequence, such as *scalp*, *epicranium*, *headpiece*, *brow*.

In addition to the thirteen subgroups, the entry *head* in *The Synonym Finder* contains further five subgroups with synonyms to some idioms, e.g. *head over heels*. *Head* as adjective and *head* as verb are covered by another seven subgroups.

The entry *head* also shows some of the other welcome features of *Rodale's Syn-*