

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

CHAMBERS'S ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE; Edited by Andrew Findlater, M.A., LL.D. London and Edinburgh: W. and R. Chambers; Toronto: Rose-Belford Publishing Company. 1882.

THE work, of which the above is a new and thoroughly-revised edition, is too well known and appreciated to need any particular commendation at our hands. Considering its low price, there is no lexicon of the language that can compete with it, as a generally accurate and useful aid to the English student. The new edition is in many respects a great improvement on the previous one, particularly in the advantage taken by the new editor of the researches of recent scholars, French and German, and of the "new English school of philologists, who," as the editor says, "have done so much during the last twenty years to promote the historic and scientific study of our own language." The work, moreover, is much enhanced in value by the increased size of the type in which the new edition has been "set," and by the large addition to the book of a multitude of new words, scientific terms, etc. Another improvement will be found in the words following a strictly alphabetical order, instead of being grouped under the stem or root-word, as was the case in previous editions. Considerable useful matter, in the shape of appendices, appears in the new edition, and adds bulk and value to the book.

A notable feature of this work, and one that is more characteristic of the admirable dictionary of the late Rev. James Stormonth—the lexicon, in the opinion of the writer, *par excellence*, of the language—is the compilation of the compound and other derived words and phrases, grouped under the parent word, throughout the lexicon. This feature is happily enlarged in the present

edition, though it falls far short of Stormonth's work in the characteristic we have pointed out. To make our meaning intelligible, we will cite a few words from the present and earlier editions of Chambers' book, and also from the new one of Stormonth's. To take the inflected and compound words under the word "break," for example, we have in both editions of Chambers the following: Breakage, breaker, breakfast, and breakwater. The addition to these in the new issue are the following: Break cover, break down, break ground, break the ice, break a lance, break upon the wheel, break with, breaking-in, and breakneck. The additional fulness of Stormonth's book will be seen at a glance by our adding the derivatives supplied in the latter, in excess of those already quoted. These are some of them: Breaking, broke, broken, to break up, to break forth, to break in, to break from, to break upon, to break through, to break off, to break loose, to break out, a break-up, to break the heart, break of day, and breakfasting—all of which are fully defined, and the hyphen, where necessary, properly supplied. The matter of supplying the hyphen is, we notice, carelessly attended to in the new "Chambers;" and to proof-readers, and accurate writers for the press, this grave omission will greatly detract from the value which they would otherwise place upon the work. The following, which we alight upon at random, will illustrate this: By-law, by-name, and by-word, though appearing in former editions as we here give them, are all in the new book shorn of the hyphen. In the case of other words, the present edition is an improvement: Gunboat, for instance, which in previous issues appears with the hyphen, is now correctly given without it. Under the word "sea," however, there is evidence of the same carelessness we have referred