

### Book Notice

*A New Dictionary of Eponyms*. By Morton S. Freeman. New York: Oxford U P. 1997. \$14.95. Pp. x-284.

A recent entry into the stable of popular or semi-popular works on eponymy, Morton Freeman's seems one of the better and one of the more useful for novice or more serious students of names.

Freeman is pleasant to read and the entries are, for the most part, substantial and go beyond the bland, terse and often conjectural pairing of the person and the name, along with a cursory account of the connection between the two, found in many similar books. Freeman's entries are lengthy, appear to be well-researched and contain information which will be of interest to many users. Entries are enjoyably detailed, and take off on appropriate tangents; the entry for *Dickensian*, for instance, also includes such additional Dickens-derived eponyms as *Wellerism* and *pecksniffian*, along with *Uriah Heep*, *Fagin* and *Little Nell*.

To these classic eponyms Freeman inexplicably adds a number of toponyms, actual (bikini, bologna, epsom salts, magenta, siamese twins) and fictional (serendipity), herbonyms (sardonic), and common nouns which may superficially appear to derive from names (smart aleck).

There is a bibliography, mostly of standard sources, but unfortunately there is no index nor cross-references within the text, making it difficult to locate particular items. There are also a number of distracting spelling and other proofreading errors, e.g., *pecksniffian* appears as *pecksiffian*, the final *s* is left off Mathews' *Dictionary of Americanisms* and at least one sentence is garbled in the Preface.

On balance, given the number of entries and the extent and clarity of the presentations, this is a handy guide to at least the more common English eponyms; it is the kind of book which everyone interested in names should own.

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