

ers, therefore, will strive to please the majority, and we must be content to sacrifice the correctness of theory to the convenience of use. We would give up in a work intended as much for the farm as the forum, as much for the school as the study, as much for the family as for the philosopher, considerable etymology, some dozens of sesquipedalians, and any number of happy citations, before we would consent to part with such well-trying delights of the family and the school as Webster's Illustrations have proved to be. Let any school-boy who is full of curiosity about anything and everything have the run of Webster's Dictionary, and it will go hard but his curiosity will be satisfied and his wits brightened beyond all recognition.

*The Pronunciation.*—As might have been expected, great attention has been paid to this portion of the work. Many changes have been made in the successive editions, and we may look upon the matter as still in a transition state. The pronunciation sanctioned by Dr. Webster, and in America almost consecrated by his authority, has in multitudes of words been abandoned, and a determined stand has been made against the vulgarities and abominations that threatened under the name of common speech to destroy on this continent the grace and beauty of English. There is now a manifest desire upon the part of all cultured Americans to cease to speak American, and to endeavour to speak English as it is spoken by the most cultured in England, not merely in accent but in intonation and enunciation, so much so that we may hope with the constant intercourse between Britain and America that the two people may soon become of one speech. Webster's Dictionary is still too American in its pronunciation to suit the well-attuned English ear, or of those in Canada who desire to imitate English rather than American. The

introductory essay on *The Principles of Pronunciation* deserves the most careful attention of all who pretend to use the work systematically. We recommend for consideration this portion of the work to all teachers of English, and here we might say to our young readers that it is impossible to learn exact pronunciation from any book. Pronunciation, correct in style and tone, must be learned from the lips of living men; but a good dictionary will be a great help, and *Webster* will be very helpful, though there is too much Webster in it still.

*The Orthography.*—All the English-reading world knows of the vagaries of Dr. Webster in the matter of spelling. He constructed a theory, in some respects reasonable enough, but he did not recollect that language is a creature of fashion as well as of habit, and will not be compelled to yield obedience to any theory, however reasonable. What he would not do, therefore, his editors and publishers have done for him—conformed his spelling, or the spelling of what is called his Dictionary, as far as American *amour-propre* would allow, to English methods—treating words as they are and not as they ought to be. Side by side in the text appear, in deference to public opinion, the rival John and Jonathan methods, and there are numerous signs that lead us to believe that the struggle for the supremacy will not be long doubtful. As with the Essay on Pronunciation, so we may remind the student and the teacher of the Essay on Orthography. He will find in it all that can be said in favour of variations from the English method, but he will do well to remember, before adopting the American, that this method is not yet finally fixed, and that of all things in the world language most obstinately resists being improved according to theories and rules.