

GOOD BOOK MAKING

(Japan Times, Sept. 10, 1931)

We have more than once noted the good work of the Hokuseido Press of Tokyo in raising the standard of English language publications appearing in Japan. They have perhaps surpassed themselves in the way of good book making by the production of a work by Mr. Thomas R. G. Lyell on "Slang, Phrase and Idiom in Colloquial English and Their Use," a volume of 764 pages. Excepting for the name of the publisher, one would believe that the book had been printed and bound abroad.

The good impression of the volume is all the more increased when one considers the majority of English language books which have been produced here. The printing world of Japan would seem to have imported its type forms in the days of early Meiji.

We have gone into the above matter in some detail since the Japanese printing world would seem to be somewhat indifferent to these facts. One glance at a volume is sufficient to tell whether the volume had been printed in Japan or not. All the more surprising, therefore, was it to behold this latest volume from the Hokuseido Press, which one would say at first glance—had been produced in England and not in Japan.

This dictionary contains up-to-date colloquialism, and therefore includes those slang expressions produced during the War, most of which are missing in other dictionaries. It also shows, not only how each expression is used, but when it is used; i.e. whether it is suitable for familiar or ordinary conversation, whether it is literary or vulgar. Modern usage is, in many cases, surprisingly different from that of pre-War days. The Dictionary is unique in giving full examples for every expression contained, showing how it is actually used. It also contains a number of colloquialisms which are missing in other books of this kind, owing to their being considered too ordinary and therefore too well known for insertion, but which in actual fact, have been found to be most puzzling to foreigners.

The volume is one which, we believe, will find its way into the library of all who are interested in language and literature. It is entirely lacking in any Japanese explanatory matter, the pronunciation of the phrases being rendered by phonetic symbols which, of course, every Japanese student of English should first master. The volume is thus an attractive one even for those to whom the English language is the mother tongue, and to whom much explanatory matter in Japanese is irritating.

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